

Week Three: Nim and the War Effort

Theme: Citizenship, Patriotism

1: Ice Breaker

Hand out note cards and pencils and ask everyone to write down one question they think should be on the naturalization exam for foreigners to become U.S. citizens. As a reminder, they don't necessarily have to know the answer to the question. Ask people to read aloud the questions and have a discussion of the naturalization process. Ask: Should we all have to take this test? Should we choose to become citizens at age 18 instead of automatically be granted citizenship?

Frame the discussion: We will be talking about citizenship and patriotism in our discussion of Nim and the War Effort.

2: Passage from the book

Ask: At what point in the story did you know that Nim is an American citizen? Find passages and pictures to read and discuss. What evidence made you believe that she wasn't? Find passages and pictures to read and discuss.

Possible continuation of the conversation: Make lists of American and Chinese elements of Nim's life.

3: Discussion

Part of what makes this book so rich for discussion and powerful are the images. We've talked about the role of symbols in conveying messages (The Children's Story) and role of the media, as well as the conflicting versions of the truth that coexist (Nothing but the Truth). Let's look at this page of Nim at school. Ask: What is going on in this picture? How is it similar to or different from what is going on at your school these days? What are some people at your school doing to express their opinions about the war? Which of these actions are patriotic?

4: Closing activity/for further reflection

Take suggestions from the group of actions of citizenship and/or patriotism. Examples might be voting, protesting, volunteering, shopping (paying taxes), helping neighbors, writing letters, attending neighborhood meetings...

Designate small groups and assign each group one action. Give 5 minutes to come up with a 30 second commercial advocating the importance of this action as a right and/or responsibility of a patriot and citizen. As a reminder, symbols are very useful and powerful in conveying messages AND the media typically tells one perspective and transmits one message (ie, not the whole story). Provide paper and markers and suggest various techniques (silent drama, narration, music jingles, setting the stage or context).

Wrap up: We discussed citizenship and patriotism and how they are part of the way people identify with a group, or belong. We all belong to many groups: our family, or school class or grade, clubs, teams, neighborhoods. Hand out geometric shape activity for take home. BRING IT BACK NEXT WEEK! None of our cubes will be the same. Think creatively about all the ways you identify yourself

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You may apply for naturalization if:

1. You have been a lawful permanent resident for five years.
2. You have been a lawful permanent resident for three years, have been married to a US citizen for those three years, and continue to be married to that U.S. citizen.;
3. You are a lawful permanent resident child of United States citizen parents: or
4. You have qualifying military service.

Children under 18 may automatically become citizens when their parents naturalize. You may inquire at your local Immigration and Naturalization Service Center for further information.

In addition, the law requires an understanding of English (speaking, reading and writing) and the history, principles, and form of government of the United States, good moral character, attachment to the principles of the Constitution, and favorable disposition toward the United States. Ineligibility may be due to failure to meet any of the above requirements of as a result of opposition to the U.S. Government or U.S. law, favoring totalitarian forms of government, desertion from or refusal to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States or certain serious criminal offenses.

The concept of dual citizenship recognizes that a person may have and exercise rights of nationality in two countries and be subject to the responsibilities of both. The mere fact that he /she searched the right of one citizenship does not mean that he/she renounces the other.

Nonetheless, official U.S. policy has been to discourage the incidence of dual nationality. The Government accepts but does not recognize or approve of dual nationality. The Government accepts it: "only as the result of separate conflicting laws of other countries."

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE CITIZENSHIP EXAM

(from Federal Citizenship Texts published by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and sold by the Government Printing Office)

- What kind of government does the U.S. have?
- Whose rights are guaranteed by the Constitution?
- Who controls the government in the United States? How?
- In which branch of the federal government do the President and Vice President work?
- Name one qualification of the Presidency.
- What is the purpose of primary elections in choosing a President?
- What are some possible differences between the U.S. Constitution and state constitutions?
- How many branches do all state governments have, and what are they called?
- Name one power of a state governor.
- What is a common characteristic of all local governments.
- Name one example of why democracy was not complete in the colonies.
- What holiday, still celebrated in the U.S., was begun by colonists?
- Why are amendments added to the Constitution?
- Name two precedents set by the first President.
- Name one result of the War of 1812.
- Name two issues which helped to cause the Civil War.
- Describe briefly U.S. policy toward immigration before 1917.
- Did the Allies or Central powers win World War I?
- What important event took place at Pearl Harbor in 1941?
- Name one positive result of the Watergate affair during Nixon's Presidency.