



What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Citizenship in the United States is determined in several ways.
2. Citizens are expected to fulfill a number of important duties.
3. Active citizen involvement in government and the community is encouraged.

The Big Idea

American citizenship involves great privileges and serious responsibilities.

Key Terms

naturalized citizens, p. 222
 deport, p. 222
 draft, p. 223
 interest groups, p. 225a
 political action committees, p. 225a


hmhsocialstudies.com

TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on three ways a person can become a U.S. citizen.

Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

If YOU were there...

Your older brother and his friends have just turned 18. That means they must register with selective service. But it also means that they are old enough to vote in national elections. You are interested in the upcoming elections and think it would be exciting to have a real voice in politics. But your brother and his friends don't even plan to register to vote.

How would you persuade your brother that voting is important?

BUILDING BACKGROUND What do you think it means to be a citizen of the United States? Have you ever enjoyed the rights or fulfilled the responsibilities of citizenship? What do you think the national identity is? Use your prior experience and knowledge of U.S. citizenship to help you understand this section.

Gaining U.S. Citizenship

People become U.S. citizens in several ways. First, anyone born in the United States or a territory it controls is a citizen. People born in a foreign country are U.S. citizens if at least one parent is a U.S. citizen. **Foreign-born people whose parents are not citizens must move to the United States to become naturalized citizens.** Once in the United States, they go through a long process before applying for citizenship. If they succeed, they become naturalized citizens, giving them most of the rights and responsibilities of other citizens.

In the United States, legal immigrants have many of the rights and responsibilities of citizens but cannot vote or hold public office. The U.S. government can **deport, or return to the country of origin,** immigrants who break the law.

Legal immigrants over age 18 may request naturalization after living in the United States for five years. All legal immigrants have to

support themselves financially. If not, someone must assume financial responsibility for them. Immigrants must be law-abiding and support the U.S. Constitution. They must demonstrate understanding of written and spoken English. They also must show basic knowledge of U.S. history and government.

When this is done, candidates take an oath of allegiance to the United States. They then get certificates of naturalization.

Only two differences between naturalized and native-born citizens exist. Naturalized citizens can lose their citizenship, and they cannot become president or vice president. Many famous Americans have been naturalized citizens, including German Jewish scientist Albert Einstein and former secretary of state Madeleine Albright, originally from Czechoslovakia.

READING CHECK Drawing Conclusions

Why does U.S. law have such demanding requirements for people to become naturalized citizens?

Responsibilities of Citizenship

For a representative democracy to work, Americans need to fulfill their civic duties. “The stakes ... are too high for government to be a spectator sport,” former Texas congresswoman Barbara Jordan once said.

Civic Duties

Citizens elect officials to make laws for them. In turn, citizens must obey those laws and respect the authorities who enforce them. Obeying rules and laws includes knowing them and staying informed about any changes. Ignorance of a law will not prevent a person from being punished for breaking it.

Another duty is paying taxes for services such as public roads, police, and public schools. People pay sales taxes, property taxes, and tariffs. Many Americans also pay a tax on their income to the federal, and sometimes state, government.



Becoming a Citizen

For many people around the world, becoming a citizen of the United States is a lifelong dream. The highlight of the naturalization process is the ceremony where candidates promise to “support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.”

Citizens have the duty to defend the nation. Men 18 years or older must register with selective service. In the event of a **draft, or required military service**, those able to fight are already registered. Although women do not register, many serve in the armed forces.

Americans have the right to a trial by jury under the Sixth Amendment. To protect this right, citizens should be willing to serve on a jury when they are called. Otherwise, fulfilling each person’s Sixth Amendment rights would be difficult.

Responsibilities of Citizens

For representative democracy to work, citizens must do their part. Each activity pictured here serves an important role in the community.



Jury Duty



Voting



Military Service

Civic Responsibilities

In addition to duties, which are required by law, citizens also have responsibilities to fulfill. These are not required by law, but are necessary for American democracy to work. Civic responsibilities are often considered to be an important part of the character of the country itself.

The most important of these responsibilities is voting. Voting is also one of our most important rights, because it shapes government policies. If citizens do not vote, they are not taking part in choosing who represents them in government. Elected representatives respond to the opinions of the voters who elect them. If only a small portion of constituents vote, the policies of the representative may not reflect the true opinion of the majority of people he or she represents.

To make the best choices in voting, people have a responsibility to stay informed on public issues and candidates. Information is available from many sources: the Internet, newspapers, television, other media, and from attending public meetings or listening to speeches. However, voters should also be aware that some material may be deliberately biased to support or discredit a particular viewpoint. Comparing many sources of information and opinions can help voters

make the decision that best represents what they want the government to do.

Society benefits when people fulfill their personal responsibilities, because it means that people take responsibility for the consequences of their behavior, whether good or bad. These responsibilities are different for everyone, but might include supporting one's family, attending school, working at a job, or caring for a pet. When people fulfill their personal responsibilities, it puts less strain on the resources of other people and the government.

The responsibilities of U.S. citizens are some of the most basic aspects of the national identity. The United States was founded on the principles of democracy and the idea that each citizen should have a voice in the nation's government. Some other nations have used these ideas as a template for their own democracies, so that the U.S. today is known for its citizens' responsibility and right to vote. Keeping informed about issues is also part of the national identity. Following poll and election results, for example, is a common activity for many Americans.

READING CHECK Making Inferences Why

do the rights of citizenship carry certain responsibilities?



Community Service



Obey the Law

ANALYSIS
SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

Which responsibilities can you fulfill now, without waiting until you turn 18 years old?

First Amendment Rights

Many of the rights enjoyed by U.S. citizens are specifically protected by the Constitution. As you have read, the 27 amendments are especially important tools to protect these rights. Many of the amendments protect voting rights and the rights of people accused of crimes. The rights protected by the first 10 amendments, or the Bill of Rights, were so important to the founders that they were included before the government went into effect.

The rights protected by the First Amendment are considered by many people to be the most fundamental to the identity of the nation. The First Amendment reads:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

This amendment prevents the government from making policies that support one religion over another. It also allows people to practice any religion they want or no religion at all. The freedom of religion has shaped the American way of life since colonial times. Several colonies were founded to protect

religious freedom. The freedom of religion has led to the existence of a wide variety of kinds of worship in the United States. Having many choices for religious worship is one part of the American national identity.

The right to free speech and a free press allow citizens to express their viewpoints, even if they are critical of the government or elected officials. These rights are necessary for a constitutional republic because citizens need to be informed about the government, elected officials, policies, and issues so that people can hear important facts and opinions when making voting decisions. They are also valuable for sharing new information and stories that can educate, entertain, or promote invention.

The final two rights mentioned in the First Amendment, the right to assemble and the right to petition the government, are directly related to British policies toward the colonies. British authorities tried to stop the revolutionary movement by arresting people who gathered to discuss the issues. They also ignored petitions for change by claiming the colonists were not following the correct rules in asking for different laws.

READING CHECK Recall What kinds of rights are described in the First Amendment?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

influence
change or have
an effect on

Citizens and Government

Even after an election, people can **influence** officials. Political participation is part of our nation's identity and tradition. When colonists protested British rule in the 1700s, they formed committees and presented their views to political leaders.

Influencing Government

As the new American nation grew, so did political participation. French diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in 1831 to study American democracy. He was amazed at the large number of political groups Americans participated in. He wrote about them:

“What political power could ever carry on the vast multitude [large number] of lesser undertakings which the American citizens perform every day, with the assistance of the principle of association [joining a group]? Nothing, in my opinion, is more deserving of our attention than the intellectual and moral associations of America.”

—Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

U.S. citizens sometimes work with **interest groups**. These groups of people share a **common interest that motivates them to take political action**. Interest groups organize speeches and rallies to support their cause. However, citizens need not join a group to influence government. They can write letters to leaders of government or attend city council meetings. Active political participation is an important duty for U.S. citizens and immigrants alike.

In addition to voting, many Americans choose to campaign for candidates or issues. Anyone can help campaign, even if he or she is not eligible to vote. Many people also help campaigns by giving money directly or through **political action committees (PACs)**, groups that collect money for candidates who support certain issues.

Helping the Community

Commitment to others moves many Americans to volunteer in community service groups. Some small communities rely on volunteers for services such as fire protection and law enforcement. The American Red Cross helps citizens in times of natural disasters or other

The Freedom of Speech



Citizens of the United States are able to take part in their own government by voicing their opinion to government officials and speaking out about actions they disagree with. Symbolic speech, such as hanging flags upside down, is also protected under the First Amendment.

emergencies. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts plan many projects such as planting trees to improve the environment. Even simple acts such as picking up trash in parks or serving food in shelters help a community.

READING CHECK Summarizing In what ways do volunteer groups benefit the community?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW In this section you learned about citizens' duties toward their nation and their communities. In the next chapter you will learn about the first government formed under the Constitution.

Section 3 Assessment

hmhsocialstudies.com
ONLINE QUIZ

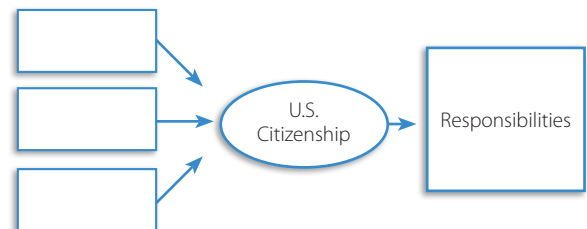
Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Summarize** What are the criteria for becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States?
 - Explain** What is the process by which one can become a naturalized citizen of the United States?
 - Make Inferences** Why do you think the law requires an immigrant to live in the United States at least five years before he or she can become a **naturalized citizen**?
- Identify** What are four duties expected of U.S. citizens?
 - Explain** Why is it important for citizens to obey the rules and laws of the nation?
 - Recall** Why must citizens pay taxes and how are taxes used?
 - Identify** What is the selective service? Who registers for selective service?
 - Analyze** Why is it important for citizens to serve on juries when called to do so?
 - Evaluate** In your opinion, which duty expected of citizens is the most important? Explain your answer.
- Define** What are civic responsibilities? Why are they important to fulfill? Name three.
 - Explain** How does voting help democracy work?
 - Draw Conclusions** What would happen to a democracy in which few people voted?
 - Analyze** Why should people stay informed on public issues?
 - Identify** What are some examples of personal responsibilities?
 - Evaluate** Why is it important for people to accept the consequences of their personal behavior?
 - Make Inferences** How might one help support one's family?
 - Explain** How do the responsibilities of citizens reflect the American national identity?
- Recall** Which rights are protected by the First Amendment?
 - Describe** Why is the right to free speech important in a constitutional republic?

- Describe** Why is the right to a free press important in a constitutional republic?
 - Describe** Why are the rights of petitioning and assembly important in a constitutional republic?
 - Explain** Why was it important to the authors of the Bill of Rights that these rights be protected?
 - Analyze** Explain how the rights of citizens reflect the American national identity.
 - Analyze** How does the freedom of religion affect the American way of life?
- Identify** In what ways can citizens participate in the election process?
 - Define** What is an **interest group**?
 - Make Inferences** Why do you think it is important that citizens participate in the political process?

Critical Thinking

- Categorizing** Review your notes on becoming a U.S. citizen. Then add the responsibilities of citizenship to your graphic organizer. As a class, discuss the topics in the section and how they relate to your own background knowledge. Ask your teacher or classmates for clarification of any language or sentences used in the book that you don't understand. Summarize for the class why you chose to categorize the responsibilities in the way that you did.



FOCUS ON WRITING

myWriteSmart

- Thinking about Citizenship** The last page of your pamphlet will have two parts—one part on requirements for citizenship and one part on the responsibilities of citizens. Look back through this section and make two lists, one on requirements and one on responsibilities.