The Role of Citizens
Key Terms

• Citizenship – The status of a person recognized under the custom or law as being a legal member of a sovereign state.
• Rights – Things that citizens and residents are legally able to do
• Responsibilities – Things that should be done, or obligations that we fulfill voluntarily
• Duties – Things that are required to be done
Civic Duties: Obey the Law

• It is the duty of every citizen to know and follow the law
  • Laws apply to all citizens, residents, and visitors to the country
  • For the safety of citizens
    • Prevent accidents
    • Promotes order
  • Allow for business to be conducted fairly
  • Fair use of resources
Civic Duties: Pay Taxes

• It is required of all citizens and residents to pay taxes
• Taxes used for civic good
  • Provides protection
    • Police
    • Fire
    • Hospitals
  • Maintain armed forces
  • Provides services
    • Roads
    • Schools
    • Administration

In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.

-- Benjamin Franklin
Civic Duties: Defend the Nation

• In times of need the country can instate the draft that mandates military service
  • Military service is normally voluntary
  • Draft only used in times of need
    • All men aged 18-25 must register for the draft
Civic Duties: Serve in Court

• In order to provide a fair, and impartial, trial for criminal cases it is necessary to convene a jury of peers
  • Required service for jury duty if called upon
  • Act as a witness or provide testimony if required
Civic Duties: Attend School

- Attending school is mandatory until age of 16. Parents can remove student at 16, student can remove self at 18
  - Exceptions for Home School
  - Criminal implications for truancy
    - Fines, juvenile detention, criminal neglect
Civic Responsibilities: Be Informed

- Know what your government is doing and voice your opposition or approval
- Use reputable news sources to know what is going on
- Know politician’s stance on issues to help make decisions on who to vote for
Civic Responsibilities: Voice Your Opinion

• Let your elected officials know your stance on issues, and be politically active
  • Petition
  • Protest
  • Write Letters
  • Join a political party
  • Call representatives
  • Contribute to interest groups
  • VOTE!

Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion, can change the government, practically just so much.

(Abraham Lincoln)

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Civic Responsibility: Respect

• Respect others’ Rights
  • You are entitled to your rights as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others.

• Respect Diversity
  • Respect the fact that in a democracy not everyone will have the same opinions. Listen to and respect others, and their opinions

The Golden Rule: Treat others the way You want to be treated.
Civic Responsibilities: Contribute

• Contribute your time, effort, and money to improving your government and community
  • Volunteer
  • Mentor
  • Teach/Inform
  • Run for public office
  • Sponsorship
  • Contribute to a charity
Civic Rights

• All citizens are offered the protections of the constitution
  • Freedom of Expression
  • Freedom of Religion
  • Right to a fair trial
  • Right to vote in elections
  • Right to apply for federal employment
  • Right to run for public office
  • Freedom of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”