Pathway to U.S. Citizenship

For an adult immigrant to become a U.S. citizen, he or she must go through the process of naturalization. GENERAL requirements for naturalization call for the immigrant to:

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of U.S. history, government, and civic principles
- Demonstrate an ability to read, write, speak, and understand basic English
- Demonstrate an attachment to the principles and ideals of the U.S. Constitution
- Have demonstrated good moral character
- Have lived within the State or USCIS District for at least 3 months prior to filing
- Have demonstrated continuous permanent residence
- Receive a Certificate of Naturalization
- Swear an oath of allegiance to the United States
- Be at least 18 years old at the time of filing the Application for Naturalization (Form N-400)
- Be a lawfully admitted permanent resident of the United States
- Have demonstrated physical presence
- For Form N-400 and to learn more about specific eligibility requirements for naturalization, visit www.uscis.gov or call 1 800 375 5283

Implementation Timeline

Which version of the test to take?

USCIS began administering a redesigned (new) naturalization test on October 1, 2008. The following guidelines will determine whether naturalization applicants will take the old test or the redesigned (new) test.

- **An applicant who:**
  - filed the Application for Naturalization, Form N-400, BEFORE October 1, 2008, and is scheduled for his or her naturalization interview ON or AFTER October 1, 2008, can choose to take the old test or the redesigned (new) test.
  - filed the Application for Naturalization, Form N-400, ON or AFTER October 1, 2008, will take the redesigned (new) test.
- If the applicant is reinspected, even if the retest is scheduled on or after October 1, 2009, the applicant is retested, even if the retest is scheduled on or after October 1, 2009, the applicant will be required to take the same version of the test, old or redesigned (new), when the first examination, the applicant will be required to take the old test or the redesigned (new) test.
- If an applicant fails the English and/or civics test during the first examination, the applicant will be required to take the same version of the test, old or redesigned (new), when the applicant is reinspected, even if the retest is scheduled on or after October 1, 2009.

For additional information about the old and redesigned (new) test, please visit http://www.uscis.gov/citizenshiptest.

Preparing for the Test

What study materials are available and how can I find English language, civics, and/or citizenship classes?

The USCIS Office of Citizenship has developed a variety of study materials for the redesigned (new) naturalization test. These materials include Civics Flash Cards, Vocabulary Flash Cards, Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons, and translated versions of the civics questions available at http://www.uscis.gov/newtest.

For many applicants, adult education classes are an excellent place to learn English and prepare for the naturalization test. Many local school districts, community colleges, libraries, and other community-based organizations offer English language and civics classes. These opportunities, however, are not centralized in one place. To find an appropriate class, try these options:

- Look in the yellow pages of your telephone book under the heading “Language Schools.”
- Contact your local public library and ask if they offer English language or citizenship classes.
- Call your local community college or school district and ask about adult education opportunities.
- Call or visit a local community-based organization or place of worship and ask if they offer English language or citizenship classes.

About the Redesigned (New) Test

Background

In the interest of creating a more standardized, fair, and meaningful naturalization process, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) redesigned the naturalization test. The redesigned test, with an emphasis on the fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, will help encourage citizenship applicants to learn and identify with the basic values we all share as Americans.

The major aim of the redesign process was to ensure that naturalization applicants have uniform, consistent testing experiences nationwide, and that the civics test can effectively assess whether applicants have a meaningful understanding of U.S. government and history. Following a basic U.S. history and civics curriculum, the redesigned test will serve as an important instrument to encourage civic learning and patriotism among prospective citizens.

To accomplish these goals, USCIS initially piloted a new test—with an overhaul of English reading and writing sections, as well as new history and government questions—in ten sites across the country. The feedback from this pilot was then used to finalize testing procedures, English reading and writing prompts, and a list of 100 new history and government questions. To ensure the pilot accurately reflected a representative sample of candidates with a variety of education levels, the test was also piloted at adult education sites nationwide.

For more information on the redesigned (new) naturalization test, please visit http://www.uscis.gov/newtest.

The Redesigned (New) Naturalization Test

Office of Citizenship
Components of the Redesigned (New) Naturalization Test

Civics Test

Redesigned (New) Naturalization Test

An applicant will be asked up to 10 questions from the list below. Applicants must answer correctly at least six of the 10 questions to pass the test.

American Government
A: Principles of American Democracy
- What is the supreme law of the land?
- What is the Constitution?
- How many amendments does it have?
- What is the Pledge of Allegiance?
- Who was the first President?

B: System of Government
- Name one branch of government.
- How many Senators are there?
- Who is in charge of the executive branch?
- What is the capital of the United States?
- Who is the Governor of your state now?

Integrated Civics
A: Geography
- Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.
- What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?
- What region is on the East Coast of the United States?
- Name five U.S. territories.

B: Symbols
- Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
- Why does the flag have 50 stars?

C: Holidays
- When do we celebrate Independence Day?
- Name one national U.S. holiday.

American History
A: Colonial Period and Independence
- Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
- Who was the first President?

B: 1800s
- Who was President during the Civil War?
- Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?

C: Rights and Responsibilities
- Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?
- Who is the Governor of your state now?

Writing Vocabulary
- What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?
- What is one right or freedom from the Constitution?

English Test

Reading Test

Speaking

Reading Vocabulary

Writing Test

*If you are 65 or older and have been a legal permanent resident of the United States for 20 or more years, you may study just the questions that have been marked with an asterisk.