

The Oath of Allegiance



Taking the Oath of Allegiance at a naturalization ceremony on the U.S.S. Midway, San Diego, CA. Courtesy of USCIS.

When you take the Oath of Allegiance at your naturalization ceremony, you make several important promises of loyalty to the United States. Loyalty means showing consistent support to something or someone. At your naturalization ceremony, you will raise your right hand and say the Oath. After the Oath, you become a U.S. citizen. As a new citizen, you have new responsibilities and duties that you promised in the Oath.

The complete Oath is below. You can watch the video of a USCIS Naturalization Oath Ceremony [here](#) or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuvBn8sduGE>

You can use the closed captioning while you watch the video or pause the video and listen to a section at a time.

The Oath of Allegiance

“I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen;

...that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic;

...that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;

...that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law;

...that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law;



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...that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and

...that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.”

What are the Key Principles?

The key principles of the Oath of Allegiance mean the main ideas in each section or paragraph. You must understand the key principles of each section. The Oath has words that may be new to you. With your teacher, review the meanings and pronunciation of these words and phrases.

Key Principles in the Oath of Allegiance

Here are the key principles you will study in this lesson:

- I promise to completely give up all loyalty to leaders and governments of other countries where I was a subject or citizen before.
- I promise that I will protect the Constitution and all laws from all enemies, from other countries, or from inside the United States.
- I promise that my loyalty is to the United States only.
- I promise I will use a weapon if the U.S. government asks me to.
- I promise to serve in the military performing duties other than combat if the U.S. government asks me.
- I promise to do other non-military work that is important to the country if the U.S. government asks me.
- I promise, before God, all this without influence from anyone or hesitation.



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The next part breaks the Oath into seven sections. Here are steps to help you learn about the Oath:

1. Listen to each section on the video several times (or listen to your teacher read it out loud).
2. In pairs or a small group, discuss the key principle of that section.
3. Review the list of **New Words/Phrases** and their meanings with your teacher.
4. Practice the pronunciation of the words.
5. Practice reading the whole section out loud by repeating after your teacher.
6. Complete the activity at the end of each section.



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SECTION 1

“I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen;

Key principle: I promise to completely give up all loyalty to leaders and governments of other countries where I was a subject or citizen before.

WORDS AND PHRASES IN THE OATH

MEANING

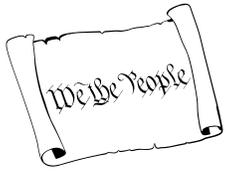
(to) declare absolutely and entirely	(to) promise or announce something you believe completely
(to) renounce and abjure	(to) give something up or (to) let go
fidelity	loyalty
foreign prince, potentate, state, sovereignty	a king or queen, a royal person, a ruler of a or country
heretofore	before now
subject or citizen	person who is controlled by a king or belongs to a country

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Renounce and abjure means to give up something important. A new U.S. citizen must renounce all loyalty to any king or queen outside the United States. Why do you think this is important?



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SECTION 2

...that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic;

Key principle: I promise that I will protect the Constitution and all laws from all enemies, from other countries, or from inside the United States.

WORDS IN THE OATH

MEANING

(to) support	(to) hold up as important
(to) defend	(to) protect, (to) fight for
against	(to) be opposite
enemies	people who hurt or threaten you
foreign	of another country or nationality
domestic	of your own country

MATCHING ACTIVITY



Match each word with its meaning. Do not look at the list above until you are finished.

1. defend	people who hurt or threaten you
2. foreign	hold up as important
3. against	of your own country
4. support	protect, fight for
5. domestic	of another country or nationality
6. enemies	to be opposite



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SECTION 3

...that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;

Key principle: I promise that my loyalty is to the United States only.

WORDS IN THE OATH

(to) bear

true faith and allegiance

MEANING

(to) make a promise

complete belief and loyalty

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

What are some people or things that you show allegiance to? How do you show allegiance? Why do you think it is important to show allegiance?



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SECTION 4

...that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law;

Key principle: I promise I will use a weapon if the U.S. government asks me to.

WORDS IN THE OATH

MEANING

(to) bear arms

(to) carry a gun or weapon

on behalf of the United States

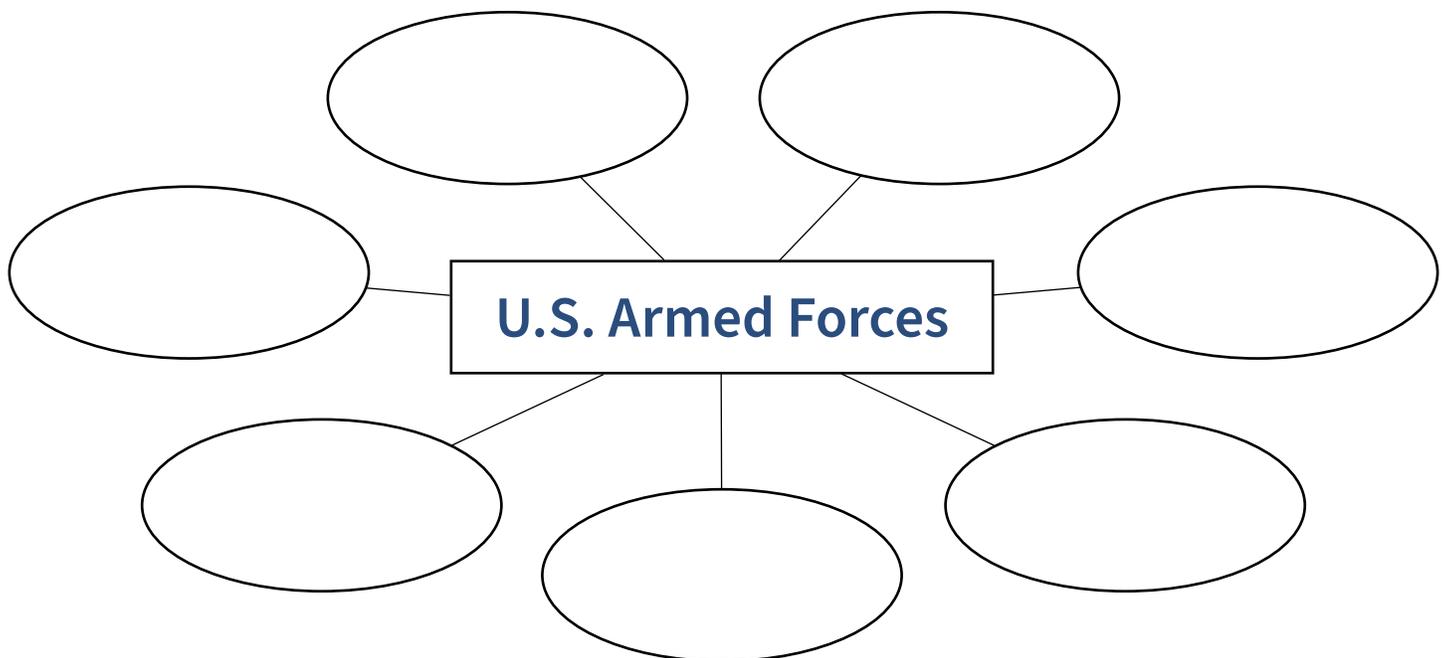
(to) do it for the United States

required by the law

the law says you must do something

FILL IN THE CHART ACTIVITY

The **U.S. Armed Forces** has 7 different branches. Visit <https://www.defense.gov/Our-Story/Our-Forces>. Fill in the branches in the diagram below.



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SECTION 5

...that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law;

Key principle: I promise to serve in the military performing duties other than combat if the U.S. government asks me.

(Some examples of **noncombatant service** are civilian work, such as doing administrative duties, cooking for the military, helping in a military hospital, working as a chaplain, etc.)

WORDS IN THE OATH

MEANING

(to) perform

(to) do or (to) act

noncombatant service

do something that does not include fighting in a war

armed forces

military

required by the law

the law says you must do something

FILL IN THE VERB ACTIVITY

Here are some things that are **required by law**. From the word bank, choose the correct verb for each phrase. Write the verb in the blank.

Word Bank

pay

file

register

obey

serve

stop

1. _____ for a red light

4. _____ on a jury

2. _____ for Selective Service

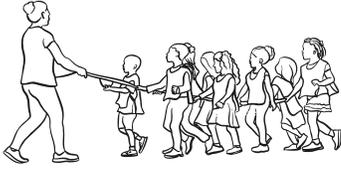
5. _____ all laws

3. _____ child support

6. _____ federal income taxes



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SECTION 6

...that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and

Key principle: I promise to do non-military work that the U.S. government says is important to the country.

(Some examples of this work are health care, taking care of young children or old people, etc.)

WORDS IN THE OATH

MEANING

(to) perform

(to) do something

national importance

something that the country needs

under civilian direction

the officials tell you to do something; not the military

required by the law

the law says you must do something

Give Examples

Think about the current events in the United States. Work in pairs or small groups and discuss ways that people can help their community and their country, besides serving in the military?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



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SECTION 7

...that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.”

Key principle: I promise, before God, all this without influence from anyone or hesitation.

WORDS IN THE OATH

MEANING

obligation

something you must do

freely

by yourself; without being pushed or required

without any mental reservation

no question in your mind; free to think something

(without) purpose of evasion

without lying or avoiding

so help me God

before God

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE



Think about different obligations that people have. Finish each sentence.

Parents have an obligation to _____

Children have an obligation to _____

U.S. citizens have an obligation to _____

I have an obligation to _____



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Vocabulary – Verb Practice

FILL-IN EXERCISE

Read the verbs in the Word Bank. Write the correct verb in the blanks for each sentence below.

Hint: Some words may be used twice.

Word Bank

perform

bear arms

defend

support

renounce

bear

declare

take

Fill in the Blanks

1. I hereby _____, on oath...
2. I absolutely and entirely _____ and abjure all allegiance and fidelity...
3. I will _____ and _____ the Constitution and laws of the United States...
4. I will _____ true faith and allegiance...
5. I will _____ on behalf of the United States...
6. I will _____ noncombatant services in the Armed Forces of the United States...
7. I will _____ work of national importance...
8. I _____ this obligation freely...



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Why Do You Think? — Responsibilities

There are many responsibilities of U.S. citizens. Why do you think these responsibilities are considered important? Write a sentence about each one and discuss your ideas with the class.

Remember: These are **your** opinions – there is no right or wrong answer.

1. Be loyal to the Constitution.

2. Obey the laws of the United States.

3. Register for the Selective Service.

4. Pay federal taxes.

5. Serve on a jury.

6. Vote in elections.



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EXTENSION ACTIVITY – WRITING PRACTICE

Why do you want to become a U.S. citizen? What does the Oath of Allegiance mean to you?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY – SPEAKING PRACTICE

Use your cell phone to record yourself reading the Oath of Allegiance out loud. Send the recording to your teacher or classmate.

For more practice, visit Preparing for the Oath, U.S. History and Civics for Citizenship:
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/learn/responsibilities/53/learn>

