

USING THE CITIZENSHIP STUDY GUIDES

INFORMATION FOR TUTORS, PAGE 1

What are the guides for?

These pages are designed as handouts so that students have something to take home and study after each lesson. By giving students a copy of everything you've talked about in class, you can maximize the amount of time you spend on listening and speaking (instead of taking time out of class for students to copy down information from the board/book). They are also your guide to planning what you will teach at each session and subsequently assessing whether your student has mastered the material. Your goal is to make sure that your student is able to answer each question/write each dictation sentence correctly by the next session. Before you begin a new lesson, you should first take out the study guide for the previous lesson, and review/quiz the material there.

How long will it take to teach each topic?

Each lesson corresponds to a topic in the book, *Citizenship: Passing the Test*. An average lesson will last from 45 to 90 minutes, depending on the degree of background knowledge/skills the student already possesses. Some students will need a great deal of instruction and reinforcement, while others need only a quick content review. Students who are at very low oral or written proficiency levels in English may need more than one session to cover all of the material on any one study guide.

Will my student know how to practice the material independently between sessions?

Students who have limited formal education (or who have been out of school for a long time) may need guidance in terms of how to review the information outside of class. Go over the instructions for each section of the handout, and help the student to devise a study plan: how, when, where, and with whom he/she will practice the material. To ensure that everything is clear, ask the student to restate to you what he/she will do before the next lesson. ("OK, tell me again – what are you going to do before the next class?")

What will my student be expected to do for the USCIS interview/test?

The examiner will:

- Ask 10 of the questions from the list. Your student needs to answer six correctly.
- Give your student a paper with a question written on it. The student must read the question aloud (but not answer it).
- Dictate a sentence (which will be the answer to the question he/she has just read) while your student writes it down. The sentence does not need to be written perfectly – it just needs to convey the general meaning of what was dictated. Punctuation and minor spelling errors are not important. Your student will get a second and third chance, with new sentences, if necessary.
- Ask questions about your student's citizenship application. Simple one or two word answers will do in most cases, and perfect pronunciation or grammar is not required.

Note: Some of the civics questions can be answered in more than one way. For example, there are many possible answers to: "Name one American Indian tribe." To keep things simple for beginning-level students, the study guides offer one simple answer (the easiest for students to say/remember). For a list of all acceptable answers, go to the USCIS.gov website.

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How do I teach the lessons?

Step 1: Review civics questions

- Each lesson (except for the first one) should begin with a review of the previous civics lesson. Using the book or picture cards, review the civics facts you taught last time, and check that the student understands the material. Then quiz the student on each question in the study guide. Coach for pronunciation where necessary. You may also want to “recycle” some of the questions from earlier lessons so they are still fresh in your student’s mind.

Step 2: Teach the new civics topic

Note: The civics test involves listening and speaking, so make sure you emphasize these skills when you teach this section.

- Use the book or picture cards to find out what your student already knows about the topic. For example, ask the student about the picture – who/what is the picture about, and see if the student already knows some of the vocabulary or information you are presenting. Explain new vocabulary and concepts, making reference, where possible, to topics/events the student is familiar with. For example, when you talk about the U.S. flag (or capital, or type of leader/government) you can ask about the flag (or capital, or leader, etc.) of your student’s country. Many students come from countries that experienced colonialism, civil wars, or who celebrate a day of giving thanks.
- If your student likes to read, have him/her read through the chapter text and do the written exercises in the book.
- Go through each of the questions in the study guide and make sure your student understands the answer. At this point you may need to do some pronunciation coaching to ensure that your student is able to produce answers clearly enough to be understood by an examiner.
- Give the student the study guide page and remind him/her to practice the questions with a friend/family member/co-worker for homework.

Step 3: Give a “read aloud” and dictation quiz

- Each lesson (except for the first one) should include a reading and writing test. Take out the list of “read alouds” from the previous session and have the student to read each question aloud to you. Coach pronunciation where necessary.
- Check to be sure that your student has copied the “writing practice” sentences from last session’s assignment. If there are any errors, have your student check his/her work against the sentences in the study guide.
- Have your student turn to a blank page in his/her notebook. One at a time, read each sentences from the previous lesson’s “writing practice.” Read each word slowly and clearly, and repeat as many times as you need to. If there are any errors, underline the location of the error(s) and encourage your student to revise the sentence, using the study guide if necessary. (Remember that errors in punctuation, capitalization, and even *minor* spelling errors will probably still get a passing score. It’s OK to point out such errors, but reassure the student that the sentence would probably still be OK for passing the citizenship test.)

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Step 4: Introduce the next set of writing (dictation) and “read aloud” sentences

- Go over the new set of “read alouds” and make sure the student can recognize and pronounce each word in the question. (Note: students may need practice distinguishing between the words: *what*, *when*, and *where*.) Remember – the student does not need to give an answer to this question.
- Read each new dictation sentence aloud to the student. If necessary, clarify the meaning of the sentence, and discuss any words that give the student trouble. For example, students are often confused by homonyms (like *right/write*), peculiar spellings such as *February*, and *-s* or *-d* endings in words like *lived* or *lives*. For fun, students may like to find the “read aloud” question that goes with each sentence – however, this is not something they will need to do on the citizenship test.
- Remind the student to write each sentence 10 times in a notebook and to practice for the dictation test with a friend.

Step 5: Go over the interview questions

NOTE: Occasionally, there may be some information in the questions that is sensitive, and uncomfortable for your student to reveal to you. If you sense that there is a problem, give your student a chance to “opt out” of interview practice for this lesson.

- Clarify each question, and help the student construct his/her own answer. If possible, use a copy of the student’s citizenship application as a reference for picky details like dates. Coach pronunciation where necessary to make sure the response is comprehensible.
- There are various ways any given question might be worded, and we don’t know which wording an examiner may use, so it makes sense to practice alternate forms of each question, if your student can handle it.
- Every few lessons perform a “practice interview” with your student in which you (role playing the examiner) ask all of the questions from previous lessons.
- Remind the student to practice the interview questions for homework.

Finally: Once your student has an interview date, have him/her make an appointment with the ESL Coordinator for a practice interview. She will check to make sure that the student is prepared for the interview and give you feedback about anything you may need to review in the last few sessions.