



October 1, 2008

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# Fact Sheet

## NEW NATURALIZATION TEST

On October 1, 2008, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will begin administering a new naturalization test. The following guidelines will determine whether you will take the old test or the new test. If you:

- Filed\* the *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, **BEFORE** October 1, 2008, and are scheduled for your naturalization interview **BEFORE** October 1, 2008, you will take the **old test**.
- Filed\* the *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, **BEFORE** October 1, 2008, and are scheduled for your naturalization interview **ON or AFTER** October 1, 2008 up until October 1, 2009, you can choose to take the **old test or the new test**.
- Filed\* the *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, **ON or AFTER** October 1, 2008, you will take the **new test**.
- Are scheduled for your naturalization interview **ON or AFTER** October 1, 2009, regardless of when you filed\* the *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, you will take the **new test**.

### Changes to the New Naturalization Test

Changes to the new naturalization test include a revised list of 100 civics (history and government) questions and answers; a new list of civics-based English reading and writing vocabulary items; and standardized testing procedures for USCIS Officers.

The 100 new civics (history and government) questions and answers are available to the public. The content now follows a basic U.S. history and government curriculum. For the civics test, an applicant will be asked up to 10 questions from the list of 100 civics questions and answers. Applicants must answer correctly at least six of the 10 questions to pass the civics test.

There are three components of the English test: speaking, reading, and writing. No changes were made to the speaking portion of the English test. An applicant's ability to speak English is determined by the USCIS Officer from the applicant's answers to questions normally asked during the eligibility interview on the

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\* The *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, is properly filed with USCIS on the date it is received by the appropriate USCIS Office with signature, correct fee, and the form is completed according to instructions.

*Application for Naturalization, Form N-400.* Modifications were made to the reading and writing tests. The sentences included on the new reading and writing tests will not be made publicly available. USCIS released reading and writing vocabulary lists containing all the words found in the new English reading and writing tests. Applicants can use the vocabulary lists to study. Applicants must read 1 out of 3 items correctly to pass the reading test. Applicants must write 1 out of 3 items correctly to pass the writing test. To increase the meaningfulness of the reading and writing tests, the content of the reading and writing questions are civics-based.

The design of the new test will provide consistency in test administration and evaluation. Through the use of standard forms and weighted test items to ensure that all test forms have the same level of difficulty, applicants will have a more uniform experience. Because there have been no statutory or regulatory changes as part of the naturalization test redesign process, the exercise of due consideration remains unchanged. In the same manner as the current test, USCIS Officers will make a determination on whether to exercise due consideration on a case-by-case basis. Officers can exercise due consideration through the choice of subject matter, the phrasing of questions, and the evaluation of applicant responses as provided by regulation. The choice of subject matter will be drawn from the list of 100 civics questions and answers available to the public. Applicants are encouraged to study the full list of questions to prepare for the civics test.

### **Educational Materials for the New Naturalization Test**

USCIS has released a variety of study materials to accompany the new naturalization test. These study materials include:

- **Civics (History and Government) Questions:** The 100 civics questions and answers for the new naturalization test in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- **Vocabulary Lists for the English Reading and Writing Test:** Vocabulary lists containing all the words found in the English reading and writing portion of the new test.
- **Civics Flash Cards for the New Naturalization Test:** The 100 civics questions and answers for the new naturalization test are included in these flash cards. These Civics Flash Cards will help immigrants learn about U.S. history and government while preparing for the new naturalization test. Featuring historical photos and relevant captions to provide additional civic learning, the Civics Flash Cards may also be used in the classroom as an instructional tool for citizenship preparation.
- ***Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons for the New Naturalization Test:*** Distributed to all naturalization applicants at the time of fingerprinting beginning October 1, 2008, *Learn About the United States* contains short lessons based on each of the 100 civics questions and answers and information to help applicants prepare for the English reading and writing portion of the new test.

### **Training for Immigrant-Serving Organizations**

Since October 2007, USCIS has provided training on the new naturalization test to more than 2,000 volunteers, adult educators, and other service providers. USCIS will continue to hold training conferences and workshops on the new naturalization test and to help improve skills in teaching U.S. history, civics, and the naturalization process to immigrant students. For information on upcoming training conferences, please visit <http://www.uscis.gov/teachertraining>.

## **Background**

In the interest of creating a more standardized, fair, and meaningful testing process, USCIS redesigned the naturalization test. The new test, with an emphasis on the fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, will help encourage citizenship applicants to learn and identify with the basic values we all share as Americans.

The major aim of the redesign process was to ensure that naturalization applicants have uniform, consistent testing experiences nationwide, and that the civics test can effectively assess whether applicants have a meaningful understanding of U.S. government and history. Following a basic U.S. history and civics curriculum, the new test will serve as an important instrument to encourage civic learning and patriotism among prospective citizens.

To accomplish these goals, USCIS initially piloted a new test—with an overhauled English reading and writing section, as well as new history and government questions—in ten sites across the country. The feedback from this pilot was then used to finalize testing procedures, English reading and writing items, and a list of 100 new history and government questions. To ensure the pilot accounted for a representative sample of candidates with a variety of education levels, the test was also piloted at adult education sites nationwide.

For more information on the new naturalization test, and to find available educational materials, please visit <http://www.uscis.gov/newtest>.

For more information regarding English and civics requirements and the naturalization interview, please visit <http://www.uscis.gov/citizenshiptest>.

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