



English and Civics

According to the law, applicants must demonstrate:

- “An understanding of the English language, including an ability to read, write, and speak...simple words and phrases...in ordinary usage in the English language....”
- “A knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history, and of the principles and form of government, of the United States....”

This means that to be eligible for naturalization, you must be able to read, write, and speak basic English. You must also have a basic knowledge of U.S. history and government (also known as “civics”).

What if I cannot meet the English or civics requirements? Certain applicants, because of age and time as a permanent resident; or others because of a disability, have different English and civics requirements.

Age — There are three important exemptions for English testing based on an applicant’s age and time as a Permanent Resident:

- (a) If you are over 50 years old and have lived in the United States as a Permanent Resident for periods totaling at least 20 years,** you do not have to take the English test. You do have to take the civics test in the language of your choice.
- (b) If you are over 55 years old and have lived in the United States as a Permanent Resident for periods totaling at least 15 years,** you do not have to take the English test. You do have to take the civics test in the language of your choice.

- (c) If you are over 65 years old and have lived in the United States as a Permanent Resident for periods totaling at least 20 years,** you do not have to take the English test. You do have to take the civics test in the language of your choice. Designated test questions have been selected for you to study and are identified within the list of 100 civics test questions, which can be found at www.uscis.gov under Education and Resources.

To qualify for one of these exceptions, your time as a Permanent Resident does not have to be continuous. You are eligible for the exemption as long as your total time residing in the United States (as a Permanent Resident) is at least 15 or 20 years. You may not count time when you were not a Permanent Resident.



You must meet these requirements for age and time as a Permanent Resident at the time you file your application to qualify for an exemption.

If you qualify for an exemption of English testing based on age and time as a Permanent Resident, an interpreter, who is proficient in English and the language of your choice, must accompany you to the interview.