



# U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

# Training the Trainer

A Guide to Teaching *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants*  
Film and Booklet



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# Teaching *A Promise of Freedom*

- *A Promise of Freedom* is a study tool on U.S. history and government and the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. The video and accompanying discussion booklet are online at <http://www.uscis.gov/civicsmultimedia>.
- Teachers, librarians, volunteers, and others can use it to lead a civics and citizenship class or orientation for immigrants.
- This document provides a step-by-step guide on how to lead a discussion on civics using *A Promise of Freedom*.



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# Teaching *A Promise of Freedom*

What should a teaching program for a *A Promise of Freedom* look like?

- Step 1: Setting up the Room
- Step 2: Introducing the Participants
- Step 3: Previewing the Booklet
- Step 4: Showing the Film
- Step 5: Leading a Discussion



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# Step 1: Setting up the room

- **Seating arrangements**

- All participants should be able to make eye contact with each other, while still being able to clearly view the film. Try configuring the seats in a U-shape, a half circle, or a conference table.
- Leave a chair for the discussion leader.

- **Supplies**

- **Copy of DVD:** You may have already received a copy from the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit*, a USCIS Community Relations Officer or other USCIS Contact. Additional copies can be purchased from the GPO Bookstore Toll-Free at 1-866-512-1800 or online at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.



# Step 1: Setting up the room

- **Supplies (continued)**
  - **Copies of booklets:** Make extra copies for the group. A PDF file of the booklet can be downloaded at <http://www.uscis.gov/civicsmultimedia>.
  - **Television and DVD player and/or projector and screen:** Make sure all the equipment works before you begin.
  - **Pens/pencils:** Participants will have the opportunity to take notes and answer questions in the booklets.

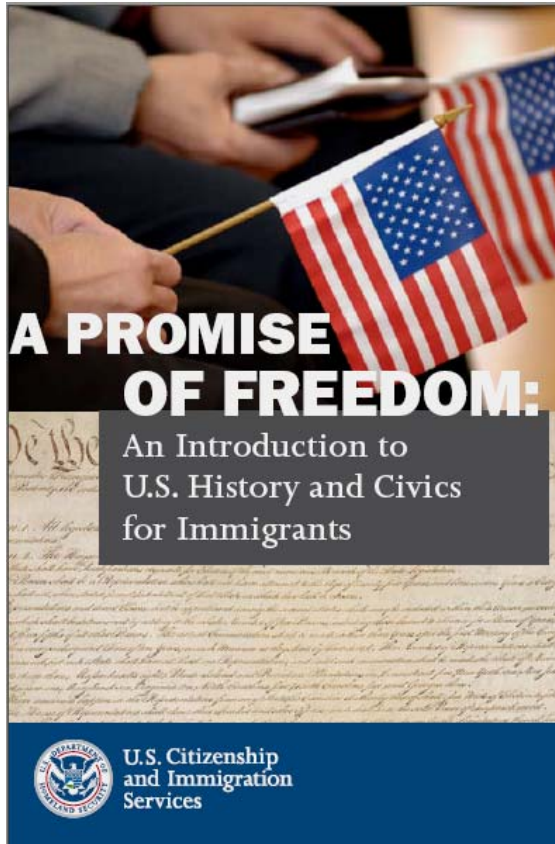


# Step 2: Introducing the Participants

- Introduce yourself and briefly explain the purpose of the program.
- Begin the conversation by providing an easy question that everyone can answer. Examples:
  - Why did you come to this town/city?
  - What is your favorite thing about living in the U.S.?
- Ask participants to provide their names and other key information before answering the question.
- Go around the room and allow everyone to answer. This will help people feel more comfortable speaking to the whole group about the film. You may start with your answer just to “break the ice.”



# Step 3: Previewing the Booklet



- Preview the booklet as a group before playing the film.
- The booklet contains a welcome letter, instructions, introductions, reflections, and questions that go with each of the film's three acts.
- Read the welcome letter and instructions aloud. Encourage others to follow along.



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# Step 3: Previewing the Booklet

**ACT 1**  
Choosing a Promise of Freedom

**"We the People..."**  
the first three words of the United States Constitution, a document that is the foundation for the freedoms and responsibilities of U.S. citizens. In the United States, a country with people of many different backgrounds, the principles of our Constitution unite all of us as a nation.

**The Declaration of Independence**  
announced that the colonies were free and independent states. It stated that all men are created equal and are born with the natural right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

**DISCUSSION**

What unites us as Americans?  
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What did the Declaration of Independence do?  
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- Preview the three acts. Go over the questions so participants know what they will be looking for, but leave answers for the discussion after the film.
- Explain how the pages are set up: the left-hand page has a photo and quote from the film; the quotes may help answer the questions on the right-hand page.



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# Step 3: Previewing the Booklet

## Welcome

Dear viewer:


For more than 200 years, the United States has remained strong because of the common civic values proclaimed in our founding documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants* is a short film outlining the history of these documents and their relevance to immigrants today.

The film will help immigrant viewers understand how our nation was founded, how it is governed, and what they will be able to do with the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities that accompany U.S. citizenship. This booklet is a useful study tool for both teachers and viewers to review and discuss the concepts presented in the film.

If you are interested in becoming a U.S. citizen, we hope this film will be useful to you in your journey toward citizenship. We look forward to calling you a fellow citizen. Over time, America's promise of freedom has expanded to include more and more people, and with each person who joins the nation, "We the People" becomes even stronger.

We hope you enjoy this inspiring and informational film.

Sincerely,  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
National Constitution Center



### How to Use This Booklet

This booklet will help you review the basic concepts found in *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants*. You can use this booklet as you watch the film or at its conclusion, either on your own or in a group discussion.

The booklet follows the three acts, or sections, of the film: "Choosing a Promise of Freedom," "Creating a Promise of Freedom," and "A Promise of Freedom." Each act, or section, has two pages; the first page contains quotes from the film and the second page contains questions for discussion. The quotes from the film will help you answer the questions. For each question, write down your thoughts in a few phrases. Feel free to write your own questions and ideas to discuss with others.

## INTRODUCTION

Think about the question below and write down your thoughts. Try to answer the question before watching the film. Discuss your ideas with the group.

What does "We the People" mean to you?

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- Before showing the film, ask participants to answer the introduction question: **“What does We the People mean to you?”**
- You may choose to ask a few participants to share their answer with the group.



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# Step 4: Showing the Film

- Proceed to PLAY ► the film.
- High quality audiovisual equipment makes a strong impact (“bigger and louder” is better).
- Balance lighting in the room for note-taking.
- Run film all the way through without pausing.
- As the film progresses you may choose to identify the acts aloud for the benefit of the participants.



# Step 5: Leading a Discussion



**ACT 1**  
Choosing a Promise of Freedom

**“We the People...”**  
the first three words of the United States Constitution, a document that is the foundation for the freedoms and responsibilities of U.S. citizens. In the United States, a country with people of many different backgrounds, the principles of our Constitution unite all of us as a nation.

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What unites us as Americans?  
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What did the Declaration of Independence do?  
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DISCUSSION

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- After the film is over, ask the group each one of the questions in the booklet.
- Allow everyone a chance to answer one of the questions if possible.
- You may choose to read aloud the quotes from the film for the benefit of the group.



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# Step 5: Leading a Discussion

Think again about the question below and whether your answer has changed. Share your thoughts with the group.

What does "We the People" mean to you?

REFLECTION

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### Finding More Information

If you are interested in learning more about U.S. history and civics, you may visit the following websites:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

National Constitution Center  
[www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org)

Our Documents  
[www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov)

We the People  
[www.wethepeople.gov](http://www.wethepeople.gov)

Ben's Guide  
<http://bensguide.gpo.gov>

National Archives  
[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

U.S. Government Bookstore  
<http://bookstore.gpo.gov>

Welcome to U.S.A.  
[www.welcometousa.gov](http://www.welcometousa.gov)

Center for Civic Education  
[www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org)

- After the questions, give the participants time to answer the reflection piece at the end of the booklet.
- The reflection is the same question that they were asked in the introduction, allowing them to think about how their answer may have changed after the film.
- Ask some participants to share their answers.



# Step 5: Leading a Discussion

- Remember this is a discussion, not a presentation.
- Patience is key, particularly when working with English language learners.
- Be friendly, make eye contact, and speak slowly.
- Encourage everyone to speak up.
- Respond to each other's comments.



# Step 5: Leading a Discussion

We suggest using the following learning strategy for discussion:

- **What I Know:** Discuss the introduction question at the beginning of the booklet.
- **What I Want to Learn:** Preview the three acts in the booklet and watch the film.
- **What I Learned:** Answer the questions in the booklet and reflect on the conclusion.



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# Ending *A Promise of Freedom*

- Think about the concepts you want participants in your program to remember. Feel free to add additional questions or topics to the discussion.
- You may proceed to show the Flash® presentation *Becoming a U.S. Citizen: An Overview of the Naturalization Process*, the companion piece to *A Promise of Freedom*, immediately following the discussion or in a second session.\*



\* *Becoming a U.S. Citizen* will only play in a computer. You must have Flash® software installed on the computer.



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