

Tennessee Secretary of State Civics Lesson Plans

Citizenship

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Grade Level: High School

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Introduction:

Being a citizen of your country is very important. This lesson plan is designed to help students understand the duties and responsibilities of a U.S. citizen. In addition, students will learn about the process of naturalization and have the chance to take the U.S. civics test that all naturalized citizens must take during the process of naturalization. The goal of this lesson plan is to get students to think about what it means to be a citizen of the United States and how they can be a more civically engaged citizen.

Guiding Questions:

- What does it mean to be a citizen in the United States?
- Why is the naturalization process so important to the immigration process?

Learning Objectives: In the course of this lesson, students will...

- Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States.
- Understand the importance of being a good citizen.
- Discuss ways to become more civically engaged citizens.

Curriculum Standards:

GC.37 Describe the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.

GC.38 Connect insights gained from appropriate informational text to describe the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.

GC.40 Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States, including the process of naturalization.

Materials Needed:

- Video Link: [What does it mean to be a citizen?](#)
- Lecture and Discussion PowerPoint (click [HERE](#) to download)
- Handout (see attachment)
- Website Link: [Citizenship Test](#)
- Optional: [Study Materials for the Civics Test](#), [Practice Test](#)

Background:

- [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
- [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, Citizenship Resource Center](#)
- [The Citizen's Almanac](#)
- [Tennessee Secretary of State's Civics Website, Citizenship Page](#)

Lesson Activities:

Activity 1:

Show the students the video: [What does it mean to be a citizen?](#)

Have a class discussion on what it means to them to be a citizen.

1. Why do you think so many people want to become U.S. citizens?
2. Do Americans take their citizenship for granted?
3. What does being a citizen mean to you?

Activity 2:

Lecture and Discussion: Citizenship and Naturalization PowerPoint & Handout

Walk through the PowerPoint lecture and have students follow along with the accompanying worksheet. This PowerPoint goes through the history of citizenship and the process of naturalization.

Activity 3:

Have students take the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services Civics Test.

You can choose 20 questions out of the 100 questions for them to take. Click [here](#) to find the test.

The [USCIS website](#) has additional study materials for the civics test. There is also an online [practice test](#).

Activity 4:

Now that students have a basic understanding of citizenship and naturalization, have them brainstorm as a class: **What is the ideal citizen?**

Some things to consider:

- Voting
- Being informed on issues
- Volunteering and community service

Other discussion questions:

- What are some steps that you can practically take in order to be a more civically engaged citizen?
- Why is it important that a society has engaged citizens?
- What are the consequences of being disengaged?
- Can you think of anyone in your life (friends, family, etc.) who exemplifies citizenship?

Extension Options:

1. Students could research the differences in the naturalization process between the United States and other countries.

2. Like the video in the beginning, have your students create a video by interviewing students from the school, asking what it means for them to be a citizen and part of their school community.
3. Create a video interviewing someone who has gone through the process of naturalization.
4. Have your students research and write an essay on the following prompt:
“If you could create your own country, what would be the naturalization process and requirements of citizens?”
5. Examine how qualifications for citizenship have changed throughout U.S. history.
6. Student can research currently policy or past policy issues surrounding citizenship and naturalization in the United States.

Citizenship and Naturalization Lecture Note Handout

Instructions: Follow the lecture notes and fill in the section of notes as a guide to key points from the lecture.

Citizenship

A citizen is _____

Citizenship is gained by _____

_____ grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens.

The _____ of citizenship varies from _____ to _____.

How does one become a citizen?

Birth

_____ law of the blood

_____ law of the soil

Naturalization

Dual citizenship can result from _____, which is the _____ way someone can _____ his/her citizenship.

What does the U.S. Constitution say about citizenship?

The U.S. Constitution, drafted in _____, did not explain _____, but did mention _____.

Citizens of the U.S. became entitled to the _____ guaranteed to them by the _____ and its later _____.

The first _____ written explanation of American citizenship was included in the _____ amendment to the Constitution, passed in _____.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of _____, amended in _____, _____, and _____ give those _____.

How does Naturalization work?

The U.S. Constitution gives _____ the power to make naturalization laws for the United States. No _____ can grant citizenship to noncitizens.

A person must be over _____ years old and must have _____ in the United States for _____ years, without leaving for more than a total of _____ months throughout that _____ year period.

People who wish to become U.S. citizens must file a _____, take an _____, and have fair knowledge of _____, _____, and the _____.

He or she may become a U.S. citizen by taking an _____.

_____ is Citizenship Day.

Naturalized citizens may not become _____ or _____.

Can citizenship be lost?

Known as _____, means that a person no longer wants the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a particular country.

If U.S. citizens wish to give up their _____, they must _____ this wish on a _____ provided by the _____.

Historical Perspective

In the ancient city-state of _____, citizenship was granted to _____ of certain classes.

Citizenship was also granted to a few _____ and freed _____.

Citizenship meant that a man could _____, hold _____, serve on committees and _____, and give _____ service.

Roman citizenship was extended to _____ serving in the _____ and to _____ of conquered lands.

The _____ was based on _____ and _____ to a higher _____ in exchange for his protection.