Connections Education logo.



# Civil Rights and Citizenship

American Government Unit Companion

**Directions**

* Complete Prepare and Strategies for Success sections before you begin a unit.
* Complete Summaries and Reflect and Review sections before you take the unit assessment.
* For more details about each section, return to the course overview unit.

## Prepare icon. Prepare

Throughout the Civil Rights and Citizenship unit, you will explore the following Essential Questions.

### Essential question icon. Essential Questions

* What are the benefits and challenges of living in a diverse society?
* Why is the struggle for civil rights ongoing?
* How can citizens voice their opinions and influence public policy?

In Lessons 1–4, you will learn about these topics:

* the United States, a nation of immigrants
* the ongoing struggle for equality faced by racial minorities and women
* the Supreme Court’s evolving interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment

At the end of Lesson 4, you will take a cumulative quiz.

In Lessons 5–6, you will learn about these topics:

* the U.S. and its history of legalized discrimination based on race
* the role of the government in righting the wrongs of segregation and discrimination

At the end of Lesson 6, you will take a cumulative quiz.

In Lessons 7–10, you will learn about these topics:

* becoming an American citizen through birth and the process of naturalization
* immigration policy in the United States, past and present
* the rights and responsibilities of citizenship

In Lesson 10, you will complete a portfolio assignment, participating in a class discussion.

In Lessons 11–14, you will learn about these topics:

* your right to vote
* the role of interest groups and political parties in government
* mass media’s influence in a democracy

After a review of the unit in Lesson 15, you will take a cumulative test in Lesson 16.

## Strategies for success icon. Strategies for Success

### Participate in a Discussion

Do you think 16- and 17-year-olds should have the right to vote? What are the reasons that support your opinion? What do other people your age think? What might adults have to say about the issue?

It’s likely that you, your peers, and caretakers will not all share the same opinion. Now imagine you were to ask this question to everyone in the entire country. Undoubtedly, given how large and diverse the country is, there would be many differences of opinion.

Learning how to become an effective communicator is one of the most valuable skills you can develop and it will help you in all of your relationships. Moreover, for democracy to grow and thrive, it is essential for citizens to be able to discuss issues and exchange ideas among themselves and their representatives in government.

Participating in a discussion may sound easy, but most people have all participated in and observed bad discussions. For example, discussions where people get overly emotional or heated. Another example is when arguments are not supported with facts or reason, or where people just simply don’t listen to each other. To prevent these pitfalls, break down the steps for how you would successfully prepare for a discussion:

1. Gather background information on the topic. You need to get yourself familiar with both sides of the issue. That means you need to understand the general arguments, or reasons, why people agree or disagree about the issue.
2. Research to gain a better understanding of the issue. After you have a general understanding of the issue, continue to research the topic to gain even more knowledge.
3. Identify the strongest arguments on each side of the issue. Examine the background information and your research. What are the strongest reasons that provide support for the issue? What are the strongest reasons against the issue? Rank the reasons in order from most convincing or persuasive (strongest arguments), to least convincing or persuasive (weakest arguments).
4. Create counter arguments or rebuttals for the strongest arguments on each side of the issue. When you think about a counter argument, you acknowledge what is being said and are then prepared to speak to why the claim is wrong, faulty, weak, or misguided.
5. Present your arguments. Keep an open mind and listen carefully to what the opposing side says. Ask questions to help you understand the other side better. Always remember that communication is not only about the words you say, but how you say them. Keep your tone respectful and do not interrupt other people.

Now that you have covered the process of preparing for a discussion, return to the previous question: Should 16- and 17-year-olds have the right to vote? Imagine you have read about the issue, researched the positions on both sides of the issue, and now you must identify the strongest arguments on each side of the issue.

Read the following arguments in support of 16- and 17-year-olds having the right to vote. Rank them on a scale of 1–3 with 1 being the strongest, most persuasive or convincing reason to support that side, and 3 being the weakest or least persuasive or convincing reason.

Yes, 16- and 17-year-olds should have the right to vote.

**Taxation Without Representation**

16- and 17-year-olds live under the laws of the U.S. and pay taxes, just like adults. One of the primary reasons colonist fought for independence against the British in the American Revolution was the fact that although they were taxed like British citizens, they had no say in government decisions. This is like many 16- and 17-year-olds who work and as a result pay taxes towards the government. Unable to vote, this is a classic case of taxation without representation.

**The U.S. – An Example of Democracy?**

Many countries such as Norway, Austria, Brazil, Ecuador, Cuba, and Argentina, permit 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in federal elections and other countries such as Switzerland and Germany allow those same age groups to vote in municipal and provincial (state) elections. How can the U.S. claim to be an example of a democracy if countries such as Cuba offer greater voting rights?

**Double Standard**

When the U.S. was at the height of the Vietnam War, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, giving the right to vote to 18- to 20-year-olds. At that time, most Americans realized there was a double standard in sending 18-year-old soldiers to fight and die for their country when they weren’t allowed to vote. The same double-standard exists today. In many states, the penalties for juveniles who commit a crime are the same as they are for adults. Why is it youths are considered reasonable and mature adults when they are committing a crime but silly and irresponsible when they want to vote?

After you are prioritized your arguments, create counter-arguments or rebuttals for the strongest argument. Let’s say you thought argument Taxation Without Representation was the strongest, or most persuasive argument supporting the issue. Imagine you have to argue against that argument. Re-read argument #1 and think how you would respond to the speaker. What are some problems or weaknesses with your opponent’s argument?

**Counter Argument:** Yes, working youths do pay taxes but everyone who buys a candy bar or soda does so because they are paying sales tax. Some of the tax money generated pays for services and infrastructure that only benefits youths (schools, after-school programs, youth centers, etc.). Plus, there are many things people under the age of 18 aren’t allowed to do. From purchasing tobacco, drinking alcohol, enlisting in the military, and getting married, society has stated there is a minimum age requirement and the ages 16 and 17 are too young.

Now that you have prioritized your arguments and prepared counter-arguments, you are ready to discuss the issue. Remember to actively listen and keep an open mind. The goal is not proving your point as much as formulating a viewpoint based on evidence and reason.

You will have an opportunity to practice these skills throughout the unit and course. Review the steps before starting your portfolio assignment in Lesson 10 where you will be participating in a discussion.

 Summaries

You may read summaries of the Magruder’s American Government textbook pages assigned in each lesson. Decide whether you want to read them before, during, or after a lesson.

* Read before a lesson to preview the most important information ahead of time, including people, places, and events.
* Read during or after a lesson to review Magruder’s American Government pages without rereading every word.

Access the American Government Summaries through the Web Links resource by selecting the backpack icon. Read the corresponding summary with the lesson.

* Lesson 1: American Diversity
* Lesson 2: Racial Discrimination
* Lesson 3: Discrimination Against Women
* Lesson 4: Equal Protection Under the Law
* Lesson 5: Segregation and Jim Crow Laws
* Lesson 6: Federal Civil Rights Laws
* Lesson 7: American Citizenship
* Lesson 8: A Nation of Immigrants
* Lesson 11: Can One Person Make a Difference?
* Lesson 12: Collective Action and Interest Groups
* Lesson 13: Political Party Influence
* Lesson 14: The Power of the Media

 Reflect and Review

Before the unit assessment, use the checklist to reflect on what you have learned throughout the Civil Rights and Citizenship unit. This will help determine what content to review to prepare for the multiple question types on the assessment.

1. Read each of the statements.
2. If you agree with the statement, check the box.
3. Revisit statements that you did not check. Return to the lesson resources to review the content. Study the key words using the Glossary.

### Statements

| **[**check mark**]** | **Statement** | **Key Words** | **Resources** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Part I: I can describe how African Americans have been discriminated and explain actions the government has taken to protect or limit their rights. | * discriminate * segregation * separate-but-equal doctrine * Jim Crow Laws * affirmative action * poll tax | * Lesson 2: Two-Column Chart “Racial Discrimination” * Lesson 2: *Magruder’s American Government:* Citizenship and Civil Rights> Diversity and Discrimination> Discrimination in America * Lesson 4: Flipped Video “Equal Protection Clause” * Lesson 4: *Magruder’s American Government*: Citizenship and Civil Rights > Equality Before the Law > Equal Protection and Individual Rights |
|  | Part II: I can describe how African Americans have been discriminated and explain actions the government has taken to protect or limit their rights. | * discriminate * segregation * separate-but-equal doctrine * Jim Crow Laws * affirmative action * poll tax | * Lesson 5: Magruder’s American Government: Citizenship and Civil Rights > Equality Before the Law > A History of Segregation * Lesson 6: Flipped Video: “Civil Rights Movement” * Lesson 6: Magruder’s American Government: Citizenship and Civil Rights > Federal Civil Rights Laws > The History of Civil Rights Laws and Government Policies on Affirmative Action |
|  | I can describe how women have been discriminated and explain actions the government has taken to protect or limit women’s rights. | * discriminate * suffragette * equal protection | * Lesson 3: *Magruder’s American Government*: Citizenship and Civil Rights > Diversity and Discrimination > Discrimination against Women * Lesson 3: Interactive Gallery Women’s Rights * Lesson 4: Flipped Video “Equal Protection Clause” * Lesson 4: *Magruder’s American Government*: Citizenship and Civil Rights > Equality Before the Law > Equal Protection and Individual Rights |
|  | I can describe how Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and immigrants have been discriminated and the actions the government has taken to protect and limit their rights. | * discriminate * refugee * reservations * amnesty | * Lesson 1: Flipped Video “Diversity and Discrimination” * Lesson 2: *Magruder’s American Government:* Citizenship and Civil Rights> Diversity and Discrimination> Discrimination in America * Lesson 2: Two-Column Chart Racial Discrimination * Lesson 8: *Magruder’s American Government:* Citizenship and Civil Rights> American Citizenship> Governmental Policies on Undocumented Aliens * Lesson 8: Concept Web Immigration Legislation |
|  | I can describe the characteristics and actions of a good citizen, including voting. | * tolerance | * Lesson 9: Interactive Review: Characteristics of Good Citizenship * Lesson 11: Flipped Video “Why Vote?” |
|  | I can explain what makes the U.S. a nation of immigrants. | * diverse * heterogeneous * assimilation * tolerance | * Lesson 1: Flipped Video: “Diversity and Discrimination”   Lesson 1: *Magruder’s American Government:* Citizenship and Civil Rights> Diversity and Discrimination> A Changing American Culture |

| **[**check mark**]** | **Statement** | **Key Words** | **Resources** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | I can describe how interest groups influence government decision making in all three branches of government and give examples of strategies used. | * interest groups * lobbying | * Lesson 12: Flipped Video: “Understanding Interest Groups” * Lesson 12: *Magruder’s American Government*: Government by the People> Understanding Interest Groups> Different Views of Interest Groups * Lesson 12: *Magruder’s American Government*: Government by the People> Understanding Interest Groups> Processes Used by Interest Groups –Direct Approach |
|  | I can explain the different ways of becoming an American citizen including:   * birth * naturalization | * citizen * jus soli * jus Sanguinis * naturalization | * Lesson 7: *Magruder’s American Government*: Citizenship and Civil Rights> American Citizenship> Natural Born Citizen * Lesson 7: Flipped Video: “American Citizenship” |