

Becoming a Citizen

by Karine Manoukian

Resources

Read: Do Now #80: [What Makes a Good Citizen?](#)

Read: [97 immigrants from 36 countries become U.S. citizens in Kissimmee ceremony](#), Jeff Kunerth, Orlando Sentinel, 7/4/2013

Additional Resources

[US Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)

Read: [Six-time Everest Climber Receives Citizenship](#), KQED's News Fix, 4/2013

Read: [Could you Pass the Citizenship Test? The Lowdown](#), 5/2013

Listen to: [Overwhelming Support for Pathway to Citizenship](#), The California Report, 2/2013

Critical Issue

Over the past decade, over 6.6 million people have become citizens of the United States. What is important to know about becoming a citizen of the United States? What is the naturalization process like? For those that have sacrificed and waited for many years, what does it feel like to participate in a naturalization ceremony? In the following lesson students will discuss elements of citizenship and read about the experiences of newly naturalized American citizens. In addition, students will discuss the qualities of good citizens and will be invited to research the naturalization process.

Introductory Activities

- 1 Write the word **Citizen** on the board and brainstorm with the class the nouns, verbs and adjectives that relate to the word **Citizen**. Add the words to respective columns on the board.

Build a word bank with these words to use in future discussions or writing.

- 2 Discuss the following questions with a partner and then with the whole class.
- What do you know about the steps for becoming a citizen of the United States?
 - What do you know about the naturalization ceremony?
 - What rights do you have as a US citizen?
 - Is it easy to become a citizen in your home country?
 - Are you a (new?) citizen in the US, or do you know someone who is? Describe the experience.

Assignment #1

Read 97 immigrants from 36 countries become U.S. citizens in Kissimmee ceremony

This reading could be given to the class in advance for homework. Direct students to the web site for reading practice online or distribute the transcript for students to read in class before the lesson.

Vocabulary Check

Before reading, ensure students understand the following terms:

oath repressive turbulent inception
ceremony The Pledge of Allegiance naturalization

Comprehension Questions

1. Jose Emilio Castaneda feels “born again” after receiving his U.S. citizenship. What does the expression “born again” mean? Why does Mr. Castaneda use this expression to describe his feelings about becoming a citizen?
2. What are the two kinds of Americans mentioned by U.S. Rep. Alan Grayson?
3. Why do the new citizens recite the Pledge of Allegiance?
4. What was one reason Paul McCluskey chose to become a US citizen?
5. Clifton Joseph believes that after becoming an American citizen “you can be anything.” Do you agree?

Post-Reading Activities

Do Now #80: What Makes a Good Citizen?

“Deciding to become a U.S. citizen is one of the most important decisions in an individual’s life. If you decide to apply to become a U.S. citizen, you will be showing your commitment to the United States and your loyalty to its Constitution. In return, you are rewarded with all the rights and privileges that are part of U.S. citizenship.”
([USCIS website](#))

Explain the difference between a right and a privilege, giving examples.
What should be required of a citizen?

Writing/Reflection

- [Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America](#)
- [Pledge of Allegiance](#)

After one passes the citizenship test he or she takes a Naturalization Oath (or pledge/promise) to the United States and recites the Pledge of Allegiance. Freewrite for 10 minutes your thoughts - if you were to pledge or have pledged allegiance to a new country.

Contact Assignment

Students may interview other students, friends, neighbors and/or people in the professional world about what it means to them to be a citizen.

Questions could include:

- What qualities make a good citizen?
- Do you remember being taught to be a citizen?
- Are there responsibilities that go along with being a citizen?

Karine Manoukian is a Bay Area native, ESL instructor at International Gateways, San José State University and has taught ESL in and around the San Francisco Bay Area for many moons.
