Citizenship, Civic Participation, and Civic Responsibility

Citizenship in the United States

How do you become a citizen in the United States?

1. **Natural Born Citizen – Citizenship by birth**
   - **jus soli** – (law of soil) if you are born in US, then you are a citizen.
   - **jus sanguinis** – (law of blood) if your parents are citizens, then you are a citizen.

2. **Naturalized Citizen – Citizen by naturalization**
   - In order to be **naturalized**, an applicant must first be qualified to apply for **citizenship** with the **USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services)**. Before an individual applies for naturalization, he or she must meet a few requirements. Depending on the individual’s situation, there are different requirements that may apply. General requirements for naturalization are below. Then, he or she must complete an application, attend an interview, and pass an English and a civics test. Upon successful completion of these steps, the applicant takes an oath of loyalty, and becomes a citizen.
     - Be at least 18 years old
     - Be a permanent resident (have a “Green Card”) for at least 5 years. (Must have entered the US legally)
     - If marry a US citizen you only need 3 years of residency.
     - Be able to read, write, and speak basic English.
     - Have a basic understanding of U.S. history and government (civics).
     - Be a person of good moral character.
     - Demonstrate an attachment to the principles and ideals of the U.S. Constitution.

   **Resource:** [https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/teachers/naturalization-information](https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/teachers/naturalization-information)

**Expatriation:** giving up one's citizenship to become a citizen of a foreign country.
Civic Responsibilities and Participation

• Describe how and why citizens are required by law to pay taxes, serve on a jury, and register for military duty.
• Describe how citizens voluntarily and responsibly participate in the political process by voting, performing public service, being informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions.

Civic Responsibilities (Requirements)

Obeying the Law
• Laws are passed to make citizens safe and must be followed if the society is going to work.
• Laws set guidelines for personal behavior, business practices, elections, and even operation of cars.
• They reduce areas of uncertainty, and therefore they limit conflict. When conflict does arise, laws can be applied by court judges and juries, who use such laws as an impartial basis on which to settle conflict.
• Not every law has been perfect; many have been changed over the years when enough people stand up to challenge a law that they feel is unfair or unconstitutional (doesn't follow our Constitution).

Paying Taxes
• The government must pay for the goods and services it provides to its citizens.
• This is done with tax revenues, making it a responsibility of U.S. citizenship.

Registering for Military Duty
• The US currently has a volunteer military...
• However, the US also has the right to staff its military using the draft.
• Since 1980, all young men have been required to register with Selective Service - To register for the draft when and if it is ever reinstated.

Serving on a Jury
• If you are registered to vote, or have a driver’s license...You might be called to serve jury duty.
• The Constitution stipulates that accused persons must be tried by a jury of one’s peers...
• This is a RIGHT of any citizen...The corresponding RESPONSIBILITY is that citizens must serve jury duty.
Civic Participation (Responsible but Voluntary)

Participating in the Political Process
- **Voting**—the legitimacy of the US government depends upon “the consent of the governed”...
- **Serving** – You can run for political office or work on a staff of a politician ...
- **Campaigning** or working for a political party or movement ...
- **Lobbying** – You can join and participate in an interest group (like PTSA) to try to influence political leaders to make laws the help society ...
- **Writing letters** to the editor of a newspaper or magazine about political issues ...
- **Protesting** the actions of the government in a legal and orderly manner.

Performing Public Service
- Citizens should be **ENGAGED** and recognize the importance of **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**.
- This could include, but is not limited to joining the military, or working for a political campaign...
- You can serve the community as a police officer, fire fighter, teacher, etc.
- You can also volunteer for the library, for food drives, for your church or for your community.

Being Informed about Current Issues
- Knowledge about current issues and world affairs is **ESSENTIAL** if you are going to make informed voting decisions.

Respecting Differing Opinions
- “I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it”—Voltaire.
- Participation in the government demands the ability to listen to and respect the viewpoints of others.
- Citizens must both tolerate and be knowledgeable of different points of view.
- Don’t EVER take political disagreement PERSONALLY.
The Pledge History:
The Pledge of Allegiance was written in August 1892 by the socialist minister Francis Bellamy.

- It was originally published in The Youth's Companion on September 8, 1892. Bellamy had hoped that the pledge would be used by citizens in any country. In its original form it read:

  "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

- In 1923, the words, "the Flag of the United States of America" were added.

- In 1954, in response to the Communist threat of the times, President Eisenhower encouraged Congress to add the words "under God," creating the 31-word pledge we say today.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

The Pledge Meaning:

I - - Me; an individual; a committee of one.
Pledge - - Dedicate all of my worldly goods to give without self-pity.
Allegiance - - My love and my devotion.
To the Flag - - Our standard; Old Glory; a symbol of Freedom; wherever she waves there is respect, because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts, Freedom is everybody's job.
United - - That means that we have all come together.
States - - Individual communities that have united into forty-eight great states. Forty-eight individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose. All divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common purpose, and that is love for country.
And to the Republic - - a state in which sovereign power is invested in representatives chosen by the people to govern. And government is the people; and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people.
For which it stands - - it holds true and stands for.
One Nation - - people united by common descent, history, culture, and language.
Under God - - Blessed by God
Indivisible - - Incapable of being divided.
With Liberty - - Which is Freedom; the right of power to live one's own life, without threats, fear, or some sort of retaliation.
And Justice - - The principle, or qualities, of dealing fairly with others.
For All - - which means, boys and girls, it's as much your country as it is mine.

Based on Red Skelton's Pledge Skit.

the Government Classroom
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Other National Statements
What political beliefs are fundamental to the identity of the American Citizen and American political culture?

Oath of Citizenship:
"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."

American Creed:
"I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to live it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies."

It was written by William Tyler Page, Clerk of the House of Representatives in 1917 and official accepted by the House on behalf of the American people on April 3, 1918.

National Motto: “IN GOD WE TRUST”

Official National Motto of the United States

In 1956 the President approved a Joint Resolution of the 84th Congress declaring IN GOD WE TRUST as the national motto of the United States. Most Americans are only familiar with the first verse of Francis Scott Key's 1814 poem The Star Spangled Banner, but the fourth verse includes: And this be our motto: In God is our trust.

The original motto of the United States was E Pluribus Unum (Latin for one from many or one from many parts), referring to the welding of a single federal state from a group of individual political units (the original colonies, now states). E Pluribus Unum remains on the Great Seal of the United States. Each of the 50 United States also has an official motto.

IN GOD WE TRUST first appeared on the 1864 two-cent coin. The motto has been in continuous use on the one-cent coin since 1909, and on the ten-cent coin since 1916. It also has appeared on all gold coins and silver dollar coins, half-dollar coins, and quarter-dollar coins struck since July 1, 1908.