



Enhancing Citizenship Lessons with Technology

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Agenda

- Naturalization process and interview
- Recent changes
- Wayground
- Padlet
- Flippity
- Strategies and considerations for teaching citizenship
- Discussion
- Resources
- Questions

Naturalization process (in brief)

- Applicants must have a green card (be a legal permanent resident) for at least five years, or three years if married to a citizen.
 - Can apply up to 90 days before the five-year or three-year point
 - Some exceptions (e.g., based on military service)
 - Rules about “physical presence” and “continuous residence” in the U.S.
- Biometrics appointment (if necessary)
- Submit N-400 application: \$710 if filing online, \$760 if filing on paper

Naturalization interview

- Civics test
 - Topics:
 - U.S. history
 - Principles and system of government
 - Rights and responsibilities
 - Symbols and holidays
 - Current leaders (president, governor, senator, etc.)
 - Oral, not written
 - Not multiple-choice
 - Many questions have more than one possible answer; some require multiple answers.

Naturalization interview

- Reading and writing tests
 - [Reading vocabulary](#) and [writing vocabulary](#)
 - Read a question aloud – e.g., “Where does the president live?”
 - Write a dictated sentence (the answer to the question) – e.g., “The president lives in the White House.”
- Assessment of speaking and listening skills, based on small talk and (especially) N-400 application
- [Exemptions](#) for applicants who have had a green card for many years (e.g., “65/20 exemption”)

Naturalization interview

- [N-400](#)
 - Personal information
 - Marital history
 - Children
 - Employment history
 - Trips outside the U.S.
 - Part 9 (“Have you ever...?”)
 - Officers sometimes ask applicants to define terms on the application as a way to test their English.

Recent changes

- New civics test (2025 test)
 - For applicants who file on or after October 20, 2025
 - Similar to the test (briefly) implemented in 2020-2021
 - [128 questions](#) – must get 12/20 correct
 - [Study guide](#)
- Old civics test (2008 test)
 - For applicants who filed before October 20, 2025
 - [100 questions](#) – must get 6/10 correct
 - [Comparison of old and new tests](#)

Other changes

- [Proposed increase in application fee](#)
- [“Good moral character” standard](#)
- [Neighborhood checks](#)
- [Screening social media](#)
- [Longer processing times](#)

Resources for the civics tests

- I knew of a number of useful resources for the 2008 test:
 - [USCIS questions and answers with audio](#)
 - [Preparing for the Oath](#)
 - [USA Learns](#)
 - [USCIS practice test](#)

Resources for the civics tests

- I noticed that there weren't many resources for the 2025 test, so I decided to create some:
 - [Practice test](#)
 - [Practice test with audio](#)
 - These links and many others are on the [citizenship resources page](#) on my program's website.
 - Let's try!

Wayground (formerly Quizizz)

- Interactive, “gamified” assessments with a variety of question types (similar to Kahoot), as well as other activities
- Assessments can be teacher-led (during a lesson) or student-paced (assigned for homework).
- Works well with online or in-person classes
- Generates useful reports with lots of data for teachers
- Basic account is free, with a limit on how many activities you can create; premium account is \$216/year, unless on a school/district plan.

Assessment question types

Basic/Free

- Multiple choice
- Multi-select
- True or false
- Fill in the blanks
- Open ended
- Draw
- Poll
- Word cloud
- Passage
- Slide
- Interactive video

Premium

- Match
- Categorize
- Drag and drop
- Reorder
- Dropdown
- Hot text
- Labeling
- Hotspot
- Audio response (in addition to audio questions)
- Video response

Other Wayground components

- Standalone activities (all free):
 - Presentations/slideshows
 - Interactive videos
 - Interactive reading passages
 - Flashcards
- Upload documents, PDFs, YouTube videos, etc. to use in activities
- Search for and adapt pre-existing activities
- Many AI features

More citizenship ideas using Wayground

- Audio response questions for students to practice answering the civics questions orally
- Audio response questions for students to practice reading aloud for the reading test (e.g., “Where does the president live?”)
- Audio questions for students to practice dictations for the writing test (e.g., “The president lives in the White House.”)
- Interactive video activities using mock interviews from YouTube — students answer comprehension questions while watching
- True/false questions for low-level or struggling students

More citizenship ideas using Wayground

- For low-literacy students, a variety of question types to practice spelling for the writing test (e.g., “Thanksgiving,” “November”)
- “Categorize” questions to sort items into groups (e.g., the three branches of government)
- “Reorder” questions to work on sequencing (e.g., wars and other historical events)
- “Match” questions to practice information on the civics test (e.g., presidents and what they are famous for) or N-400
- Slides to help teach about history, government, etc.
- See examples [here](#).

Padlet

- Shared bulletin boards on which teachers and students can post text, images, videos, audio recordings, and more
- Free account: Three(ish) “padlets” or boards, which you can clear and reuse as often as you want, with access to all types of posts
- Paid accounts:
 - Platinum plan: \$15/month or \$120/year for unlimited padlets
 - Classroom/school plans offer student accounts, but I don’t think these are necessary for most teachers.

Creating and posting to a board

- Format types, recipes (templates), and AI creation option
- Title, wallpaper, and other settings
- What can you post?
 - Text
 - Audio
 - Videos
 - Images
 - Links
 - Files
 - And more!

Citizenship ideas using Padlet

- “Regular” text posts to practice sentences for the writing test
- Audio recordings to practice answering questions from the civics test
- YouTube videos (e.g., examples of the naturalization interview) with questions for students to answer
- Images and text to help teach about U.S. history, government, etc. (see slideshow mode)
- Links to other websites/activities (e.g., Wayground activity to practice N-400 vocabulary)
- Let’s practice!

Padlet Arcade

- AI tool to create interactive games/activities
- Start by entering a topic, uploading a file, or adding a link to a website or YouTube video.
- Select a game type, edit as needed, and then play/share; games can be posted to a Padlet board.
- Free account is needed to create and save games; there's currently no limit on the number of games you can create.

Padlet tips

- Sandboxes are a cool feature to create shared whiteboards.
- You can save posts before clearing/deleting a board.
- There are multiple ways to prevent students from seeing each other's work (if you don't want that), such as manually approving posts.
- Padlet works well on all devices, but if there's a problem, you or your students might benefit from downloading the app. (The same goes for Wayground.)
- Explore the settings!

Flippity

- Free tool to create interactive games and other activities
- Some activities are “quick and easy” to make; others require modifying a template in Google Sheets (with a free Google account).
- Some activities, such as crossword puzzles, are designed to be printed rather than played online.
- Ideas for citizenship: quiz show (civics questions), manipulatives (writing test), flashcards (N-400 vocabulary)

Citizenship teaching strategies

- Focus on what your students need!
- Oral Q&A to practice for civics test
- Reading aloud to practice for reading test
- Dictations to practice for writing test
- Mock interviews based on N-400
- Have students practice asking for repetition or clarification.
- Practice small talk.
- Use videos of sample interviews.

Citizenship teaching strategies

- When more than one answer is possible, choose the simplest one.
- Identify commonly confused questions.
- Point out key words in questions.
- Ask questions in different ways.
- For low-literacy students, focus on spelling and reading/writing sentences using the word lists.
- Work on N-400 vocabulary with those who are comfortable with everything else.
- Homework: WhatsApp dictations, YouTube videos, etc.

Other considerations

- The civics test is oral. Being able to read the questions and write the answers is helpful, but not essential.
- The civics test is also not multiple-choice. Providing answer choices is OK for practice purposes, but students shouldn't rely on them.
- It's up to the teacher and student to determine how much detail to get into about U.S. history, government, etc., since the civics test only covers basic facts. This will depend on how much time students have before their interview, their level of interest, the teacher's preferences, etc.

Other considerations

- Some officers are more lenient than others (for example, when assessing students' English skills), so interview experiences may vary. Directives from the current administration may also affect how officers conduct interviews.
- Applicants get a second chance if they don't pass one or more parts of the interview. If they don't pass the second time, they can apply again.
- We are not immigration attorneys (with a few exceptions). Students may have specific issues that we are not in a position to address.

Discussion

1. Which tech tool or feature are you most interested in trying?
2. What challenges do you foresee in using these tools or teaching citizenship more generally?
3. What are your takeaways from this workshop?

Resources

- Books:
 - *Voices of Freedom*, Bill Bliss
 - *Citizenship: Passing the Test* series, Lynne Weintraub
- Websites:
 - [List of resources on Newton Free Library website](#)
 - [Current leaders](#)
 - [Citizenship with Jackie YouTube channel](#)
 - [Lynne Weintraub's study guide](#) (good for reading and writing practice; not updated for 2025 civics test)

Resources

- Websites:
 - [ECHO for Citizenship Educators](#)
 - [USAHello Citizenship Guide](#)
 - [Citizenship News](#) (Lynne Weintraub)
 - [USCIS](#)

Feedback wanted!

- Please fill out [this feedback form](#)! (Click on the link or scan the QR code below.)





Thank you!

Feel free to contact me with any comments
or questions:

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