



DISCOVERING JUSTICE CHILDREN DISCOVERING JUSTICE

Grade 4 Sample Lesson Naturalization Activity

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that our nation has always recognized that more people and more states might be joining the Union.
- When the founders wrote the rules for our nation, the Constitution, they provided ways for people to join and ways to enlarge the nation's borders.
- Article IV, Section III in the Constitution talks about new states: *New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new States shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.*
- Article I, Section VIII, Clause IV in the Constitution gives Congress the power to “establish a uniform rule of naturalization.” The rules for becoming a citizen are the same throughout the country. They do not change based on where you live.

Introducing the Naturalization Activity (15 – 20 minutes)

Explain to students that they will do a brief activity to learn how people who would like to become Americans can become citizens.

Ask students to explain what it means to be a citizen of a nation. *A citizen is someone who lives somewhere. An American lives in the United States. You can also be a citizen of the town you live in.*

Now ask students:

Q: What are some of the rights that you have as a citizen of the United States? *You get to stay here as long as you want. You get to vote and participate in government. No one can make you leave this country.*

- Students may not know that you get the right to serve on a jury and participate in our justice system by making decisions about a court case as a citizen.
- Ask students if they know the two ways people can become a citizen of the United States.
- Explain that you can be a native-born citizen, or you can choose to become a citizen and go through a process called naturalization.
- Explain the process for becoming a naturalized citizen. (This applies to adults over 18.)
 1. First you have to have a green card (permission to live and work here).

2. You have to have lived here for five years, otherwise known as a residency requirement. (If you marry a citizen, you only have to have lived here for three years.)
3. You have to be a person of good moral character. For example, you have to follow laws.
4. Then you have to take a test, pass an interview, and be sworn in. When you are sworn in, you promise to follow the laws of this government.
5. You take the Oath of Allegiance in front of a judge and then you are given your citizenship papers.

Acting Out the Naturalization Process (30 – 40 minutes)

- Divide the class into three groups of approximately eight to 10 students each.
- Each group will act out one part of the naturalization process and present it to the rest of the class.
 1. Group I will act out the interview process for the class so that they can see what it involves. The goal of the interview is for the inspectors to prove that the applicants have met the residency requirements and are of good moral character.
 2. Group II will give the class a short practice test on American history and civics, similar to the one that applicants take. The goal of this test is for applicants to show that they have a working knowledge of our nation's history and government.
 3. Group III will explain and then lead the class through the Oath of Allegiance ceremony. The goal of the ceremony is for applicants to pledge their loyalty to their new nation, the United States of America, and give up their loyalty to their old country.
- Give students 10 to 15 minutes to practice their parts of the process and then call the groups together.
- Make sure the students in the audience know what is expected of them, as the role of the audience changes with each group.
- It should take each group about five minutes to present their part.

*You may want to explain that someone can be of good moral character even if he or she has broken a law, but that this is how the ceremony is written.

Debriefing the Naturalization Ceremony (15–25 minutes)

- Ask students to explain what they learned about the process of becoming a citizen:
 - Q:** Was it harder or easier than you expected?
 - Q:** Were you surprised by any of the requirements?
- Ask students to respond to this question in writing:
 - Q:** What did you learn about becoming a citizen?