

that, ideally, all people are equal under the law. The rights of each citizen are equal to those of every other citizen. No one has the right to act as though his or her liberties are more important than those of others.

Equality means that each citizen has the same right to enjoy the many benefits granted to all citizens. Everyone has the right to seek an education or choose a job or career. U.S. law guarantees that any citizen qualified for a job has an equal opportunity to secure it.

### Liberty

Can you imagine what your future might be if you did not have the freedom to get an education? What if you were not able to take a job that you wanted or start a business? What if you could not speak or write certain things without fear of punishment? Would you like to live in a place where the government told you where you had to live, or that you could not travel from one place to another within your own country? How would you feel if you could not practice religion? What if the

government could put you in jail for no reason and hold you indefinitely without a trial?

Our rights seem normal to us—and some people probably take them for granted—but millions of people around the world do not have these basic freedoms. However, the people who created our government gave us a system that guarantees these rights.

### Justice

Do you believe all citizens have certain rights that no one can take away? Do you think that laws should protect those rights? Our government has given power to the police to prevent others from violating our rights. But if those rights are infringed, or violated, our government has given the courts the power to punish those responsible.

Your rights and freedoms cannot be taken away from you, as long as you follow the laws of your community, state, and country. But as an American citizen, you must be willing to do your share to protect this freedom. Your rights and freedoms have been handed down from one generation of Americans to the next for more than 200 years. Throughout our history, citizens have fought and died for the freedoms we enjoy. If thousands of Americans gave their lives to preserve our rights and freedoms, then we must all do our part to protect those rights. This is called our “civic duty.”

**READING CHECK** Analyzing Information What values are important to Americans?

## Qualities of a Good Citizen

Imagine a society in which people did not take their civic duties seriously. For instance, what if people stayed home and did not vote? What would happen if people never expressed their opinions to their representatives in government? We cannot have government “by the people,” as Abraham Lincoln said, unless the people participate.

## Direct Teach

### Reading Focus

- 3 What are the roles and qualities of a good citizen?

### Qualities of a Good Citizen

**Explain** Why are many of the most important positions in American government elected? *to make sure that officeholders respond to citizens’ wishes and concerns*

**Make Inferences** Why is it helpful for the men and women who govern to hear about citizens’ needs and concerns? *It helps them stay connected and meet citizens’ needs. This can also help them get re-elected.*

**Elaborate** What are some additional characteristics of good citizens? Why are these qualities important? *Answers will vary, but students should suggest and explain additional qualities of good citizens.*

### Info to Know

**Amish Values** Various cultures and societies emphasize different aspects of good citizenship. Among the Old Order Amish, for example, devotion to family, the land, and “plain living” are marks of good citizenship. The Amish—a majority of whom live in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana—are a strict religious group. Members avoid anything of a “worldly nature,” such as modern technology. Amish families are self-sufficient, focusing on intense farming. To sustain this lifestyle, hard work is expected of good citizens.



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## Collaborative Learning

### Debate Good Citizenship

1. Organize the class into two groups.
2. Present the following statement to students:  
If you obey all laws, you have fulfilled your responsibilities as an American citizen.
3. Assign one group to argue for this statement and one group to argue against it. Have each group review the text and come up with reasons to support their assigned point of view.
4. Once they have prepared their arguments, review debate etiquette with the students. Then have the groups debate whether or not being a good citizen means more than simply obeying laws. **LS Verbal/Linguistic, Interpersonal**

Alternative Assessment Handbook: Rubric 10: Debates

Above Level

## Answers

**Reading Check** *equality, liberty, and justice*