

Informational guide for the Naturalization Interview



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• What Is Naturalization?

Naturalization is commonly referred to as the manner in which a person not born a citizen voluntarily becomes a U.S. citizen.

• How can I become a U.S. citizen?

You may become a U.S. citizen (1) by birth or (2) through naturalization.

• How do I become a naturalized citizen?

Eligible persons use the “Application for Naturalization” (Form N-400) to apply for naturalization.

You must be at least 18 years old, and a Lawful Permanent Resident for at least 4 years and 9 months or at least 2 years and 9 months if married to a U.S. citizen. Other requirements may affect you depending on individual circumstances.

Naturalization Application Process

1. Complete the Application

Send application supporting documents to USCIS.

2. Confirmation

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will mail a notice verifying the receipt of the application.

3. Fingerprints

USCIS will mail a fingerprint notification letter indicating the date and location to take the fingerprints.

4. The Interview

USCIS will send notice of an appointment for the interview.

5. Oath Ceremony

USCIS will mail an appointment for the Oath Ceremony.

Upon taking the oath, the applicant will then become a United States citizen!

Naturalization Interview

At your naturalization interview, you will be required to answer questions about your N-400 application and personal history.

You will also take an English and civics test unless you qualify for an exemption or a waiver.

The civics test is an oral test and the USCIS Officer will ask you up to 10 of the 100 civics questions. You will need to answer correctly 6 questions in order to pass the test. You will also be evaluated on your ability to speak, read, write, and understand English at your interview.

At the end of the interview, the USCIS officer will provide a decision regarding the application.

Who Qualifies for the Exemptions from language requirement

- Applicants unable to comply because of physical or developmental disability or mental impairment. They have to submit the Medical Certification for Disability Exception, Form N-648 completed by a medical professional who can certify that the patient meets the criteria and will only be accepted if the doctor establishes that the applicant qualifies for the waiver.

The date of the Naturalization Interview the USCIS officer will review and determine if the medical waiver will be approved.

- Applicants over 50 years of age and living in US as Legal Permanent Resident for 20 years or more and Persons over 55 years of age and living in US as Legal Permanent Resident for 15 years or more can take the test in their own language.
- “Special consideration” is given those over age 65 with 20 years as Legal Permanent Resident, they are asked 10 of 20 Civic questions and must answer 6 correct.

You should always be honest with USCIS about all:

- Arrests (even if you were not charged or convicted);
- Convictions (even if your record was cleared or expunged);
- Crimes you have committed for which you were not arrested or convicted; and
- Any countervailing evidence, or evidence in your favor concerning the circumstances of your arrests, and/or convictions or offenses that you would like USCIS to consider.



SCORING GUIDELINES FOR THE U.S. NATURALIZATION TEST

Section 312 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides that most applicants for naturalization demonstrate an understanding of the English language, including an ability to read, write, and speak words in ordinary usage in the English language, as well as a knowledge of U.S. government and history (civics)¹. This document provides a general description of how the U.S. Naturalization Test is evaluated and scored by Officers of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

SPEAKING: An applicant's verbal skills are determined by the applicant's answers to questions normally asked by USCIS Officers during the naturalization eligibility interview. USCIS Officers are required to repeat and rephrase questions until the Officer is satisfied that the applicant either fully understands the question or does not understand English. If the applicant generally understands and can respond meaningfully to questions relevant to the determination of eligibility, the applicant has demonstrated the ability to speak English.

READING: To sufficiently demonstrate the ability to read in English, applicants must read one sentence, out of three sentences, in a manner suggesting to the USCIS Officer that the applicant appears to understand the meaning of the sentence. Once the applicant reads one of three sentences correctly, USCIS procedures require that the USCIS Officer will stop administering the reading test. Applicants shall not be failed because of their accent when speaking English. A general description of how the reading test is scored follows:

Pass:

- Reads one sentence without extended pauses
- Reads all content words but may omit short words that do not interfere with meaning
- May make pronunciation or intonation errors that do not interfere with meaning

Fail:

- Does not read the sentence
- Omits a content word or substitutes another word for a content word
- Pauses for extended periods of time while reading the sentence
- Makes pronunciation or intonation errors that interfere with meaning

¹ The English language requirement may be waived for an applicant, who on the date of filing the Application for Naturalization, Form N-400, was over 50 years old and has been a permanent resident for at least 20 years, or was over 55 years old and has been a permanent resident for at least 15 years. If either exemption applies, the applicant is not tested in English and may take the civics examination in the applicant's language of choice. An applicant, who on the date of filing the application, was over 65 years old and has been a permanent resident for 20 years, is not tested in English and qualifies to take a simpler version of the civics test in the applicant's language of choice. Also, both the English language and civics requirements for naturalization are waived for applicants who are unable to comply with these requirements because of a medical or physical impairment. To achieve a passing score on the civics test, applicants are required to answer 6 out of 10 questions correctly.

WRITING: To sufficiently demonstrate the ability to write in English, the applicant must write one sentence, out of three sentences, in a manner that would be understandable as written to the USCIS Officer. An applicant must not abbreviate any dictated word in the written sentence. Once the applicant writes one of three sentences correctly, USCIS procedures require that the USCIS Officer will stop administering the writing test. An applicant shall not be failed because of spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors unless the errors would prevent understanding the meaning of the sentence. A general description of how the writing portion is scored follows:

Pass:

- Has the same general meaning as the dictated sentence
- May contain some grammatical, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors that do not interfere with meaning
- May omit short words that do not interfere with meaning
- Numbers may be spelled out or written as digits

Fail:

- Writes nothing or only one or two isolated words
- Is completely illegible
- Writes a different sentence or words
- Written sentence does not communicate the meaning of the dictated sentence
- Writes an abbreviation for a dictated word

CIVICS: To sufficiently demonstrate knowledge of U.S. government and history (civics), the applicant must answer six of ten questions correctly. The civics test will be an oral examination. Once the applicant answers six questions correctly, USCIS procedures require that the USCIS Officer will stop administering the civics test. A general description of how the civics portion is scored follows:

Pass:

- Provides a correct answer
- Provides an alternative phrasing of the correct answer

Fail:

- Provides an incorrect answer
- Fails to respond

According to regulation, applicants who fail the English literacy and/or civics test during their first examination will be rescheduled to appear for a second opportunity to take the test (8 CFR 312.5).

NATURALIZATION INTERVIEW DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

Please bring the following documents (originals and copies) to your naturalization interview

1. Interview notice
2. Green card
3. All passports used in the last five years
4. Social Security card
5. NYS ID or other State ID
6. Current marriage certificate and proof of termination of all prior marriages
7. Certified court dispositions for any arrests
8. Proof of child support
9. IRS tax return transcripts for the last five years

For assistance requesting your Tax Return Transcripts please contact IRS and request an appointment at: 1-844-545-5640 or visit <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>

If you owe taxes please provide proof of payment plan agreement including cancelled checks.

If you are applying for naturalization before 4 years 9 months AND you are still married to US Citizen, please provide the following documents for last 3 years:

1. Spouse's Certificate of Naturalization or U.S. Passport
2. Joint bank statements AND bank letter AND cancelled checks
3. Common children's birth certificates and green cards (s) (if applicable)
4. Utility bills: example – gas, electric, telephone, cable
5. Joint health insurance coverage
6. Life Insurance
7. Credit card statements
8. Lease, mortgage, house deed, joint ownership of any real estate
9. Tax returns transcripts AND W2s

For assistance requesting your Tax Return Transcripts please contact IRS and request an appointment at: 1-844-545-5640 or visit www.irs.gov

If you owe taxes please provide proof of payment plan agreement including cancelled checks.

Naturalization Interview

At the USCIS testing facility, the interviewer will call your name and lead you to an office. Before starting the actual interview, the USCIS officer will begin with some general conversation, or small talk, to see how well you speak English.

Greetings and small talk

1. How are you? A: I am fine /good /great. Or fine/good thank you.
2. How is the weather today? A: the weather is fine /good /cold /warm /sunny /rainy /windy.
3. How did you get here today? A: I came by car /bus /subway /train or my son or daughter brought me

Beginning the interview

1. Do you have any questions before we begin?
2. Have you prepared for the citizenship test? Or Have you studied for the citizenship test?
3. How did you study or prepare?

A: I read a book / I took a class / my children helped me / I took a Citizenship Class at Emerald Isle Immigration Center.

Truth Oath

1. Please stand and raise your right hand.
2. Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? (Yes, I do.)
3. What does truth mean? Or What is truth? A true statement/ not to lie/ be honest
4. What is an “oath”? (An “oath” is a promise. I promise to tell the truth.)
5. Why are you here today? (I want to become an American citizen.)
6. Did you bring your legal representative, attorney or a lawyer?
7. Who helped you fill out your citizenship application form?
8. Why do you want to become an American citizen?

A: I love America. I love freedom./ There are many good opportunities for citizens here./I want a better life for my children./ Other _____

9. What do you miss about your home country? A: I miss my friends and family. / I miss the food. / I don't miss my old country. / Other _____

10. Show me your Green Card, driver's license, passport, and photo ID. A: Here is my Green Card, license, and passport.

Reading Test

Reading Vocabulary

Each reading test administered to an applicant contains no more than 3 sentences. Applicants must read 1 out of 3 sentences correctly to demonstrate an ability to read in English. To help applicants prepare, USCIS released a reading vocabulary list containing all the words found in the English reading portion of the test. The content focuses on civics and history topics.

PEOPLE

- Abraham Lincoln
- George Washington

CIVICS

- American flag
- Bill of Rights
- capital
- citizen
- city
- Congress
- country
- Father of Our Country
- government
- President
- right
- Senators
- state/states
- White House

PLACES

- America
- United States
- U.S.

HOLIDAYS

- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Flag Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving

QUESTION WORDS

- How
- What
- When
- Where
- Who
- Why

VERBS

- can
- come
- do/does
- elects
- have/has
- is/are/was/be
- lives/lived
- meet
- name
- pay
- vote
- want

OTHER (FUNCTION)

- a
- for
- here
- in
- of
- on
- the
- to
- we

OTHER (CONTENT)

- colors
- dollar bill
- first
- largest
- many
- most
- north
- one
- people
- second
- south

Writing Test

Writing Vocabulary

Each writing test administered to an applicant contains no more than 3 sentences. Applicants must write 1 out of 3 sentences correctly in order to demonstrate an ability to write in English. To help applicants prepare, USCIS released a writing vocabulary list containing all the words found in the English writing portion of the test. The content focuses on civics and history topics.

PEOPLE

- Adams
- Lincoln
- Washington

CIVICS

- American Indians
- capital
- citizens
- Civil War
- Congress
- Father of Our Country
- flag
- free
- freedom of speech
- President
- right
- Senators
- state/states
- White House

PLACES

- Alaska
- California
- Canada
- Delaware
- Mexico
- New York City
- United States
- Washington
- Washington, D.C.

MONTHS

- February
- May
- June
- July
- September
- October
- November

HOLIDAYS

- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Flag Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving

VERBS

- can
- come
- elect
- have/has
- is/was/be
- lives/lived
- meets
- pay
- vote
- want

OTHER (FUNCTION)

- and
- during
- for
- here
- in
- of
- on
- the
- to
- we

OTHER (CONTENT)

- blue
- dollar bill
- fifty/50
- first
- largest
- most
- north
- one
- one hundred/100
- people
- red
- second
- south
- taxes
- white

QUESTIONS

1. How many states are in the United States?
2. What is the capital of the United States?
3. What are the colors of the American flag?
4. What is on the American flag?
5. When is Flag Day?
6. What was the first U.S. Capital?
7. What state has the most people?
8. What country is north of the United States?
9. What is the largest state?
10. What country is south of the United States?
11. Who lived here first?
12. Why do people want to be citizens?
13. Why do people come to America?
14. When is Columbus Day?
15. When is Thanksgiving?
16. What was the first U.S. state?
17. Who is the father of our country?
18. Who was the first president?
19. What president is on the dollar bill?
20. Who was the second president?
21. Who was George Washington?
22. Who was Abraham Lincoln?
23. When is President's Day?
24. When is Memorial Day?
25. What is one right in the Bill of Rights?
26. Who elects Congress?
27. How many Senators do we have?
28. Where does congress meet?
29. When do we vote for president?
30. Where does the president live?
31. Where is the White House?
32. Who lives in the White House?
33. When is Labor Day?
34. What do we have to pay to the government?
35. What does Congress do?
36. Who can vote?
37. Why do people want to be citizens?
38. When is Independence Day?

Writing and Reading Sentences

ANSWERS

1. The United States has 50 states.
2. Washington D.C. is the capital.
3. The colors of the flag are red, white and blue.
4. Stars and stripes are on the flag.
5. Flag Day is on June 14th.
6. New York City was the first capital.
7. California has the most people.
8. Canada is north of the United States.
9. Alaska is the largest state.
10. Mexico is south of the United States.
11. American Indians lived here first.
12. They want to live in a free country.
13. People come here to be free.
14. Columbus Day is in October.
15. Thanksgiving is every fourth Thursday in November.
16. Delaware was the first state.
17. George Washington is the father of our country.
18. George Washington was the first president.
19. George Washington is on the dollar bill.
20. John Adams was the second president.
21. The first president of the United States.
22. Lincoln was the president during the Civil War.
23. President's Day is in February.
24. Memorial Day is the last Monday in May.
25. Freedom of speech is one of our rights.
26. People elect members of Congress.
27. We have 100 Senators.
28. Congress meets in Washington D.C.
29. We vote for president on the first Tuesday in November every 4 years.
30. The president lives in the White House.
31. The White House is in Washington D.C.
32. The president of the United States.
33. Labor Day is on the first Monday in September.
34. We have to pay taxes.
35. Congress makes laws.
36. Citizens can vote.
37. They want to vote.
38. Independence Day is on July 4th.

Sample Sentences for Written English Testing

Civics/History	Everyday Life
<p>A Senator is elected for 6 years. _____ is the Vice President of the United States. All people want to be free. America is the land of freedom. All United States citizens have the right to vote. America is the home of the brave. America is the land of the free. _____ is the President of the United States. Citizens have the right to vote. Congress is part of the American government. Congress meets in Washington, DC. Congress passes laws in the United States. George Washington was the first president. I want to be a citizen of the United States. I want to become an American citizen. I want to become an American so I can vote. It is important for all citizens to vote. Many people come to America for freedom. Many people have died for freedom. Martha Washington was the first First Lady. Only Congress can declare war. Our Government is divided into three branches. People in America have the right to freedom. People vote for the President in November. The American flag has stars and stripes. The American flag has 13 stripes. The capital of the United States is Washington, DC. The colors of the flag are red, white and blue. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. The flag of the United States has 50 stars. The House and Senate are parts of Congress. The people have a voice in Government. The people in the class took a citizenship test. The President enforces the laws. The President has the power of veto. The President is elected every four years. The President lives in the White House. The President lives in Washington, DC. The President must be an American citizen. The President must also be born in the United States. The President signs bills into laws. The stars of the American flag are white. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from France. The stripes of the American flag are red and white. The White House is in Washington, DC. The United States flag is red, white and blue. The United States of America has 50 states. There are 50 states in the Union. There are three branches of Government.</p>	<p>He came to live with his brother. He has a very big dog. He knows how to ride a bike. He wanted to find a job. He wanted to talk to his boss. He went to the post office. His wife is at work in the house. I am too busy to talk today. I bought a blue car today. I came to _____ (city) today for my interview. I count the cars as they pass by the office. I drive a blue car to work. I go to work every day. I have three children. I know how to speak English. I live in the state of _____. I want to be a United States citizen. It is a good job to start with. My car does not work. She can speak English very well. She cooks for her friends. She is my daughter, and he is my son. She needs to buy some new clothes. She wanted to live near her brother. She was happy with her house. The boy threw a ball. The children brought a newspaper. The children play at school. The children wanted a television. The man wanted to get a job. The teacher was proud of her class. The white house has a big tree. They are a very happy family. They are very happy with their car. They buy many things at the store. They came to live in the United States. They go to the grocery store. They have horses on their farm. They live together in a big house. They work well together. Today I am going to the store. Today is a sunny day. Warm clothing was on sale in the store. We are very smart to learn this. We have a very clean house. You cook very well. You drink too much coffee. You work very hard at your job.</p>