

CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>SS.8.CG.2.2</b> Compare the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New benchmark added to the 2023-2024 middle school civics and government standards</li> </ul>

## Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

**This section addresses the following topics:**

1. The Obligations and Responsibilities of U.S. Citizenship
2. Obligations of Citizenship
3. Responsibilities of Citizenship

### 1. The Obligations and Responsibilities of U.S. Citizenship

Citizenship brings with it both obligations and responsibilities. The obligations of citizenship include those actions that citizens are required by law to take while the responsibilities of citizenship are those actions that citizens should take for the sake of the common good.

The notion of citizen responsibility may also be understood as enlightened self-interest. Enlightened self-interest suggests that when people act in a way that furthers others' interests and that advances the interests of groups to which they belong consequently serves their own interest. Self-interest is often considered selfish or self-centered; by contrast, enlightened self-interest focuses on group-based action, where one sees a positive connection between group involvement broadly defined and self-interest that is tied to the virtue of doing what is right. The notion of enlightened self-interest was articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville in his two volume work, *Democracy in America*.

*Democracy in America* was Alexis de Tocqueville's two volume account (Volume I, 1835, Volume II, 1840) of his one visit to the United States in 1831-1832. The original purpose of Tocqueville's visit was to study the U.S. prison system, yet Tocqueville collected extensive data on the nature of American society, giving particular attention to Americans' involvement in voluntary associations, social connectedness, and political practices tied to representative democracy. Tocqueville argued that Americans' tendency to join associations was an enlightened self-interest.

There is a connection among enlightened self-interest, obligations of citizenship and responsibilities of citizenship as persons who hold an enlightened self-interest are more likely to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities of citizenship.

### 2. Obligations of Citizenship

Obey laws	Legislatures and chief executives are elected by citizens in a democracy; these legislatures and chief executives are elected to represent citizen interests. Courts interpret whether these laws cohere to the U.S. Constitution. Citizens and non-citizens alike are obligated to obey laws whether they agree with them or not. Citizens and non-citizens who choose not to obey the laws may be prosecuted for their crimes; non-citizens who choose not to obey the laws may also be deported.
Pay taxes	Taxes support government functions. Legislatures and chief executives enact tax laws the same as they do other laws. The 16 <sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution allows Congress to impose an income tax. The U.S. Supreme Court may not find income taxes unconstitutional because income taxes are protected by the 16 <sup>th</sup> Amendment.
Defend the nation	Swear allegiance to support and defend the U.S. Constitution and the laws of the United States against all enemies.

Selective service	Selective service is a system by which men (both citizens and resident aliens) ages 18 through 25 register with the U.S. government for military service. Selective service is not a draft; however, it is from the names included among those registered for selective service that a person drafted will be selected.
Serve on juries	<p>The sixth amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides for a trial by jury in most cases as follows:</p> <p>“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district where the crime shall have been committed...”</p> <p>Citizens who have reached the age of majority may be called upon to serve on juries.</p>

### 3. Responsibilities of Citizenship

Voting	Citizens have a responsibility for selecting public officials who will represent their interests in government.
Attending civic meetings	Civic meetings are ways for citizens to be active participants in their government. Interest groups, political parties, candidates for public office, religious organizations, the media and public officials hold civic meetings in order to inform and learn from the public.
Petitioning government	<p>The right of individuals to come together with others and collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests. This includes the right to assemble in public places, and the right to join an association. Peaceable assembly is also understood as freedom of association. The U.S Supreme Court has upheld laws requiring general permits, as well as prosecutions for illegal demonstrations under certain circumstances.</p> <p>The right of individuals to express themselves must be balanced against the need to maintain public order.</p> <p>People are protected when they bring to the government’s attention their unresolved concerns, provide information to political leaders about unpopular policies and issues, and expose government misconduct. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that regulation of assembly may not be used to stifle dissent; unpopular groups may not be prevented from gathering based on the nature of the group’s message.</p>
Running for office	Running for or being appointed to serve in public office as well as serving in public office

## Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
What are the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels?		
BENCHMARK		
SS.8.CG.2.2 Compare the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will identify and compare the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will recognize responsibilities of citizens (e.g., obeying the law, paying taxes, serving on a jury when summoned, registering with the Selective Service).</li> </ul>		
BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS		
N/A		
CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>citizen, jury, obligation, responsibility, Selective Service, tax</li> </ul>		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Video as text	Collaborative learning	Student-led instruction
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copier paper</li> <li>Art supplies</li> <li>Sticky notes or index cards</li> <li>What are the Responsibilities of Citizenship? activity sheet</li> <li>Responsibilities of Citizenship video (external link)</li> <li>Obligations of Citizenship video (external link)</li> <li>The Citizen video (external link)</li> <li>Responsibilities of Citizenship One-Pager</li> </ul>		
B.E.S.T. STANDARDS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ELA.8.R.2.1- Analyze how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose and/or meaning in texts.</li> </ul>		

- ELA.8.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.
- ELA.8.V.1.3- Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.
- ELA.K12.EE.1.1- Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.

## Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To start the lesson, pass out copies of the “What are the Responsibilities of Citizenship?” activity sheet.</li> <li>2. Explain to students that today they are going to identify some responsibilities and obligations of U.S. citizenship.</li> <li>3. Begin by having students write down examples (box #1) of what they think a responsible citizen does.</li> <li>4. Have students share their responses. While they share, other students should add to or modify their own responses to reflect their growing understanding.</li> <li>5. In the same box (#1) have students predict what they think the difference is between a responsibility and an obligation.  <b>Teacher Note:</b> If students have already taken M/J Civics, they should already have this background knowledge.</li> <li>6. As a class, watch the video “<a href="#">Responsibilities of Citizenship</a>” from Khan Academy.</li> <li>7. While students watch, have them note examples of responsibilities of citizenship in box #2</li> <li>8. Have students share their responses. Again, other students should add to or modify their own responses to reflect their growing understanding.</li> <li>9. Next, watch the video “<a href="#">Obligations of Citizenship</a>” from Khan Academy.</li> <li>10. While students watch, have them note examples of obligations of citizenship in box #2.</li> <li>11. Once again, have students share their responses, and other students should add to or modify their own responses to reflect their growing understanding.</li> <li>12. After watching both videos, ask students to label each responsibility and obligation listed in box #2 with either an ‘L’, ‘S’, or ‘N’, depending on which level of government (local, state, or national) they think the responsibility/obligation corresponds. If they believe the responsibility/obligation is to multiple levels of government, they should label with multiple letters.</li> <li>13. Review a few examples with the class by having a student read one of their bullet points and then the entire class doing a show of hands for ‘L’, ‘S’, or ‘N’.</li> <li>14. Lead students to the understanding that there are responsibilities/obligations at all levels of government, and that many overlap.  <b>Teacher Note:</b> From the examples in the benchmark clarification, only one is level specific (Selective Service: national level) while the rest are responsibilities/obligations at all levels of government.</li> <li>15. Direct students to box #3. Now that they have watched both videos and had class discussion, have them put in their own words the difference between a responsibility and an obligation.</li> <li>16. Discuss responses as a class, allowing students to make any changes necessary.</li> <li>17. Lead students to the understanding that a responsibility is something you <i>should</i> do, while an obligation is something you <i>must</i> do.</li> <li>18. Finish today’s lesson by watching “<a href="#">The Citizen</a>” from the National Conference of State Legislatures.</li> <li>19. While watching the video, have students summarize what other responsibilities citizens have in our constitutional republic in box #4.</li> <li>20. To wrap up, have students share out responses to the prompt in box #4.</li> </ol>

<p>DAYS 2 &amp; 3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin the lesson by passing back out or having students take out the “What are the Responsibilities of Citizenship?” activity sheet from yesterday.</li> <li>2. Review the information by asking students: What is the difference between a responsibility and an obligation of citizenship? What are some examples of each?</li> <li>3. Have the students turn the handout over (to the blank side) and divide the page in two sections by drawing a line across the middle.</li> <li>4. Ask students to reflect and answer in the top section the following question: What would happen if citizens didn’t meet their responsibilities/obligations?</li> <li>5. Have students share their responses.</li> <li>6. Next ask students to reflect and answer: How do citizens meeting their responsibilities/obligations make our country stronger?</li> <li>7. Have students share their responses.</li> <li>8. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment): Explain to students that they are going to illustrate examples of the responsibilities and obligations they have learned about by creating a one-pager.</li> <li>9. Pass out the “Responsibilities of Citizenship One-Pager Instructions/Rubric”.</li> <li>10. Review the handout with the class.</li> <li>11. Have students choose one responsibility or obligation of citizenship for their one-pager. <b>Teacher Note:</b> You could also assign these out, randomly or deliberately, if you are concerned with not every responsibility/obligation being covered through student choice. <u>Responsibilities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Voting</li> <li>■ Being informed</li> <li>■ Respecting the rights and beliefs of others</li> <li>■ Voicing your concerns responsibly</li> <li>■ Public service</li> </ul> <u>Obligations:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Obeying the law</li> <li>■ Paying taxes</li> <li>■ Serving on juries</li> <li>■ Selective Service/defending the country</li> <li>■ Attending school</li> </ul> </li> <li>12. While students complete their one-pagers, circulate the classroom to monitor for engagement and understanding, checking in with students and redirecting them as appropriate. <b>Teacher Note:</b> Lesson can be cut down to one day if students finish faster or if finishing is assigned for homework.</li> </ol>
<p>DAY 4</p>	<p><b>Planning Note:</b> This day could be optional.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once students complete their one-pagers, have them stand and form the class into a circle.</li> <li>2. One by one, have students share their one-pager with the rest of the class, first describing their responsibility/obligation, explaining why it’s important to fulfill, and sharing their graphic and why they chose that to represent their responsibility/obligation. <b>Teacher Note:</b> You could do this in multiple ways, having students form multiple, smaller groups to share, or as a large group having each student who shares choose the next student, in any order.</li> <li>3. After presenting, have students attach their one-pagers to the wall to display.</li> </ol>

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|  | <p>4. End the overall lesson by having students complete an exit ticket explaining which responsibility/obligation they think is the most important and why.</p> |
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## Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
<b>citizen</b>	a legal member of a state and/or country
<b>jury</b>	a sworn body of people convened to hear evidence and render an impartial verdict in a court of law, or to set a penalty or judgement
<b>obligation</b>	a requirement or duty, something a person or government has to do
<b>responsibility</b>	something a person should do
<b>Selective Service</b>	a system by which men ages 18 through 25 register with the U.S. government for military service
<b>tax</b>	a compulsory financial charge levied by a governmental organization in order to fund government spending and expenditures

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### [Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- *The Democratic Process* by Mark Friedman

### ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: What are the Responsibilities of Citizenship? activity sheet

One-Pager Rubric

### SOURCES

“Responsibilities of Citizenship” video from Khan Academy:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tms0TgD\\_97g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tms0TgD_97g)

“Obligations of Citizenship” video from Khan Academy: <https://youtu.be/VjPE5JTGjXE>

“The Citizen” video from the National Conference of State Legislatures:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBr3pFleh5U>