

Unit 3

DISCOVERING CITIZENSHIP

In this unit students will think about and describe their current beliefs about citizenship. They will use research and analysis to explore existing definitions of citizenship, and then will consider what it means to extend citizenship beyond family, community, and country. The activities in this unit are meant to challenge, augment, and expand conventional meanings of citizenship. The unit culminates with an independent purpose-oriented project, intended to build both on students' understanding of problem solving and on their unique sets of talents, interests, character traits, and creative energy, in order to address a problem in their community.



Grade level

6-12

Subjects

- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- History
- Government

Skills

- Brainstorming
- Research
- Description
- Analysis
- Comparison
- Critical thinking
- Reflection

Essential Questions

- What is citizenship?
- What does it mean to be a good citizen?
- How has citizenship been defined by different entities in the past?
- In what ways are we challenged to expand the common definition of citizenship?
- How have good and poor citizenship been displayed in literature and throughout history?
- How might different perspectives on citizenship lead to conflict?
- What is my role as an active citizen?
- How can my skills, talents, interests, and character strengths contribute to solving a problem in my community?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define citizen and citizenship
- Name the rights and responsibilities of citizens in their countries
- Use a Venn diagram to show similarities and differences among ideas or entities
- Understand an expanded definition of citizenship, which extends to humanity
- Identify citizenship as displayed in literature and current and historical events
- Recognize different perspectives on citizenship and how those perspectives may lead to conflict
- Use deductive reasoning to name the responsibilities of citizens based on the expanded view of citizenship and reflect upon their actions
- Apply their new knowledge to plan, participate in, and reflect on an independent purpose-oriented project.

Common Core State Standards Addressed

- Reading Standards for Literature Grades 6 – 12
 - » Key Ideas and Details
 - How does the plot unfold and relate the change in events to how a character(s) responds and/or reveals aspects of a character?
 - Cite textual evidence to support the analysis of the changes in a character as the plot of a story unfold.
- Reading Standards for Informational Text Grades 6 – 12
 - » Key Ideas and Details
 - Analyze the interactions between individuals, events and ideas in a text.
 - » Craft and Structure
 - Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author uses literary devices to advance the point of view.
- Writing Standards Grades 6 – 12
 - » Types and Purposes
 - Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and evidence.
 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information.
 - » Research to Build and Present Knowledge
 - Draw evidence from literary and informative texts to support analysis, reflection and research.

- Speaking and Listening Standards Grades 6 – 12
 - » Comprehension and Collaboration
 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions
 - Analyze main ideas and supporting details in a variety of formats
- Reading Standard for Literacy in History/Social Science Grades 6 – 12
 - » Key Ideas and Details
 - Cite textual evidence
 - Determine central ideas
 - Analyze a series of events described in a text
- Reading Standard for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects Grades 6 – 12
 - » Key Ideas and Details
 - Cite textual evidence
 - Determine central ideas
 - Follow precisely a multistep procedure

Supplemental Resources

[What Really Makes Someone a Good Citizen?](#) by Manoj Bhargava,
founder of *Billions in Change*

[The 20 Time Project](#)



ACTIVITY 3.1: LINKING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students will explore their current understanding or beliefs about citizenship.

Time: 40 minutes

Materials: Paper/pen for writing reflections.

- A. Have students think silently about the idea of citizenship** as they currently understand it. Based on their thoughts, have them write out their own answers to the following questions.
1. What is a citizen?
 2. What is a good citizen?
 3. What is meant by citizenship?
 4. What are the characteristics of someone who exhibits citizenship?
 5. What are the characteristics of someone who does not exhibit citizenship?
- B. Invite students to share their answers** and, as a class, come to agreement about the answers to the questions above.

ACTIVITY 3.2: BUILDING AND BROADENING CURRENT IDEAS OF CITIZENSHIP

Based on the class discussion, students will apply their current understanding of citizenship to different areas of life. They will imagine ways in which citizenship can be practiced at home, in their communities, and beyond.

Time: 40 minutes

*Materials: Online access to or printed copies of *Citizenship and Life* (Resource 3.1 in Appendix 3); paper/pen for take-home assignment.*

- A. Introduce the Citizenship and Life activity** (See Resource 3.1 in Appendix 3) and have students work in pairs to fill out the worksheet.
- B. Have students share their examples and write them on the board.** As a class, attempt to group the actions exemplifying good and poor citizenship into themes, particularly with respect to general ways of behaving and the underlying character traits that may prompt such behaviors.
- C. Assign students a take-home assignment in which they write a letter** to someone seeking advice on how to practice better citizenship. Students should define the person to whom they are writing (e.g., a teacher, politician, business person, farmer, coach, friend, etc.), explain the benefits of good citizenship and the costs of poor citizenship, and support their positions with specific examples from personal experience, history, or the media as discovered through the Citizenship and Life activity.

ACTIVITY 3.3: INVESTIGATING OFFICIAL DEFINITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

Students will research official definitions of citizenship and, specifically, how the country in which they live defines the rights and responsibilities (or duties) of its citizens. These are typically written guidelines or rules published by the government, and most can be found online. Students will compare and contrast their country's definition to that of another country.

Time: 10 minutes (in class) + 40 minutes (at home)

Materials: Internet access; pen/paper or computer for completing written assignment.

A. Assign students a short report (3-4 paragraphs) about how citizenship is defined by their government. They may choose any published source of information to aid their research. The report should answer the following questions:

1. What is a citizen?
2. According to the laws of your country, who is considered a citizen, and who is not?
3. What are the rights of citizens?
4. What responsibilities or duties are expected of citizens?
(Make a list and keep for Lesson Activity C)
5. What is citizenship?
6. How does the legal definition of citizenship according to your government differ from what you would consider to be "good citizenship?"

B. Require students to report their sources of information, including webpages, books, journals, personal communication, etc.

ACTIVITY 3.4: COMPARING CITIZENSHIP BETWEEN TWO NATIONS

Students will identify similarities and differences of the responsibilities of citizens in their own country and another country of their choosing.

Time: 10 minutes (in class) + 60 minutes (at home)

Materials: Internet access; pen/paper or computer for completing written assignments.

- A. Introduce the concept of a Venn diagram** for demonstrating similarities and differences among ideas. Choose a couple of examples to do as a class (e.g., two familiar cities; two pop stars; two historical figures, etc.). Begin by making two columns and listing characteristics of each pair. Circle the similarities. Those go in the overlapping section of the diagram. Inform students that they'll be making their own Venn diagrams comparing and contrasting definitions of citizenship in different countries.
- B. Have students create two columns on a sheet of paper.** In one column, have them list the duties and responsibilities of citizens according to their government (they should have made this list as part of their citizenship report in Activity 3.3). In the second column, they will list the duties and responsibilities of citizens in another country of their choosing. (This research may be done at home).
- C. Instruct students to choose another country to compare and contrast** with their own country. Ask them to research the duties and responsibilities of citizens in that country and write them in the second column of their list. For most countries, this information can be found with a simple web search.
- D. Have students circle the common duties and responsibilities** between the two lists. Then instruct them to draw two overlapping circles (free-hand or using a computer). At the top of one circle they should write the name of their country, and at the top of the other circle they should write the name of the comparison country. Instruct students to write common duties and responsibilities in the area where the two circles overlap, and the dissimilar ones in the appropriate non-overlapping portions of the circles.
- E. Encourage students to share their findings** with the rest of the class. As a group discuss which countries seemed most similar and which were most different. Identify whether those similarities and differences may be due to the types of political systems, social systems, or economies that exist in those countries.
- F. Assign students a short essay where they describe their Venn diagrams.** Instruct them to offer an argument for why those similarities or differences exist. They should support their findings by citing sources of information.

ACTIVITY 3.5: CONSIDERING AN EXPANDED VIEW OF CITIZENSHIP

Students will read an essay on citizenship by *Billions in Change* founder, Manoj Bhargava, which extends the idea of citizenship beyond conventional understanding.

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Online access to or printed copies of What Really Makes Someone a Good Citizen? (link below), and Redefining Citizenship (Resource 3.2 in Appendix 3); paper/pen for completing written assignments.

- A. Have students read [What Really Makes Someone a Good Citizen?](#)** by Manoj Bhargava. Students may read independently, in pairs or small groups, or as a whole class, depending on teacher preference.
- B. Allow students to work independently** through the Redefining Citizenship worksheet (Resource 3.2 in Appendix 3), and then go over the answers as a class.
- C. Have students consider Manoj Bhargava’s call for active citizenship**, and ask them to discuss how his ideas compare with what they have learned about citizenship thus far.
- D. As a class, come up with a list of universal duties and responsibilities** that define citizenship in the global sense.
- E. Instruct students to compare and contrast citizens’ responsibilities** based on the idea of global citizenship and those of the two countries they researched. As an option, have them create a new Venn diagram with three overlapping circles.



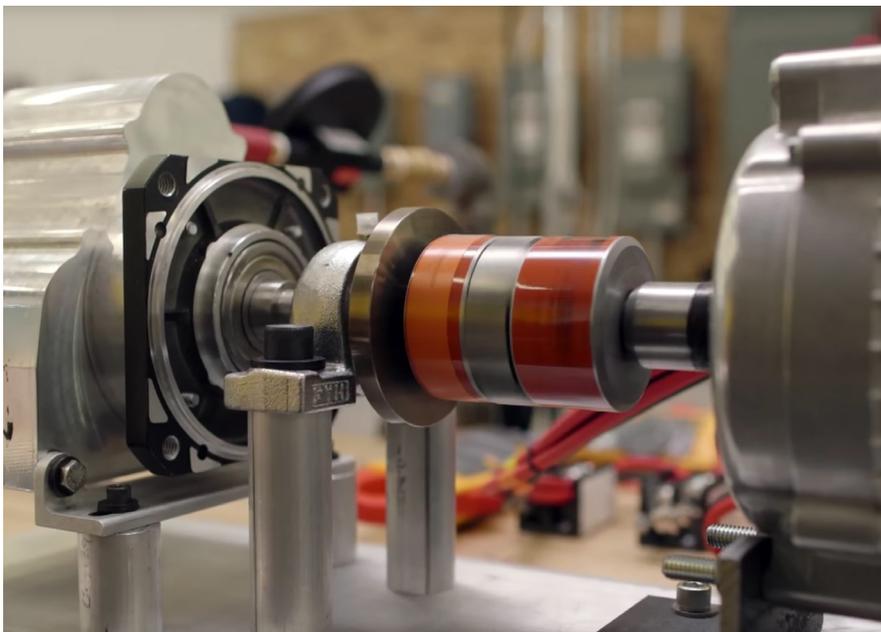
ACTIVITY 3.6: MODELING CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

Students will prepare and perform short skits based on their understanding of global citizenship.

Time: 60-90 minutes; may be divided into two days

Materials: Optional props.

- A. Break the class into groups of 3-4 students** and inform them that they will create short skits (3-5 minutes) that capture citizenship, as they now understand it.
- B. Instruct the groups to each prepare a scene with two scenarios:** one in which poor citizenship is displayed, and then another of the same scene in which good citizenship is shown. The citizenship shown should reflect one of the universal responsibilities the class identified in Activity 3.5. They may choose a topic on their own, or you may have them draw from a list of topics out of a hat, but each skit should represent the various perspectives and responsibilities of citizenship.
- C. Have students perform their skits in front of the class,** and ask the class to identify the perspective and responsibility depicted in each skit.



ACTIVITY 3.7: A LITERARY LOOK INTO GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Students will examine different displays of citizenship in literature, paying specific attention to situations where contrasting perspectives on citizenship are at odds. This activity may be geared specifically for literature courses, or may be used in conjunction with reading assigned within a social studies, history, or government class.

Time: 60-90 minutes (in class), 2-3 hours (at home) not including reading time

Materials: Variable depending on student presentations.

A. Using an assigned title or their choice from a list of titles suggested by the teacher, have students answer the following questions using examples from the literary selection they chose.

1. Describe a scene in which a character displays good citizenship.
2. Describe a scene in which a character displays poor citizenship.
3. In what ways is good citizenship linked to action?

B. Have students think about how different perspectives on citizenship might lead to conflict, and ask them to present an historical or literary example in a creative way (e.g., poster, illustrated timeline, short skit, script, newspaper article, song, video, etc.). Examples might include events and literature related to the Civil Rights movement, Women's Suffrage, or protests related to war, indigenous rights, environmental issues, poverty, etc.

C. Invite students to present their creative assignments to the class.



ACTIVITY 3.8: AWARENESS VS. SOLUTIONS

Students will study examples of awareness campaigns and form opinions about their effectiveness at solving a problem. They will assess the weaknesses of the campaigns and make suggestions about how to improve them, as well as how to design actual solutions to the problem.

Time: 45 minutes in class, 90 minutes at home

Materials: Printed or online access to copies of discussion questions outlined in part D.

Internet access, computer, large monitor or projector; pen/paper or computer for writing assignments.

- A. Have students recall the beginning of the *Billions in Change* film**, by reshowing the first 55 seconds of the documentary. In the opening lines, Manoj Bhargava discusses the ineffectiveness of “talking” about a problem compared to actually doing something to solve it. “Talk doesn’t help someone out of poverty. Awareness doesn’t reduce pollution and grow food, or heal the sick. That takes doing.”
- B. Introduce the idea of a public awareness campaign** by explaining that awareness campaigns are often ways of drawing attention to a problem, conveying the seriousness of a problem, or making people see a problem in a new light. Show the students a few examples of print (online) or video awareness advertisements (e.g., public service announcements). A Google search of “famous awareness campaigns” yields myriad options for students to observe and evaluate. (Some of the more conversation-worthy ones, and pertinent to middle and high school age students have to do with smoking, driving under the influence, the environment, texting while driving.) For each print or video awareness ad (you may need to show it a couple of times if it’s a video), ask students to answer the following questions:
1. What is the ultimate goal this ad is trying to accomplish?
 2. Is this ad attempting to raise awareness? Convey the seriousness of a problem? Make people see the problem in a new light? Make the problem more personal? Or some combination of these?
 3. What type of emotion is the ad trying to elicit in order to accomplish the goal?
 4. How well does the ad elicit the intended emotional response? Does it elicit any other responses?

5. How well do you think this ad will change peoples' beliefs about the matter at hand?
6. How well do you think this ad will change peoples' beliefs about behaviors regarding the matter at hand?

C. Working in pairs, have students find and evaluate an awareness campaign on their own. Ask them to answer the questions below, the first of which mirror those above.

1. What is the ultimate goal this ad is trying to accomplish?
2. Is this ad attempting to raise awareness? Convey the seriousness of a problem? Make people see the problem in a new light? Make the problem more personal? Or some combination of these?
3. What type of emotion is the ad trying to elicit in order to accomplish the goal?
4. How well does the ad elicit the intended emotional response? Does it elicit any other responses?
5. How well do you think this ad will change peoples' beliefs about the matter at hand?
6. How well do you think this ad will change peoples' beliefs about behaviors regarding the matter at hand?
7. What will be the ultimate outcome?
8. How could the awareness campaign be improved in order to get a better outcome?

D. On their own, ask students to write a short essay about awareness vs, action. They should cover what they perceive to be the benefits of awareness campaigns, and then discuss the awareness ad that they and their partner evaluated (what it was, who produced it, what the intended goal was, and how well it achieved that goal.) They should conclude their essay with one or more suggestions about how to take that campaign into actual solutions and implementation. According to Manoj Bhargava, "Implementation at the smallest level is better than incredible awareness."

ACTIVITY 3.9: REFLECTION TO ACTION—A PURPOSE-ORIENTED PROJECT

Students will design and execute a service-oriented project that addresses a problem facing their classroom, school, or community (local or global). Students may work in pairs, groups, or independently, and are encouraged to pursue something that already interests them. Teachers may offer students the opportunity to work in class on their projects one day per week (the [20 Time Project](#) model), or may opt to make this a semester-long take-home assignment. Instructors who choose to use the 20 Time model are encouraged to take a look at the [20 Time Template](#), which provides a step-by-step guide on implementation.

Time: Ongoing (possible quarter-long or year-long service project)

Materials: Printed or online access to copies of the discussion questions listed in part A; sticky notes and butcher paper for brainstorming activity; paper/pen or computer for written assignments.

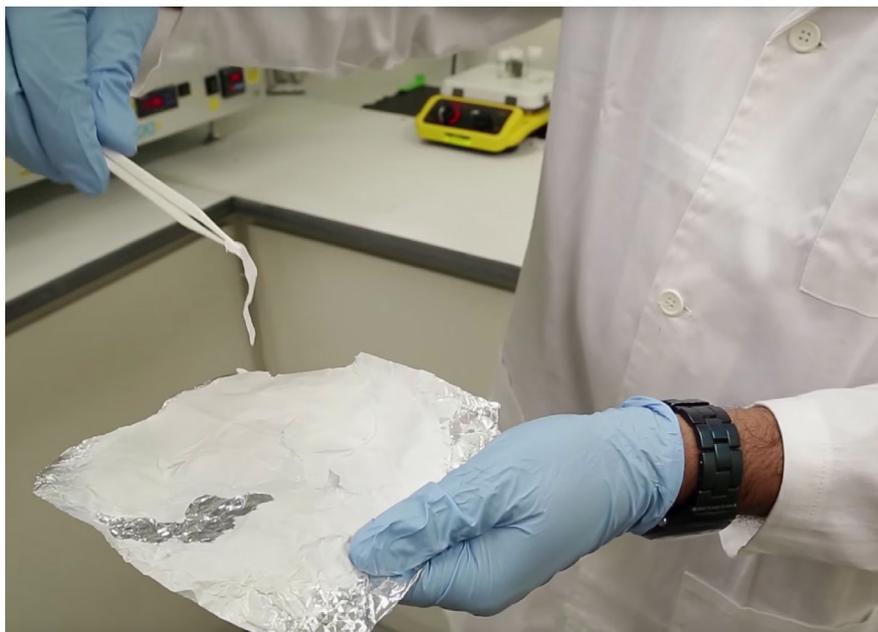
A. Have students work in pairs, groups, or independently to identify an important problem in the classroom, school or community (local or global) and answer the following questions:

1. What is the problem?
2. What are the negative consequences of this problem currently (the symptoms), and what will they be if the problem persists (more symptoms)?
3. What might be the root cause?
4. What resources are needed to address the problem?
5. Whose responsibility is it to acquire the resources and fix the problem?
6. What are the barriers to a solution and how can they be overcome?
7. What are the consequences of solving the problem?

B. Invite students to brainstorm ideas for projects that could address their problem, even if on a small scale. Encourage them to brainstorm bad ideas as well, as sometimes those can lead to a great idea.

C. Have students analyze their skills, abilities, and resources to narrow down the list of projects into those that are feasible for them to execute. Students may know their skills or talents, but if they find it difficult to define their own strengths, they may ask a friend, family member, teacher, or mentor to articulate their positive character traits (e.g., honesty, compassion, respect, responsibility, courage).

- D. Instruct each group to choose one project from its brainstorm of ideas.**
- E. Assign each group the task of writing a formal proposal** about its chosen project. The proposal should answer the following questions:
1. What is the problem that needs solving?
 2. Why is the problem important? What happens if it is not addressed?
 3. What is the project and how does it work toward solving the problem?
 4. Who is the audience for the project?
 5. What steps are involved with designing and executing the project?
 6. What is success for this project?
- F. Invite students to present their proposals to the rest of the class.** The class should offer feedback in terms of encouragement, critiques, questions, and ideas.
- G. Instruct students to keep a weekly journal to document their progress,** including reflections, learning experiences, unmet expectations, setbacks, and failures. Inform students that they will be graded on their effort and on their documentation of the project, not on whether the project itself succeeds.
- H. At the conclusion of the project period, create a TEDx style event** for students to give 5-minute presentations on their projects to their peers, parents, and to others in the community.



APPENDIX 3: RESOURCE 3.1

Citizenship and Life

For each category below, list an action, event, or story that exemplifies good citizenship and an action, event, or story that exemplifies poor citizenship.

Category	Good Citizenship	Poor Citizenship
At school		
At a public park		
On a crowded bus		
On a highway		
An historical event		
A current event		
Someone famous		
With your friends		

APPENDIX 3: RESOURCE 3.2

Redefining Citizenship

Based on the essay [What Really Makes Someone a Good Citizen?](#) by Manoj Bhargava, please respond to the statement by circling True or False. After completion, discuss the statements as a group to support your responses.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. True citizenship requires acting in a certain way. | T | F |
| 2. Citizenship is about rights, not responsibilities. | T | F |
| 3. Citizenship as an obligation is a new idea. | T | F |
| 4. Citizenship is an action that can be used to unite a variety of geopolitical groups. | T | F |
| 5. All human beings are citizens of the world. | T | F |
| 6. True citizenship actively promotes goodness and well being for all humanity. | T | F |
| 7. Citizens must have monetary resources to be effective in changing the world. | T | F |
| 8. Words and position titles are the most important in enacting citizenship. | T | F |
| 9. We all require the same skillsets to be good citizens of the world. | T | F |
| 10. Citizenship is about doing what we want to do as individuals. | T | F |