

Responsibilities

Key Vocabulary—Responsibilities

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

courtroom: the place where legal cases are reviewed

defend: to protect someone or something from being attacked

draft: Selective Service, a system that requires people to join the military

election: an event when people choose a member of government by voting

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

jury: a group of people who listen to a case in court and decide if someone is guilty or innocent

loyal: demonstrating support for the same government or set of beliefs

military: the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard)

national defense: military protection of the country and its citizens

obey: to do what the law says you must do

promise: to say you will definitely do something

protect: to keep something or someone safe

register: to put a name or other information on an official list

requirement: something that must be done because of a law or rule

responsibility: a duty or task that you are required or expected to do

serve: to work for a certain period of time, usually in political office or in the military

Social Security: a U.S. government program that provides benefits for certain retired workers and their families, certain disabled workers and their families, and certain family members of deceased workers

trial: a process in court to decide if someone is innocent or guilty of a crime

USCIS Questions

In the Responsibilities theme:

49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?
53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?
56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?

Related:

55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?

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.

Responsibilities for Citizens

What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens? USCIS #49

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Citizenship Oath

What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen? USCIS #53

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Selective Service

When must all men register for the Selective Service? USCIS #57

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Federal Income Tax

When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms? USCIS #56

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Why Do You Think?—Responsibilities

This video describes 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.

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

Background Information

The Naturalization Oath

- Prior to 1906, naturalization courts had little or no guidance on how to apply or administer the law. Naturalization legislation required an applicant to first declare an "oath" before any "court of record" to announce his intention to become a U.S. citizen.
- Though an official text was adopted by 1920 for the oath of allegiance taken by those assuming U.S. citizenship, an official text for the naturalization oath did not appear in the regulations until 1929. Rule 8, Subdivision C, of that year stipulated that before a certificate of citizenship could be issued, the applicant should "take in court and subscribe to the following oath of allegiance:"
- With the introduction of a signed oath, the text of which was prescribed in Federal regulations, came the standardization of the language of the oath of renunciation and allegiance.
- Though the text was prescribed, there was yet no separate, federal form for the oath. It was probably printed on the back of the petition, as it is today.

The Naturalization Oath

"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; 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."

Understanding the Oath

Match lines from the oath to the meaning and to examples.

Lines from the Oath

Line 1: 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.

Meaning: _____

Example: _____

Line 2: I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Meaning: _____

Example: _____

Line 3: I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same [the Constitution].

Meaning: _____

Example: _____

Line 4: I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law.

Meaning: _____

Example: _____

Line 5: I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law.

Meaning: _____

Example: _____

Meanings

- A. I promise to follow the laws of the United States.
- B. I will keep others from going against the Constitution and laws of the United States.
- C. I will do important work for the United States if I am needed.
- D. I will serve in the United States military if I am needed.
- E. I promise to give up loyalty to other countries. I will be loyal to the United States.

Examples

- 1. Abdul enlists as a soldier in the U.S. Army.
- 2. Charles used to be loyal to Spain. Now he is a citizen of the United States. Now he is loyal to the United States.
- 3. Daniel works for the government in Washington, D.C.
- 4. Susan always pays her taxes on April 15.
- 5. Mercedes becomes a policewoman to make sure people follow the law.

A

Do you know the responsibilities of a U.S. citizen? In pairs or small groups, discuss these sentences. Write a, b, or c on each line. Then check your answers on page 119.

a = things you must do
 b = things you should or may do
 c = things you mustn't or shouldn't do

1. ___ Oppose the Constitution of the United States.
2. ___ Protect your own rights and respect the rights of others.
3. ___ Obey the laws of the nation, state, county, and city.
4. ___ If you disagree with a policy or law, write your representative or senator to try to change it.
5. ___ Serve in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, or Air Force if there is a draft.
6. ___ Join the armed forces in peacetime.
7. ___ Serve on a jury if the court calls you and you are not excused.
8. ___ Stop work temporarily to do jury duty.
9. ___ Pay income taxes on time or pay the penalties.
10. ___ Refuse to report all your income so that your tax bill will be lower.
11. ___ Register to vote.
12. ___ Learn about the candidates (people running for office) and issues (topics of discussion) before every election.
13. ___ Discriminate against women, blacks, or members of national groups.
14. ___ Attend community or public meetings.
15. ___ Stay away from your children's school and refuse to help them with their homework.
16. ___ Volunteer (work without pay) in the community.
17. ___ Speak only your native language.
18. ___ Take English classes at a local school or adult school.

B

In groups, tell the duties and responsibilities of U.S. citizens. You can use this sentence pattern.

As a citizen, you

have to
 mustn't
 ought to
 shouldn't
