



Citizen You: SS.7.CG.2.2  
**Citizen Obligations and Responsibilities**  
**READING #3**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**SS.7.CG.2.2 Benchmark Clarification 3:** Students will evaluate the obligations and responsibilities of citizens as they relate to active participation in society and government.

A **citizen** is a legal and protected member of a country. In the United States, citizens have both **obligations** and **responsibilities**. In a democracy, the people actively participate in government and make decisions to promote the **common good**. Each **citizen** has certain basic **obligations** and **responsibilities** related to active participation in society and government.

Active participation comes in many different forms that include both obligations and responsibilities. Obeying the laws, registering for **Selective Service**, defending our nation, serving on juries, and paying taxes are all obligations of active participation in society and government.

Here are examples of contributions that citizens can make that include obligations:

- Obeying laws (obligation) – everyone has to follow federal, state, and local laws.
- Paying taxes (obligation) – everyone must pay federal, state, and local taxes.
- Taxes pay for different services the government provides.
- Jury duty (obligation) – the right to a trial by jury is a guarantee for the people; when called to do so, citizens must serve on juries.
- Defending the nation (obligation) – all males between the ages of 18-25 have to register for **Selective Service**. (This does not mean they immediately join the military; it means that they may be called up in an emergency.)

Registering to vote, attending civic meetings, joining interest groups, joining a political party, running for office, and petitioning the government are all responsibilities of good citizens related to active participation in society and government.

Here are examples of contributions that citizens can make that include both responsibilities:

- Voting (responsibility) – voting is important for democracy to work. Voting gives citizens the opportunity to be heard by government leaders and to express their opinions about candidates.
- Attending civic meetings (responsibility) – when a citizen attends civic meetings, such as a city council meeting, he or she can become a more informed citizen.
- Petitioning the government (responsibility) – petitioning the government is a right listed in the First Amendment to the Constitution. This right means that citizens can tell the government what they believe the government should do about a specific problem.
- Running for office (responsibility) – running for office provides citizens an opportunity to become involved in the government and represent their community.
- Community service (responsibility) – performing community service provides an opportunity for people to understand problems in their community and help to fix them.

**citizen** - a legal member of a state and/or country

**common good** - beliefs or actions that are seen as a benefit to the community rather than individual interests, also known as the public good

**obligation** - a requirement, something a person has to do

**responsibility** - something a person should do

**Selective Service** - a system by which men ages 18 through 25 register with the U.S. government for military service