4-H Citizenship:

Government Is *Us!*

A Civic Engagement Curriculum for Youth Groups
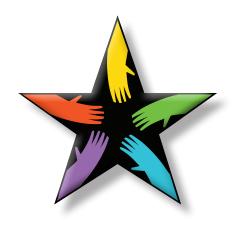
MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H Citizenship: Government Is Us!
A Civic Engagement Curriculum for Youth Groups

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Acknowledgments

This curriculum was developed by Michigan 4-H Youth Development for older adolescents. Concepts and activities in *4-H Citizenship: Government Is Us!* have been adapted for younger children in the 4-H Afterschool resource guide, *Civic Engagement: After-School Activities for Citizenship, Leadership, and Service.* The resource guide can be found at *http://4-hafterschool.org/resourceguides.aspx*

Introduction

What is Michigan 4-H?

Michigan 4-H Youth Development is the youth program of Michigan State University Extension. 4-H staff members work at Michigan State University and in every Michigan county with local volunteers to bring the knowledge of the state's land-grant university to the citizens of Michigan. This work is done in partnership with and uses funding provided by local county boards of commissioners, the state of Michigan and the federal government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additional intellectual and programming support and funding is provided by a variety of public and private partners – both at local and state levels – to increase our impact on youth in Michigan communities.

Purpose of this curriculum

This curriculum is designed for an adult facilitator, though teens could be trained in the design and content and teach the sessions with an adult advisor. It was created to help 4-H members and other youth groups experience citizenship and civic education. The goal is to have teens develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to be active citizens and practice what they learn in their local communities. Citizenship is not a spectator sport, and the learning activities included here get youth and adults more involved, cause them to think critically about their values and beliefs and prepare young people to want to be active citizens in the future. The activities have been designed for use with 13- to 19-year-old youths. Each activity specifies the age group that it is intended for. Some activities may be adapted for use with younger participants.

The issues of citizenship and civic engagement

This curriculum represents a new direction in youth civic engagement. Civic education has long been seen as a means for strengthening our democracy, and educators are increasingly pursuing programs to deliver this content to young people. The results, thus far, are mixed: youth participation in community service is high; yet youth interest in politics is at an all-time low. This phenomenon can partly be explained by the focus of most civic education programs, which often emphasize character building, leadership training and volunteering in community activities. These areas are important pieces of becoming an active, responsible citizen, and many young people have benefited from them. Often missing from these programs, however, is a look at the broader perspective – helping youth understand how their volunteerism addresses a public issue and how that issue is dealt with on a political level. This requires youth to take a deeper look at the underlying causes behind the issues they deal with, and it encourages them to work towards a sustainable solution via the political process. For example, traditional civic education programs might encourage youth to donate canned goods to a food drive for the impoverished. While this is a fine example of civic engagement, this curriculum would additionally help youth explore the issue of poverty in their community and guide them in addressing this issue at the public policy level. Having this in-depth understanding of community issues and the political process gives young people a sense of empowerment and motivation to make change.

Research has shown that civic engagement not only empowers young people and improves their motivation to make change; it also improves their academic performance and career development. A commitment to helping others and involvement in community groups have been associated with gains on achievement tests, school engagement, higher career goals and actual attainment of more prestigious jobs and higher salaries in adulthood for young people. Instilling the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of civic engagement at an early age is a good way to ensure a continued sense of empowerment. In this way, young people may advance their academic success and their career development as they learn to become more civically engaged.

History of Michigan 4-H Citizenship

4-H has a long history of helping young people gain citizenship skills. The section of the 4-H pledge that dedicates "my hands to larger service" encourages all members to be actively engaged

in their communities. 4-H members have some of their first experiences learning about being a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer in their 4-H clubs and learn about parliamentary procedure, skills that can be used on community boards and in local, state and federal government. 4-H members practice giving back to their communities and caring for others by doing community service activities. They learn and practice leadership skills through demonstrations and public speeches. Since 1982, Michigan 4-H has taught thousands of teens about state government and for a longer period of time, has had trips to Washington D.C. to learn about the federal government.

The idea of a "Citizenship Academy" was originally conceived by Genesee County, Michigan State University Extension, in 1998 in order to increase youth interest in the area of citizenship. The Citizenship Academy program in Genesee County is founded on a partnership with the Genesee County Board of Commissioners. Each of the nine county commissioners sponsors one high school student from his or her district within the county, and the nine sponsored students thus make up the Citizenship Academy. Members learn about Genesee County history and political structure, visit public facilities and attend county board meetings to foster knowledge of the local political process. The youth explore county issues and ultimately draft policy proposals, which are presented before the board of commissioners. The groups have, historically, effected significant change through their work and their relationship with county officials.

The program has since had academies in Antrim, Livingston and St. Joseph counties, all coordinated through Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Development. The academies have been adapted to their unique environments at the county level, but they continue to share the common goal of preparing the next generation of active, committed citizens.

Why should Michigan 4-H be involved in civic engagement?

There are a variety of reasons that make Michigan 4-H a natural leader in this brand of civic engagement. First, being included and involved in one's community is a fundamental piece of the philosophy of Michigan 4-H; one of the organization's seven guiding principles for positive youth

development is that "youth grow and contribute as active citizens through service and leadership." Furthermore, the status of 4-H as an independent extracurricular education program helps to address the challenges that civic engagement faces in formal education. According to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, civic education in high schools is usually confined to a single government class, the focus of which is mostly structures and functions, with little discussion of the citizen's role. This de-emphasis on citizenship and civic education in schools is attributable to a number of factors: avoidance of topics that may seem controversial or political, lack of opportunity to experiment with alternative approaches to civic education and budget cutbacks from extracurricular programs such as community service projects. Additionally, high-stakes testing in reading, writing and mathematics can divert resources away from civic education. Even when civics is included as a content area in standardized testing, performance is often measured only in terms of knowledge – skills and attitudes are ignored. In this way, the high-stakes testing movement can serve as a disincentive for schools to implement effective civic engagement programs. For these reasons, it is all the more important for organizations like 4-H to supplement civic education in the schools by providing experiential learning opportunities.

"A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do you know that his future will not be equal to our present?"

— Confucius

Creating a space for citizenship and civic engagement

There are a variety of ways to introduce young people to concepts of civic engagement or strengthen the citizenship skills that they already practice. 4-H traditionally employs "club" programs to support the development of youth participants in their areas of interest, and citizenship and civic engagement principles can grow within the club structure. The most direct way to expose young people to these concepts is to create a citizenship club, the central focus of which is exploring issues of citizenship and civic engagement and becoming socially and politically active in the community. Clubs of this nature can meet continuously, on a permanent basis, or for limited periods to cover specific topics. Alternatively, already existing clubs with a focus other than

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citizenship and civic engagement can incorporate these ideas into their activities. Indeed, one of the components of a model 4-H club is involvement in the community. For more information on club development, visit the Michigan 4-H Youth Development Club Resources web site at *http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/clubs*.

Other avenues for incorporating citizenship and civic engagement content are through the formal school curriculum and extracurricular after-school programs. Recently, experts in the field of civic education have made calls to include a more experiential aspect to traditional civics programs in the schools. Furthermore, the Michigan Department of Education, in redefining the state content standards for high school social studies, has placed responsible citizenship as the ultimate goal of social studies education in the schools. Understanding and practicing citizenship and civic engagement is now a critical part of formal education.

The political role of youth organizations

Youth clubs and organizations inevitably have a political role. Whether intentionally or not, youth clubs encourage and reinforce a certain set of values and morals. Young people learn about citizenship and character according to the group's principles. For example, 4-H members make the 4-H pledge at every club meeting: "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to greater service, and my health to better living for my club, my community, my country and my world." Additionally, the governance of the club serves as a sort of microcosm for our federal, state and local governments, and club officer training helps to teach the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for future government involvement. In these ways, youth learn how to function in a community and conform to a certain definition of citizenship, providing a solid foundation for the political system. That is, even if a youth group is not founded around the idea of civic engagement, it still has a uniquely civic role in the lives of its members.

"4-H club activities involve youth in such experiences as discussing issues, working in teams and taking action — citizenship skills that can be used today and in the future."
— Cyndi Mark, ph.D.,
Michigan 4-H Program Leader

It is therefore the responsibility of youth organizations to define a responsible version of citizenship. The norms that are established and promoted by the organization should encourage good charac-ter, tolerance and participation. These are important considerations regardless of the type of youth organization; from rabbit raising clubs to theatre troupes – groups are political by nature, and group membership teaches young people political attitudes. Incorporating activities into the program that highlight responsible citizenship is a way to ensure that the youth organization is sending the right message about citizenship.

Recruiting young people

Identifying and engaging participants in civic education are important steps in the process of implementing a program. Programmers in this field can benefit from the recent trend in many high schools that requires student participation in community service projects. Even in the absence of this requirement, establishing a relationship with schools is often the most effective way of recruiting young people. Working with principals, teachers and school counselors to identify candidates and distribute marketing materials and/or applications has proven to be a successful method. This requires an active effort on the part of the programmer in order to reach out to school officials and establish cooperative relationships. Other avenues of recruitment include web-based marketing, posting flyers in public places, news articles, recruiting youth from other youth organizations and directly contacting parents.

As one of the major goals of civic education is to help young people understand a more inclusive definition of citizenship and of "the common good," it is important to consider a diverse, inclusive group of participants, facilitators and guests for any civic engagement program. This emphasis on diversity should be present at all stages of the program – planning, implementation and evaluation – for the benefit of youth involved.

Forming partnerships

Youth civic engagement requires collective action. Young people will not learn what it means to be part of their democracy by working alone. A highly effective form of partnership is one between youth and adults. This can encompass one or several adults providing guidance and support to a youth group or a youth group co-operating with an adult organization. Adult groups are often open to youth involvement for the unique perspective that young people bring. The youth group or the programmer should actively seek out individual adults or organizations that are affected by the

same problems or that are interested in the same issues.

A particularly effective youth-adult partnership is one that links youth to an official governmental body. There are several examples in this curriculum of youth working with government officials – including the preceding Citizenship Academy example – and this provides a unique opportunity for young people to be involved in the political process. It is recommended that the programmer contact local government officials prior to beginning the program to determine if there is interest in collaboration. Indeed, the programs mentioned here are founded on such collaboration. Attending local government board meetings or scheduling appointments with individual board members are both effective ways to introduce the idea to government officials.

How to use this curriculum

This curriculum is arranged in such a way as to provide a coherent plan for anyone interested in starting a youth group with a local citizenship focus. It consists of six units: "Citizenship Defined," "Diversity and Inclusion," "Issues Identification," "Local Government Knowledge," "Taking Action" and "Finishing Strong." These units are arranged sequentially, and each contains user-friendly activities and materials designed to lead youth through the process of becoming active in the local politi-

cal process. The activities included in this curriculum can be used several different ways. The activities can be done individually or in a series. They can be combined in a series of special group sessions, as part of a regularly scheduled meeting or a one-day workshop. Non-4-H groups will find the material helpful when planning civic education projects.

Table 1 below shows the scope and sequence of the curriculum.

Although the curriculum is designed to be used as a whole, specific materials may be useful as a supplement to any civic education program or as an introduction to citizenship for groups not working directly with civics. Youth groups interested in citizenship, leadership and service activities may find pieces of the curriculum useful in working toward their goals.

Reflecting on what has been learned

An important element of any citizenship and civic engagement activity is to make time for reflection and sharing. Each activity in this curriculum is concluded with a series of reflection questions to help youth participants think critically about what they have learned and how it is important in a broader social context. This process of reflection is equally important after taking action in the community.

Table 1: Scope and sequence	
Content area	**Corresponding Activities**
Unit 1: Citizenship defined	• "What Is Citizenship?" • "Five Easy Pieces of Citizenship" • "Government Is Us"
Unit 2: Diversity and inclusion	• "Walk the (Trust) Walk" • "Communicating Through Conflict" • "Exploring And Challenging Stereotypes" • "A Class Divided"
Unit 3: Issues identification	• "It's My Right!" • "Agree To Disagree" • "We Have Issues" • "Cause And Effect"
Unit 4: Local government knowledge	• "The 'Invisible' Government" • "Behind-The-Scenes Of Local Government
Unit 5: Taking action	• "Board Meeting" • "Guide: Writing A Petition" • "Guide: Writing A Policy Brief"
Unit 6: Finishing strong	• "Put on Your Reflecting Cap"

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Whether engaging with community leaders, performing a community service activity or writing letters to your U.S. congressperson, it is important to make time for the group to share, process and think about how what they have leaned and accomplished fits into the bigger social picture. Unit 6 focuses further on reflection and provides an activity to carry out a reflection project.

Life skills

Life skills are defined as skills needed for effective living. Youth development programs can and should actively promote the acquisition of these skills that help individuals achieve success and satisfaction in their lives. Examples of life skills include communication, problem-solving, healthy lifestyle choices and goal setting. Young people often learn life skills from parents, peers and their communities in non-formal settings; youth development programs can supplement and enhance these lessons with carefully planned, high quality experiences that give youth an opportunity to learn and practice life skills in an intentional way. Citizenship and civic education training is a natural space for learning life skills. Learning to be a good citizen requires competency in many of the life skills, and each of the activities in this curriculum state which of these skills are addressed and practiced. For more information on life skills, visit the Iowa 4-H Youth Development web site, where they present their Targeting Life Skills Model: *http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/lifeskills/previewwheel.html*.

Notes to classroom teachers

High school and middle school teachers may use the materials in the curriculum to provide an experiential learning component to support formal education in social studies, in general, and civics and government, in particular. Half of all public schools currently have service-learning programs as part of their curricula, and this curriculum can function as a guide for implementing a service-learning program that is connected to classroom learning in civics and government. Shelley Billig of RMC Research Corporation has documented the benefits of service-learning programs for both the student and the school; some examples are improved grades and standardized test scores, improved overall school climate, increased mutual respect between teachers and students and a higher rate of student attendance.

In order to facilitate the use of this curriculum in schools, social studies standards for the State of Michigan's curricular framework are provided for each activity in this curriculum. Responsible citizenship is the stated goal of high school social studies education for the Michigan Department of Education, and engagement in the real civic life of one's community is a cornerstone of the state's expectations. Therefore, a clear connection has been made between the activities in this curriculum and the associated standards and expectations for social studies learning.

Notes to advisors

Due to the multicultural nature of the material in this curriculum, and the inclusive definition of the "common good" that the curriculum encourages, it is important for the user of the curriculum to have a good understanding of his or her own cultural values and assumptions. A good place to start is by looking at our own cultural heritage and determining how it affects our present biases and ideas of right and wrong. An understanding of how discrimination, stereotyping and oppression play out in society – and how we affect and are affected by them – is also a key part of being multiculturally sensitive. Ultimately, users of this curriculum should feel comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and others in terms of race, gender, class, ethnicity, culture and beliefs. It is equally important to recognize the limits of our cultural sensitivity and, where appropriate, seek out opportunities to improve our awareness through trainings, consultations, or by talking with more qualified individuals.

"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."

— John Dewey

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UNIT 1: Citizenship Defined

Active citizens are the building blocks of our democracy, and Michigan 4-H recognizes the importance of developing good citizens among our youth. A democracy is only as strong as the citizens that make it up, and strength comes from having the knowledge, skills and attitudes to work for a common good.

Citizenship means responsibility

Citizenship means enjoying certain rights and accepting certain responsibilities. As citizens in the United States, we all benefit from the freedoms provided to us by the Constitution. But enjoying these privileges is only part of being a citizen. We also have to give back to ensure that our rights continue to exist. As John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."

An important part of good citizenship is asking what you can do for your country, as well as your school, your neighborhood, your town and your county. In other words, good citizenship means having responsibility to a larger group of which you are a member. We are all responsible for upholding our democracy and making life better for ourselves and for others.

There are certain mandatory responsibilities that all of us, as Americans, are required to fulfill. These include obeying laws, paying taxes, doing jury duty, serving as a witness in a trial and registering for the draft. Voting in elections is also an expectation, though not required. These are the bare minimum responsibilities of citizens. In a deeper sense, citizenship involves much more. Good citizenship demands learning and action. It is this commitment to learning and action that is implied by "citizenship" in 4-H Youth Development. What specifically does this type of citizenship entail?

What makes a responsible citizen?

Being a responsible citizen means different things to different people. Some consider a good citizen to be someone who has strong character, donates to charity and volunteers to help others; others say a good citizen is one who takes an interest in understanding social issues and concerns; and still others would describe a good citizen as one who has the skills and knowledge to actively influence decision-making and public policy. Because of these diverse ideas of what it means to be a good citizen, it is important to consider a broad definition of citizenship, including the knowledge, skills and attitudes that a good citizen should have. Therefore, we can say that a good citizen is competent in the following areas:

"Citizens make the government. Without citizens, there would be no government or no United States. The citizens make this country what it is."
— Brandy, teen 4-H member

- **Character** – moral and civic virtues, such as a concern for the rights and welfare of others and appreciation of diversity;
- **Knowledge of government** – an understanding of the structure and processes of government and community organizations;
- **Community service learning** – an awareness of public and community issues, and participation in service to address problems;
- **Public policy** – the skills, knowledge and commitment to influence decision-making and public policy; and
- **Issues** – an awareness and understanding of public issues, how they are connected across local, national and global levels, and how one affects and is affected by them.

Citizenship is learned

These criteria for citizenship are not easily met. It takes courage, hard work and commitment to be a good citizen. But even the most courageous, hardworking and committed people still must have educational experiences that help them develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for putting citizenship into action. Young people learn good citizenship through classroom instruction and simulations of civic processes, watching the news, discussing current events, engaging in service learning to work on local problems and participating in school or organizational government.

These are examples of how citizenship is learned. Now we turn to what needs to be learned in order to meet our definition of citizenship. It helps to think of competencies – or specific learning outcomes – that youth development programs can encourage. Some examples of citizenship competencies are given in the following table. The five parts of our definition of citizenship are inserted into Table 2 as categories of content, and the areas of competency – knowledge, skills and attitudes – are listed as column heads to create a framework for thinking about what responsible citizens should be learning.

Table 2: Competencies for civic engagement

Five Principles of Citizenship	A. Knowledge	B. Skills	C. Attitudes
1. Character	Understanding of self-identity	Dialogue with others about different points of view	Concern for the rights and welfare of others
2. Knowledge of Government	Knowledge of government structure	Ability to locate information on local government	Appreciation of the importance of voting
3. Community Service Learning	Awareness of community issues	Assets and problems assessment in the community	Trust in the community
4. Public Policy	Understanding of policy-making process	Policy and petition writing	Confidence in ability to make changes
5. Issues	Knowledge of how one affects and is affected by an issue	Ability to locate information on local issues	Respect for multiple perspectives on an issue

The competencies provided in Table 2 are just a few examples of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that go into becoming a good citizen. All of these things may seem overwhelming. But an effective citizenship and civic engagement program can encourage all of these competencies and more, and make it fun in the process. By looking at Table 2, we see that citizenship and civic engagement involve both learning and doing, and 4-H believes that it is very important for youth to experience the ideas and principles that they learn. These five principles of citizenship recur throughout the curriculum. The principles addressed within a unit are stated at the beginning of that unit.

"Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of a democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country."

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

Citizenship in our communities

Helping youth experience citizenship in their towns, cities and counties is a special focus of 4-H Youth Development. This local perspective allows youth to see how citizenship works in their area and how they can participate in community issues. At the local level, youth have the regular opportunity to meet with public officials, visit local government buildings, and be connected to the issues in their communities. By using the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a good citizen in their own communities, youth can take action to make real changes. Seeing the results of their active citizenship is a fun and empowering experience! It shows youth that they can make a difference by influencing public policy, and at the same time, it prepares a next generation of good citizens to safeguard our democracy.

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ACTIVITY:

What Is Citizenship?

Description:
Youth explore the concept of "citizenship" by examining several different definitions of citizenship and finally creating their own meaning.

Participant Age:
16–19

Activity Objectives:
The participants will:
- Discuss the meaning of citizenship.
- Examine different definitions of citizenship.
- Define "citizenship" and "good citizenship" and communicate the importance of citizenship.

Learning and Life Skills:
Critical Thinking; Communication

State of Michigan Social Studies Standards:
Standard III.2 Ideals of American Democracy; Standard VI.2 Group Discussion

Materials, Equipment, Handouts:
❏ Sheets of paper and pencils or pens
❏ Newsprint and markers
❏ Easel or tape for recording on newsprint
❏ Handout: "U.S. Citizenship Test"
❏ Handout: "Oath of Citizenship"
❏ Video: *Citizenship & Civic Engagement*, (approximately 13 minutes long) available online at *http://av.anr. msu.edu/4h*

Time:
90–120 minutes, broken up into four parts

Setting:
Indoors with tables and chairs

Procedure:

Before the meeting:
- Review activity directions and materials and the five principles of citizenship in the introduction to this unit and also appended to this activity.
- Print out the "U.S. Citizenship Test" handout or visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services web site at *http://www.uscis.gov/natzpilot* to create your own list of ten questions from the full U.S. Citizenship Test.
- Make sure that all participants have a writing utensil and blank sheet of paper for the U.S. Citizenship Test that is administered in Part I.
- Print one copy of the handout, "Oath of Citizenship," for each participant.
- Prepare five sheets of newsprint, each with one of the five rights described in the Preamble of the Constitution written at the top (see Part II, Steps 3 and 4).
- Make sure all participants have newsprint and markers or other writing utensils for depictions of good citizens as described in Part IV, step 2.
- Consult the U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services web site (*http://www. uscis.gov*) for background information on U.S. Citizenship requirements.

During the meeting:

Part I

1. Once everyone is seated in the semicircle, tell participants that the purpose of today's meeting is to talk about and define "citizenship." Explain that there are a lot of different definitions of citizenship, and today will be spent thinking about what it means to each of us as individuals and what it means to the group. Begin by asking individuals to share what they believe "citizenship" means in the United States. Encourage participants to use examples. Recording responses is optional.

2. Explain that to become a U.S. citizen, one must either be born into it (have an American parent) or become *naturalized*. In order to become naturalized, one must pass a U.S. Citizenship Test to determine whether or not he or she has the knowledge necessary to be an American citizen. Tell the participants that they are going to go through some of the procedures for a foreigner to become an American citizen (be sensitive to any participants who may be naturalized citizens or non-citizens). Tell participants that the requirements of citizenship are:
   - a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the United States;
   - residence in a particular USCIS district prior to filing;
   - an ability to read, write and speak English;
   - a knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government;
   - good moral character;
   - attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and,
   - favorable disposition toward the United States.

   Give participants the chance to ask for clarification on any of these points.

3. Say that the participants are going to take the U.S. Citizenship Test. Consult the "U.S. Citizenship Test" handout, **read** the instructions on the test and administer it. Use the 10 questions given or choose 10 questions from the official list

of 142 *Questions and Answers for New Pilot Naturalization Test* from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at *http://www.uscis.gov/natzpilot*. Emphasize that this is the actual test that immigrants desiring naturalization must take. Afterwards, review the answers so that everyone can indicate how many correct answers they had. Explain that in order to become a U.S. citizen, most regional offices require a score of six (6) out of ten (10) to pass.

Reflection Activities and Ideas:

Give participants a moment to consider what they now know about the U.S. Citizenship Test, and then ask the following questions:
- Do these questions determine whether or not one is a good citizen?
- If you answered all of the questions correctly, does that make you a good citizen? Why?
- If you answered some questions incorrectly, does that mean that you're not a good citizen? Why?
- What else needs to be asked to truly determine whether or not someone is a good citizen?

Part II

1. Distribute the "Oath of Citizenship" handout. Explain that every naturalized citizen must take this oath. Read the oath and give participants the option of repeating after you in order to simulate the experience of taking the oath.

2. Go through the oath with participants and identify each of the responsibilities indicated for citizenship: (a) renunciation of foreign allegiance, (b) support and defense of the Constitution and laws, (c) allegiance to the Constitution and laws and (d) service in the armed forces when required by law.

3. Point out the second responsibility in the oath – support and defense of the Constitution – and ask participants to tell you what they know about the Constitution and the rights it guarantees.

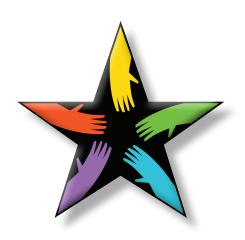   Read the Preamble to the Constitution:

   > *"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, (1) establish Justice, (2) insure domestic Tranquility, (3) provide for the common defence, (4) promote the general Welfare, and (5) secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."*

4. Break participants into teams and give each team a piece of newsprint with one of the five rights described in the Preamble written at the top: *(1) establish justice, (2) insure domestic tranquility, (3) provide for the common defense, (4) promote the general welfare, and (5) secure the blessings of liberty*. Have each team brainstorm and write (a) a definition of the right in their own words and (b) a list of ways to support or defend this right.

Reflection Activities and Ideas:

After giving the group a moment to consider the oath of citizenship and the Preamble, ask the following:
- What do you think about the requirements for citizenship outlined in the oath? Is there anything you disagree with? Is there anything else that you think needs to be added?
- What do you think about the rights outlined in the Preamble? Which of these five rights would you support and defend? Can you be a good citizen if you do not support or defend all of these rights?

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Part III

1. Explain to the group that they have looked at several different ideas of citizenship. Tell them that they are going to watch a video that depicts another idea of what citizenship is. Play the *Citizenship & Civic Engagement* video (approximately 13 minutes long).

Reflection Activities and Ideas:

After watching the video, ask the group the following questions:
- How is citizenship portrayed in the video?
- What did the young people in the video do to demonstrate good citizenship? How did their discussions relate to citizenship?
- What are other ways that young people can demonstrate good citizenship?

Part IV

1. Tell participants to consider the different ideas of citizenship that have been discussed up to now, and ask the question again, "What is citizenship?" Accommodate any responses and discussion.

2. Ask participants to think about examples of when they or somebody they know has been a good citizen. Finally, give participants newsprint and markers or other writing utensils and ask them to (a) write a definition, (b) write a story or (c) draw a picture of what a good citizen looks like. Encourage them to be creative. Give everybody time to complete their chosen activity (15 minutes). As the facilitator, work with participants to help generate ideas.

3. Ask everyone to share their respective constructions of a good citizen. Record items from everyone's definition on newsprint. As you field responses, try to categorize them into five different unlabeled columns based on the five principles of citizenship outlined in the introduction to this unit and also appended to this activity: (1) character, (2) knowledge of government, (3) community service learning, (4) public policy and (5) issues. If any of the participants' responses do not naturally fit into one of these five categories, create a new column or more columns if necessary. After you have fielded all responses, label each of the five columns according to the corresponding principle of citizenship. Then, present the responses to the group as a sort of group definition of citizenship.

Reflection Activities and Ideas:

Ask the group the following reflection questions:
- What do you think of the provided definition of citizenship? How is it similar or different from your own idea of citizenship? How is it similar or different from the group definition?
- Do you prefer your own idea of good citizenship to that of the group? How does it feel to have ideas different from the rest of the group?
- Is our definition of citizenship inclusive of all groups? Are there people who are left out of our definition based on race, gender, ethnicity, class or other reasons?
- A common stereotype is that people of color, including Latinos, Asian Americans, Arab Americans and others are "from somewhere else" and are not "real" citizens. People of color often get asked, "Where are you from?" even when they and their families may have lived in the United States for years – and even generations. What do you think about this statement? How can we ensure that we are inclusive of all groups?

Try This, Too:

- For Part I, break participants up into teams and give them each a sheet of newsprint. Assign each team one of the seven USCIS criteria for U.S. Citizenship (see Part I, Step 2). Ask them to write (a) reasons why this is an important part of citizenship and (b) whether or not they think one can be a good citizen without fulfilling this requirement. Share ideas with the group.

- Invite speakers into your meeting who have become naturalized citizens and ask them to speak with the group about what becoming an American citizen means to them. Ask them to talk about similarities and differences to their country of origin, including government and individual participation in government.

- The participants' depictions of "good citizens" (Part IV, Step 2) can be adapted to include different types of media (such as theatre or photography), and the group definition can also be represented through a larger project such as a mural, a performance or a focus group with students in their school.

HANDOUT:

U.S. Citizenship Test

The questions and answers below were selected randomly from the official list of 142 *Questions and Answers for New Pilot Naturalization Test* from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). For a full list of questions, visit the USCIS web site at *http://www.uscis.gov/natzpilot* to compile a list of ten questions of your choice. When giving the test to persons desiring citizenship, the examiner selects any ten questions at his or her discretion to be posed orally to the examinees. The examinee writes down the answer for each item. According to the USCIS, most regional offices require a score of six (6) out of ten (10) to pass.

1. **What is the supreme law of the land?**
   The Constitution

2. **What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?**
   The Bill of Rights

3. **What are the two parts of the United States Congress?**
   The Senate and the House of Representatives

4. **When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?**
   July 4, 1776

5. **What decides each state's number of U.S. Representatives?**
   The state's population

6. **Who is called the "Father of Our Country"?**
   George Washington

7. **Who confirms Supreme Court justices?**
   The Senate

8. **Who was President during World War I?**
   Woodrow Wilson

9. **Why does the flag have 13 stripes?**
   Because there were 13 original colonies

10. **Name one state that borders on Mexico.**
    Arizona, California, New Mexico, or Texas

Oath of Citizenship

The **United States Oath of Allegiance for Naturalized Citizens** is an oath that must be taken by all immigrants who wish to become United States citizens.

The current oath is as follows:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.

Five Easy Pieces of Citizenship

Description:

In order to introduce the definition of citizenship on which this curriculum is based, youth explore that definition of citizenship, analyze its component parts, and compare and contrast it to their own ideas of citizenship. If performing this activity after the activity, "What is Citizenship?," skip the first three steps of the procedure during the meeting, and use the definition of citizenship that the group constructed at the end of the previous activity.

Participant Age:

13–19

Activity Objectives:

The participants will:
- Understand one definition of citizenship.
- Analyze one definition of citizenship and compare and contrast it with their own ideas of citizenship.

Learning and Life Skills:

Critical Thinking; Communication

State of Michigan Social Studies Standards:

Standard III.2 Ideals of American Democracy

Materials, Equipment, Handouts:

❏ Newsprint, five sheets
❏ Easel or tape for recording on newsprint
❏ Markers
❏ Handout: "Five Principles of Citizenship"

Time:

30–60 minutes, depending on whether or not the group has completed the activity, "What is Citizenship?"

Setting:

Indoors, tables and chairs to accommodate all participants

Procedure:

Before the meeting:

- Review activity directions and materials and the five principles of citizenship in the introduction to this unit and also in the "Five Principles of Citizenship" handout.

- Print one copy of the "Five Principles of Citizenship" handout for each participant.

- At the top of each sheet of newsprint, write one of the five principles of citizenship, as described in the "Five Principles of Citizenship" handout and in the introduction to this unit: (1) character, (2) knowledge of government, (3) issues, (4) community service learning and (5) public policy.

During the meeting:

1. Ask the question, "What is citizenship?" and accommodate any responses and discussion.
2. Ask participants to think about examples of when they or somebody they know has been a good citizen. Then, give participants newsprint and markers and ask them to write a definition of citizenship. Give ample time to complete the definitions, and work with participants to help generate ideas.
3. Ask everyone to share their respective definitions of citizenship. Record items from everyone's definition on newsprint. As you field responses, try to categorize them into five different unlabeled columns based on the five principles of citizenship outlined in the introduction to this unit and also in the "Five Principles of Citizenship" handout: (1) character, (2) knowledge of government, (3) community service learning, (4) public policy and (5) issues. If any of the participants' responses do not naturally fit into one of these five categories, create a new column or more columns if necessary. After you have fielded all responses, label each of the five columns according to the corresponding principle of citizenship. Then, present the responses to the group as a sort of group definition of citizenship.

4. Tell participants that the purpose of this activity is to understand and examine a broad definition of citizenship. People use many definitions of citizenship, and this curriculum emphasizes a broader definition of citizenship, which includes knowledge about society, skills for participation and attitudes to engage in public efforts. This definition has five parts, and it is important to understand what each of the five mean.

5. Break participants up into five teams. Give each team one of the sheets of newsprint with one of the five principles of citizenship at the top. Instruct each team to first talk about and then write a definition for their principle.

6. After about five minutes, tell each team to discuss and write three examples of how their principle can be put into practice.

7. When each team is finished, reconvene the whole group and have each team share their principle, their definition and their practical examples.

8. After each team has shared, distribute the "Five Principles of Citizenship" hand-out. Give participants time to read over the handout. Then, explain that the five principles that each team explored are the parts of this broader definition of citizenship. The activities in this curriculum are based on this notion of citizen-ship.
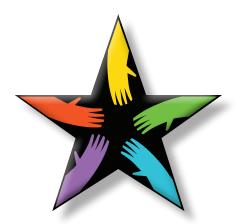
Try This, Too:

- Have participants make a citizenship collage that includes depictions of all five principles of citizenship.

- Arrange for participants to create and maintain citizenship portfolios in which they can keep records of their activities and accomplishments related to citizenship and civic engagement.

Reflection Activities and Ideas:

Ask the group the following reflection questions:

1. What are your reactions to this definition of citizenship based on the five principles of citizenship?

2. What would you add to this definition? What would you change? Do any of your ideas of citizenship not fit into any of the five principles?

3. What would it look like if a person were to use all of these principles in his or her life?

Five Principles of Citizenship

Being a responsible citizen means different things to different people. Some consider a good citizen to be someone who has strong character, donates to charity and volunteers to help others; others say a good citizen is one who takes an interest in understanding social issues and concerns; and still others would describe a good citizen as one who has the skills and knowledge to actively influence decision-making and public policy. Because of these diverse ideas of what it means to be a good citizen, it is important to consider a broad definition of citizenship. Therefore, we can say that a definition of what it means to be a good citizen should include the following:

- **Character** — moral and civic virtues, such as a concern for the rights and welfare of others and appreciation of diversity;

- **Knowledge of government** — an understanding of the structure and processes of government and community organizations;

- **Community service learning** — an awareness of public and community issues, and participation in service to address problems;

- **Public policy** — the skills, knowledge and commitment to influence decision-making and public policy; and

- **Issues** — an awareness and understanding of public issues, how they are connected across local, national and global levels, and how one affects and is affected by them.

References:

Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. (2003). *The Civic Mission of Schools*. New York: Carnegie Corporation.

Education Commission of the States. (2006). *Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten through Grade 12*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Government Is Us

Description:

Individually, youth write down what they believe the rules should be for the group. Then in groups, participants elect a representative to make rules for the entire group. Once the representatives have finished, their rules are contrasted with the rules that each person created to impress on participants the inherent compromise of representative government. After, youth discuss how to use their own voices to influence decision making as active citizens.

Participant Age:

13–19

Activity Objectives:

The participants will:
* Experience representative government.
* Brainstorm ways to use their voice in decision making.
* Define active citizenship.

Learning and Life Skills:

Self-Responsibility; Communication; Decision Making

State of Michigan Social Studies Standards:

Standard III.1 Purposes of Government; Standard III.2 Ideals of American Democracy; Standard III.3 Democracy in Action; Standard VI.2 Group Discussion

Materials, Equipment, Handouts:

❏ Newsprint, several sheets
❏ Easel or tape for recording on newsprint
❏ Marker(s), one or two
❏ Writing utensils, for each participant
❏ Handout: "Group Rules"

Time:

30–60 minutes

Setting:

Indoors, tables and chairs to accommodate all participants

Procedure:

Before the meeting:

* Review activity directions and materials.
* Print one copy of the "Group Rules" handout for each participant.
* Make sure that all participants have a writing utensil.
* Bring newsprint and markers (easel optional).
* Arrange one table separate from the group for the "representatives."

During the meeting:

1. Tell participants that the purpose of this activity is to set the rules for the group that everyone will follow for the remainder of the group meetings. Distribute the "Group Rules" handout to all participants. Explain that everybody should individually fill out the handout according to what they think the rules and expectations should be for group meetings. Encourage everyone to list at least five rules.

2. After everyone has filled it out, explain that, in the interest of time, not everyone can share their rules. Ask the group to pick "representatives" to share their rules (try to have about one representative per five participants). Explain that the representatives are the only ones who actually have the power to decide what the rules will be. Collect the representatives' handouts and record their chosen rules on newsprint for everyone to see (there is no need to write duplicate rules more than once).

3. Ask the whole group what they think of the rules and how the representatives' rules compare and contrast to the rules that they developed individually. Make sure everyone keeps their individual "Group Rules" handout.

4. Explain that the group is going to try an alternative process of coming up with the rules. Break participants up into teams of four or five; give each group a new "Group Rules" handout; and instruct them to talk together and, as a team, come up with rules. After, have each team decide together who they would like to represent them – this new "representative" should record his or her team's rules on a new handout. Then move the representative from each team to the separate table. Collect the representatives' handouts and record the rules on newsprint as in step 2.

5. Announce that these are the official group rules. Put the newsprint with the rules in a visible place where it can stay for the remainder of the group's meetings.
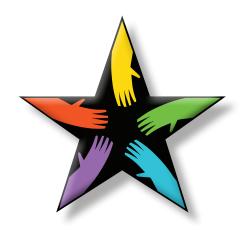
Try This, Too:

Any decision-making activity that could be done collaboratively and that the group has an interest in could be substituted for generating group rules. For example, the activity could be planning a (real or imaginary) field trip, designing a T-shirt, or deciding how many pieces of candy everybody in the group should get.

Reflection Activities and Ideas:

Ask the group the following reflection questions:

1. Reflect on the two methods used to devise the group rules. Ask: "What was frustrating or difficult?" "Which process more closely reflected your ideas? Why?" "What were the differences in how you selected representatives?" "What is the job of the representative?" "How were you able to communicate your ideas to your representative?" Allow ample time for discussion.

2. Remind the group that in our democracy, we choose representatives to make decisions for us. Ask: "What are some of the representative governmental bodies or groups called?" (Congress, House of Representatives [state/federal], Senate [state/federal], county board of commissioners, school board, city/village council). Stress that the representative's job is to make decisions that we, the people he or she represents, *want*. Tell the group to think about the activity that they did, and ask the following questions: "How closely were your ideas represented when you didn't communicate with your representative?" "How closely were your ideas represented when you did communicate with you representative?" "How, in government, do you think you can communicate with your representatives to make your ideas heard?" (for example, letter writing, petitions, meetings with representatives, protests, or other means).

3. How does this activity relate to responsible citizenship?

HANDOUT:

Group Rules

Below, list the rules that you would like to have for this group:

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

5. _____

_____

_____