# Citizenship Paths

Citizenship at birth and citizenship through naturalization

**9-12.GOV.19** "Explain the requirements to be considered a natural-born U.S. citizen, and describe the process of naturalization, including the knowledge required by the Naturalization Test."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the rules for citizenship at birth, circle the requirements for naturalization, and number the steps in the naturalization process. Use your marks to explain how the two paths differ.

### When Does Citizenship Begin?

1. Imagine three people hoping to run for president. The Constitution says the president must be a natural-born citizen, meaning a U.S. citizen from birth rather than someone who became a citizen later through naturalization. A person born in the United States is generally a citizen at birth if subject to U.S. jurisdiction. One exception involves children of foreign diplomats. A child born abroad can also be a citizen at birth through a U.S. citizen parent if the law's conditions are met.

2. Now imagine a neighbor who immigrated and has a green card. Most adults seeking naturalization must be at least 18 and have held lawful permanent resident status for five years; some spouses of U.S. citizens may qualify after three years. Applicants must also meet rules about time spent in the United States and good moral character. They file an application, provide fingerprints for background checks, and attend an interview. Naturalization grants citizenship later in life, not at birth.

3. At the interview, an officer checks the application and tests English speaking, reading, and writing, unless an exemption applies. A civics test asks about U.S. government and history, such as the branches of government and the Constitution. Some applicants qualify for test exceptions or accommodations. After approval, an applicant usually takes the Oath of Allegiance at a ceremony and becomes a citizen. The test checks civic knowledge needed in the naturalization process; passing it does not make someone a natural-born citizen.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Leah was born in Ohio to parents who are not foreign diplomats. Omar first became a U.S. citizen at age 30 through naturalization. Which person could be natural-born, and why?

2. Ravi was born outside the United States to a U.S. citizen parent. What must be checked before deciding whether he was a citizen at birth?

3. An adult has held a green card for two years and is not married to a U.S. citizen. Why does this person not yet meet the usual green card time requirement for naturalization?

4. What English and civics knowledge does a typical applicant demonstrate at the interview, and what action usually follows approval?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences comparing two invented people: one born abroad who is a citizen at birth through a U.S. citizen parent, and one immigrant who naturalizes. State what must be true about the parent, and include two naturalization requirements and one civics test topic.

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## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the rules for citizenship at birth, circle the requirements for naturalization, and number the steps in the naturalization process. Use your marks to explain how the two paths differ. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Leah was born in Ohio to parents who are not foreign diplomats. Omar first became a U.S. citizen at age 30 through naturalization. Which person could be natural-born, and why? | **Leah could be natural-born because she was a citizen at birth. Omar became a citizen later through naturalization.** |
| 2 | Ravi was born outside the United States to a U.S. citizen parent. What must be checked before deciding whether he was a citizen at birth? | **Check whether his parent met the legal conditions for passing U.S. citizenship to a child born abroad.** |
| 3 | An adult has held a green card for two years and is not married to a U.S. citizen. Why does this person not yet meet the usual green card time requirement for naturalization? | **The usual requirement is five years as a lawful permanent resident, so two years is not enough.** |
| 4 | What English and civics knowledge does a typical applicant demonstrate at the interview, and what action usually follows approval? | **The applicant demonstrates English speaking, reading, and writing and answers civics questions about U.S. government and history. After approval, the applicant usually takes the Oath of Allegiance.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Mina was born abroad to a U.S. citizen mother and is a citizen from birth because her mother met the legal conditions to pass on citizenship. Mina did not need to naturalize. After five years as a lawful permanent resident, Arturo applied for naturalization and attended an interview. He met the rules about time spent in the United States, answered civics questions about the branches of government, and took the Oath of Allegiance after approval.

Accept other accurate birth circumstances and naturalization requirements. For a child born abroad, the response must recognize that a citizen parent alone does not establish citizenship at birth without meeting the applicable legal conditions.