

# Civics & Economics CE.6 -

## Defining Citizenship in the United States (new 2023 standards)

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### CE.6a – How an Individual Becomes a U.S. Citizen

a) describe the processes by which an individual becomes a **citizen** of the United States

A citizen is an individual with **certain rights**, who by **birth** or **naturalization** shows **allegiance** to the government and fulfills certain duties.

Citizens have certain **rights** and **responsibilities**.

The **Fourteenth Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution says:

*“All persons **born or naturalized** in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are **citizens** of the United States and the state wherein they reside.”*

#### Two main ways to become a citizen:

- **By Birth**
  - **Born** in the U.S. or in U.S. territories (like Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands).
  - **Born to parents** who are U.S. citizens (even if born abroad, depending on legal rules).



2 ways to become a citizen:  
By Birth  
By Naturalization

- **By Naturalization**
  - Process for **immigrants** to become citizens.
  - Requirements often include:
    - **Living in the U.S.** for 3–5 years.
    - Being at least **18** years old.

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- Demonstrating good **moral** character.
- Passing English and **civics tests**.
- Taking the **Oath of Allegiance**.

### CE.6b – Rights and Freedoms of Citizens

b) describe the rights and privileges guaranteed by the **First Amendment**, including freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition, the rights guaranteed by **due process** and **equal protection** under the law (**Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments**), and protection from unreasonable government **search and seizure** (**Fourth Amendment**);

The **U.S. Constitution** protects freedoms and rights.

Disagreements about these rights are often resolved by the **courts**.



#### First Amendment Freedoms:

- **Religion** – Practice any religion or none.
- **Speech** – Express opinions without government interference (with limits for safety and honesty).
- **Press** – News organizations can publish freely.
- **Assembly** – Gather peacefully in groups.
- **Petition** – Ask the government to change laws or policies.

## Other Key Constitutional Protections:

- **Due Process** – Fair legal procedures (Fifth, Sixth, Fourteenth Amendments).
- **Equal Protection** – Laws must treat people fairly (Fourteenth Amendment).
- **Protection from Unreasonable Search and Seizure** – Police and government usually need a **warrant** to search (Fourth Amendment).

### ↪ Key Amendments – Quick Guide

- **1st Five Freedoms:** Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly, Petition
- **4th Search & Seizure:** No unreasonable searches or seizures (warrant required)
- **5th Due Process:** Due process, no double jeopardy, no self-incrimination
- **6th Rights of the Accused:** Speedy trial, lawyer, jury, know the charges
- **14th Citizenship & Equal Protection:** Citizenship, equal protection, and due process from states



In 2005, the federal government designated **September 17th** as **Constitution Day**, also known as **Citizenship Day**, that recognizes the **adoption of the Constitution** of the United States and those who have

become **U.S. citizens**.

## CE.6c – Peacefully Working for Change

*c) examine ways to peacefully work for change in communities or the nation by participating in political campaigns and methods of peacefully petitioning the government for change*

Citizens can **influence government** decisions without violence:

- **Vote** in elections.
- Work on **political campaigns** – make calls, distribute flyers, or attend events.
- Sign or organize **petitions**.
- Join peaceful **protests** or marches.
- Write **letters or emails** to government officials.
- Support **advocacy** groups.

## How citizens can influence government decisions



**Example:** The Civil Rights Movement used marches, speeches, and petitions to **fight segregation**.

## CE.6d – Civic Participation and the Public Good

*d) examine how **civic participation** can address community needs and serve the public good, including the importance of volunteering, staying informed about current issues, and respecting differing beliefs in a diverse society*



**Civic participation** means taking part in community and national life:

- **Volunteer** to help others.
- Stay **informed** about local, state, and national issues.
- **Respect** different beliefs and cultures.
- **Work together** to solve problems.
- Help create a community that is **safe, fair**, and a good place to live.

**Why it matters:** **Democracies work** best when citizens are **involved**.

## CE.6e – Immigration Policies in U.S. History

e) examine the process and importance of immigration policies at different points in U.S. history;

**Immigration policies** have shaped who can come to the U.S. and how they can become citizens:

- **1800s** – Large waves of **European immigrants**; **Ellis Island** opened in 1892.
- **Early 1900s** – **Restrictions** based on **nationality** were introduced.
- **1965 Immigration Act** – **Ended race-based quotas**, increasing diversity.
- **Today** – Immigration policy continues to **evolve**, balancing national security and opportunities for newcomers.



Immigration and naturalization, especially in the 20th century, have made the U.S. a very diverse society.

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## CE.6f – The Naturalization Exam

f) review the criteria and exam for naturalizing U.S. citizens.

To become a citizen through **naturalization**, applicants must:

Try a practice civics naturalization test. 🌐 On

- Meet requirements for **residency**, **age**, and **moral character**.
- Pass:
  - An **English test** (reading, writing, speaking).
  - A **Civics test** (U.S. history, government, symbols, and holidays).
- Take the **Oath of Allegiance**.
- Show **loyalty** to the Constitution and the country.

## CE.7 – Qualities of Good Citizens (new 2023 standards)

*The student will apply history and social science skills that exhibit effective and respectful participation in civic life including, but not limited to civility, trustworthiness and honesty, courtesy, respect for the rights of others, personal responsibility, military service, self-reliance, hard work, respect for the law, patriotism, and service in one's community.*

Being a good citizen is about behavior and character. Key qualities include:

- **Civility** – Being polite in public discussions.
- **Trustworthiness & Honesty** – Being truthful and dependable.
- **Courtesy** – Showing respect in speech and actions.
- **Respect for Others' Rights** – Recognizing that everyone has freedoms.
- **Personal Responsibility** – Doing your part without being told.
- **Military Service** – Serving if called upon.
- **Self-Reliance** – Being able to take care of yourself.
- **Hard Work** – Putting in effort to contribute.
- **Respect for the Law** – Following rules and laws.
- **Patriotism** – Showing loyalty and love for the country.
- **Community Service** – Volunteering to improve the community.

# CE.10 – Public Participation in Civic Life (new 2023 standards)

## CE.10a – Duties of Citizens (Required by Law)

a) describe the processes by which an individual becomes a citizen of the United States

### DUTIES OF A CITIZEN (REQUIRED BY LAW)



Citizens **must**:

- **Pay taxes** – Funds services like schools, roads, and defense.
- **Serve on a jury when called** – Ensures fair trials.
- **Follow the law** – Keeps society safe and orderly.
- **Register for Selective Service (males 18–25)** – In case of a military draft.

## CE.10b – Voting Responsibilities in Virginia

a) describe the processes by which an individual becomes a citizen of the United States

**Voting** is both a **right** and a **responsibility**.



- Citizens should **stay informed** about candidates and issues.
- **Election dates** and processes are posted on the **Virginia Department of Elections** website.

In **Virginia**:

- **General elections** are in **November**.
- **Primaries** are usually in **June**.

**Responsible voters:**

- **Register** on time.
- Learn about **issues**.
- **Vote** in every election.

## CE.10c – Voter Eligibility and Registration

a) describe the processes by which an individual becomes a citizen of the United States

To register to **vote in Virginia**, you must:



- Be a **U.S. citizen**.
- Be a **resident of Virginia** and of your voting precinct.
- Be **at least 18** years old by the day of the general election.

**Ways to register:**

- **Online**.
- At the **DMV**.
- In person at a **registrar's** office.
- **By mail**.

Only **registered citizens can vote** in primary and general elections.