

Government Basics

Key Vocabulary—Government Basics

break laws: to not follow the law

capitalism: an economic system where most things are privately owned

capitalist: a person, group, or nation that believes in or practices capitalism

case: a question or an argument that is decided in the court system

citizen: a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protection of that country

constitutional: when something is allowed because it is in the U.S. Constitution.

create: to make something new

debate: to discuss an issue in order to make a decision

declare war: to formally announce that there will be a war

enforce: to make people follow laws

equal: to be the same

federal: part of the central U.S. government, not state or local governments

powerful: having a lot of power or control

protect: to keep something or someone safe

represent: to make decisions for another person or group of people

representatives: elected members of a government group in the United States, such as in Congress

right: something you are morally or legally allowed to do

self-government: a government where the people make the laws

separate: to keep something or someone apart

treaties: formal written agreements between two or more countries

unconstitutional: not allowed by the U.S. Constitution

zoning: laws that say that land can only be used for a certain purpose, like building houses

Directions: As you watch the video, write down the answers to the questions below. Eventually you'll have your answers for all 100 civics questions.

Constitution: Purpose

What does the Constitution do? USCIS #2

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Constitution: Supreme Law

What is the supreme law of the land? USCIS #1

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Constitution: First Three Words

The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words? USCIS #3

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Rule of Law

What is the "rule of law"? USCIS #12

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Branches of Government

Name one branch or part of the government. USCIS #13

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Checks and Balances

What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful? USCIS #14

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Powers of the Federal Government

Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government? USCIS #41

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Powers of the State Governments

Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states? USCIS #42

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Your Governor Today

Who is the Governor of your state now? USCIS #43

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Capitalism

What is the economic system in the United States? USCIS #11

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Finish This Sentence—Government Basics

Finish each sentence with information you learned in this video. Discuss your answers with your class.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Visit <http://www.nga.org/cms/governors/bios> right before your naturalization interview for current information on your state's governor.

Example: The Constitution sets up the government and protects basic rights of Americans.

1. The three branches of government are _____.
2. In the United States, the economic system is _____.
3. Some state powers are to _____.
4. The first three words of the Constitution are _____.
5. The "rule of law" means _____.
6. The name of the governor of my state is _____.
7. The supreme law of the land is _____.
8. Some federal government powers are to _____.
9. One branch of government cannot become too powerful because of _____.



Visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/index.html?theme=1> to go directly to the **Government Basics** theme.