

## Basic Strategies for Teaching Writing Skills for the Naturalization Interview and Test

Most permanent residents, unless they qualify for an [exception or accommodation](#), must demonstrate an ability to write in English to qualify for naturalization. Applicants for naturalization demonstrate this ability by correctly writing one out of three sentences during the naturalization interview (see [USCIS Scoring Guidelines for the U.S. Naturalization](#)

[Test](#)). Applicants may also use writing skills to complete [Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#). In addition, they may be asked to sign and print their name or initial and date forms during the naturalization interview. This document provides teachers with strategies for teaching writing skills in the adult citizenship education classroom.

### Determine Students' Writing Proficiency and Build Upon It

- Assess students' writing skills to determine their writing proficiency (e.g., beginning, intermediate, or advanced). Use the assessment results to place students in the correct class level or to refer students with lower levels of English writing proficiency to an English as a second language program.
- Select adult citizenship writing topics that are at the appropriate level.

### Use Materials that Reinforce Citizenship Content

- Provide access to various writing instruments, such as pens, pencils, and computers, so students can improve their writing skills and abilities.
- Ensure adult citizenship textbooks, handouts, and activities are at the appropriate level.
- Encourage students to keep a journal and assign them to write on civics or naturalization content.
- Incorporate manipulatives—or items used to support hands-on learning—such as letter tiles, blocks, or cubes, into the adult citizenship classroom activities.

### Incorporate Various Learning Activities

- Introduce the topic and model the writing activity. Remember to face students while speaking clearly, audibly, and at a normal pace.
- Use the [reading](#) and [writing](#) vocabulary lists available on the [USCIS Citizenship Resource Center](#) when teaching students the parts of a



sentence. Have students write sentences using these vocabulary words. Have students circle the different parts of a sentence.

- Include activities that require students to fill in the missing word from a sentence or paragraph. This type of activity is referred to as a CLOZE activity. You can find these and other types of classroom exercises on the [USCIS Citizenship Resource Center](#) under [Lesson Plans and Activities](#).
- Practice dictation exercises by having students write what you say. Dictation exercises are important since the English writing test for naturalization assesses students through dictation.
- Have students sequence information or events, such as having students develop lists or a timeline for a sequencing activity. Timelines are particularly effective to convey steps in the naturalization process. Have students practice the dates required on [Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#), describe holidays on a calendar, etc.
- Present a civics topic or picture. Have students write as many words or sentences as they can in 10 minutes related to the topic or picture.
- Have students practice writing dates.
- Practice spelling, printing, and writing students' names and initials. These skills are needed to complete [Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#).
- Incorporate copying activities in the lesson. Have students copy letters (in both print and cursive) and numbers.
- Try not to overcorrect students' writing samples. Focus on key errors and discuss ways students can improve.
- Use the [Lesson Plans and Activities](#), which contain civics-related material and additional writing activities, to help students prepare for the naturalization interview and test.

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To find additional citizenship education materials and instructional resources, visit the [USCIS Citizenship Resource Center](#) at [www.uscis.gov/citizenship](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship).



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