# ***Citizenship Thematic Unit***

**The Asian American Education Project**

# For educators who wish to teach with a thematic approach when using The Asian American Education Project curricular resources**,** the following are suggestions on how to utilize the different lesson plans with the time teachers can allot to the theme.

**Theme – *Citizenship:***

In this thematic unit, students explore issues pertaining to citizenship through the lens of the Asian American experience in the United States.

**Organizing Questions:**

* What does it mean to be a U.S. citizen?
* What barriers to U.S. citizenship have existed for Asian Americans?
* Who are the DREAMers and what barriers to citizenship exist for them?

**Teacher Procedures:**

1. Inform students that they will be learning about issues pertaining to citizenship through the lens of the Asian American experience in the United States.
2. Outline expectations for discussions on this topic. Emphasize that they must be respectful when acknowledging classmates’ comments, as well as exhibit sensitivity toward cultures and ideas different from their own.
3. Follow the guidelines outlined below, depending on how much time you have available to teach this unit.
4. Please note that instructions for group work are based on a class size of 30. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.

**DAY ONE:**

**Summary:**

Students examine the benefits of having citizenship in the United States and research the history of citizenship in the United States.

**Activity 1:**

1. Begin the lesson with the question: What benefits are there to citizenship? Ask students to spend 2–­3 minutes brainstorming their answers and writing them onto a piece of scratch paper. Once time is up, ask student volunteers to share their answers.
2. Record their answers on a sheet of butcher paper or a whiteboard at the front of the classroom. Then, reveal some of the main benefits of citizenship (as listed on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [website)](https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learn-about-citizenship/should-i-consider-us-citizenship) Add benefits that the students did not brainstorm onto the list:

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| **Benefit:** | **Explanation:** |
| Vote | * Only citizens can vote in federal elections * Most states also restrict the right to vote, in most elections, to U.S. citizens |
| Serve on a Jury | * Only U.S. citizens can serve on a federal jury * Most states also restrict jury service to U.S. citizens * Serving on a jury is an important responsibility for U.S. citizens |
| Travel with a U.S. Passport | * A U.S. passport enables you to get assistance from the U.S. government when overseas, if necessary |
| Bring Family Members to the U.S. | * U.S. citizens generally get priority when petitioning to bring family members permanently to this country. |
| Obtain Citizenship for Children Under 18 Years of Age | * In most cases, a child born abroad to a U.S. citizen is automatically a U.S. citizen |
| Apply for Federal Jobs | * Certain jobs with government agencies require U.S. citizenship. |
| Become an Elected Official | * Only citizens can run for federal office (U.S. Senate or House of Representatives) and for most state and local offices. |
| Keep Your Residency | * A U.S. citizen’s rights to remain in the United States cannot be taken away. |
| Become Eligible for Federal Grants and Scholarships | * Many financial aid grants, including college scholarships and funds given by the government for specific purposes, are available to U.S. citizens. |
| Obtain Government Benefits | * Some government benefits are available only to U.S. citizens |

1. Ask students their opinions about which of the above benefits they think are the most important. Highlight how voting gives an individual power, secure financial and government benefits, and keep your residency.
2. Next ask students to think about what the consequences of **not** having citizenship might be.
3. Inform students that over the course of U.S. history certain groups were barred from being able to become citizens.

**Activity 2:**

1. Divide the class into ten small groups of three students each. Distribute a copy of the following handout to each student. Inform students that this handout describes important citizenship dates in the history of the United States (from the National Museum of American History [website)](https://americanhistory.si.edu/democracy-exhibition/creating-citizens/defining-citizenship).

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| **Match the following dates with the correct event:**  **1776, 1789, 1789, 1790, 1848, 1865, 1868, 1870, 1882, 1898, 1917, 1921, 1924, 1940, 1952, 1965, 1986, 2001** | |
|  | Naturalization Act of \_\_\_\_ provides the first rules to be followed by the United States in granting national citizenship to “free white people.” |
|  | Alien Registration Act requires all non-citizen adults to register with the government and empowers the president to deport foreigners suspected of espionage or being a security risk. |
|  | Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery, although it did not grant formerly enslaved persons the full rights of citizenship. |
|  | USA Patriot Act amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to broaden the scope of aliens ineligible for admission or deportation to include terrorist activities. |
|  | First quota law is passed limiting the annual number of immigrants based on country of origin. |
|  | Indian Citizenship Act extends U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans. |
|  | Immigration and Nationality Act eliminates race as a bar to immigration or citizenship. |
|  | Hart-Celler Act abolishes the national origins quota system, replacing it with a preference system that focuses on immigrants’ skills and family relationships with citizens or U.S. residents. |
|  | Immigration Reform and Control Act of \_\_\_\_ grants amnesty to millions of individuals living in the United States who entered the country before January 1, 1982. |
|  | U.S. Constitution, under Article I, Congress is “to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization,” eventually giving the federal government the sole authority over immigration. |
|  | Chinese Exclusion Act of \_\_\_\_ is the first U.S. law to ban immigration based on race or nationality; it would be repealed in 1943. |
|  | Jones-Shafroth Act grants U.S. citizenship to residents of Puerto Rico. |
|  | U.S. Supreme Court rules in United States v. Wong Kim Ark that any child born in the United States, regardless of race or parents’ citizenship status, is a U.S. citizen. |
|  | Naturalization Act of \_\_\_\_ extends naturalization rights to former African slaves not born in the United States; Asian immigrants remain excluded from citizenship. |
|  | Declaration of Independence protests England’s limiting naturalization of foreigners in the colonies. |
|  | Fourteenth Amendment grants that all persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens and are guaranteed “equal protection of the laws.” |
|  | Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo extends citizenship to all inhabitants living in the territory annexed to the United States following the Mexican War. |
|  | Bill of Rights outlines basic rights under the new government. |

1. Instruct them to work together with their group members to match the events with the dates that they believe to be correct. Direct them to try and do as many of these as possible without using the Internet (roughly 10 minutes). Then, allow students 5–10 extra minutes to use the Internet to find their answers.
2. Review students’ answers together as a class. Instruct them to correct their sheets as the answers are checked. **The correct answers are displayed below for your reference.**

* **1776:** Declaration of Independence protests England’s limiting naturalization of foreigners in the colonies.
* **1789:** U.S. Constitution, under Article I, Congress is “to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization,” eventually giving the federal government the sole authority over immigration.
* **1789:** Bill of Rights outlines basic rights under the new government.
* **1790:** Naturalization Act of 1790 provides the first rules to be followed by the United States in granting national citizenship to “free white people.”
* **1848:** Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo extends citizenship to all inhabitants living in the territory annexed to the United States following the Mexican War.
* **1865:** Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery, although it did not grant formerly enslaved persons the full rights of citizenship.
* **1868:** Fourteenth Amendment grants that all persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens and are guaranteed “equal protection of the laws.”
* **1870:** Naturalization Act of 1870 extends naturalization rights to former African slaves not born in the United States; Asian immigrants remain excluded from citizenship.
* **1882:** Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is the first U.S. law to ban immigration based on race or nationality; it would be repealed in 1943.
* **1898:** U.S. Supreme Court rules in United States v. Wong Kim Ark that any child born in the United States, regardless of race or parents’ citizenship status, is a U.S. citizen.
* **1917:** Jones-Shafroth Act grants U.S. citizenship to residents of Puerto Rico.
* **1921:** First quota law is passed limiting the annual number of immigrants based on country of origin.
* **1924:** Indian Citizenship Act extends U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans.
* **1940:** Alien Registration Act requires all non-citizen adults to register with the government and empowers the president to deport foreigners suspected of espionage or being a security risk.
* **1952:** Immigration and Nationality Act eliminates race as a bar to immigration or citizenship.
* **1965:** Hart-Celler Act abolishes the national origins quota system, replacing it with a preference system that focuses on immigrants’ skills and family relationships with citizens or U.S. residents.
* **1986:** Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 grants amnesty to millions of individuals living in the United States who entered the country before January 1, 1982.
* **2001:** USA Patriot Act amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to broaden the scope of aliens ineligible for admission or deportation to include terrorist activities.

1. Inform students that Asians were barred from U.S. citizenship in various ways, and that they will learn more about this history through viewing the video in Lesson 1.7 - *Racial Identity and American Citizenship in the Court* as homework.

**Homework Prior to Day Two:**

1. Direct students to watch the video in Lesson 1.7 - *Racial Identity and American Citizenship in the Court*.
2. Also instruct students to read the essay in this lesson*,* and to answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper:

* Why did Asian Americans challenge racist laws and policies through the courts?
* What effects does limiting citizenship to certain races have? What was the impact of the *Wong Kim Ark* and *Yick Wo* cases on U.S. citizenship?
* What do the *Thind* and *Ozawa* cases tell you about how race is defined? Why do you think the Supreme Court changed its reasoning about who is white?

***Note:*** *If students do not have computer and Internet access to watch this video as homework, you will need to provide students time to watch it during class.*

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| **One Day to Teach Lesson:** |
| If you have only one day to teach about issues pertaining to citizenship, collect students’ homework assignments for assessment and conclude your lesson on citizenship here. If you have additional days to teach on this theme, proceed with the following directions. |

**DAY TWO:**

**Summary:**

Students review topics explored in the documentary, and learn more about past legal cases pertaining to citizenship.

**Activity 1:**

1. Direct students to the questions that they answered for their homework. Facilitate a discussion based on them. The questions are included again below for your reference:

* Why did Asian Americans challenge racist laws and policies through the courts?
* What effects does limiting citizenship to certain races have? What was the impact of the *Wong Kim Ark* and *Yick Wo* cases on American citizenship?
* What do the *Thind* and *Ozawa* cases tell you about how race is defined? Why do you think the Supreme Court changed its reasoning about who is white?

**Activity 2:**

1. Distribute one copy of the handout, *Ozawa and Thind:* *Inconsistencies at the Court,* from Lesson 1.7 to each student. Divide the class into partner pairs and instruct them to alternate turns reading the handout to each other.
2. Once competed, direct them to discuss the following questions with each other. After doing so, facilitate a class discussion based on the same questions, listed below for reference:

* How is “white” defined in *Ozawa*? In *Thind*?
* What do the Justices seem to say about the term “Caucasian” in *Ozawa*? What about in *Thind*?
* Why was it important for *Ozawa* and *Thind* to both argue that they were white as opposed to another race? For context, people of African descent had the right to naturalize under the 14th Amendment.
* What bases or authorities did the Justices rely on in making their determination of who is “white” in each of the cases?
* How does science play a role in the Justices’ reasoning in *Ozawa* and *Thind*? Did their position change from *Ozawa* to *Thind*?
* Do the two decisions seem logical or consistent with the Constitution? Why or why not?
* Viewed together, what do the two cases say about citizenship and its relationship to race in the United States in the early 20th century?

1. Inform students that they will have a chance to explore more recent events and legislation that continue to affect people’s ability to obtain U.S. citizenship.

**Activity 3:**

1. When 10 minutes of class time remain, distribute one copy of the essayfrom Lesson 5.5 – *Teresa Lee and Undocumented Asian America*. Instruct students to read the handout as homework and to answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper:

* In what ways did the general lack of public knowledge around undocumented Asian Americans and their stories affect Tereza Lee? In what ways may it have protected her? In what ways did it increase her vulnerability?
* What is Senator Dick Durbin’s point of view on undocumented immigrants like Tereza Lee?
* What impact did the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States have on the DREAM Act? In what ways do we see that impact continue until today?
* Why do you think the DREAM Act focused on young undocumented students who had been brought to the country as minors? In what ways do they change the prevailing perceptions about undocumented immigration?
* Who is American? What does it mean to be American? Does being documented or undocumented affect this view?

**Homework Prior to Day Three:**

Students read the essayfrom Lesson 5.5, and answer questions assigned at the end of the previous class on a separate sheet of paper.

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| **Two Days to Teach Lesson:** |
| If you have only two days to teach about issues pertaining to citizenship, collect students’ homework assignments for assessment and conclude your lesson on citizenship here. If you have additional days to teach on this theme, proceed with the following directions. |

**DAY THREE:**

**Summary:**

Students explore the situation of undocumented immigrants in the United States as well as DREAMers. They also analyze the responsibilities of citizenship and how these immigrants meet the criteria.

**Activity 1:**

1. Begin class with a quick discussion based on the homework questions assigned at the end of the previous class.
2. Then, inform students that there are responsibilities that come with having U.S. citizenship. Ask students to brainstorm what those responsibilities might be.
3. Record students answers on a whiteboard or sheet of butcher paper in front of the classroom. Then, reveal the answers, as documented on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [website](https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learn-about-citizenship/should-i-consider-us-citizenship).

* Support and defend the Constitution.
* Stay informed of the issues affecting your community.
* Participate in the democratic process.
* Respect and obey federal, state, and local laws.
* Respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others.
* Participate in your local community.
* Pay income and other taxes honestly, and on time, to federal, state, and local authorities.
* Serve on a jury when called upon.
* Defend the country if the need should arise.

1. As a class, discuss the meaning behind each of these responsibilities, how many of these responsibilities they have fulfilled (or adult citizens that they know) have fulfilled.
2. Inform students that there are numerous people who wish to become U.S. citizens, but as they learned through the videos that they watched in the previous class and through the accompanying essays*,* current legislation has made the process much more difficult for some people.

**Activity 2:**

1. Assign the following activity (from Lesson 5.5), to each student:  
   Research three undocumented Americans. Some can be found in [Dreamers’ Stories](https://www.durbin.senate.gov/issues/immigration-and-the-dream-act/dreamers-stories). Write a short report that answers the following questions:

* Who are the undocumented Americans you selected, what is their family background, where did they grow up?
* What is their educational and/or professional background?
* Do you think they will be able to contribute to our country? To advance our country?
* How have immigration policies such as DACA, as a substitute for the DREAM Act, assisted them, and will affect them if cancelled?
* Do you think that the DACA program should be extended? Why or why not?

1. Allow students time to research their chosen individuals during class, and complete the assignment as homework, if necessary.

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| **Three Days to Teach Lesson:** |
| If you have only three days to teach about issues pertaining to citizenship, collect students’ homework assignments for assessment and conclude your lesson on citizenship here. If you have additional days to teach on this theme, proceed with the following directions. |

**DAY FOUR:**

**Summary:**

Students share their research about undocumented immigrants and engage in a class discussion. Students then analyze the process in which citizenship is obtained.

**Activity 1:**

1. Group students into six small groups of five students each. Allow students time to share their reports with each other.
2. Reconvene as a class to debrief the assignment with a class discussion. Sample questions are included below for your reference.

* Were there any similarities between the people you chose to study? If so, what were they?
* Think about the responsibilities of citizenship that you studied in the last class. Do you think the people you studied will be able to contribute to our country? To advance our country?
* How have immigration policies such as DACA, as a substitute for the DREAM Act, assisted them, and will affect them if canceled?
* Do you think that the DACA program should be extended? Why or why not?

**Activity 2:**

1. Inform students that they will now examine more of the steps necessary for immigrants to obtain U.S. citizenship. Direct them to the “How to Apply for U.S. Citizenship,” page of the USA.gov [website](https://www.usa.gov/become-us-citizen#item-36212). In addition to the other methods through which citizenship can be obtained, ask them to pay special attention to the “U.S. Citizenship through Naturalization” process.
2. While researching the process, ask students to write down three thoughts that they have about the process. These can be about information that was new to them, surprised them, that they agree with, disagree with, etc.

If time allows, ask students to take the “Civics Practice Test” offered on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [website](https://my.uscis.gov/prep/test/civics). If students feel comfortable sharing their results, choose student volunteers to do so.

**Activity 3:**

1. Debrief the unit with a class discussion. Revisit the list of citizen responsibilities and review with the class which of these responsibilities that they can fulfill, even as students. Brainstorm ways in which they can become more responsible citizens, and also help those who wish to become U.S. citizens, but are not yet able to. Refer also to some of the additional activities listed at the end of this unit.

**ADDITIONAL DAYS:**

If you have more than four days to teach about citizenship issues through the lens of the Asian American experience, consider spending one class per time period, and incorporating activities from the following lessons in particular:

***Breaking Ground, 1850s – 1920s***

* 1.5, *Angel Island: Exclusion or Inclusion?*
* 1.7, *Racial Identity and American Citizenship in the Court*

***Good Americans, 1950s – 1960s***

* 3.5, *Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965—Civil Rights Movement Era*

***Breaking Through, 1980s - Present***

* 5.5, *Tereza Lee and the Undocumented*
* 5.5.1, *Fight for Just Immigration in a Nation of Native Americans and Immigrants*

If class time allows, consider including additional activities such as the following:

* Arrange a panel of guest speakers of people who have become naturalized citizens of the United States. Ask them to share why they decided to become citizens, and the process they went through to do so.
* Write a letter to their senator, sharing their thoughts on the DREAM Act.

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Note: The thematic unit is created by Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE) with the lesson plans developed by Asian Americans Advancing Justice.