

Lesson Plan: Citizenship

Key Concepts:

Citizenship
Rights
Responsibilities
Bystander
Patriotism
Democracy

Materials:

- White board, chalkboard, overhead projector, or easel with chart paper
- Downloadable testimony clips:
Testimony - Citizenship
- TV and DVD player and/or a computer with a broadband connection is recommended for viewing directly from the online resource *Creating Character*
- Student Handouts:
Viewing Guide - Citizenship
Group Activity - "What if it Happened Here?"
Independent Practice - Citizenship
(Possible alternative: use a transparency of the above student handouts in lieu of individual copies.)

Time Required:

1-2 Class Periods

Objectives:

- Students will explore and develop an understanding of the concept of citizenship.
- Students will identify the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Students will evaluate how a group of citizens becomes the target of discrimination.
- Students will identify the effects that a loss of citizenship has on individuals and society.
- Students will evaluate their personal responsibility toward others who are being discriminated against.
- Students will identify actions they can take to prevent citizens from losing their rights.
- Students will work with visual history testimony.
- Students will use visual history testimony to examine the impact the loss of citizenship had on survivors of the Holocaust.

Procedures:

1. Instruct students to write about one of the following prompts:
 - What is citizenship?
 - What does it mean to be a citizen?
 - What benefits do people have in the United States as a result of being a citizen?
 - What are the responsibilities of citizenship?
 - If tomorrow you were told that you were no longer a citizen of this country, how do you think your life would change?
2. On the white board, chart paper, or overhead projector, create two categories titled "Benefits of Citizenship" and "Responsibilities of Citizenship."
3. Facilitate a large group discussion of student responses. Ask students to identify ideas that were similar between classmates. Ask students to identify ideas that were different between classmates. As students share their responses, record their ideas under one of the two categories.
4. Inform students that they are about to watch testimony clips taken from testimonies given by Holocaust survivors and witnesses. Explain to students that the following clips are brief excerpts from longer interviews.

*NOTE: Some background knowledge of the Holocaust is necessary for students to understand the context of the visual history testimony clips. Some general resources are available on the USC Shoah Foundation Institute website at www.usc.edu/vhi or in the bibliography listed in the Additional Resources section. In addition, comprehensive classroom lessons that provide historical context on the Holocaust are included in **Echoes and Reflections – a multimedia curriculum on the Holocaust**, available at www.echoesandreflections.org.*

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5. Distribute copies of the Student Handout: *Viewing Guide - Citizenship*.

*ALTERNATIVE: You may want to display a transparency of the **Viewing Guide** using the overhead projector and allow students to create their own replica.*

6. Play testimony clips: *Testimony - Citizenship*.
7. Inform students that as they are watching the video, they should look for actions that each survivor took regarding citizenship. Students should write these actions in the “actions” column.

NOTE: For clarification, you may want to pause the video after playing each testimony clip or play the clips more than once.

8. After viewing all three of the testimony clips, students should then describe the survivor’s viewpoint regarding their German citizenship. These answers should be written in the “viewpoint” column. Students should then create a definition of citizenship based on the testimonies and viewpoints and write it in the “Define Citizenship” circle.
9. Based on the testimonies and viewpoints expressed, students should then create their own definition of citizenship and write it in the “define citizenship” circle.
10. Conduct a large class discussion using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - Based on the testimony clips viewed, what are the many ways in which interviewees on the testimony clips define citizenship?
 - Based on the testimonies, what do you think being a citizen means to each of these survivors?
 - What does being a citizen mean to you? How are these meanings similar? How are these meanings different?
 - What benefits of United States citizenship were identified in the testimonies? What do you feel is the greatest benefit of citizenship?
 - What are the responsibilities of having citizenship? How were these responsibilities exemplified in the actions described in the testimonies?
 - What do you think is the most important responsibility of citizenship?
11. Divide students into groups of approximately 4-5 students. In this group activity, students will imagine the circumstances that could lead to the persecution of a group of citizens in the United States. The purpose of the activity is to get students to analyze how a similar event like the Holocaust could happen in the U.S., and how they might react under the circumstances.

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12. Students should understand that the persecution of a particular group of citizens can happen, and has happened, in the United States. Inform or review with your students some or all of the following topics. The websites provided may be useful in finding additional information if needed.
- At the same time the Holocaust was taking place in Europe during WWII, the U.S. was interning Japanese-Americans in camps throughout California and elsewhere in the United States.
(http://goforbroke.org/learning/learning_teachers_lesson_japanese.asp)
 - Additional groups of Americans who have suffered a loss of rights under our laws include: Native Americans (loss of property; www.nativeweb.org), African Americans (voting and equality rights; www.africanamericans.com), Chinese Americans (denial of immigration and citizenship rights; www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/chineseexperience.html), etc.
 - Women, people with disabilities and homosexuals have also been forced to fight for equal rights (www.aclu.org).

NOTE: It should be acknowledged that students will have difficulty comprehending the true thoughts and feelings of members of these persecuted groups. In order for students to understand their responsibility as citizens in preventing such occurrences from happening, it is the goal of this activity to provide students with the opportunity to consider the consequences of such institutionalized discrimination.

13. Instruct student groups to pretend that a group of citizens in their country will be discriminated against just as these other groups have been. Each student group will decide which group of citizens will be discriminated against and under what circumstances this will occur.

*NOTE: Teachers should be aware that some students may have highly emotional responses to group choices. Teachers should monitor group choices to make sure they are appropriate for the class. Students do not have to choose their group of citizens based solely on ethnicity or religion. Teachers should encourage students to think of other criteria, including physical features (eye color), education (people who drop out of high school) socio-economic levels (lawyers), behavior (bad drivers) etc. **Teacher discretion should be used.***

14. Distribute copies of the Student Handout: *Group Activity - "What if it Happened Here?"* Inform students that they will answer the first three questions as a group. Once they decide the circumstances of discrimination regarding the group of citizens they chose, they will then respond to questions regarding what action they will take in response to this discrimination. They may work as a group or individually to answer the rest of the questions.
15. Inform students that once each group is finished, they will give a small presentation to the class regarding the circumstances of their group of citizens. Allow the rest of the class to discuss and question each group after their presentation.

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- 16.** Conduct a large class discussion using some or all of the following as a guide:
- Was it difficult to decide which group of citizens would be persecuted? How did it make you feel?
 - What happens when you imagine that the circumstances you created ever actually happening in the United States? Explain.
 - What conditions might lead to a group of citizens being singled-out?
 - What methods do you think the government might use to turn you against a certain group of citizens?
 - How did having to consider leaving the United States make you feel? Where did you consider going? What if no other country would allow you to enter? Did you have an alternative plan in mind?
 - How does it make you feel to imagine losing your U.S. citizenship? How do you think you might respond if you were not a citizen of the United States?
 - In what ways were you willing to openly protest the persecution of these citizens?
 - How can we prevent the government from taking away the rights of citizens?
 - How can we prevent society from singling out and discriminating against certain groups?
 - How do you become a citizen of the United States? Do you think becoming a citizen is a difficult process? If yes, why? Should everyone be allowed to become a citizen? Explain.
 - Does considering this kind of discrimination change your mind regarding certain prejudices you might hold against others?
- 17.** For homework or independent practice, assign one or more of the following activities:
- ALTERNATIVE: Have students choose the activity they would like to do for homework or practice.*
- Distribute the Student Handout: *Independent Practice - Citizenship*. Respond to each question by writing a few sentences that explain why you agree or disagree with each of the given statements.
 - Write a journal entry or reflection on the following prompt:
Robert Mendler says that he is a free man and that this is the most important thing. Do you agree with him that freedom is the most important thing in life? What is his definition of freedom? What is your definition of freedom? Is there something more important than freedom? If so, what is more important?

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- Choose one of the following quotes and write a response to its author that explains why you either agree or disagree with the quote. In your response, reference your own experiences, the experiences exemplified in the testimony clips viewed, and/or the outcomes and insights garnered from class activities and class discussions of citizenship.
 - **And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world; ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.**
— *John F. Kennedy*
 - **The brave man inattentive to his duty is worth little more to his country than the coward who deserts in the hour of danger.**
— *Andrew Jackson*

Extension Activities:

1. Research the process of becoming a citizen of the United States. Volunteer to help a local group that offers classes for those preparing to become citizens. Attend a citizenship ceremony.
2. Interview a person in your community who became a citizen of the United States. Be sure to ask about the following:
 - Why did the person become a citizen?
 - What was the process of becoming a citizen?
 - Why did they feel citizenship was important?Share the results of your interview with your class.
3. Research and present other examples throughout history in which people were either denied citizenship or their rights as citizens. Examples can include:
 - Japanese Americans during World War II
 - Indigenous people in various North and South American countries
 - Indigenous people in Australia
 - Black South Africans during Apartheid

Viewing Guide: Citizenship

Name _____

As the testimony clips for *Citizenship* are viewed, complete the two columns below:

Interviewee

Actions taken regarding citizenship

Viewpoint of survivors regarding (German) citizenship

Dina Gottliebova-Babbitt

Robert Mendler

Henry Adler

Your definition of citizenship:

Viewing Guide: Citizenship

Teacher's Answer Key

Name _____

As the testimony clips for *Citizenship* are viewed, complete the two columns below:

Interviewee

Actions taken regarding citizenship

Viewpoint of survivors regarding (German) citizenship

Dina Gottliebova-Babbitt

Dina describes having to wear a yellow Jewish star on her clothes identifying her as a Jew.

Dina looked forward to going to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp, so she could be with Jewish people.

She turns away or acts preoccupied when German soldiers march by because she cannot salute "Heil Hitler."

All German citizens were supposed to say "Heil Hitler" when the troops marched by, but she couldn't because she was considered a non-citizen even though she was German.

Robert Mendler

Robert can express himself, he can vote, he can do whatever he wants because he is free.

Robert is very grateful to be in the United States because he can enjoy the freedoms the U.S. has to offer.

If anyone tries to call him names because he is a Jew, he now has the ability to defend himself freely because he is a citizen of the United States.

Henry Adler

Henry's father decided not to leave Germany even though his mother saw the warning signs and danger of staying.

Henry's father believed that he was a German before he was a Jew.

He thought being a Jew was just his religion, not his citizenship or nationality.

His father believed that the "period of evil" under Hitler would pass.

Your definition of citizenship:

Group Activity: "What if it Happened Here?"

Name _____

In this group activity, imagine the circumstances that would lead to the persecution of a group of citizens in the United States. The purpose of this activity is to analyze how an event similar to the Holocaust could happen here and to evaluate what your actions might be under the circumstances.

As a group, analyze and create answers for questions 1-3:

1. What group of citizens in the United States will lose their rights?
(Keep in mind the group does not have to be defined by race or religion.)
2. What will be the circumstances of their persecution?
(Why will they be discriminated against?)
3. What kind of rights will they lose? (What will happen to them?)

Together as a group, or individually, discuss and answer the following questions:

4. If you were a citizen of the group being persecuted, would you resist?
If yes, how would you resist? If no, why not?
5. Would you leave the United States? If yes, where would you go? If you were not allowed into another country, what would you do? Would you try to hide? If so, where would you hide?
6. If you were not a citizen of the group being discriminated against, would you openly protest the persecution of this group? If yes, how? If no, why not?
7. Would you risk your life to help citizens of this group? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Reflection Questions:

8. How can we prevent citizens from losing their rights today?
9. Do you believe there are any groups of citizens currently being persecuted in the United States? If yes, who are they and what are the circumstances of their persecution?
10. How can one person prevent the persecution and discrimination of another?

Independent Practice: Citizenship

Respond to each statement by writing an explanation as to why you agree or disagree.

Name _____

1. A citizen is defined only by the country he or she lives in.

I agree/disagree because:

2. A government should treat all of its citizens equally.

I agree/disagree because:

3. Being a citizen means you should be responsible to your country at all times.

I agree/disagree because:

4. Your identification with your country is more important than your identification with a group (i.e., race, religion, ethnicity, etc.).

I agree/disagree because: