



Citizenship in the U.S. | Lesson Plan

How can we be great citizens?

Students learn about the roles, responsibilities, privileges, and benefits of being a citizen of the United States. They'll join Uncle Sam as he quizzes kid contestants about the topic and complete a fun follow-along worksheet.

Learning Objectives:

- Define the concept of citizenship.
- Identify the origins of modern citizenship from ancient Greek and Roman empires.
- Compare and contrast the forms of government in a republic and a monarchy.
- List the rights and privileges of U.S. citizens, including freedom of speech, religion, a fair trial, voting rights, running for office, and access to government aid and benefits.
- Explain the responsibilities of U.S. citizens, such as obeying laws, paying taxes, and serving on juries.
- Value the significance, honor, and privileges associated with being a citizen of the United States

Key Vocabulary:

- **Citizenship:** The status of being a legally recognized member of a country, characterized by specific entitlements to rights and the obligation to fulfill duties that sustain the country's constitutional and moral framework.
- **Republic:** A form of government where officials are elected by the people, operates under a constitution that limits power, protects individual liberties, and ensures that authority is maintained by the consent of the governed.
- **Unalienable Rights:** Rights that are inherent and cannot be taken away, as they are believed to be endowed by the Creator and essential to human nature. These rights, including "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" as stated in the Declaration of Independence, define the government's primary role: to protect and uphold these freedoms.
- **Constitution:** The supreme law of the United States that outlines the national framework of government and fundamental laws, guaranteeing certain basic rights to its citizens. It established the three branches of government (executive, legislative, and judicial) and incorporated systems of checks and balances and federalism.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.L.3, CCRA.I.4

Academic Subject Areas: Civics, U.S. History, Western Civilization, Political Science, Liberty, Freedom



What You'll Need

- Video: *Street Smarts: Citizenship in the U.S.* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Street Smarts: Citizenship in the U.S.* (Click [Here](#))

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Begin by asking students to define what they understand by "citizenship." As they share, write down their ideas on the board, creating a concept map that includes "Rights" and "Responsibilities."
2. Prompt students with questions like, "What rights do you think you have as a citizen?" and "What responsibilities might you have?" This will open up discussion on the legal and social aspects of citizenship. If needed, list the rights and privileges of U.S. citizens, including freedom of speech, religion, a fair trial, voting rights, running for office, and access to government aid and benefits.
3. Introduce the concept that the idea of citizenship didn't start in the modern era. Mention how ancient civilizations like Greece and Rome have shaped what we consider citizenship today.
4. Pose a question: "How might the ideas from ancient civilizations influence our government and responsibilities today?" Allow students to reflect on democratic principles such as civic participation and the rule of law.
5. Shift the discussion to types of government by introducing the basic definitions of a republic and a monarchy. Ask, "What do you think are the key differences between a republic like the U.S. and a monarchy?"
6. Guide the discussion to help students understand that in a republic, citizens have roles in decision-making through voting, which differs from a monarchy where a king or queen might make most decisions.
7. Wrap up the warm-up by discussing civic duties. Ask students: "Why is it important for citizens to vote, pay taxes, or serve on juries?"
8. Discuss how these duties support the function of a democratic society and the justice system, emphasizing that these actions are ways citizens contribute to and influence their government.
9. Hand out the "Street Smarts: Citizenship in the U.S. Worksheet" and prepare the episode for display.

Watch and Complete (20 minutes)

1. Watch the video *Street Smarts: Citizenship in the U.S.* Pause after key segments to discuss and relate to the warm-up topics.
2. Ask students to fill out their worksheets as the video progresses. Utilize pauses to specifically address:
 - The concept of citizenship and its rights and responsibilities.
 - The influence of ancient civilizations on the concept of citizenship.

- The differences between a republic and a monarchy.
- The importance of civic duties like voting, paying taxes, and serving on juries.

Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

1. Invite students to briefly reflect on what they learned about citizenship. Ask them to think about how the concepts discussed—rights, responsibilities, the influence of ancient civilizations, and different government systems—relate to their own lives as citizens or future citizens.
2. Encourage students to consider how understanding these aspects of citizenship affects their perspective on current events or societal issues.
3. Ask students to identify one way they can actively participate in their community based on the civic duties discussed. This could be as simple as being more informed about local elections, discussing community issues with family or friends, or understanding the importance of jury duty.
4. Assessment: Collect the completed worksheets to assess understanding and engagement.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.