



WHAT MAKES A GOOD CITIZEN? UNDERSTANDING RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND REAL-WORLD CIVIC ACTION



TIME

90 Minutes

STANDARDS

WV SS.5.1 and WV ELA 5.3 & 5.4

TOPIC

Rights & Responsibilities

GRADE

5th Grade

LEARNING OUTCOMES



Civics: I can illustrate and explain the rights, responsibilities, duties, and privileges of a patriotic citizen using real-life situations such as elections and community service. They will evaluate actions and defend whether they are examples or non-examples of good citizenship (SS.5.1).



ELA: I can explain the relationships between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical or informational text based on specific information in the text (RI.5.3). I can cite evidence, respond to questions, and use academic vocabulary to demonstrate understanding (RI.5.4).

MATERIALS

- Printed literary texts: [Who Are Citizens?](#), [Why Civics Matters](#), [Electing Members of Congress](#)
- SS.5.1 [Text & Text Dependent Questions](#) & [Quote It](#) activity
- Chart paper & markers
- Sticky notes or index cards
- Student notebooks
- Sentence stems and question cards
- Labeled visuals or anchor chart headings for Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, and Privileges

VOCABULARY

- **citizen-** A person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and responsibilities of that country.
- **right-** A freedom or benefit that is protected by law.
- **responsibility-** Something a person is expected or required to do.
- **privilege-** A special benefit or advantage not enjoyed by everyone.
- **duty-** A task or action that someone is morally or legally required to do.
- **participate-** To take part in an activity or event.
- **patriotic-** Showing love and support for one's country.
- **community-** A group of people living in the same place or sharing common interests.
- **election-** A process in which people vote to choose leaders or make decisions
- **contribution-** Something that is given or done to help a cause or group.

1) HOOK & INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

- Ask: "What does it mean to be a 'good citizen'? What do citizens do?"
- Record answers on chart paper and create four columns: Rights, Responsibilities, Duties, Privileges.
- Define each and give a few real-world examples (voting = right, jury duty = duty, helping a neighbor = responsibility).
- Hand out and briefly preview the vocabulary list. Students highlight 2-3 familiar words.



[CLICK HERE FOR SUMMARY & EXTENSION
ACTIVITIES, DIFFERENTIATION, AND ASSESSMENT
IDEAS](#)

2) LITERARY TEXT EXPLORATION (25 MINUTES)

Texts: Who Are Citizens?, Why Civics Matters, Electing Members of Congress

- Break the class into four small reading groups (Two for Electing Members of Congress), each assigned one of the texts.
- Each group reads (independently, in pairs, or with support) and fills out a “Who, What, Why” chart:
 - Who is this text about?
 - What actions do the people take?
 - Why are these actions examples of citizenship?
- **Optional Activity (add 15 minutes): Have each group complete the assessments/activities on each reading.**
- After 10–15 minutes, bring students back together and do a gallery walk: each group posts its chart and rotates to view others.
- Discuss common themes: participation, community, elections, service.
- Prompt: “Which person or action showed the strongest example of good citizenship?” and discuss.

3) INFORMATIONAL TEXT: CLOSE READING + TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS (25 MINUTES)

Text: SS.5.1 Informational Reading Passage

- Read aloud or in partners. Students annotate with highlighters:
 - Yellow = rights
 - Blue = responsibilities
 - Green = duties
 - Pink = privileges
- Pause to discuss: “What’s the difference between a right and a privilege?”
- Use Text & Text Dependent Questions to check comprehension:
 - Multiple choice for key concepts
 - Short answers to explain and defend ideas

4) QUOTE IT ACTIVITY & CIVIC SORTING (15 MINUTES)

Text: SS.5.1 Quote It

- Students select a quote from the Quote It page and paste it on a sticky note.
- On a large wall chart (or individual papers), sort quotes under: **Right, Responsibility, Duty, or Privilege.**
- Then, in writing: “This quote shows a ___ because ___.”
- Volunteers share their **sentence aloud.**

5) DEFEND YOUR EXAMPLE: MINI-DEBATE OR WRITING TASK (10–15 MINUTES)

- Students choose one real-world scenario (e.g., voting, helping during a food drive, attending school, protesting).
- They write or present:
 - What the action is
 - Why it is (or isn’t) an example of good citizenship
 - Which category it belongs in (right/responsibility/duty/privilege)
- Encourage the use of vocabulary and evidence from texts.

6) REFLECTION & SHARE-OUT (5–10 MINUTES)

- Students complete one of the following:
 - “I used to think being a citizen meant _____, but now I think it means _____.”
 - “One way I can be a good citizen in my school/community is _____.”
- Invite 2–3 students to share aloud.