



# CITIZENSHIP

## April's Key to Character

### Definitions

**Elementary:** Citizenship is being a member of and supporting your community and country.

**Secondary:** Citizenship is membership in a nation and accepting full rights and responsibilities to protect and defend it.

### Related Words

tolerance    freedom    community    contribution  
patriotism    cooperation    authority    responsibility

### *How Can I Show Good Citizenship?*

### *Do Your Share*

**DO:** Be a good citizen and a good neighbor • Care about and pursue the common good • Be a volunteer — help your school and community be better, cleaner, and safer • Protect the environment by conserving resources, reducing pollution and cleaning up after yourself • Participate in making things better by voicing your opinion, voting, serving on committees, reporting wrongdoing and paying taxes



### *Respect Authority and the Law*



**DO:** Play by the rules • Obey parents, teachers, coaches, and others who have been given authority • Observe just laws • Honor and respect principles of democracy

Source: <http://charactercounts.org/resources/personofcharacter.html>  
Josephson Institute—Center for Youth Ethics



### What Does Citizenship Look Like?

Citizenship can be defined in terms of nine distinct but interdependent elements:

1. **Membership** - of a state, society and the world
2. A **sense of personal power**, self-esteem and confidence to take part
3. **Democratic values**, e.g. freedom, fairness, social justice, respect for democracy and diversity
4. **Political and human rights** including those enshrined in law and UN Conventions
5. **Civic involvement and responsibility** ('active citizenship'). Rights create obligations to others and "duties to the community" are part of the Universal Declaration (Article 29)
6. **Accountability** means those responsible for decisions are answerable for their actions.
7. **Knowledge and skills** needed to take part
8. **Participation** in democratic decision-making
9. A **constitution**, written and unwritten rules governing the place of citizens in society

From Titus Alexander, **Citizenship Schools**, UNICEF -UK/Campaign for Learning, 2001



"He loves his country best who strives to make it best." Robert G. Ingersoll

# suggested Reading List



## Elementary

Roses Are Pink, Your Feet Really Stink by Diane deGroat. This book teaches younger students about rules and values and why it is important to "do the right thing."

A Very Important Day by Maggie Rugg Herold. This book teaches civic participation when a group of families become naturalized citizens.

All in a Day by Mitsumasa—This book promotes peace and understanding.

Mr. Popper's Penguins by Richard/Florence Atwater. This is a humorous story of a housepainter and the penguins he trained to make money for his family.

The Children's Book of America by William Bennett has poems, songs, folktales and paintings that bring life to the story of our nation's heritage.

## Secondary:

Eagle Song by Joseph Burchac illustrates for middle-elementary students the concepts of government, values and principles, and civic participation. Fourth-grader Danny Bigtree feels out of place in his school, where he is the only Native American student. He hopes his classmates will stop teasing him after his father visits the class and tells the story of Aionwahta and the Iroquois League.

Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman brings home to middle- and upper-elementary students the concepts of government, values, and civic participation. The voices of 13 residents of a Cleveland neighborhood describe how and why they became involved in turning an empty lot into a garden.

A Small Civil War by John Neufeld instructs students in grades 5 and up about government, principles, and civic participation. The small town of Owanka erupts in controversy when a group of parents protest inclusion of [set ITAL] *The Grapes of Wrath* in the tenth-grade curriculum.

Rio Grande Stories by Carolyn Meyer explores for students in grades 6 and up the concepts of values and civic participation. Seventh-graders in an Albuquerque middle school are looking for a fund-raising project when they hit upon the idea of creating a book that reflects the diverse heritage of their community.

Nothing but the Truth by Avi. A ninth graders suspension for singing the National Anthem becomes a national news story.

The Moral Compass by William Bennett. This book has more than 50 stories/poems on citizenship and leadership.



## Websites

[www.congressforkids.net/citizenship](http://www.congressforkids.net/citizenship)—this site has fun worksheets and games

[www.discoveryeducation.com/redirect.php?goto=1524](http://www.discoveryeducation.com/redirect.php?goto=1524)—"Cruel Schools" unit for grades 6-8

[www.goodcitizen.org](http://www.goodcitizen.org)—citizenship unit with worksheets, quizzes, puzzles, top ten citizenship actions, "Good Citizen" contest, stickers, etc. K-12 grade level specific lessons

[www.pbs.org/democracy/parentseducators/citizenshipcity.html](http://www.pbs.org/democracy/parentseducators/citizenshipcity.html)—"The Democracy Project" grades 3-6—Math, Language Arts and Social Science unit

[www.educationworld.com-curr008.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com-curr008.shtml)  
"Teaching Citizenship's Five Themes"- grade level specific lessons and activities for grades K-6

[www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/62749.aspx](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/62749.aspx)—lesson plans

[www.teachablemoment.org/highschool.html](http://www.teachablemoment.org/highschool.html)  
Activities on current domestic and foreign issues for high school students (Libya, budget debate, Egypt, information overload, etc.)



## Spotlight on Schools

### Good Citizens

### Show Respect

Gibbons Street Elementary builds good citizens through their classroom character education instruction and recognizes them monthly. Good citizens show respect for others, for themselves and for their community. A red, white and blue trophy of respect is given to each grade level at the beginning of the year. Each month it is awarded to the class in that grade level that is most respectful. At the end of the year, one student in each class is given a trophy to keep in recognition of being a model of respectful behavior. Betty Drake is the character education teacher leading the program. Thanks Betty for these great ideas and working so hard to build character in our students.

# Citizenship Lesson Plans and Activities

## Language Arts:

- Write a thank you letter to a local representative, police department, or other community service agency.
- Discuss the lines from the Up With People song: "Freedom isn't free, you have to pay a price, you have to sacrifice, for your liberty." Write an essay to explain why this is true.
- Compose a class letter to an elected official that identifies a community problem and suggests a solution. Ask that it be considered for legislation.

## Science:

- Organize a recycling project at your school. Create a brochure that explains the damage of litter and waste to our environment and our responsibility as good citizens.
- Debate the topic: "Should the government or private citizens control scientific research in our nation?"

## Social Science:

- Conduct mock elections for a local, state or national election.
- Research the lives of great Americans who showed examples of great citizenship.
- Write a history of your local community emphasizing the contribution of good citizens in its development.
- Invite a recruiter from one of the armed services to speak to the class about careers in the military.

## Math:

- Discuss the responsibility we as citizens have to pay taxes and the responsibility of our elected officials to be responsible in spending them. Find a report in the newspaper about a project that is paid for by taxes and ask students to determine whether that project is a good use of taxpayer money.
- Brainstorm the goods and services that taxes provide. Help students to understand that the government has no money but manages the money citizens provide in taxes.

## Drama:

- Direct students to write a play or skit to perform for younger students to teach them about the flag. Include its symbolism, care, history and proper display.
- Have students read stories about extraordinary citizens then act out the stories.



## FCAT Writes

1. Johann W. von Goethe said, "To rule is easy, to govern difficult." Write to describe what you feel he meant by that statement.
2. Do you agree with Carl Schurz when he said, "Our country, right or wrong. When right to be kept right; when wrong to be put right?" Write to convince a friend to agree with you.
3. Write to describe what a community might be like with no rules or laws to govern us.
4. Think about actions of people you know or have observed that were an example of good citizenship. If you were in charge of the citizen of the year award, who would you give it to and why? Write to convince a committee that your selection deserves the award.
5. President William Clinton once said, "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America." Write to explain what you think he meant by that statement.
6. Think about teaching a kindergarten class about being a good citizen. Write to describe what that good citizen would be like.
7. Think about the process of electing our officials or student council representatives. Write to explain that process to a new student from another country.

### Francis Scott Key

The inspiration for our National Anthem during the War of 1812.

In 1813 the commander of Ft. McHenry asked for a flag so big that "the British have no trouble seeing it from a distance." He asked Mary Young Pickersgill to make the flag for him. Her thirteen year old daughter Caroline helped her. She used 400 yards of fine wool. They cut 15 stars that were two feet across. There were 8 red and 7 white stripes. The stripes were each two feet wide. When it was finished it measured 30 by 42 feet and cost \$405.90.

During this time Francis Scott Key was a lawyer in Georgetown, just a few miles from Washington D.C. He and his wife Mary had 6 sons and 5 daughters. In 1814, the British captured Washington and set the Capitol on fire. President James Madison and his wife Dolley had to leave the White House and run to a safer place.

After this attack, the Americans knew that Baltimore would be attacked next. The British had captured Mr. Key's friend. His name was William Beanes and he was a doctor. Key and another man set out to try to save Dr. Beanes' life. They told the British the doctor had helped to save British soldiers who had been wounded. They agreed to free him, but they wouldn't let them leave because the three men had overheard the British making plans to attack. So they were placed under guard on a British ship. It was from this ship Francis Scott Key watched the bombing of Ft. McHenry. There was a lot of smoke and haze, but when daylight came, he could see the flag was still waving. He was so inspired he began to write a poem on the back of a letter he had in his pocket. He later finished the poem and showed it to his brother-in-law who took it to a printer and had copies made of it. Two of these copies survive today. Newspapers started printing it and people began singing it to a familiar tune. The Star Spangled Banner was adopted as our national anthem on March 3, 1931.

The flag which flew over Ft. McHenry is now at the Smithsonian in the Museum of American History. The flag is very fragile and they keep a curtain in front of it to protect it from the light and dust. They show the flag for a few moments once every hour when the museum is open to the public. Source: <http://gardenofpraise.com/>

# Parent Power

## How Can Parents Teach Citizenship?

Regardless of whether we realize or plan it, we as parents are teaching citizenship! We begin the first time we tell our toddler "no" and continue through their first introduction to rules and a need to be considerate of others at preschool, the self-discipline learned in elementary school, the recognition of community responsibility in high school and the preparation to become a voter as they enter college as a legal adult. Through that journey, we are their example of a good citizen at home, school and in the community. What a challenge! We make a positive or negative impact on their sense of responsibility, their respect for laws and the level at which they contribute to improving the community. They learn by the what we do or do not do (inaction speaks as loudly as action). Therefore, to make sure that we are sending a positive message, it is an area that we all should give some special attention to. First, a self-analysis: are we the kind of citizen that we should be? Are we involved in our community? Do we honestly obey all laws, pay all taxes, and show respect for authority? When we have made any adjustments needed in our own lives, we can use the following projects to encourage good citizenship in our children. We as parents can:

- talk with our children about the elected officials that represent our district or state. Explain why we voted for them or against them.
- stress that we must support our nation and those who fight to defend it even if we disagree with some policies or laws.
- practice and demand honesty and integrity in dealing with others.
- contribute to fund raisers and events to improve the community.
- volunteer to serve meals at a homeless shelter or deliver meals to the homebound.
- visit the elderly at a nursing home.
- be there for our neighbors. Assist with food, yard work, dog sitting or child care to help in case of illness or emergencies.
- involve our children in making the rules for our home and compare the experience to the responsibility of our elected officials in making the laws that govern our society.
- read the paper together and point out actions of good citizens that make a strong community.
- make an effort to do a community service project with our children monthly.
- adopt the motto that "good citizenship starts at home" and recognize and reward family members for acts of good citizenship within the family and community.

When we build good character in our children, we are building good citizens. Honesty, respect, responsibility, courtesy, and a good work ethic built a great nation and will protect it for their future.

## Good Citizenship is Rewarding! By Jacqueline Freeman

In the mid-80's, I owned a holistic health center on Martha's Vineyard Island. A woman on my staff and I would talk about how elders seem to become more invisible to society as they age. So, we decided we would volunteer at the elderly center and do something to honor them. Every Friday morning we went there and spent a few hours massaging shoulders and giving foot rubs to anyone who looked like they could use one. As we did that, we talked with them, asking them questions and appreciating the wisdom they shared with us.

Years later I had saved up a little sum toward a home of my own. One of my clients, who owned a real estate company, told me about some acreage that was about to go on the market. She suggested I look at it and if I liked it, that I make an offer through one of her agents. The property was just what I was looking for. I asked the agent to write an offer on it, but to write it for a lesser amount than was being asked. Even scrimping, I knew I could only come up with half the asking price. The agent told me it was rude to put in such a low offer and it would never be accepted. I told her this wasn't a negotiation tactic, it was all I could afford. She presented the offer and the next day it was accepted. The agent was amazed since the land clearly was worth the asking price. Some weeks later I learned why that happened. The woman who read my offer was selling the land for her mother. Her mother had been one of the elderly women whose feet, on many occasions, I'd rubbed three years earlier. The mother had told her daughter many times how much she appreciated my doing that and how much better she felt afterwards. When my offer came in, as acknowledgement for those free foot rubs years earlier, they sold me the land for the price I could afford. That still is, to me, a miracle. I had no idea way back then that these little acts of kindness we did would come back years later and end up saving me a small fortune in return.

### Sunshine State Standards

#### PreK-2

HE.A.1.1 - The student comprehends concepts related to health promotion.

HE.B.1.1 - The student knows health-enhancing behaviors and how to reduce health risks.

HE.B.3.1 - The student knows how to use effective interpersonal communication skills that enhance health.

#### Grades 3-5

HE.B.1.2 - The student knows health-enhancing behaviors.

HE.B.3.2 - The student analyzes the influence of culture, media, technology and other factors on health.

#### Grades 6-9

HE.A.1.3 - The student comprehends concepts related to health promotion.

HE.A.2.3 - The student knows how to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.

HE.B.3.3 - The student knows how to use effective interpersonal skills that enhance health.

#### Grades 9-12

HE.B.1.4 - The student knows health enhancing behaviors and how to reduce health risks.

HE.B.2.4 - The student analyzes the influence of culture, media technology, and other factors on health.

HE.B.3.4 - The student knows how to use effective communication skills that enhance health.



## Bulletin Board Ideas

- Center the title "**Good Citizens**" in the middle of the board. After brainstorming all character traits that good citizens should have. (respect, responsibility, reliability, etc.) use the terms to make a word splash around the titles. Talk about what each one means in action. Challenge the students to recognize that behavior and bring in pictures they took, drew or clipped from newspapers or magazines that are examples of that behavior to place under each title.
- Enlarge a map of your community, county or state as the background for the bulletin board. Center the title, "**Protect our \_\_\_**" (use the name of your community) and scatter the words , reduce, recycle, reuse around the title. Discuss our responsibilities as citizens to clean and protect our environment..
- Choose six books from the reading list and post a color photocopy of each cover on the bulletin board. After reading the book, ask students to write a brief summary of the book and select reviews to be placed under the corresponding book cover. The book selections can be rotated on a weekly or monthly basis.

## Poet's Corner



**"Then join hand in hand,  
Brave American's all!  
By uniting we stand,  
By dividing we fall."**

**John Dickenson**

# Citizenship Quotes

## Week 1

"Government is the people's business and every man, woman and child becomes a shareholder with the first penny of tax paid." Ronald Regan

"The first requisite of a good citizen in this republic of ours is that he shall be able and willing to pull his own weight."

Theodore Roosevelt

"A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm."

Henrick Ibsen

"Democracy is never a thing done. Democracy is always something that a nation must be doing." Archibald MacLeish

"It is not always the same thing to be a good man and a good citizen." Aristotle

## Week 2

"The efforts of the government alone will never be enough. In the end the people must choose and the people must help themselves." John F. Kennedy

"Life is not so short but that there is always time for courtesy."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"That government is best which governs least."

Thomas Jefferson

"The worth of the state, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it." John Stuart Mill

"The best principles of our republic secure to all its citizens a perfect equality of rights."

Thomas Jefferson

## Week 3

"Nothing is the least arduous of a citizen's duties. He has the prior and harder duty of making up his mind." Ralph Barton Perry

"The only thing in our country superior to the President is the title of citizen."

Louis D. Brandeis

"Believe in something larger than yourself.....get involved in the big ideas of your time."

Barbara Bush

"As citizens of this democracy, you are the rulers and the ruled, the law givers and the law abiding, the beginning and the end."

Adlai Stevenson

"Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote."

George Jean Nathan

## Week 4

"If you will help run our government in the American way, then there will never be danger of our government running America in the wrong way."

Omar M. Bradley

"The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter." Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Good government is no substitute for self-government."

Mahatma Gandhi

"Territory is but the body of the nation. The people who inhabit its hills and valleys are its soul, its spirit, its life."

James Garfield

"What we need are critical lovers of America, patriots who express their faith in their country by working to improve it." Hubert Humphrey



## Teacher's Corner



Good citizenship in the classroom is the goal of every teacher. Until our classes are orderly and respectful we cannot teach; therefore, teaching good citizenship is an ongoing process in every subject at every grade level. Different challenges present themselves as students mature from pre-school to high school; however, the message is the same. Good citizens are respectful of themselves, of others, of authority, of the school and community, and of their homes and family. They work hard to achieve. They have compassion and help others. Citizenship is a combination of character traits that create the heart of who we are as Americans. We often focus on the rights of citizens (and we certainly should) but sometimes neglect to pair each right with the responsibility that goes with it.

Students should be reminded that:

- they have the right of free speech, but the responsibility to make sure that everything they say is true.
- they have the right to a free public education, but the responsibility to study, complete every assignment, cooperate with school staff, and attend school regularly.
- they have the right to private ownership of their property, but the responsibility to have nothing illegal or harmful to others in their possession.

Building a relationship of trust with our students to let them know that when they are responsible their rights will be protected is the next important step. When this is accomplished, our classroom becomes a community of good citizens who can thrive in the supportive learning environment that you have created..

### *An Example of Good Citizenship*

"There's a good movie playing downtown. How about let's go tonight?" asked my wife. "I guess so." I told her. I really did not like going to the theater. It was located right on the edge of a very seedy part of town. When we arrived we parked the car and started to walk the block or so to the theater. "Can you spare a dollar?" or "Can you spare some change?" asked almost every person that we passed. Most people coming to this part of town had already learned that it was best not to speak and to just keep on walking. As we rounded the last corner I saw a gentleman sitting on the sidewalk, his back to the building. Next to him was a large duffel bag. He was unshaven and very unclean. Around his eyes were very dark circles. It appeared as though he had not washed his face for quite a long time. His clothes were old and worn and there was very little doubt that they were in need of a good washing. As we passed, he said not a word. My wife proceeded up to the ticket booth to buy the tickets.

"Going to see the movie?" asked the man. "Yea, my wife wants to see it," I replied. "It's a very good movie," he said. "Have you seen it?" I asked. "No, just heard that it was very good," he replied. "Well, I had better go in," I said. "Could you spare a dollar?" he asked. "Sorry, but the wife's got all the money," I said to him, as I turned and walked away.

We entered the theater and my wife purchased a large bucket of popcorn and two drinks. After seating ourselves, I slowly started eating the popcorn. All at once I looked over at my wife. "Can I have \$20?" I asked her. "Twenty dollars! For what?" she said. "I just need \$20, Hon.," I replied. "You're not buying a bunch of juicy fruits and candy junk. I told you that before we came," she said. She reached into her wallet and took out a \$20 bill. I took the money and walked back to the entrance of the theater where the man was still sitting. I had decided that I was not going to give him any money. I would invite him in to see the movie and feed him while he watched the show. He looked up as I approached. "I'll pay for it if you want to come in and see the movie," I said to him. "I can't leave my stuff. Somebody will steal it. Besides, I'm not dressed for the movies," said the man, looking down at his clothing. "Tell you what, I'll put your bag in the trunk of my car until after the movie" I offered. He quickly reached over and grabbed his bag and held onto it, as if I was going to take it. "It'll be safe," I told him. Slowly he got up from the ground and picked up his bag. We walked to where my car was parked. I placed the large bag in the trunk and locked it. We then walked back to the theater where I purchased his ticket.

"Roger" I said to the man, holding out my hand. "Willie" he said, wiping his hand on his pants before shaking my hand. I bought a bucket of popcorn and a large drink, which I handed to him. I don't recall the name of the movie that we saw that day. I do remember it was one of those women type movies. You know the kind that makes women cry. Every now and then I'd see a tear rolling down Willie's cheek. Each time a tear appeared he'd cough with his hand over his mouth and then turn his head to the side and wipe the tears away with his fingers. After the movie the three of us left the theater and headed back toward our car. All Willie could talk about the entire time was that movie. My wife and he were talking about the movie as if they were old friends.

"How about some Baskin-Robbins?" I said to my wife. "You don't need any ice cream," said Judy. "Just one scoop on a cone. PLEEEEEASE," I begged. In the ice cream parlor I asked, "What kind of ice cream do you like Willie?" "Do they have that kind with marshmallows and the nuts in it?" he asked. "That's called Rocky Road," said Judy. "Ain't had none of that since before Vietnam," Willie responded. "Three Rocky Roads. Double scoops" I yelled. "One scoop for you, idiot," said Judy.

Willie laughed, turning his head to the side as if embarrassed. The clerk reached across the counter handing Willie his double scoop of Rocky Road. Slowly he licked the ice cream and then closed his eyes and just stood there. All at once the top scoop fell off his cone and splattered on the floor. I couldn't help but laugh. Then Judy started laughing. Willy's eyes got real big and his face was that of a young boy who felt that he was going to get into trouble. Then he started laughing. The three of us just stood there laughing as hard as we could.

After we ate our cones we walked to the car. I took Willy's bag out of the trunk. "Where do you live Willie?" I asked. "I got a place over at the mission on Market Street," he answered. "You take it easy, Dude," I told Willie, as I shook his hand.

Judy and I got in the car and headed home. Judy said absolutely nothing about Willie, whatsoever. It was as if she had never even met him. All weekend long I thought about Willie and why he had taken to the streets. I wondered if his experience in Vietnam had something to do with him not caring about himself. Monday morning I drove back downtown to see if I could find him. I didn't see him anywhere on the streets. I drove to the mission on Market Street to see if anyone knew Willie. "Willie? Don't have no Willie here," said the man at the counter. "Sort of a short man with dirt rings around his eyes. Sort of looks like a raccoon's eyes. Carries an old green army duffel bag," I told him. "Oh! You mean Waldo Williams. He left out of here on Saturday morning, heading to Kentucky, on the Greyhound bus," said the gentleman. "Kentucky?" I asked. "Yea, Old Waldo came in here Friday night acting as though he'd been on a date, or something. He took a hot shower for the first time in months. He shaved his face down to the bone. Then asked Billy to cut his hair. He told old Bill that he was going back home to his family. He said something about having forgotten that life was supposed to be a fun time."

Our gratitude to Roger Dean Kiser for sharing this story with To Be A Blessing. Roger has used the early adversities of his life to help him focus his heart and mind on being a blessing to others. He ADDS! Roger's stories are frequently published in a variety of venues. He can be reached through <http://www.rogerdeankiser.com>

Source: [www.tobeablessing.com](http://www.tobeablessing.com)