

Quick Reference Guide

This quick reference guide is designed to help you determine whether you're ready to apply for U.S. citizenship and to understand what's required at each step of the process. It walks you through eligibility criteria, essential documents to gather, and what to expect during the interview and testing phases. Use it as a practical checklist to stay organized, prepare confidently, and avoid common mistakes that could delay your naturalization.

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Criteria For Citizenship

Who is Allowed to Apply for U.S. Citizenship?

The following questions will help you determine if you are currently in a position to start the naturalization process. If your answer is “yes,” you are.

- Are you 18 or older?
- Have you been a legal (or “lawful”) permanent resident (LPR) for at least 5 years? (Have you had a “Green Card” for 5 years?)
- Have you been physically present in the U.S. 30 months out of the five years immediately before filing your application?
- Have you lived in the state or USCIS district with jurisdiction over your place of residence for at least three months before filing?
- Have you shown good moral character (GMC) (more on the specifics of this in the next section) for five years before filing for naturalization?
- Can you read, write, speak, and understand basic English? (If you are reading this book, you can read and understand basic English! You can even understand an intermediate level of English!)
- Do you know and understand the U.S. history and government?*
- Have you reported your income on your income tax forms?
- Do you support the U.S. Constitution?

I'm eligible! Now What?

Once you have determined that you're eligible for U.S. citizenship, you can take the first step by downloading the N-400 Application for Naturalization form from the USCIS website: <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/n-400.pdf>.

Gather Documents To Submit With The N-400

- Copies of both sides of your "Green Card" or Legal Permanent Residence Card (LPR Card).
- If you have a physical or mental disability, also submit an N-648. This way, you can request an exception to the English and/or Civics Test.
- Send any document related to your marital status, that is, documentation to prove you are single or married (marriage certificate, divorce or annulment decree, death certificate of your partner).
- If you have any documents regarding your criminal background that might help decide about your "good moral character," you must submit them now. If you have evidence to show you are a person of "good moral character," (please read the Good Moral Character section), put it together, too.
- Proof of Continuous Residence and Physical Presence. Remember we talked about this requirement? How can you prove that you were indeed in U.S. territory for the time they are requesting? These are some documents that can help: bank statements showing regular transactions, tax papers and your passport.

The Eligibility Interview: Oral (Verbal) Questions, Reading and Writing English Test

At the eligibility interview with the USCIS official, they may ask you questions about the information on your application (N-400). The interview is not exactly like an oral English test, but you need to show that you can express your ideas clearly and that you understand the questions the USCIS official asks you. But besides the interview, they will also ask you to read 3 sentences on a computer or a tablet screen. It will be enough if you read only one of those sentences well. For the written part, they will ask you to write 3 sentences that they will read to you. You will pass if you write only one of those sentences correctly.

The Civics Test

There are 128 questions USCIS uses for the Civics test.. They will ask you 20 questions. You must answer 12 questions correctly to pass the test. The Civics test is an oral test; that is, an USCIS official sits with you and verbally asks you 20 questions they choose from that list of 128.

What Should I Bring to my Naturalization Interview?

- Your interview appointment notice.
- Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card.
- A state-issued picture identification such as a driver's license or ID.
- All valid and expired passports and any other travel documents that indicate when you were outside of the United States since becoming a permanent resident.

What are some tips for the day of the interview?

Arrive on time. Dress formally. Make sure you have organized all supporting documents well. Always be respectful. Never try to be funny or make jokes.