

LESSON PLAN

Your Government and You

Level: Literacy, Low Beginning

Suggested Length: 2 or 3 class periods, depending on class time and level

Civics Test Questions

- #41—Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?
- #42—Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?
- #43—Who is the Governor of your state now?
- #44—What is the capital of your state?
- #49—What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?
- #50—Name one right only for United States citizens.
- #53—What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
- #55—What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?
- #56—When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?
- #57—When must all men register for the Selective Service?
- #94—What is the capital of the United States?

Reading Test Vocabulary

capital, citizen, country, government, right, state/states
United States, U.S.
How, What, When, Where, Who
can, do, elects, have/has, is/are/
was/be, name, pay, vote, want
a, for, in, of, on, the, to
many, most, people

Writing Test Vocabulary

capital, citizens, President, right, Senators, state/states
United States, Washington, D.C.
can, have/has, is/was/be, pay, vote, want
and, for, in, of, on, the, to
most, people, taxes

Objectives:

Students will:

- identify ways that Americans can participate in their democracy
- understand the naturalization process
- explain the promises that are part of the Oath of Allegiance
- identify rights and responsibilities only for U.S. citizens
- explain when men must register for the Selective Service
- explain when federal income tax forms are due
- name federal and state powers
- identify the current governor of their state
- identify the capitals of the United States and their home state

Materials:

World map, U.S. wall map, map of your state

Handouts: **Democracy in the United States, Becoming a U.S. Citizen, Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens, Responsibilities for Everyone Here, Dividing the Power of Government, Your State Government, Word Search—Your Government and You, and Give One Example—Review.**

Optional handout (Literacy Level Writing Practice): **Right**

Your Government and You Lesson Answer Key



Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

This lesson provides an overview of the importance of citizenship and how U.S. citizens participate in American democracy. The handouts cover information about voting in the United States, other key rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens, the process of becoming a U.S. citizen, and the Oath of Allegiance. The word search highlights important vocabulary for the Civics Test and a writing activity on “Give One Example” serves as a review and study sheet for the concepts covered in the lesson. The Literacy Level Writing Practice handout **Right** offers practice on a Civics Test question and answer.

For the Civics Test question on the current state governor’s name, direct your students to

<http://www.nga.org/cms/governors/bios> and remind them to look up the name of the state’s current governor immediately prior to their naturalization interview.

Important note: Regarding the District of Columbia, those residents should answer this question by saying that D.C. does not have a Governor. On the question about state capitals, District of Columbia residents should respond that D.C. is not a state and does not have a capital. Residents of U.S. territories should name the capital of their territory.

Introduction: Write **democracy** on the board. Ask the students what they think of when they hear this word (**rights, freedom, voting, everyone is equal**). Write the key words to their answers on the board. Explain

that in a democracy, people vote for their leaders to represent them and their ideas in the government. Ask the students if the government in their native country has a similar system.

Guided Practice: Distribute the handout **Democracy in the United States**. Go over the paragraph, reading each sentence 2-3 times out loud for the students to hear. Have the students repeat each line after you. Ask the students if voting is the same in their native country.

Point out that **What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?, What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?, and Name one right only for United States citizens** are items on the Civics Test.

Practice: Distribute the handout **Becoming a U.S. Citizen**. Discuss with the students different reasons why a person would want to become a U.S. citizen and write their answers on the board (**voting, belonging to the United States, traveling with a U.S. passport**). Review the reading as described above. Discuss each point about the promises a person makes when he or she takes the Oath of Allegiance. Point out that **What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?** is a question on the Civics Test.

them if there are similar laws about military service and paying taxes in their native countries. Review the reading together. Refer to the image of the income tax form at the bottom of the handout to review the specific vocabulary for that form. Point out that **When must all men register for the Selective Service? and When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?** are both items on the Civics Test.

Distribute the handout **Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens**. Have the students examine the photographs on this handout and review the reading as described above. Point out that **What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?** and **Name one right only for United States citizens** are items on the Civics Test.

Distribute the handout **Dividing the Power of Government**. Write **power** on the board and ask the students what it means (**control, make decisions, leaders**). Write **federal** and **state** on the board, and ask the students what the difference is between these two words (**federal = national or whole country, state = part of the country with its own government**). Pointing to the words **federal** and **state**, explain that the powers to make laws and decisions for the country and states are divided between federal and state governments. Review the paragraph as described above. Have the students examine the chart and illustrations that provide a breakdown of federal and state powers and review the different powers. Remind students that they will only need to name **one** federal government power and **one**

Distribute the handout **Responsibilities for Everyone Here**. With the class, discuss the different types of laws: federal, state, and local. Ask them to give some examples of laws in this country. Tell them that two important U.S. laws that apply to everyone here include Selective Service and paying federal income tax. Ask

state power for the Civics Test. Point out that these are two items on the Civics Test: **Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government.** **What is one power of the federal government?** and **Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states.** **What is one power of the states?** Help your students practice these items by asking them slowly and then more quickly until they can easily pick out the words **federal** and **state** when they hear these items.

Display maps of the world, the United States, and your state on the wall. Draw a chart on the board with two columns labeled **Native Country** and **Capital**. Ask students what **capital** means. Then ask them **What is your native country?** and **What is the capital of your home country?**, filling in the chart with their answers. Ask them **What is the capital of the United States?** and fill in **Washington, D.C.** Point out that **What is the capital of the United States?** is a question on the Civics Test.

Distribute the handout **Your State Government**. Point to the word **state** on the board and ask the students how many states there are. Ask the class how their native countries are divided. Explain that in the same way the president is in charge of the whole country, the governor is in charge of his or her state. Review the paragraph as previously described. As you discuss your state, have a more advanced student identify the name of your state capital and show where it is located on the map. Have the students fill in information at the bottom of the handout regarding their state information. Point out that **Who is the Governor of your state now?** and **What is the capital of your state?** are questions on the Civics Test. Remind the students to verify the name of their current governor immediately before their interview.

Review: Distribute the handout **Word Search—Your Government and You**. Review the vocabulary in the word

bank with your students. Go over the example provided and have the students circle the words in the puzzle.

Evaluation: Distribute the handout **Give One Example—Review**. Prepare your class for this activity by asking them to **Give one example of a country**, **Give one example of a language**, and so on. Then have them

work individually or in pairs to think of examples for each item. Review their answers together as a class. Tell your students that this page is helpful as a study sheet when they are preparing for the Civics Test.

Writing Practice for Literacy/Low Beginning

Students: The handout **Right** is included for optional copy work on a Civics Test item.