

Using the Citizenship Study Guides

- **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 little. 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.

- **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 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. 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

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 have benefited from United Nations projects, 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. Then 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.

Remind the student to practice the questions with a friend/family member/co-worker for homework.

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Step 3: Give a dictation quiz

One at a time, read each sentence from the “writing practice” section of the previous lesson’s study guide. Read each word slowly and clearly, and repeat as many times as you need to. If there are any errors, have your student check his/her work against the sentences in the study guide, or underline the location of the error(s) and have your student revise the sentence. (Remember that errors in punctuation, capitalization, and even *minor* spelling errors will probably still get a passing score. You can point out such errors, but assure the student that the sentence would probably still be OK for passing the citizenship test.)

Remind the student to copy the sentences 10 times for homework. You may also want to assign some individual spelling words for the student to write 10 times for additional practice.

Step 4: Go over the next set of dictation sentences

Have the student read each sentence aloud. If necessary, clarify the meaning of the sentence, and discuss any words that give the student trouble. For example, students are often confused by past tense verb forms (come/came, buy/bought) and homonyms (buy/by, threw/through).

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.

The examiner may make reference to specific information that the student has listed in her/his application form. For example, instead of asking “What is your current address?” and examiner might instead ask, “Are you still living at 122 Main St. in Amherst?” For this reason, it’s a good idea to practice interview questions using a copy of the student’s own citizenship application form, if possible.

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 Lynne 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.

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- **What will actually happen at my student's interview?**

Your student will be expected to:

- Answer questions (in English) about his/her citizenship application (to update and verify the information that he/she has already sent in). *Applicants need to be able to answer questions using "ordinary words or phrases." Their grammar does not need to be perfect. A few words will suffice so it's not necessary to coach full sentence answers. The important thing is to make sure verbal answers are consistent with what is already appears in their written applications.*
- Correctly answer six civics questions from a random list of ten questions (from the study guide list).
- Read one sentence (normally from the study guide list) aloud "in a manner which suggests that the applicant understands the sentence." *If the applicant stumbles, he/she will be offered a second and even a third sentence to read aloud.*
- Write one dictated sentence (normally from the study guide list). *Small spelling or punctuation errors are not a big deal, as long as the sentence is understandable. Applicants who have difficulty with the first sentence will be offered a second and third chance with new sentences.*