

## Staging an Authentic Citizenship Interview

*NOTE: You need a private space for this as the student will be asked personal information. It is ideal to have a copy of the student's application, so that you can tailor the interview and ensure that the student's application and oral responses are consistent. If you have the student's application, rephrase some of the questions below to reference info there. For example, instead of "Where were you born?" ask "You were born in China, is that correct?" or "Are you still working at ISR Corporation?"*

*This is the general outline of an interview. It should be tailored to students' individual situation. For example, if the student is not married or has no children, skip the sections on these topics.*

*Be sure to make notes about any questions/vocabulary words the student had a problem with, and any pronunciation problems the student should work on prior to the USCIS interview.*

*Assemble the "props" you will need:*

- *Copy of student's N-400 if available, or a blank one if not*
- *List of civics questions*
- *Ipad and stylus or pad and paper (with a few pre-selected reading/dictation item pairs to use for the literacy test)*
  
- *Ask student to wait in a "waiting room" outside your office. Walk out of the office and call out the student's name. Please go to room twenty-four. (Enter office with student.)*
- *Please remain standing and raise your right hand. (Keep your own hand down—don't give student the cue to copy you.)*
- *Do you swear that the statements you are about to make are the truth?*
- *Please sit down.*
- *Tell me why you're here today.*
- *OK. I'd like to see your green card and another ID please.*
- *You're applying for citizenship based on five years of being a permanent resident, is that right?*

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- *What's your family name? How do you spell it?*
  - *What's your first name? How do you spell it?*
  - *Do you have a middle name?*
  - *Have you ever used any other names--either here or in your country?*
  - *Do you want to change your name when you become a citizen? (Get correct spelling of new name)*
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- Do you have a job, or are you taking classes anywhere?
  - Where do you work? (*name of company and address*)
  - When did you start working there?
  - What do you do?
  - Where did you work before that? (*name of company and address*)
  - When did you start working there? When did you stop?
  - What did you do there?

NOTE: If student is attending a school, ask about the name of school, date student started attending, and date finished.

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- Since you became a permanent resident, have you taken any trips outside the United States? How many trips?
  - Where did you go?
  - *For each trip:* When did you leave? (*date*) When did you return? (*date*)

*NOTE: If the travel history is extensive, it would be unreasonable to ask about each trip, but instead ask these questions only about the most recent trip, and then ask if any of the other trips was for more than six months.*

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- What is your marital status?
  - How many times have you been married?

*If married:*

- What is your current spouse's name?
- What's your spouse's date of birth?
- When did you get married? (*date*)
- Does your spouse live with you?
- Is your spouse a U.S. citizen?
  - When did your spouse become a citizen?
  - Where did your spouse become a citizen—in what city?

*Note: If student has a previous marriage, ask the same questions about the previous spouse(s).*

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- Has your current spouse ever been married to another person before you?
- When did they marry? When did the marriage end? How did it end? (e.g. divorce, death)

*NOTE: Questions about former spouses are very personal. It may be more comfortable to skip these questions for students who have complicated marital histories. Instead simply tell the student that the examiner will ask about these things, and explain the reason: to check for possible marriage fraud.*

- How many sons and daughters have you had?
- What are their names?
- When was \_\_\_\_ born? (*date*)
- Where was \_\_\_\_\_ born?
- Does he/she live with you now?/Where does he/she live?
- Is \_\_\_\_\_ your biological child?

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*I'm going to ask you some questions and I want you to answer "yes" or "no" for each question*

- Have you ever claimed to be a U.S. citizen--in writing or any other way?
- Have you ever voted, or registered to vote in an election in the United States?
- Have you ever failed to file a state or federal income tax return?
- Do you owe any income taxes that are overdue?
- Have you ever been declared legally incompetent? Or have you been confined to a mental institution?
- Have you ever called yourself a non-resident on your tax return?
- Have you ever failed to file a tax return because you considered yourself a non-resident?

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- Are you a member of any groups in the United States, like, for example, a political party, a union, an organization, a club...? (*write down the names of any groups that aren't already listed on the N-400 form*)
  - Were you a member of any groups in your country?
  - Have you ever been involved with the communist party, a totalitarian party, or a terrorist group?
  - Have you ever advocated for the overthrow of any government by force or violence?
  - Have you ever persecuted anyone because of race, religion, or because of the political or social group they belonged to?
  - Have you ever been involved with genocide, torture, killing or hurting someone, forcing sexual contact, or not letting someone practice their religion?
  - Have you ever been a member of or received training from any kind of military or police group—any group that used weapons?
  - Have you ever recruited a child to serve in such a group?
  - Have you ever worked in a prison, jail, detention center or labor camp?
  - Have you ever given or sold weapons to anyone?

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- Have you ever committed a crime?
  - Have you ever been arrested, cited or detained by law enforcement?
  - Have you ever been charged with a crime or been put in jail or prison for any reason?

*NOTE: If there is any kind of criminal record, the student should check this with a legal professional before the USCIS interview.*

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- Have you had problems with alcohol, drugs, prostitution or gambling?
  - Have you ever been married to more than one person at the same time?
  - Have you ever failed to pay child support?
  - Have you ever lied to the government to get an immigration benefit or other public benefit?
  - Have you ever been deported?
  - Have you ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces? (*Men who came to the US between the ages of 18 and 26 will be asked if they have registered for Selective Service, and if not, why not.*)

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- Do you support the Constitution and the form of government of the United States?
  - (*Show the oath on the end of the N-400 form*) This is the Oath of Allegiance that immigrants take when they become citizens. Do you understand what it means? (*Can you explain in your own words what it means?*)
  - Are you willing to take this oath?
  - If your country needs you, are you willing to bear arms on behalf of the United States?
  - If your country needs you, are you willing to perform non-combatant services or work of national importance under civilian direction?

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- Now I'm going to ask you some questions about U.S. history and government: (*Ask up to ten questions from the list. Stop when six have been answered correctly.*)

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- I'm going to show you a sentence, and I want you to read it aloud for me. (*Choose one sentence from sample sentence list.*)
  - Now I'm going to read a sentence to you, and I want you to write what you hear. (*Give student a pencil and paper. Dictate up to 3 times, one of the sentences on the sample sentences list.*)

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*If student performed well:* OK, you have passed the literacy and civics tests, and I'm going to recommend that your citizenship application be approved. Congratulations!

*Go over any problems you may have noted over the course of the interview and answer any questions the student may have about what to expect. If the student is nervous about the interview, offer some reassurance. It may help to let him/her know that even if the test goes badly, a second interview will be scheduled with a different examiner within three months.*