

Paths to Citizenship

Read how U.S. citizenship can begin at birth or be gained later.

CE.6.a “describing the processes by which an individual becomes a citizen of the United States;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each phrase that names a way a person can become a U.S. citizen. Number the steps of naturalization in the order they happen so you can trace that process.

More Than One Path

- ① People can become United States citizens in several ways. Most people born in the United States are citizens at birth, even when their parents are not citizens, because they are born under U.S. jurisdiction. A child born outside the country may also be a citizen at birth through a U.S. citizen parent, if the citizenship law in effect and the family's facts meet its requirements. Citizenship at birth does not require an application or an oath.
- ② Some children gain citizenship after birth through a parent. For example, a child who is not a citizen at birth may automatically become a citizen when a parent naturalizes, if the child meets legal requirements. Under current federal law, a child generally must be under 18, be a lawful permanent resident, and live in the United States in the legal and physical custody of the citizen parent. This is often called derived citizenship. The child does not complete a separate naturalization application.
- ③ Adults who are lawful permanent residents may apply for naturalization, the legal process for becoming a citizen after birth. Most applicants must have been permanent residents for five years, show continuous residence and physical presence, demonstrate good moral character, and meet English and civics requirements, unless an exception applies. They file Form N-400, provide fingerprints and other information, attend an interview and tests, then take the Oath of Allegiance if approved. Only after the oath does naturalization become complete.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How is citizenship at birth different from citizenship through naturalization?

2 What three conditions does the passage list for a child to gain derived citizenship through a parent?

3 Put these naturalization actions in order: filing Form N-400, taking the Oath of Allegiance, attending an interview and tests, and providing fingerprints and other information.

4 What event makes an approved naturalization application complete?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a person who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. In four sentences, explain whether the person could gain derived citizenship through a parent, using at least two legal conditions from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each phrase that names a way a person can become a U.S. citizen. Number the steps of naturalization in the order they happen so you can trace that process. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How is citizenship at birth different from citizenship through naturalization?	Citizenship at birth happens automatically when a person meets the legal conditions at birth. Naturalization is an application process for lawful permanent residents that is completed with an oath.
2	What three conditions does the passage list for a child to gain derived citizenship through a parent?	The child generally must be under 18, be a lawful permanent resident, and live in the United States in the legal and physical custody of the citizen parent.
3	Put these naturalization actions in order: filing Form N-400, taking the Oath of Allegiance, attending an interview and tests, and providing fingerprints and other information.	File Form N-400, provide fingerprints and other information, attend an interview and tests, then take the Oath of Allegiance if approved.
4	What event makes an approved naturalization application complete?	Taking the Oath of Allegiance makes naturalization complete.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Mateo was not a U.S. citizen at birth. He is 16, is a lawful permanent resident, and lives in the United States with his mother, who has legal and physical custody. When his mother becomes a citizen through naturalization, Mateo can automatically gain derived citizenship because he meets the listed requirements. He does not need a separate naturalization application.

Accept equivalent wording for the legal requirements and naturalization sequence. For the open response, accept a logically accurate fictional case that includes at least two conditions for derived citizenship and correctly explains the result.