



## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Professor Ferguson shares the scene of his impending citizenship ceremony with us, noting that, “It was a grey, overcast morning in Oakland, California. I was one of 1,094 people of every color and creed, from 85 nations, beginning with Afghanistan and ending with Yemen. We had gathered, anxiously clutching the requisite documents, outside the rather antique Paramount cinema.” Do you find it remarkable that so many people from so many nations were there to become citizens? Why or why not? What contributing factors do you think compel many people to want to become a citizen of the United States? Explain.
- Later in the video, Professor Ferguson explains that, “...this [the citizenship ceremony] was very far from a multicultural occasion. Quite the reverse. To get us in the mood for our impending Americanization, a choir sang a patriotic medley, including a rather baroque setting of the preamble to the constitution, Yankee Doodle, and Woody Guthrie’s This Land Is Your Land.” Why wasn’t the ceremony multicultural? Why do you think that performing patriotic songs is appropriate and important at a citizenship ceremony?
- Professor Ferguson shares the next part of the ceremony with us, stating that, “...there he was, the President of the United States himself, much larger than life on the big screen. ‘This country is now your country,’ Donald Trump told us rather sternly. ‘Our history is now your history. And our traditions are now your traditions.’” What is so profound and significant about new citizens being imbued with U.S. history and traditions? Do you think that U.S. citizens, especially new ones, should value and take ownership of American history and traditions? Why or why not?
- Professor Ferguson points out that President Trump also told them that, “You now share the obligation to teach our values to others, to help newcomers assimilate to our way of life.” What are the American values that President Trump is referring to? Do you agree that new citizens share the obligation to not only assimilate themselves, but also to help others assimilate to the American way of life? Why or why not?
- At the end of the video, Professor Ferguson concludes that, “...I picked a fine time to become an American — because it’s always a fine time.” Why do you think that Professor Ferguson opines that it is always a fine time to become a citizen of the United States? Why do you think that Professor Ferguson became a United States citizen? Explain.

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: Patriotism v. Nationalism

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “The Difference Between ‘Patriotism’ and ‘Nationalism,’” then answer the questions that follow.

- Which French word did the term ‘patriot’ derive from? How long were the terms ‘patriotism’ and ‘nationalism’ interchangeable? Which word grew apart in meaning from the other? What is the definition of the word ‘patriotism?’ What is the definition of the word ‘nationalism?’ In what sense is the term ‘patriotism’ often used? Under what circumstances is the term ‘nationalism’ pejorative? What differences does Merriam-Webster take into account?
- What are the significant differences between the two terms? In what ways does not having everyone using the term ‘nationalism’ to mean the same thing detrimental to society, especially in political contexts? Explain. Why do you think that the two terms diverged in meaning? Do you think that people should feel some degree of patriotism? Why or why not?
- Do you think that Professor Ferguson would use either or both of the terms to describe himself? Why or why not? Would you use either of the terms to describe yourself? Why or why not?



# QUIZ

## A FINE TIME TO BECOME AN AMERICAN

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1. At the ceremony that Mr. Ferguson participated in, there were people from \_\_\_\_ nations becoming U.S. citizens.
  - a. 65
  - b. 75
  - c. 85
  - d. 95
  
2. Where was the man who initially came to California to work for N.A.S.A. from?
  - a. Eritrea
  - b. Ecuador
  - c. England
  - d. Estonia
  
3. During the ceremony, the new citizens were reminded of their right to bear arms.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
4. What did President Trump tell the new citizens during the ceremony?
  - a. "This country is now your country"
  - b. "Our history is now your history"
  - c. "Our traditions are now your traditions"
  - d. All of the above.
  
5. President Trump also told the new citizens that they share the obligation to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. pay off the national debt
  - b. teach our values to others
  - c. spread democracy to other countries
  - d. preserve the culture of their nation of origin



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/patriotism-vs-nationalism>

# The Difference Between 'Patriotism' and 'Nationalism'

Although treated as synonyms, there is a distinction. But it's more complicated than "'patriotism' good; 'nationalism' bad."

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One of the many difficulties inherent in creating a dictionary that accurately reflects the language of any large group of people is that these people may not all view certain words and values as equal. *Nationalism* and *patriotism* present us with an appropriately problematic pair with which to illustrate this. Are these words synonymous? Is one an insult, and the other not? Can either of them mean different things to different people?

Photo: Elisanth\_

How does the speaker or writer define them?

Let's take a few minutes to go over the respective histories of these two words to see where and when they shared meaning and in what senses they have drifted apart.

*Patriotism* is the older of the two words, with published written evidence dating back to the middle of the 17th century. *Patriotism* came from adding the suffix of *-ism* to the existing word *patriot*, which itself came into English from the French *patriote*, and may be traced back further to the Greek word *patrios* ("of one's father").

There is hardly any judicious man but knoweth, that it was neither learning, piety, nor patriotism that perswaded any of that Nation to Presbytery....

—C.N., *Reasons Why the Supreme Authority of the Three Nations (for the time) is not in the Parliament*, 1653

There hath been in London, and repairing to it, for these many yeers together, a knot of Scottish bankers, collybists, or coinecourseurs, of traffickers in Merchandise to and againe, and of men of other professions, who...hug all unto themselves; that, for no respect of vertue, honor, kinred, patriotism, or whatever else...whereof those quomodocunquizing clusterfists and rapacious varlets have given of late such cannibal-like proofs, by their inhumanity and obdurate carriage towards some (whose shoos-strings they are not worthy to unty) that were it not that a more able pen then mine, will assuredly not faile to jerk them on all sides....

—Thomas Urquhart, *Ekskybalauron*, 1652

(Quick side note: the Urquhart citation above serves two purposes, being both our earliest written evidence of the word *patriotism* and a fine excuse for drawing the reader's attention to the beautifully splenetic turn of phrase "quomodocunquizing clusterfists." These two words are archaic enough to only be defined in the Oxford English Dictionary, which informs us that the former is "that makes money in any possible way," and the latter is "a 'close-fisted' or grasping fellow." Should you ever find yourself in need of an insult that is not hackneyed and stale we wholeheartedly recommend *quomodocunquizing clusterfist*. End of side note.)

We do not have any evidence of *nationalism* occurring until just before the 19th century, almost a hundred and fifty years after *patriotism*. And in its early use, from the end of the 18th century onward for a number of decades, *nationalism* appears to have been largely interchangeable with *patriotism*, with both words primarily being used to refer to a general love of one's country.

Nationalism must involve the consecrated devotion of a responsive citizenship, sound policies must have universal faith and unsound vagaries must have universal condemnation.

—*The Marion County News* (Hamilton, AL), 1 Jan. 1820

Modern France, instead of diminishing, has, if possible, encreased this *nationalism*. Removed from his oppression and atrocities, they see nothing but the magnificence, the success and the splendor of Bonaparte, and I assure you that every poor, ignorant, stupid Creole, when he hears of an achievement of this their Demi God, evinces a lively interest, an exultation as if some choice unlooked for gift of heaven had blessed his family.

—*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia, PA), 11 Oct. 1811

If there be not Conservatism, and Nationalism, and Patriotism enough in the North to rise up and overwhelm with numbers the spirit that points to the the election of anybody but Fremont (or of Fremont) as the prelude to civil war, we had better seek to save as much fratricidal blood as possible in a peaceable line of immediate separation.

—*New York Daily News*, 1 Jul. 1856

These two words may have shared a distinct sense in the 19th century, but they appear to have grown apart since. Or rather, it would be more accurate to say that only *nationalism* has grown apart, since the meaning

of *patriotism* has remained largely unchanged. There are still obvious areas of overlap: we define *patriotism* as “love for or devotion to one’s country” and *nationalism* in part as “loyalty and devotion to a nation.” But the definition of *nationalism* also includes “exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups.” This exclusionary aspect is not shared by *patriotism*.

A somewhat subtler difference between the two words may be found in their modifiers and the ideas to which each is connected. When we examine large bodies of recent text we see that *patriotism* is more often used in a general sense, often in conjunction with such words as *bravery*, *valor*, *duty*, and *devotion*. *Nationalism*, however, tends to find itself modified by specific movements, most frequently of a political bent.

In one respect, the insanities of 1947 are reverberating now with growing Hindu nationalism in a professedly secular India.  
—*Kashmir Monitor*, 14 Aug. 2017

Today, more than two decades into a democratic South Africa, Afrikaner nationalism has been severely diminished and along with it the standing of Afrikaans in the public sector.  
—*The New Age* (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2 May 2017

Canadian Nationalism emerged 150 years ago, and has always been defended and protected not only by the spoken word but also, if required, by a dedicated military.  
—Rosie Sanchez, *Prairie Post East* (Swift Current, Sask.), 7 Jul 2017

Founded in 2014—two years after Burma experienced religiously motivated riots largely targeting the Muslim minority—and now with sub-chapters across the country, Ma Ba Tha has become virtually synonymous with Buddhist nationalism.  
—*Asia News Monitor* (Bangkok), 7 Jul. 2017

Over the last few years, however, a strong contender in the form of Tamil nationalism has emerged because Tamil Nadu got into river water disputes with all the neighbouring states and the neighbours did not seem to care much for Dravidian niceties although Telugus, Kannadigas and Malayalis are putatively Dravidian.  
—*The Times of India* (New Delhi), 4 Mar. 2017

His defeat by Plaid Cymru’s Gwynfor Evans at Carmarthen in 1966 stemmed not from any upsurge in Welsh nationalism, but rather a sudden deterioration in the fortunes of Harold Wilson’s government.  
—*The Telegraph* (London, UK), 5 Apr. 2017

So now that we’ve briefly looked over the history of *patriotism* and *nationalism* can we draw any firm conclusions about whether one or the other is pejorative? The answer is: it depends. It seems certain that, at least with *nationalism*, it may mean different things to different people. Of the six different kinds of *X nationalism* cited just above, it is likely that most people would find some politically questionable, and others not. *Patriotism* is rarely used in these contexts.

In U.S. usage *nationalism* is now perhaps most frequently associated with *white nationalism*, and has considerably negative connotations.

Some of us imagined that we dented the nationalism, hatred and racism that roiled the world in the first half of the 20th century.  
—Jeanette Friedman-Sieradski (letter to editor), *The Times-Tribune* (Scranton, PA), 12 Mar. 2017



And while coded appeals to racism or nationalism aren't new—two words: Southern strategy—overt calls to temporarily bar Muslims from entry to the United States or questioning a federal judge's impartiality based on his Mexican heritage are new.  
—Jim Rutenberg, *The New York Times*, 8 Aug. 2016

As a dictionary, we must weigh all matters of semantic and regional difference. Therefore we can offer no firm guidance as to whether or not *nationalism* qualifies as an insult across the board. We can, however, advocate for the revival of the tradition of insult with precision.

May we again recommend *quomodocunquizing clusterfist*?