

Understanding Good Citizenship

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 3–5

Curriculum Focus: Civics

Lesson Duration: 3–4 class periods

Program Description

Who is a Citizen? (5:42) – Discover how a person becomes a U.S. citizen. *Rights & Responsibilities* (3:52) – Explore the rights and responsibilities of all U.S. citizens, including the right to an education and the responsibility to obey laws. *Volunteering* (4:11) – See how civic-mindedness is an important part of being a good citizen. *Government Organization and Leadership* (5:31) – Investigate how the U.S. government is organized and explore the qualities of a good leader.

Onscreen Questions

- What are two ways to become a citizen of the United States?
 - What are two responsibilities of all citizens?
 - How could you volunteer to help?
 - What are the three branches of government?
-

Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Describe civic-mindedness.
- Identify four ways to practice civic-mindedness.
- Organize and participate in a civic-minded activity.

Materials

- *Understanding Good Citizenship* video
- Chart paper
- Black felt tip marker
- Computer with Internet access (optional)
- Reference books
- Writing paper

- Pencils and erasers
- Poster board or large construction paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Procedures

1. After watching *Understanding Good Citizenship*, discuss the rights and responsibilities we enjoy as U.S. citizens. What is expected from us as citizens? What should we expect from our government?
2. Next, focus the discussion on civic-mindedness. As citizens we are expected to care about our communities and neighbors. What does being civic-minded mean to you? Have you ever participated in a civic-minded activity? In what ways do you help your community, friends, and neighbors?
3. Tell the class that they will be organizing and participating in a civic project. Talk about some issues at school or in your community. Examples include: trash on the playground, the need for new library books, food or clothing donations, a local park that needs cleaning or repair. Make a list on a piece of chart paper and vote on the issue that the class would like to address.
4. Research the chosen issue. Divide the class into groups and assign a question for each to research, using reference books, community resources, and the Internet. Write the class findings on a piece of chart paper and discuss the issue.
 - What is the issue?
 - What facts or statistics can we find about this issue?
 - What has already been done?
 - What more could be done?
 - Are there any individuals or groups currently addressing this issue?
5. Once students are familiar with the issue, have them write individual letters to a local government or school official. Their letters should indicate the issue and what they think should be done about it. Remind students of the five parts of a letter (heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature) and what should be included in each part. Give them time in class and as a homework assignment to work on their letters. Edit and mail the finished letters.
6. Ask students to think of an event they could organize and participate in that would address the issue. This could be a school or community food drive, a bake sale to raise donations for an organization, or a park or playground clean-up day. Have the class pick one event to organize.
7. Choose an event date and discuss how to organize and advertise the event. Divide the class into groups and assign a planning task to each group.
 - Create posters or fliers to advertise the event.
 - Select a location for the event. If it is a donation drive or a bake sale, it could be at your school or local community center.

- Determine what supplies are needed for the event and who is responsible for providing the supplies. If it is a clean-up day, you will need gloves and trash bags. If it is a bake sale, you will need materials for pricing the items.
 - If it is a food or clothing drive, determine the logistics of collecting and donating the food or clothing. Who will collect the donations? Who will deliver the donations to the chosen organization?
 - If it is a bake sale, determine how you will get the items to sell. Will you use a sign-up sheet? Will it be for just your class or the entire school?
 - Determine a schedule and task assignments so each student knows their responsibilities during the event.
8. When the date of the event arrives, make sure students are present and participating. After the event, talk about what the class accomplished. How did their project make a difference in their school or community? How did participating in the project make them feel? Why is it important to do your civic duty as a citizen? Have each student write a paragraph about the civic project. Their paragraphs should address what they had hoped to accomplish and what actually was accomplished, what they did to participate in the project, what being civic-minded means to them, and why it is important that we do our civic duty as citizens.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students easily and thoughtfully described the idea of civic-mindedness in their own words; identified four different ways a citizen can practice civic-mindedness; and greatly participated in organizing and volunteering for the class' civic project.
- **2 points:** Students adequately described the idea of civic-mindedness in their own words; identified at least two different ways a citizen can practice civic-mindedness; and somewhat participated in organizing and volunteering for the class civic project.
- **1 point:** Students were unable to describe the idea of civic-mindedness in their own words; identified one or fewer different ways a citizen can practice civic-mindedness; and minimally participated in organizing and volunteering for the class civic project or did not participate in the project at all.

Vocabulary

citizen

Definition: a person owing loyalty to and entitled by birth or naturalization to the protection of a state or nation

Context: U.S. citizens are protected by the laws of our nation.

civic-minded

Definition: concerned with civic interests or active in community affairs

Context: Civic-mindedness is an important part of being a good citizen.

community

Definition: a group of people living in the same locality and under the same government

Context: Volunteering in your community is an important part of being a good citizen.

responsibility

Definition: something for which one is responsible; a duty or obligation

Context: It is your responsibility to do your homework every night.

right

Definition: something that is due to a person or governmental body by law, tradition, or nature

Context: Every American citizen has the right to an education.

volunteer

Definition: to performs or offer to perform a service of one's own free will; a person who does charitable or helpful work without pay

Context: The students decided to volunteer at the local soup kitchen.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Historical Understanding – Understands the historical perspective
- Civics – Understands ideas about civic life, politics, and government; Understands the meaning of citizenship in the United States, and knows the requirements of citizenship and naturalization; Understands the importance of political leadership, public service, and a knowledgeable citizenry in American constitutional democracy

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Civic Ideals and Practices
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
-

DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. Who is a Citizen? (6 min.)

Discover how a person becomes a citizen of the United States.

II. Rights and Responsibilities (4 min.)

Learn about the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens and compare the similarities of being a good student and a good citizen.

III. Volunteering (4 min.)

See how civic-mindedness is an important part of good citizenship.

IV. Government Organization and Leadership (6 min.)

Learn about the organization the U.S. government and explore qualities of a good leader.

CURRICULUM UNITS

1. Becoming a U.S. Citizen

Pre-viewing question

Q: What does being a good citizen mean to you?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What are the responsibilities of U.S. citizens?

A: U.S. citizens have the responsibility to respect and follow the law, pay taxes, serve on juries and make decisions based on the law, and vote for government representatives.

2. Challenges for New Citizens

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why would a person from another country want to become a U.S. citizen?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Approximately how many foreign-born people live in the United States?

A: More than 30 million foreign-born people live in the United States today.

3. A Good Student and Citizen

Pre-viewing question

Q: What responsibilities do you have as a student?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What are some rights of U.S. citizens?

A: Every U.S. citizen has the right to an education, the right to be treated with respect, the freedom to express opinions, and the equal right to befriend anyone.

4. Showing Civic-Mindedness

Pre-viewing question

Q: How do you help friends or neighbors in your community?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What is civic-mindedness? How can a person show civic-mindedness?

A: Civic-mindedness is concern for the well being of a community. Writing a letter to a government representative about a problem or issue, organizing an event to promote awareness of an issue, or volunteering are ways to show civic-mindedness.



5. Branches of U.S. Government

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about the structure of the U.S. government?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What are the responsibilities of the three branches of government?

A: The legislative branch creates laws. The executive branch approves, carries out, and enforces the laws created by the legislative branch, and it controls the military. The judicial branch oversees the court system.

6. Choosing Government Leaders

Pre-viewing question

Q: What qualities should a good leader have?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What did the leaders featured in the program accomplish?

A: George Washington was the first President. Abraham Lincoln ended slavery. John F. Kennedy worked for democracy around the world. Martin Luther King, Jr., fought for civil rights.