



# Citizenship Guided Reading Activity

- I can define the term citizen.
- I can explain the legal ways to become a citizen.

The **U.S. Constitution** is the supreme law of the United States. It was ratified, or approved, in 1789. At the time, it did not have a clear definition of U.S. **citizenship**. But, the Constitution did mention citizenship several times. A formal definition of U.S. citizenship was added to the Constitution when the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1868. This was over 80 years after the U.S. Constitution was written! According to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, a citizen is defined simply as:

**“All persons born or naturalized in the United States.”**

This means that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment defines citizenship as belonging to anyone who is born in the United States, or anyone who is an immigrant and has gone through the **naturalization** process.



*Passports are a form of legal identification used for travel. Only legal citizens of a country can have a passport.*

**Directions:** Answer the questions below using the reading. **HIGHLIGHT** where you found your answer in the text.

What is considered the supreme law of the United States?

Where in the U.S. Constitution is the definition of a U.S. citizen?

**Think beyond the text...**

Why do you think it is important that the U.S. Constitution defines citizenship?

First, let’s look at birth citizenship. There are two ways: **law of blood** and **law of soil**.

**Law of Blood**



One way to become a citizen by birth is for one of the person’s birth parents to be a U.S. citizen. In most cases, this means that U.S. citizenship is passed to the child from the natural mother or father. This method of gaining citizenship is called the law of blood.

**Law of Soil**



The second way to become a citizen by birth is if a person is born in the United States, some of its territories, or on a U.S. military base, that person is a citizen through what is called the “law of soil”. This method of becoming a citizen does not require the person’s mother or father to be a U.S. citizen.

In the United States there are also people who are considered **aliens**. Aliens are persons living in the U.S. who are not citizens. Aliens can be in the U.S. for temporary purposes. This could be for a job or to visit for a certain period of time. Or aliens can be in the United States as a legal permanent resident. This is someone who is permanently living in the U.S. legally but not a citizen. When someone moves permanently to live in a new country they are also called immigrants. Many of the immigrants who come to the United States to begin a new life go through the process to gain citizenship. This process is called **naturalization**.

This resource series was developed in partnership between the Lou Frey Institute, FL Joint Center for Citizenship & Orange County Public Schools, with generous funding from the Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation.



**Directions:** Answer the questions below using the reading. **HIGHLIGHT** where you found your answer in the text.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| What are the two ways a person can be <b>born</b> a citizen?                             | 1. |
|  | 2. |
| What does the term “law of soil” mean?   |    |
| What does the term “law of blood” mean?  |    |
| Define the term “alien”:   |    |
| What do you call someone that comes to live permanently in a new country?                |    |
| If someone is not born a U.S. citizen, they can become one. What is this process called? |    |

## Naturalization Process

The process of naturalization is also mentioned in the 14th Amendment. Let's look at the qualifications required for that process.

To apply for citizenship, an immigrant must:

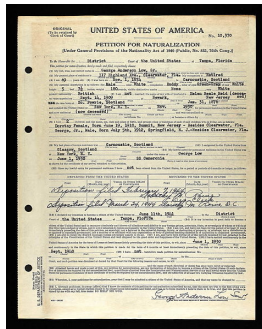


Be at least 18 years old.

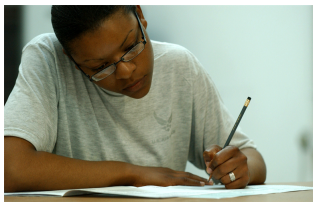


Have been a resident (someone who lives in a place for a minimum period of time) of the United States for five years

- ★ Residents cannot have left the country for more than 30 months combined.
- ★ Residents must have lived in the U.S. for at least 12 months uninterrupted in the 5 years.



File a petition for naturalization; this is similar to filling out an application stating a person wants to become a citizen



<https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/124169/tuition-assistance-allow-aimen-to-reach-educational-goals/>

Take a test that shows they can read, write and speak English well enough to demonstrate that they know American History and the U.S. Constitution



Be able to prove that they are of good moral character which means they can prove they are not a criminal.

- ★ Must have two U.S. citizens confirm that the applicant is of good moral character.



<https://www.aviano.af.mil/Articles/Photos/igphoto/2000346226/>

Once all of the conditions have been met, the applicant takes the "Oath of Allegiance". This means that people wanting to become a citizen must pledge their loyalty to the United States.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Directions:</b> Answer the questions below using the reading. <b>HIGHLIGHT</b> where you found your answer in the text.  |  |
| How old must someone be to qualify for the naturalization process on their own?   |  |
| How long must someone live in the United States in order to qualify for the naturalization process?                         |  |
| What is the last step in the naturalization process?  |  |
| <b>Think beyond the text...</b>   |  |
| Why do you think it is important to have qualifications and a process to become a naturalized citizen of the United States? |  |

| <b>CITIZENSHIP REVIEW</b>   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Directions:</b> Read the scenarios below. Highlight or underline the correct response. Then, explain how you know that is the correct answer. (Remember, use the information given to determine or infer the best response – sometimes, you are not given all of the information!) |   |   |
| <b>Scenario</b>   | <b>Response</b>   | <b>How do you know?<br/>(Support your answer)</b> |
| <b>Scenario 1:</b> Angie has been living in London, England for 10 years. Both of her parents were U.S. citizens when she was born. <i>Even though Angie lives in London, why is she considered a U.S. citizen at birth?</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citizen due to law of blood</li> <li>* Citizen due to law of soil</li> <li>* Not eligible for naturalization yet</li> <li>* Eligible for naturalization</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Scenario 2:</b> Tuck was born to parents from England. He has been living in Mexico for the last two year. He is planning to travel to Spain next week and will be using a United States passport. <i>Why can Tuck use a U.S. passport?</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citizen due to law of blood</li> <li>* Citizen due to law of soil</li> <li>* Not eligible for naturalization yet</li> <li>* Eligible for naturalization</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Scenario 3:</b> Yadiel was born in Brazil. His parents were also born in Brazil. He has been living in the United States for 3 years and his English is very good. <i>What is most likely Yadiel's U.S. citizenship status?</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citizen due to law of blood</li> <li>* Citizen due to law of soil</li> <li>* Not eligible for naturalization yet</li> <li>* Eligible for naturalization</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Scenario 4:</b> Monica was born in Ireland 30 years ago and has been living in San Francisco, California for 7 years. When she travels to other countries, she uses a Passport from Ireland. <i>What is most likely Monica's U.S. citizenship status?</i>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citizen due to law of blood</li> <li>* Citizen due to law of soil</li> <li>* Not eligible for naturalization yet</li> <li>* Eligible for naturalization</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Scenario 5:</b> Jordan was born in Germany on a U.S. Air Force base to his parents that were both serving in the U.S. Military. Jordan is 17 years old and now lives in Egypt. <i>What is most likely Jordan's U.S. citizenship status?</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citizen due to law of blood</li> <li>* Citizen due to law of soil</li> <li>* Not eligible for naturalization yet</li> <li>* Eligible for naturalization</li> </ul> |   |