

What's on the US Citizenship Test?

Speaking



Examiner goes over applicant's personal information (from his/her N-400 application form)

- Examiner is required to repeat and rephrase if applicant doesn't understand (so your student may need some coaching on how to ask for clarification).
- Short one or two word answers are good (no need coach complete sentences).
- Questions may be open-ended (e.g. Where do you work?) or they may refer to the information in the person's application (e.g. "Do you still work at *Tubed Products*?").
- Many questions are "yes/no" (e.g. "Have you ever had problems with drugs/alcohol/gambling?") Make sure student recognizes at least one "key" word in the question)
- Responses should be understandable, but applicant cannot fail on the basis of poor pronunciation or grammar.



Reading

Applicant is asked to read one (printed) question aloud

- Test questions are based on a specific vocabulary list, and are fairly simple. (Example: *Who was the first president?*)
- Questions are civics-related but these are not the 100 questions from the history/government test. (Examiners have a list of about 34 reading test questions but only the individual vocabulary words are available to the public. *Citizenship: Passing the Test* provides the full questions.)
- If the applicant can't read the question, he/she will be given a second, and even a third question to read. Applicant does not fail unless he/she is unable to read any of the three.
- Applicant cannot be failed simply for having an accent.

History/Government



Applicant is asked ten questions from the list of 100 study questions

- Questions and answers are oral (nothing is written).
- Applicant needs to give at least six correct answers to pass.
- Some of the questions have more than one possible answer. (*Citizenship: Passing the Test* suggests the answer that is generally easiest to say/remember, but you can let the student know that other answers may also be correct.) The official USCIS question list provides all of the acceptable answers, but *students do not need to learn them all!*



Writing

Applicant is given a lined sheet of paper. Examiner dictates one sentence

- This sentence will normally be the answer to the question that the applicant read aloud in the reading test. (Example: *Washington was the first president.*)
- Test sentences are civics-related, are based on a specific vocabulary list, and are fairly simple. (Examiners have a list of about 34 dictation sentences but only the individual vocabulary words are available to the public. *Citizenship: Passing the Test* provides the full sentences.)
- If the applicant can't write the dictation, he/she will be given a second, and even a third sentence to write. Applicant does not fail unless he/she is unable to write any of the three.
- Applicants cannot be failed on the basis of punctuation or capitalization errors. Minor spelling errors are OK as long as the sentence generally makes sense.

Note: If the applicant should fail any part of the test, he/she will be offered a retest (with a different examiner) within three months. The retest is free, and will only cover the portion(s) of the test that the applicant failed the first time. Also, keep in mind that it is possible to pass the test, but still be denied citizenship. This would happen if something in the application indicates that the person does not meet the qualifications for citizenship.