

## Understanding Citizenship

14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment, Section 1	<i>All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge [take away] the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.</i>
From Kids Law	<i>The 14th Amendment is a very important amendment that defines what it means to be a U.S. citizen and protects certain rights of the people. The Citizenship Clause gives individuals born in the United States – but especially at that time, African Americans – the right to citizenship. Before the 14th amendment, African Americans could not become citizens, and this limited the rights of those who were able to escape slavery and become free. This clause allows all people born in the United States to be U.S. citizens. Once you have American citizenship, it cannot be taken from you by Congress or other authorities, unless you lie to the government during the process to get U.S. citizenship. Otherwise, everyone who becomes an American citizen stays an American citizen, unless they give it up themselves.</i>
Definition of citizenship	
What is a citizen?	

### Citizenship: Just the Facts

#### Three Ways of Becoming a Citizen of the United States

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#### Naturalization Process

Using complete sentences, explain the naturalization process.

#### Impact of the Naturalization Process Discussion

# Citizenship: Just the Facts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Becoming A Citizen

**Citizenship** means being a member of a nation or country and having full rights and responsibilities under the law. In the United States, there are three ways to become a citizen: being born in the United States, having parents who are citizens of the United States, and going through a process called naturalization.



New citizens take the Oath of Allegiance at a naturalization ceremony in Boston.

**Naturalization** is the process that allows immigrants to become citizens. Most people who apply for citizenship fall into this category. To qualify, an immigrant must be at least 18 years old and have been permanent residents of the United States for 5 years. They must also have good character, speak English, and pass a civics test and an interview. The last step involves taking an Oath of Allegiance to the United States and our Constitution. There is one shortcut: People who serve in the U.S. military for at least one year can become citizens sooner because they have demonstrated their commitment to the United States.

## The Oath of Allegiance

I hereby declare, on oath,

potentate: ruler

that I absolutely and entirely renounce and **abjure** all **allegiance** and fidelity to any foreign prince, **potentate**, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have **heretofore** been a subject or citizen;

abjure: reject

heretofore: until now

that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic;

that I will *bear true faith* and **allegiance** to the same;

that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law;

that I will perform **noncombatant service** in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law;

noncombatant service: duties other than fighting

that I will perform work of national importance under *civilian direction* when required by the law;

and that I take this obligation freely without any *mental reservation* or purpose of **evasion**; so help me God.

reservation: doubt about something

evasion: avoiding the truth