



MY COMMUNITY, MY STATE

What Makes a Good Citizen?

Good citizens help our governments to work well. A **citizen** is an official member of a country, state, or community. Citizens have the responsibility to behave in certain ways. **Civic virtues** are personal behaviors and actions that help improve communities. For example, good citizens are friendly and kind. They are willing to donate their time to help others. Good citizens respect others and themselves. They treat others civilly, or politely. They work together for the common good. They are responsible in their daily lives.

Citizens have the responsibility to participate in government. They educate themselves about government issues. They vote in elections. They respectfully hold public officials to their word. Good citizens are necessary for successful communities.



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do good citizens participate in government?



RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE



RESPECT OTHERS' BELIEFS



RESPECT YOURSELF

Respect

Respect is showing all people they are important. When you respect someone, you treat that person with kindness. You show that you care about the person's feelings by respecting their beliefs and traditions. You can respect others even if you believe in different things. Respect is an important quality to practice every day.

You should also respect yourself. Having **self-respect** means you see the good things about yourself. When you respect yourself, it is easier to show respect to others. When you feel good about yourself, you are happy and treat others kindly. Respecting yourself also means admitting when you do something wrong. It means learning from your mistakes.

Working Together

A **community** is made of people who live in the same place. It is important that all community members work together to make their community better. When we work together, a community is a great place to live.

When we do things that are good for everyone, we are working for the **common good**. Picking up trash keeps the playground clean. That makes it nicer for everyone. Working for the common good helps solve community problems.

Sometimes people disagree on the solution to a problem. **Civility** is a

word that means acting in a civil, or polite, way. When we disagree, it is important we still have civility and respect.

We need to cooperate and compromise. **Cooperating** is two or more people working together to achieve a common goal. **Compromising** is when members of a group give up some things to reach an agreement. Working with others can help us see things from a different perspective and create better solutions. Working together makes communities better.



Name _____

Civic Responsibilities

A **civic responsibility** is something that citizens are expected to do in the community. All citizens are expected to make choices for the common good. Members of a community are expected to obey laws. We are all expected to work to improve our communities.

Some civic responsibilities are enforced. This means that there are consequences if we do not follow them. Obeying the law and serving on a jury are enforced responsibilities. A **jury** is a group of citizens who are selected to decide a court case.

We vote to elect public officials. However, voting is not enforced. It is by choice. Volunteering is also by choice. It helps the community and people in need. Serving in the military or holding a public office are also things citizens can do to help their community.

Voting

In the United States, voting is a right. When citizens turn 18 years old, they can vote. Voting is the way we choose our leaders. Voting gives people a chance to make their voices heard. Voters have the responsibility to learn about issues and the people they are voting for. If we don't have all the facts, we may find out later that we voted for something we didn't want. In some countries, people are not allowed to vote. Voting is an important civic responsibility in our system of government.

