

# LESSON PLAN

## Rights and Responsibilities

**Level:** Low Intermediate, Intermediate

**Suggested Length:** 1 or 2 class periods

### Civics Test Questions

- #43—Who is the Governor of your state now?
- #49—What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?
- #50—Name one right only for United States citizens.
- #51—What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?
- #53—What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
- #54—How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?
- #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?

### Key Vocabulary

republic, derive, governor, participate, issue  
 eligible, requirement, permanent resident, good moral character, Oath of Allegiance, loyalty  
 abjure, allegiance, bear arms, behalf of, declare, enemies, heretofore, fidelity, mental reservation, noncombatant, oath, perform, potentate, principals, purpose of evasion, renounce, sovereignty  
 jury, trial, outcome, run for office, natural born  
 freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, bear arms, Selective Service, debt

## Objectives:

Students will:

- identify the Governor of their state
- explain responsibilities only for U.S. citizens
- explain rights only for U.S. citizens
- explain rights of everyone living in the United States
- explain promises made when becoming a citizen
- identify the voting age for Presidential elections
- identify ways Americans participate in democracy
- state the date that federal income taxes are due
- explain when men must register for the Selective Service
- discuss civic engagement activities in their communities

## Materials:

Handouts: **Participating in a Democracy, Becoming a U.S. Citizen, The Oath of Allegiance, Rights and Responsibilities of U.S. Citizens, Rights and Responsibilities of Everyone Living in the United States, Review—Rights and Responsibilities, Civics Test Questions—Rights and Responsibilities**

**Intermediate Level Rights and Responsibilities Lesson Answer Key**

**Additional Instructions for Teachers: Using Conversation Prompts in the Adult Citizenship Classroom—Rights and Responsibilities**



## Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

This lesson covers the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens as well as those of everyone living in the United States. It also highlights the Oath of Allegiance and the meaning of specific vocabulary words found in the oath. Instructions for each handout are described below. The **Key Vocabulary** on the first page of the lesson plan is generally more advanced than the words in the vocabulary lists for the reading and writing portion of the test. However, learning these words will help the students develop a deeper understanding of the concepts in the lesson. Consider teaching these key words as part of your introduction to this lesson.

The lesson includes readings exploring various aspects of rights and responsibilities. Use the same process for reading each handout with your students. This process

is described below in the instructions for the handout **Participating in a Democracy**. At the end of each reading, students can practice the specific test items covered in that handout. Suggested discussion questions can be used for whole-class and small-group discussion or for writing assignments. For review, students can do a categorization activity. The final handout is a summary of all the Civics Test items covered in the lesson.

At the end of the lesson plan, there is an extension activity with conversation prompts to guide discussion about civic engagement using the grammatical structure, “Have you ever...?” There are activity suggestions as well as reproducible cards you can prepare for classroom use.

**Participating in a Democracy:** Write the word **participation** on the board and ask the students what it means (**to do an activity with other people, to be involved**). Ask the students for examples of ways that they participate in class and why it is important. Point out that participating in their communities and understanding their rights and responsibilities help immigrants adjust to life in their new country. Explain that this lesson describes people’s rights and responsibilities, both for citizens and non-citizens.

Discuss the image on the handout. To begin the reading, have the students read the paragraphs on the handout silently. Tell them to underline any new words while they read. When they finish, read the paragraphs aloud while the students listen silently. As you read each phrase or sentence, pause to ask if there are any words they do not know. Read the paragraphs aloud

**Becoming a U.S. Citizen:** Read the first paragraph aloud for the class. Ask the students to work in pairs and brainstorm a list of reasons why people may want to become a U.S. citizen. Discuss their answers

**The Oath of Allegiance:** Write **Oath of Allegiance** on the board and ask the students what it means to take the oath. Refer to the vocabulary at the bottom of the handout and explain that many of these words are not used in everyday speech but are important to understand when taking the oath. Review each word

again, this time without stopping. As a final step, go back to the beginning of the reading and model each sentence one at a time with the students repeating after you. If you wish, call on volunteers to take turns reading each sentence aloud. Then have the students fill in the answers to the Civics Test items at the bottom of the handout and review them together, modeling the pronunciation of each question and answer.

Refer to the discussion question at the bottom of the handout and have the students work in pairs or small groups to discuss ways of participating in our democracy. If you wish, you can assign this for written homework. Point out the website for looking up the current governor of your state and encourage students to verify their governor’s name immediately before going to their interview.

together. Review the reading as previously described in the instructions for the handout **Participating in a Democracy**.

on the list and discuss the specific meaning as it relates to the oath. Have the students repeat after you as you pronounce each word several times. Then read the oath aloud, explaining and summarizing the meaning of each section as you go along. After that, read it again, breaking the sections down into reasonable

phrases of 4 to 6 words and have the students repeat after you. Then ask the students to read the oath aloud quietly to themselves as you circulate and provide help and feedback. Because this level of vocabulary is advanced, you should plan on reviewing the oath with the students over several class periods so they become more comfortable reciting it aloud. They will

not need to memorize the oath for their ceremony, but they will need to repeat it aloud as the main presenter administers the oath to the participants. When you practice the entire oath together, be sure to have the students raise their right hand while they recite after you.

***Rights and Responsibilities of U.S. Citizens:***

Discuss the image of the courtroom and ask the students about the court system in their native country.

Review the reading as previously described in the instructions for the handout **Participating in a Democracy**.

***Rights and Responsibilities of Everyone***

***Living Here:*** Ask students what kind of rights and responsibilities every person living in the United

States has, even if he or she is not a citizen. Review the reading as previously described.

***Review—Rights and Responsibilities:*** For the categorization activity, have the students review the rights and responsibilities in the box and decide if they are limited to only U.S. citizens or apply to

everyone living in the United States. When you review the answers, point out that “register for the Selective Service” applies to both citizens and non-citizens (i.e., everyone) but is limited to men ages 18 to 26.

***Civics Test Questions—Rights and***

***Responsibilities:*** The nine Civics Test items in this lesson are listed on this handout. This exercise can

be used for pair work where the students take turns interviewing each other, or it can be assigned for homework.

***Extension Activity:*** See the following pages for activity ideas on using conversation prompts in class, focusing on the grammatical structure, “Have you

ever...?” Download the cards for class discussion and/or create your own additional prompts.

## ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

### *Using Conversation Prompts in the Adult Citizenship Classroom*

# Rights and Responsibilities

#### **Civic Engagement—Conversation Prompts with “Have You Ever...?”**

There are many ways in which immigrants and their families participate in their local communities in the United States. On a daily basis, they interact with their neighbors and co-workers, become involved in their children’s school and extra-curricular activities, attend houses of worship, enroll in adult education programs, volunteer for special causes and events, and utilize public spaces and services, all while leading full lives in their new country.

English teachers recognize that, upon arrival, most immigrants and refugees are preoccupied with learning English and U.S. customs, while trying to meet the basic needs for living and working in an unfamiliar culture. Once newcomers have been here long enough to master basic survival skills, they can settle in and become involved in the broader community outside their own linguistic and cultural group. This stage tends to be especially true for those who have been here longer and aspire to naturalize as U.S. citizens. This deeper civic engagement and investment in civic life generally promotes a greater sense of belonging and reduces the culture shock and isolation that immigrants may have felt during their first few years.

#### **Why Use Conversation Prompts?**

In your citizenship preparation class, it would be beneficial to deliberately explore the meaning of this civic engagement with your students as part of your lessons. The following questions focus on just some of the activities mentioned above and, of course, you (and your students) can think of many more to add to the list. Working with these questions in class is a good way for students to practice the phrase “Have you ever...?” while talking about their community involvement and civic engagement here in their adopted country. It also gives the students an opportunity to share their experiences, knowledge, and interests while learning about new ways to participate in their communities and advocate for themselves and their families.

It is important to note that the grammatical structure “Have you ever” is used a great deal throughout Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, and will be used frequently by the USCIS Officer during the naturalization interview with the applicant. Make sure your students understand that this phrase means “Have you ever...**in your entire life...**?” unless otherwise specified, and not just in the present.

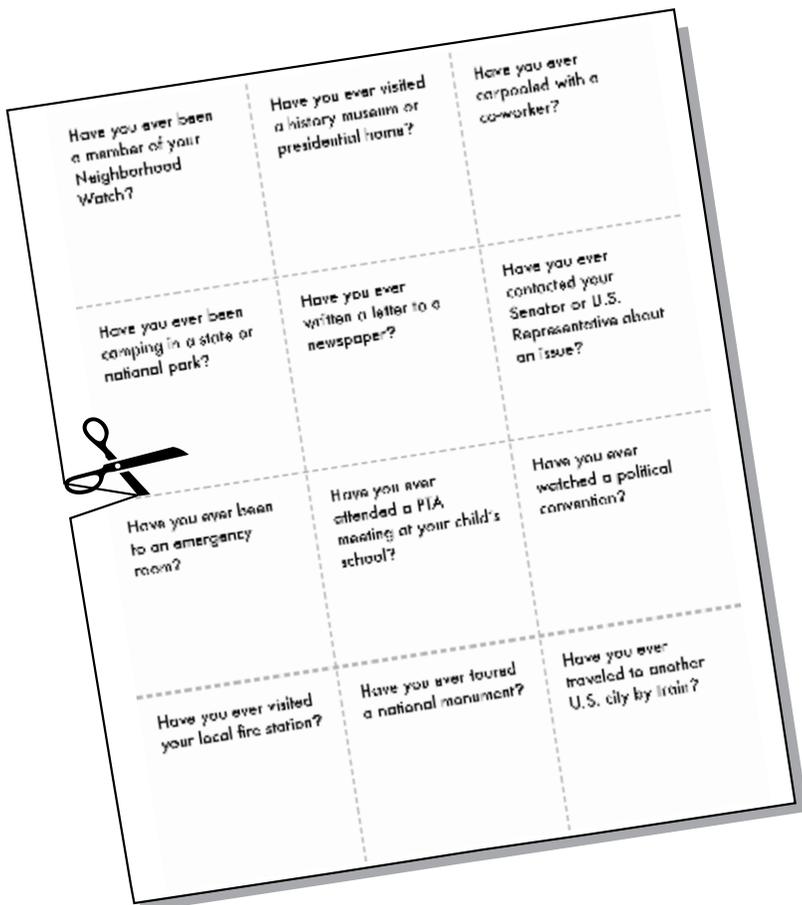
#### **A Word about Grammar**

For the most part, you will not be teaching straight English grammar in your citizenship classes. However, in order for your students to correctly use the present perfect tense (answering “have you ever...?” questions with past participles), you may need to spend some time reviewing this grammatical structure in class. You should focus on both regular and irregular past participle verb forms, practicing question structures as well as long and short answer replies. Most grammar books and ESL websites at the intermediate level cover this well so consider using them in class. Of course, the USCIS Officer is not going to be testing your student’s grammar during the naturalization interview, but the applicant should be able to both understand the questions asked and respond appropriately to the Officer when discussing the application.

## Activity Ideas for the Conversation Prompts

- Prepare sets of cards to use as random **Conversation Prompts for round-robin discussion** in small groups of 4 to 5 students. One important consideration: the students should know that they have the option to decline to discuss any topic; all sharing should be voluntary and all discussion should be respectful. This consideration applies to the following activities as well.
- Select 10 to 15 items and create a **“Find Someone Who” activity handout** for a whole class ice-breaker. Once the student finds someone who says “yes” to the item, the student should write down that person’s name and ask a follow-up question.
- Select 3 or 4 related items and create a **Conversation Grid** for extra speaking practice. Students should circulate with their conversation grid and gather information on each item from 3 to 4 classmates.

## Instructions for Preparing Conversation Prompt Cards



Download these cards and print them out, preferably on hard-stock paper. Create as many sets as you need for small-group discussion with 4 or 5 students per group. Use the sheet of blank cards at the end to create additional prompts.

Have you ever been a member of your Neighborhood Watch?

Have you ever visited a history museum or presidential home?

Have you ever carpooled with a co-worker?

Have you ever been camping in a state or national park?

Have you ever written a letter to a newspaper?

Have you ever contacted your Senator or U.S. Representative about an issue?

Have you ever been to an emergency room?

Have you ever attended a PTA meeting at your child's school?

Have you ever watched a political convention?

Have you ever visited your local fire station?

Have you ever toured a national monument?

Have you ever traveled to another U.S. city by train?

Have you ever volunteered at a food bank?

Have you ever signed a petition on an issue that was important to you?

Have you ever borrowed a book or movie from your local library?

Have you ever taken a driving test at the Department of Motor Vehicles?

Have you ever volunteered at your place of worship?

Have you ever gone to a fair or festival in your town or city here in the U.S.?

Have you ever donated money to a special cause?

Have you ever attended an adult education class besides citizenship?

Have you ever hosted a Thanksgiving dinner?

Have you ever collected money to help for a special cause?

Have you ever used a local park for a special celebration or event?

Have you ever helped a neighbor with a home project or car repair?

Have you ever applied for a business license?

Have you ever taught a new skill to a child or teenager?

Have you ever been to a USCIS Information Session?

Have you ever participated in a fundraiser such as a bake sale?

Have you ever attended a naturalization ceremony?

Have you ever organized or participated in an international pot-luck dinner?

Have you ever visited a USCIS office?

Have you ever used a credit card?

Have you ever taught someone how to use a computer?

Have you ever talked to a lawyer about writing a will?

Have you ever translated for someone from your language into English?

Have you ever taken a job training program?

Have you ever attended a town hall or county board meeting? Or school board meeting?

Have you ever been a Boy Scout or Girl Scout leader? Or 4-H leader?

Have you ever taken your children to the library for story time?

Have you ever taught someone how to make a dish from your country?

Have you ever participated in a parade in your town?

Have you ever mailed a package home to your country?

Have you ever tried to teach your native language to another person?

Have you ever donated clothes or furniture to a thrift store?

Have you ever been elected president or leader of a club or organization?

Have you ever paid your bills online?

Have you ever attended a children's performance at a local school?

Have you ever attended a high school or university graduation ceremony in the United States?

Have you ever made a speech in English or your native language?

Have you ever coached a sport or participated on a team?

Have you ever bought a money order?

Have you ever taught someone how to dance to music from your country?

Have you ever started a saving account for your child's college education?

Have you ever joined a community garden so you could grow your own flowers and food?

Have you ever joined a service club or volunteer organization?

Have you ever bought a house or a car?

Have you ever taught someone how to drive?

Have you ever explained about a custom or holiday of your country to a friend?

Have you ever adopted a dog or cat from a shelter?

Have you ever rented a safe deposit box at the bank?

Have you ever used a library card?
