



CITIZENSHIP

Lesson Plan for Grades 7-12

Teacher Resource: Brief History of Citizenship

18th Century

- 1776: Citizenship tied to white, property-owning males.
- 1791: Property requirements removed; still only white males can vote.
- 1795: Naturalization Act allows “free white persons” to become citizens after 5 years.

19th Century

- 1848: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo grants U.S. citizenship to ~80,000 Mexican residents of the Southwest.
- 1857: *Dred Scott v. Sandford* — Supreme Court rules African Americans cannot be citizens.
- 1868: 14th Amendment overturns *Dred Scott*; establishes birthright citizenship.
- 1870: Naturalization extends to “white persons and persons of African descent.” 15th Amendment gives African American men the vote.

20th Century

- 1920: 19th Amendment grants women the right to vote.
- 1924: Indian Citizenship Act grants citizenship to all Native Americans.
- 1940s: Laws banning Asian immigrants from citizenship are overturned.
- 1952: Immigration and Nationality Act removes race and gender barriers to naturalization.
- 1965: Voting Rights Act ends discriminatory voting practices such as poll taxes and literacy tests.
- 1971: 26th Amendment lowers voting age to 18.

21st Century

- 2001: USA PATRIOT Act increases national security measures, affecting immigration and naturalization processes.
- 2010s: Ongoing debates about DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and the status of “Dreamers.”
- 2013: *Shelby County v. Holder* weakens the Voting Rights Act by removing the federal preclearance requirements for some states’ voting laws.
- 2020s: Ongoing discussions about voting rights, election access, and immigration reform.
- 2025: Ongoing legal and political challenges to birthright citizenship as protected by the 14th Amendment.