



October 1, 2008

FAQs

NEW NATURALIZATION TEST

On October 1, 2008, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will begin administering a new naturalization test.

Q1: Which test do I take?

The following guidelines will determine whether you will take the old test or the new test. If you:

- Filed your *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 your *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 your *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 your *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, you will take the **new test**.

Q2: What does it mean when USCIS says an application is “filed”?

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. Those applicants who have a filing date of October 1, 2008 and after will take the new test. Your filing date will appear on your receipt notice, Form I-797.

Q3: What study materials are available to help applicants prepare for the new test?

USCIS has a range of study materials available for the new naturalization test. These include the 100 civics (history and government) questions and answers in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese; Civics Flash Cards for the New Naturalization Test, and *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons for the New Naturalization Test*. Additionally, there are vocabulary lists that contain the terms that will be used for the English reading and writing tests.

Q4: Where can I find the study materials for the new test?

All study materials are available for free online at <http://www.uscis.gov/newtest>.

Hard copies of the Civics Flash Cards for the New Naturalization Test are also available for purchase from the U.S. Government Printing Office by calling 1-866-512-1800 (toll free) or by visiting <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

All naturalization applicants will continue to receive a free copy of *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons for the New Naturalization Test* at Application Support Centers (ASCs) across the country. As of October 1, 2008, ASCs will only distribute copies of *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons for the New Naturalization Test*. The new booklet has a red cover. The booklet has the 100 civics (history and government) questions and answers for the new naturalization test. *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. Also included with the new booklet is the list of 96 civics questions and answers for the old naturalization test in case an applicant is eligible and chooses to take the old test.

Q5: How can I find materials on the old test?

All study materials for the old test are available online at <http://www.uscis.gov/citizenshiptest>.

Q6: Where can I find the 65/20 special consideration questions for the new test?

Applicants, who at the time of filing the *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, are age 65 or older and have been a legal permanent resident of the United States for 20 or more years, may qualify for special consideration on the civics test. These applicants must only study the 20 designated civics questions flagged with an asterisk (*) on the list of 100 civics questions for the new naturalization test. The 20 questions are marked with an asterisk (*) in all available study materials including *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons for the New Naturalization Test* and the Civics Flash Cards for the New Naturalization Test. The list of 100 civics questions is publicly available at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/100q.pdf>.

Q7: What changes have been made to the civics test?

The content of the new civics test has been completely revised. The content now follows a basic U.S. history and government curriculum and focuses on fundamental principles within three categories: American government, American history, and integrated civics. The test is still administered orally and an applicant must still answer six out of 10 questions correctly to pass the civics test.

Q8: What changes have been made to the English 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 *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.

Q9: What resources are available to help educators and service providers?

The USCIS Office of Citizenship will continue to hold free training conferences and workshops for adult educators, volunteers, and other immigrant-serving organizations focused on teaching U.S. history, civics, and the naturalization process to immigrant students. To learn more about these

training conferences, please visit <http://www.uscis.gov/teachertraining>. If an organization is interested in hosting the USCIS Office of Citizenship for a training workshop in the future, they should send an email to office.of.citizenship@dhs.gov. While the Office of Citizenship attempts to accommodate as many training requests as possible, please be advised that the Office of Citizenship cannot oblige all training requests it receives.

In addition to these in-person training opportunities, USCIS offers *EL/Civics Online*. This training resource consists of free web-based training modules for adult educators and volunteers. *EL/Civics Online* includes online courses and materials to prepare educators to incorporate U.S. history, U.S. government, civic engagement, and the naturalization process into their English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. To learn more and/or register for courses, see <http://www.elcivicsonline.org>.

U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online is a web-based tool that offers teachers and volunteers a single source for locating educational resources to incorporate civics and citizenship into ESL instruction. This online resource provides links to educational curricula, lesson plans, teacher assessments, and other instructional material on civics and citizenship. *U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online* resources are available in two content categories: Preparing Students to Naturalize and Teaching Civics to Adult ESL Students. Please visit <http://www.uscis.gov/civicsonline>.

Community and faith-based organizations, public libraries, adult education programs, schools, civic organizations, and immigrant-serving organizations may request one free copy of the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit* at <http://www.citizenshiptoolkit.gov>. The *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit* contains a variety of educational materials designed to help permanent residents learn more about the United States and prepare for the naturalization process. Each of the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit's* materials is designed as a self-study resource for immigrants or instruction tool for volunteers and adult educators to use in a classroom setting.

Q10: Will Immigration Services Officers know how to administer the new test?

Yes. All USCIS Immigration Services Officers who will administer the new test must first complete mandatory training. The training includes an electronic training course, a training manual, and policy guidance. USCIS also held a national train the trainer conference in September 2008.

Q11: If an applicant has a choice to take the old or the new test, how can they let the Immigration Services Officer know their choice?

If an applicant filed the *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400*, **BEFORE** October 1, 2008, and is scheduled for his or her naturalization interview **ON or AFTER** October 1, 2008 up until October 1, 2009, he or she can choose to take the **old test or the new test**. If the applicant is in this category, the USCIS Officer will ask the applicant which version of the test he or she would like to take. The applicant must then make the decision. The Officer will not tell the applicant what to do.

Q12: How can I learn more about how I will be scored on the new English reading and writing test?

The scoring guidelines for the new test are the same as for the old test. The scoring guidelines can be found at http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/English_Test_Scoring_Guidelines.pdf.

Q13: If an applicant fails on the first try, can he or she take a different test during the retest?

No. If an applicant fails the English and/or civics test during the first examination, the applicant will be required to take the same version of the test, old or new, when the applicant is retested, even if the retest is scheduled on or after October 1, 2009. For example, if an applicant takes the new test and fails on the first try, the applicant must be retested using the new test again.

Q14: How will due consideration be exercised with the new test?

There have been no changes to law or regulation with the new test and the ability to give due consideration is based in regulation. Therefore, due consideration has not changed as part of the naturalization test redesign process. Due consideration will continue to be exercised on a case-by-case basis and USCIS Officers may exercise due consideration in choosing subject matter, phrasing questions, and evaluating applicant responses. Due consideration only applies to the civics test. Applicants are encouraged to study the full list of questions to prepare for the civics test.

Q15: How will USCIS know if the new test is being correctly administered?

USCIS does plan to evaluate naturalization test results beginning October 1, 2008. A record study will take place following full implementation of the new naturalization test on October 1, 2009. On an ongoing basis, USCIS will provide Officers with the training and support necessary to ensure the test is administered according to relevant policies and procedures. This will include a yearly refresher training course for Officers who administer the naturalization test.

Q16: How long between when I apply and when I will take the new test?

USCIS has made significant progress on naturalization processing times. The times do vary by office across the nation. In some field offices, an applicant who files *Form N-400* on or after October 1, 2008 may be called for the interview as early as March 2008. To get a general idea of projected processing times by office, please see <http://www.uscis.gov/newtest>. Those applicants who have a filing date on or after October 1, 2008 should make note of these processing times in order to adequately prepare for the new naturalization test.

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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