

Creating a Better Citizenship Test	
Lesson Objective	● Investigate how individuals without full political rights have shaped American understandings of citizenship. ● Analyze the U.S. Citizenship Test through a critical, inclusive lens. ● Interpret primary sources to understand historical civic advocacy. ● Collaboratively create a revised test question that highlights underrepresented stories of civic engagement.
Compelling Questions	● Whose voices and civic values does the U.S. citizenship test reflect? Whose voices and perspectives are missing from the test? ● How can I analyze the citizenship test to identify values of civic participation? ● How can I revise the citizenship test to make it more inclusive of diverse expressions of civic participation?
Lesson Summary	Students will begin by examining the Ellis Island Flag of Faces interactive artwork. Students will use the “Parts, Perspectives, and Me” thinking routine. Next, students will consider the questions: What story does the Flag of Faces tell us about immigration to the U.S.? What story does the flag tell us about “Who gets to be American?” Then, Students will work in pairs to explore questions on the U.S. Citizenship Test. Students will brainstorm a list of values that the U.S. citizenship test illustrates. Next, students will consider which perspectives are apparent as well as those missing in the citizenship test, using the Parts, Perspectives, and Me thinking routine. As a final performance task, students will work in groups to analyze a single question from the test and compare it with a “counter-narrative” for the question they explore. Students will address the compelling question “How can we make the U.S. citizenship test more reflective of diverse expressions of citizenship?” by exploring primary sources that extend and deepen the stories found within the citizenship test. Students will use their findings to begin work on a project that proposes action plans to advocate for a more inclusive citizenship test.

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Pacing Suggestions	60-minutes
Materials Needed	• Ellis Island Flag of Faces interactive art installation • Harvard Project 0 Parts, Perspectives, and Me thinking routine • GLI's Interactive USCIS Citizenship Test • Counter Narrative Graphic Organizer and Primary Source Set with modified versions

	Pacing suggestion	Summary
1	Introduction <i>10 minutes</i>	Explain to students that they will use the U.S. citizenship test to explore the compelling question “Whose stories shape our understanding of American citizenship, and whose are left out?” Introduce students briefly to Ellis Island’s Flag of Faces interactive art installation. Allow students to individually explore the installation on their devices or explore as a whole group using a projector. After, direct students to complete the Parts, Perspectives, and Me thinking routine individually or with a partner. Use the questions below on a handout or slideshow to guide students through the thinking routine: • <i>What are the individual parts of the artwork?</i> • <i>What perspectives are represented? What perspectives can you view this art from?</i> • <i>How are you involved? What connections do you have? What assumptions, interests, or personal circumstances shape the way you see it?</i> Discuss students’ observations as a whole group and explain that the Flag of Faces represents centuries of U.S. immigration and citizenship stories. The flag “weaves together portraits from throughout history to create a picture of our national spirit.”

2	Analyze the USCIS citizenship test <i>15 Minutes</i>	Next, introduce students to the USCIS citizenship test. Explain to students that they will first have a chance to explore the test questions individually or with a partner. Students should use GLI's digital citizenship test. Students may also wish to use the USCIS official list of civics questions. After students have had a chance to test their knowledge of U.S. history and civics through the citizenship test, they will complete the thinking routine Parts, Perspectives, and Me again. This time, use the questions below to prompt student thinking: • <i>What are the individual parts of the Naturalization Test?</i> • <i>What perspectives are represented? What perspectives are missing?</i> • <i>How are you involved? What connections do you have? What assumptions, interests, or personal circumstances shaped the way you experienced the exam?</i> Students share their responses in small groups or with a partner. As a class, brainstorm a list of civic values represented in the citizenship test. Examples might include populism, values associated with national holidays, respect for the rule of law, patriotism and loyalty, etc.
3	Counter Narratives Teach-In <i>25 Minutes</i>	For the next portion of the lesson, students will analyze the citizenship test through a critical lens, considering ways to make the citizenship test more inclusive of diverse expressions of civic agency and virtues. Step 1: Students meet in expert groups Give each student a graphic organizer and a packet of primary source documents. Divide the class into small "expert groups." Assign each group a different question from the USCIS citizenship test to focus on. Along with their test question, give each group "counter-narratives." These are alternative historical perspectives that highlight voices and experiences of underrepresented groups (women, minorities, indigenous peoples, etc.) that are often left out of mainstream historical accounts. Students use their primary source documents to research these counter narratives. The documents come in two versions: the original and a modified version that's easier to read for students with different learning needs or reading levels. After researching, groups summarize what they learned about these alternative

		perspectives on their assigned topic. Finally, groups work together to write a new USCIS citizenship test question that incorporates these underrepresented voices and perspectives they've studied. Step 2: Students meet in teaching groups After students have researched the “counter narratives” in their expert groups, assign students to their teaching groups. Teaching groups should include a combination of one or two members from each of the expert groups. Expert group members share their research as well as their revised test questions.
4	Debrief and brainstorm action plans <i>10 minutes</i>	After the groups have presented their information, they should proceed to the final portion of the lesson, which involves reflecting and developing an action plan. Each teaching group should work to brainstorm a list of ways to address the question: “How can we make the USCIS test more inclusive of diverse citizenship?” Examples might include: - Designing a new page in the study guide - Creating an infographic that explains the answer to the USCIS question - Writing a letter to an elected representative advocating for a more inclusive USCIS exam Explain to students that they will begin to develop their action plans in more detail during the next lesson.

References

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