



**EXPLORING CITIZENSHIP — UNIT VI**

# *My Government*

**THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Introduction

Good citizenship is understanding your government. It is getting involved to see that your government represents you and other citizens.

Democratic governments are established to be operated by the people and for the people. Citizens' involvement in government is the only way to keep government responsive to the people.

How much do you know about your government? Are you involved in seeing that your government operates for you and other citizens? If you have trouble answering these questions, the "My Government" project is for you.

The "My Government" project will help you learn about government at the local, state, and national level. It will help you understand the importance of citizen involvement in government. It will also help you find ways to get involved in government. Specifically, this project is designed to help you:

- understand how local, state, and national governments are organized and operated.
- become aware of career possibilities related to government.
- plan and carry out projects that will increase your knowledge of government and your involvement in government.
- keep a written record of activities undertaken and what was learned from each activity.
- share the knowledge gained through this project with others.
- function as an involved and informed citizen to see that government operates for the people.

Your experiences in learning more about government and in participating more fully in government will be FUN — EXCITING — CHALLENGING!

## Planning 'My Government' Project

This project may be taken as an individual project or as a group project. It can be taken for more than one year, depending on how much you want to learn.

Begin the project by reading through the entire project book. Go back and select the activities you would like to do. Select and complete at least one activity in each of the six lists of "Things to Do." Your involvement does not have to be limited to the activities discussed in this project book. Your imagination and interests are the only boundaries.

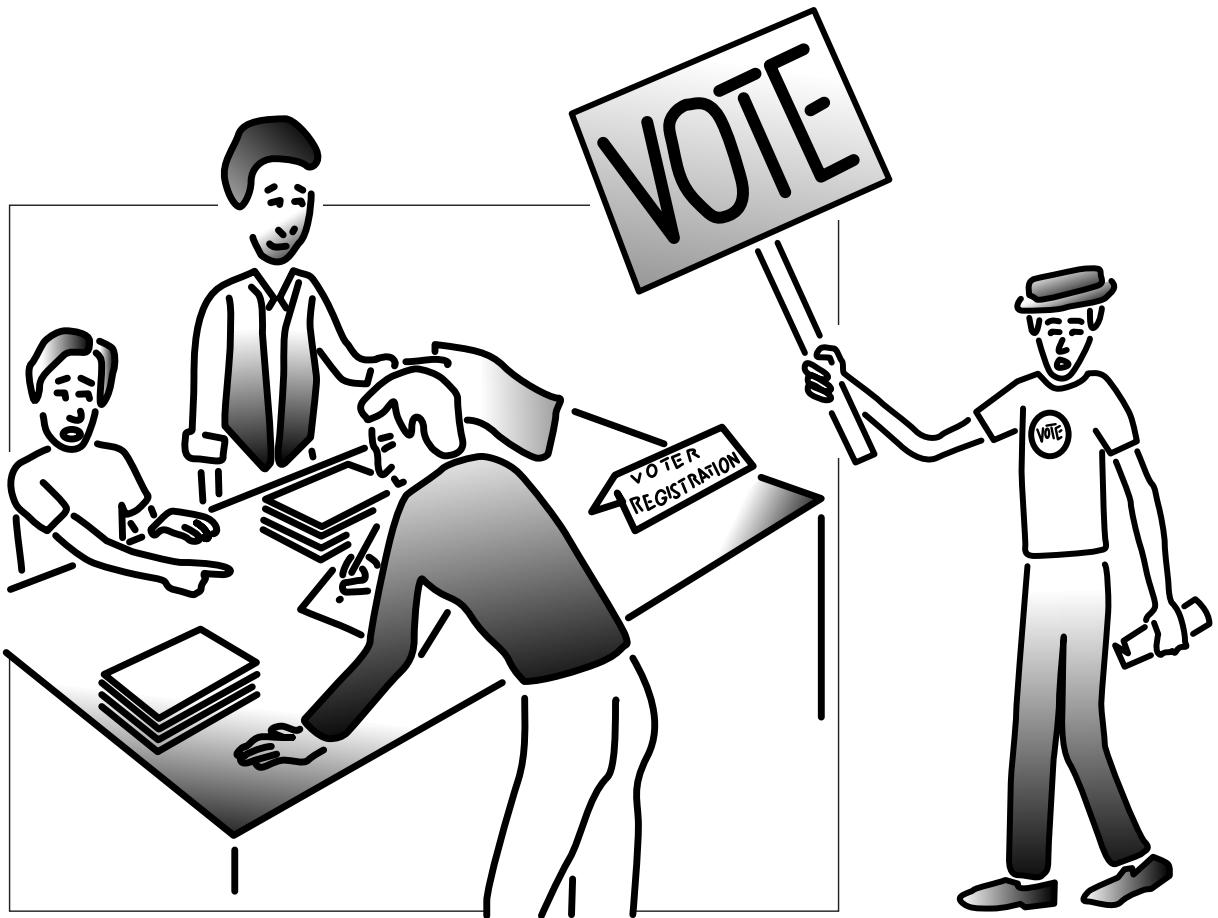
Write down your project goals. Your goals should reflect what you plan to do and what you want to learn from this project.

Make a plan of action for reaching your goals. Keep a record of what you do, what you learn, and how you share this knowledge with others. A 4-H record form is included in the back of this project book.

### Summary of Steps to Follow in This Project

1. Review the entire project book.
2. Select activities that you plan to carry out.
3. Set your project goals. Record these goals.
4. Make a plan of action.
5. Carry out the plan.
6. Keep a record of what you do, what you learn, and how you share your knowledge with others.





# *Part 1 – American Democracy*

In order to function as a responsible citizen in a democratic society, you must understand the basic principles of democracy.

The United States has a democratic form of government. This means government by the people. In a democratic government the supreme power is vested in the people. They exercise their power directly or indirectly through a system of representation, which includes a system of free elections.

Democratic government is founded on some basic beliefs about people and governments:

- People are rational beings, capable of self-government.
- Each person is unique and has worth.
- Constitutional government established a “government of laws and not of men,” meaning that the law is above the power of a select few to do whatever they want.
- All human beings should be judged equally and given equal opportunity.
- A choice should be provided through opposing political parties.

- There should be free popular elections.
- There should be government by discussion and debate where opposing views can be presented.
- The majority should rule, with minority rights protected.
- Political power should be separated among main branches of government so that government cannot become a tyranny (government by one ruler).

Democratic government requires citizen participation. Citizens give or withhold support. Each citizen has a responsibility to stay informed on public issues, to express an opinion on these issues, and to make sure that government stays sensitive to the desires of the people. In the United States, only a small group fulfill this responsibility. To most people, voting is the extent of their participation. After election time they wait until the next election to become active again. Many citizens never get active enough even to register or vote.

Don't be a “let the other guy do it” citizen. Get involved! Make sure your democratic government represents you and other citizens.



## THINGS TO DO

Select one or more of the following activities.

1. Rid yourself of citizen apathy. Read the newspaper and stay informed on public issues. Express your concerns and opinions to your elected officials. Learn about government organization and operation so you can affect it in a positive way.
2. Rid your community of citizen apathy. Do a survey in your community to learn how people feel about citizen participation in government and how involved they are. Use the results of this survey to plan an “active citizen” campaign in your community. Your campaign might include:
  - a. Presenting programs to civic clubs, community organizations or school groups to explain the role of a citizen and the importance of citizen participation in a democratic society. You should use local examples to show the results of citizen activity or apathy.
  - b. Writing articles or “letters to the editor” to be printed in the local newspaper.
  - c. Arranging to be interviewed for broadcast over radio or television.
  - d. Conducting voter registration drives and “get out the vote” campaigns.

Develop additional activities as you become more aware of citizen apathy in your local area.

“You don’t really have to save the world. Just start saving the hometown. It will add up.”

— Hubert Humphrey

# Part 2 – Division of Power in a Democracy

Democracy has a strong bias against concentrated political power. In the United States government powers and functions are divided in two ways — by geography and by function. The division of power by geography is between local, state, and federal governments. The division of power by function is usually between executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

This division of power creates a system of checks and balances. It prevents any one person or group from becoming too powerful. This system of checks and balances helps ensure that our government remains a democracy.

## Local Government

There are several types of local governments — county (sometimes called borough or parish), city, town, and township. These are the governments closest to the people and the ones that affect people most directly.

Local governments have certain powers granted to them by the state government. Local government responsibilities often include:

1. Public safety — police, courts, fire, correctional institutions
2. Public health — sewage, garbage, food, water, nursing, care of sick
3. Public utilities — water, gas, electricity, telephone
4. Public education — schools, adult education, libraries, museums
5. Public welfare — playgrounds, parks, housing, care of the needy
6. Public service — roads, highways, bridges, airports
7. Planning and zoning
8. Financing — assessments, taxes, budget appropriations, debts

Your study of local government should focus on county (borough, or parish) government.



**THINGS TO DO**

Select one or more of the following activities.

- 1. County governments vary from state to state in their organizational structure and in their range of powers. In order to understand the organization and operation of your county's government, conduct a county government survey.

You will need to visit with local county officials. You must remember they are busy people, so don't plan to take too much of their time. Explain that you are trying to learn about county government and would appreciate any material or information that they could provide. A copy of your state's constitution would also be helpful since this document spells out the power granted to local government.

Below is a list of questions your study should be designed to answer.

**County Government Study**

A. What is the exact name of your county governing body? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is it provided for in the state constitution or by legislation? \_\_\_\_\_

How many members does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ What are the qualifications for office? \_\_\_\_\_

B. How are members of the county governing body selected? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the term of office? \_\_\_\_\_ Are members paid by salary or by fees? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the total amount they are paid each year? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

C. What are the principal duties of the governing body? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does it have power to levy taxes, make appropriations, authorize bonds? \_\_\_\_\_

Any appointing powers? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, whom does it appoint? \_\_\_\_\_

D. How often does the governing body meet? \_\_\_\_\_

Are meetings open to the public? \_\_\_\_\_ Are minutes of the meetings available to the public? \_\_\_\_\_

Are hearings held? \_\_\_\_\_ On what kinds of matters? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(cont.)

E. How is the chairperson of the governing body chosen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What power or role does this person have in county government beyond presiding over meetings? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

F. Does your county have special boards or commissions for planning hospitals, health, welfare, libraries, education, elections? \_\_\_\_\_ Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

G. Does your county have a single responsible county executive? \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, how is this person chosen? \_\_\_\_\_  
Term of office? \_\_\_\_\_ Salary? \_\_\_\_\_ Duties? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What authority does this person have? \_\_\_\_\_

Any appointing powers? \_\_\_\_\_

H. If your county does not have a central executive, what officials perform executive functions? \_\_\_\_\_  
To whom are they responsible for performance of these duties? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I. Who is responsible for carrying out the governing body's decisions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
For presenting budget proposals? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

J. Which of your county officials are elected? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What are their names? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What are their duties? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(cont.)

K. Who are the principal appointed officers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who appoints them? \_\_\_\_\_

What are their duties? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

L. What is the term of office and salary of each county official? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who sets their salaries? \_\_\_\_\_

M. How is your county government financed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

N. What services are provided by your county government? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

O. What courts hold regular sessions in your county? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the jurisdiction of each? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the length of these sessions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

P. What judicial positions are in your county? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is their jurisdiction? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are they elected or appointed? \_\_\_\_\_

(cont.)

- Q. What is the grand jury in your county? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 How is the list drawn up? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many members does it have? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How much are they paid? \_\_\_\_\_ Who is exempt from jury service? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 How are exemptions granted? \_\_\_\_\_  
 When is the grand jury summoned? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How long does it serve? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are the accused sometimes held for long periods of time awaiting grand jury sessions? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- R. What is the petit-trial jury in your county? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many members does it have? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How much are they paid? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who is exempt from jury service? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What type of cases are brought before the petit jury? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**THINGS TO DO, CONT...**

2. Attend a meeting of your county governing body.
3. Attend a meeting of a special board or commission in your local area that plans hospitals, libraries and elections.
4. Visit a local court during a trial by jury.
5. Visit a top local official. Explain that you are interested in carrying out a citizenship project that would benefit the community, and that you would like some suggestions.
6. Interview several local government officials. Find out their responsibilities, their qualifications, and how they got their jobs. Share what you learn with others.

**State Government**

Each of the 50 states has its own constitution and a state government. States have certain rights and powers, according to the United States Constitution.

The United States Constitution is the law of the land, but the constitution of each state is the law within its boundaries. The only powers denied a state are those that conflict with the guarantees of the United States Constitution. The limitations placed on states by the Constitution are actually few. The separate states cannot make treaties with foreign countries, coin money, tax imports or exports, deny the due process of equal protection of the law to any individual or corporation, or impair the obligation of contracts.

State citizens elect their own officials who give leadership to their state's government. The states enact and enforce civil and criminal law, subject only to the Constitution's broad guarantees of individual freedom. The states control the public education systems within their borders and provide services in health, welfare

and highway construction. They license business and industry, charter corporations, and regulate utilities, insurance companies, and other businesses. Each state also has the power to tax individuals and corporations within its boundaries.

Among the states there are significant differences in constitutions and in governments. Despite these differences, every constitution has its "Bill of Rights" that forcefully reaffirms age-old concepts of natural and inherent human rights. Although state governments are set up differently, each state government consists of three distinct and separate branches: the executive, the legislative and the judicial. This separation of powers is patterned after federal government structure.

The EXECUTIVE BRANCH includes the governor and a number of other elected officials. These may or may not include a lieutenant governor. Generally there is a secretary of state, a treasurer, an attorney-general and sometimes an auditor. Executive officials may be elected by the people along with the governor, or the state constitution may specify that the governor appoint them, much as the President of the United States appoints a cabinet and other officials. The governor is head of the state and usually the head of the political party in that state.

**Questions and Answers**

Who is the governor of your state? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the governor's political party? \_\_\_\_\_

What other officials make up the executive branch of your state's government, and what are their positions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In your state, how are the members of the executive branch, excluding the governor, chosen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The LEGISLATIVE BRANCH usually consists of two houses (except in the state of Nebraska). These are usually referred to as the Senate and the House of Representatives. Senators are usually elected to four-year terms while representatives usually serve two-year terms.

In 1952, a Supreme Court decision (Baker vs. Carr) insisted on the concept of "one man, one vote." This ruling resulted in the apportionment of state senators as

well as representatives on the basis of population. Thus, the composition of state legislatures is much different from that of the national congress. In time, there might be one-house state legislatures such as Nebraska has used since 1937.

**Questions and Answers**

What does the legislative branch in your state consist of? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The men and women who are elected to serve in your state legislature serve designated periods of time. What are the lengths of their terms? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are the names of the men and/or women who represent you in the state legislature? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are their political parties? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The JUDICIAL BRANCH of the state, like that of federal government, consists of a number of different court systems. No state has more than four different courts, or fewer than two. At the top level is a court of last appeal, often but not always called the state "supreme court," as in the federal judiciary. The state supreme court supervises and receives cases of appeal from lower courts. In the state supreme court the number of justices ranges from three to nine.

Below the supreme court are the courts of appeal. Next are the trial courts, with such names as chancery court, circuit court, district court, and superior court.

**Questions and Answers**

What is the court of last appeal called in your state? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many justices sit on the court of last appeal in your state, and what are their names? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the function of the court of last appeal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What system of courts is immediately below the court of last appeal in your state, and what is its function? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What other courts make up your state's judiciary system, and what is the function of each one? \_\_\_\_\_

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Except for those in the District of Columbia, we are all residents of a state and consider ourselves Georgians, New Yorkers, Arkansans, Californians, etc. To be sure, all of us are Americans, but we are also citizens of a state. We are proud of our state citizenship, and as good state citizens we should be informed on issues that affect our state. We should actively work toward making our state a better place to live.

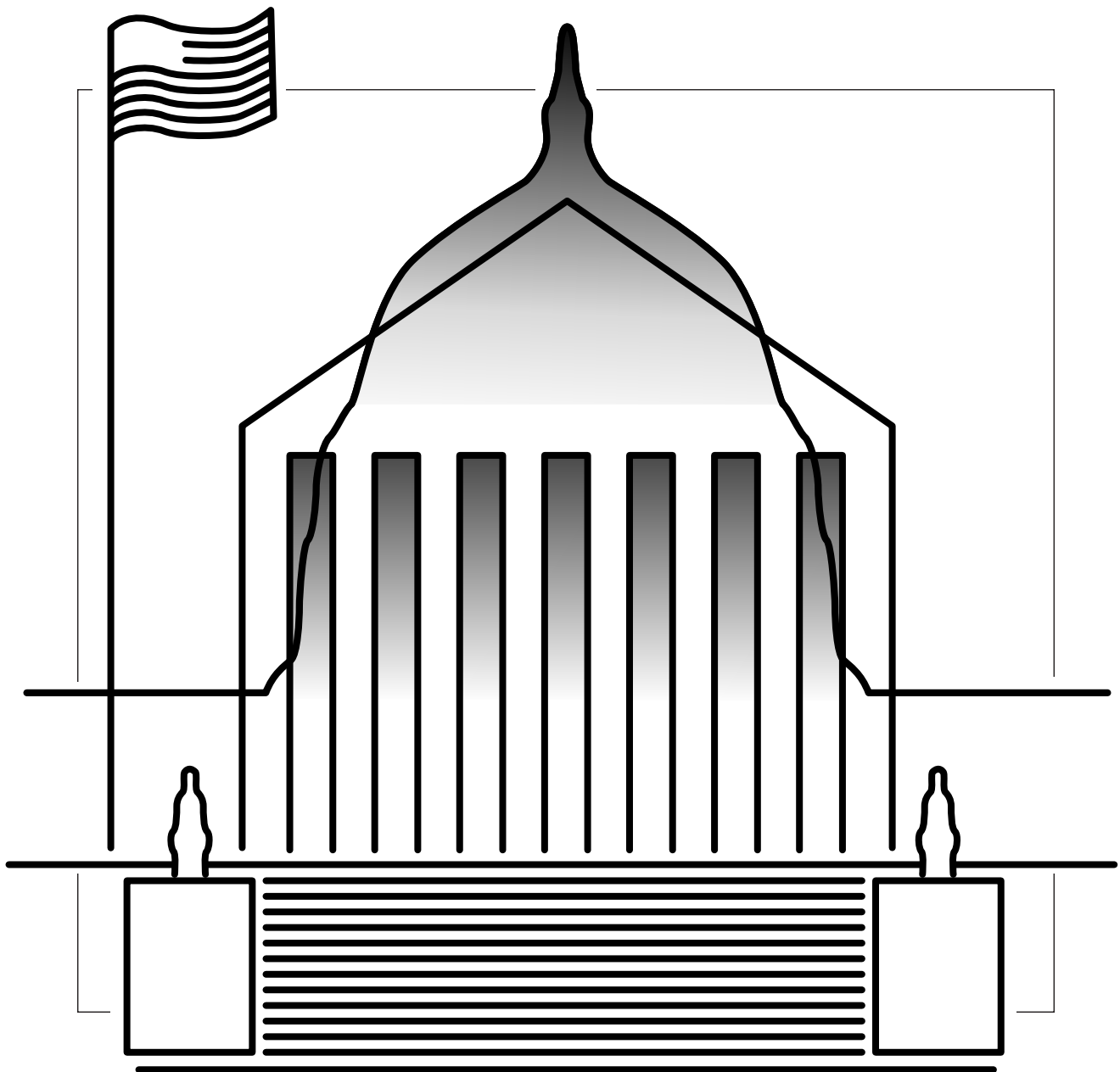
### THINGS TO DO

Select one or more of the following activities:

1. In order to learn the facts about your state's government, obtain a copy of the state constitution. A library, a state representative, or the secretary of state are possible resources for obtaining this document.  
  
Read the constitution and make a notebook of interesting facts you learn about state government.
2. A first-hand way to learn more about state government is to serve as a legislative page. Contact a representative in the state legislature and inquire about serving as a page.
3. Conduct a State Government Bowl. This is an activity where teams compete against one another. The teams have the opportunity to answer questions related to state government. Points are awarded for correct answers, and the team with the most points wins.  
  
In order to conduct a "State Government Bowl," you need a list of questions. Make sure the questions you use have only one correct answer, and be sure the answer you have is the correct one. Provide the teams with a list of references to study in preparation for the bowl.  
  
In addition to questions and answers, you will need rules for conducting the bowl. Once you have the rules and the questions, you are ready to organize the bowl. Set the time and place. Organize the teams and any prizes that are to be awarded to the winners. Publicize the event.

Conduct the bowl and evaluate the results.

4. Plan a tour of the state capitol while the legislature is in session. Invite 4-H members and other interested young people to participate.  
  
For assistance in arranging such a tour, contact your representative in the state legislature. This person can give you information that will be helpful in planning the tour. Your representative might agree to make the necessary arrangements for the group to participate in some specific learning activities while at the capitol. Some activities that might be arranged are a tour of the building, the opportunity to observe the legislature in action and committees at work, or a meeting with the governor and other officials.
5. Conduct a citizenship short course for county 4-H members dealing with state government.
6. Plan and conduct a mock state legislative session. Involve your 4-H club or 4-H members within the county who are interested in learning about the operation of state government.
7. Present talks at civic clubs or community organizations dealing with state government, and/or state citizenship responsibilities.
8. Invite your state representative to speak to your 4-H club or county 4-H group.
9. Serve as a junior or teen leader for a 4-H citizenship project group in your club or county. Your job could be to help the members learn about state government and being a good state citizen.
10. Write a skit dealing with state government. Involve the members of your 4-H club in performing the skit before various organizations.
11. Read a daily newspaper to stay informed on issues within your state. As you read the newspaper, make a list of current problems your state and its people are facing. Determine what you can do to help solve a particular problem, and make a plan of action, then carry out the plan.
12. Interview three or more state employees (not elected officials) in your local area. Find out what they do and how the state agency they work for serves state citizens.
13. Use your own ideas to develop a state citizenship project. Develop a plan and carry it out.



## Federal Government

The United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land. The Constitution reserves certain powers for the Federal government and gives other powers to state and local governments.

The Constitution establishes three branches of Federal Government. These branches operate within a system of “checks and balances.” This system keeps any one branch, from becoming the dominant force of the federal government.

The EXECUTIVE BRANCH is headed by the President, and represents all the people of the United States. To be President, you must be a natural-born citizen at least 35 years of age. The presidency is an

elected office of four years and is now limited to two consecutive terms. The president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, conducts foreign relations, recognizes foreign governments, and makes treaties, subject to Senate ratification. The president may recommend legislation and veto bills passed by Congress. A two-thirds vote of both Houses can override a presidential veto. The president is also a political party leader.

The president executes the laws, and directs the administration and has the power to pardon those who have been convicted of federal crimes. Under the Constitution, the president is, more the leader of all the people than any other individual in government.

Through messages, televised press conferences and speeches, the president can spearhead public opinion, yet the Congress can determine much of the success or failure of the Presidential program. The Congress can accept the president's recommendations, reject them, or change them.

**Questions and Answers**

Who is the President of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the Vice President of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

What is their political party? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the names and titles of the members of the president's cabinet?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The LEGISLATIVE BRANCH is made up of two houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives.

A senator represents the people of an entire state. There are 100 senators, two from each state. They are elected for a term of six years by a rotating system of elections every two years so that "one-third may be chosen every second year." Senators are elected directly by the people they represent. The Vice President of the United States presides over the Senate, but has no vote unless a tie occurs.

The Senate is required to confirm most of the president's appointments. The Senate also ratifies or rejects treaties negotiated by the president with foreign powers. While the House has the power of impeachment, it is the Senate that tries officials who have been impeached.

A member of the House represents the people of a district within a state. There are 435 representatives from the 50 states; a resident commissioner from Puerto Rico; and three delegates, one each from the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The number of representatives from each state is based on population, except that each state is entitled to one

representative regardless of population. Representatives are elected every two years.

The Speaker of the House presides over the House of Representatives. Although the election of the speaker officially occurs on the floor of the House, the speaker in fact is elected by the members of the majority party meeting in caucus on the eve of a new Congress. Once elected, a speaker is customarily re-elected so long as his or her party remains in control of the House and the House seat is retained.

Sam Rayburn's service was the longest in history. He occupied the speaker's chair for more than 17 years.

Some of the nation's most complex problems, whether in the form of messages from the president or initiated from within the House or the Senate, come under intense and informed investigation, analytical support and opposition for the Congress. These problems range from war to tax reform, from reorganization of the post office department to legislation on the American fishing industry. It is in the House that all revenue money and appropriation measures originate — the latter by law and the former by custom.

**Questions and Answers**

Who are the two senators from your state? \_\_\_\_\_

Who are the representatives from your state? \_\_\_\_\_

Which representative represents you? \_\_\_\_\_

The JUDICIAL BRANCH of the federal government is represented by the Supreme Court.

"Equal Justice Under Law" — These words, written above the main entrance to the Supreme Court Building, express the ultimate responsibility of the Supreme Court in the United States. The court is the highest tribunal in the nation for all cases and controversies arising under the Constitution or the laws of the United States.

The court's power of judicial review was not confirmed until 1803, when it was invoked by Chief Justice John Marshall in *Marbury vs. Madison*. In this decision, the chief justice asserted that the Supreme Court's responsibility to invalidate unconstitutional legislation was a necessary consequence of its sworn duty to uphold the Constitution.

The nine justices of the Supreme Court are appointed by the president, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. These justices hand down decisions on “cases” and “controversies” which arise under the Constitution.

**Questions and Answers**

Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who are the other supreme court justices? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**THINGS TO DO**

1. Read the United States Constitution. Design a set of posters that explain the articles and amendments of the Constitution. Use pictures rather than a lot of words. The posters can be used to teach others about the Constitution and the federal government.
2. Make a wall chart showing how a bill becomes a law. Do the chart as a diagram showing each step in the process. Use pictures rather than a lot of words. The wall chart can be used to help others understand how a bill becomes a law.
3. Senators and representatives in Congress serve on committees. Find out the committees on which your state’s senators and representatives serve. Select a committee of interest to you. Write the member of

Congress on that committee and ask to be kept informed about the committee’s action. Many members of congress have a newsletter to constituents. Ask to be put on the newsletter mailing list.

4. Make a list of all the United States presidents. List them in order of service, and record the years they served.
5. Plan and conduct a mock presidential election. Follow the same procedures as used in a real election. Voters must register. Voters cast their votes on machines or ballots. Electors are selected. They cast their votes according to how the majority of the people they represent voted.
6. Plan a family vacation to Washington, D.C., or attend Citizenship ... Washington Focus. While in Washington, visit Capitol Hill, sit in on a legislative session, attend a congressional committee meeting and visit your representatives and senators.
7. Read the newspaper to find issues under consideration in Congress. Present a controversial issue to your 4-H group. Form pro and con teams. Have each team research their side of the issue. Conduct the debate at a 4-H meeting, and then vote on the issue. This is the basic procedure Congress uses to pass new legislation.
8. Develop your own citizenship project related to the Constitution or the federal government. Carry out your plan.

# *Part 3—Political Parties in a Democracy*

Political parties are the instruments through which candidates are put forward, platforms written, conventions run and campaigns conducted.

The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. From time-to-time third parties arise when certain groups feel neither major party represents them.

Political parties provide the framework for selecting candidates for political office at all levels. Almost all states use primaries to select candidates for state office. The Democratic and Republican primaries offer voters a

choice of several candidates seeking the nomination of their party. A candidate must win the primary in order to run for a state office.

National Democratic and Republican conventions are held each national election year. Delegates to the national conventions are determined by each state. This is usually done at a state convention. National conventions are held to submit presidential candidates and adopt party platforms. The president usually selects the vice presidential candidate.



“Political parties provide an outlet for concerned citizens who do not care to run for public office. They provide a social mechanism for permitting the largest part of the population to influence majority decisions by choosing the candidates for political office. They provide a continuing link between the relatively small number of men who implement government policy and the massive voting public. In short, through participation in national political parties the people of the nation govern themselves.”

Senator Howard Baker  
Republican — Tennessee

Political parties are looking for help at all levels. The youth of America can play an important role in American politics.

“No political candidate today can ignore the reservoir of talented young people that are available to assist in his bid for public office. In a close campaign their help can frequently make the difference between winning and losing.”

Senator George McGovern  
Democrat — South Dakota

## THINGS TO DO

Select one or more of the following activities .

1. Select a political party to study. Write the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee for information.  
  
Democratic National Committee  
430 South Capitol Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
  
Republican National Committee  
310 First Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
  
You might also want to write to some of the minor parties. The local library can help you find their addresses.
2. Join or start a political club in your area. Write the appropriate national committee to obtain information about its youth club.
3. Find a political candidate who seems to believe in the same things you do. Volunteer to help with this candidate's campaign.
4. One of the most active hobby groups in the country today is collectors of campaign buttons and other political items. This can become a very interesting activity that will help you learn about political campaigns, past and present. For more information about this hobby, write to American Political Items Collectors, P. O. Box 340339, San Antonio, Texas 78234.

# *Part 4*

## *The Voter in a Democracy*

The belief in free popular elections is one of the basic principles of democratic government. Democratic government depends on citizen participation. One type of citizen participation is voting.

The vote is your opportunity to have a voice in the operation of your government, whether that government is in your school, your town, or in Washington, D.C.

Every vote is important. A single vote once decided the election of a President of United States. Regardless of the difference in votes at any election, your vote is important. It enables you to express your opinion about your government—even if the majority disagrees with you.

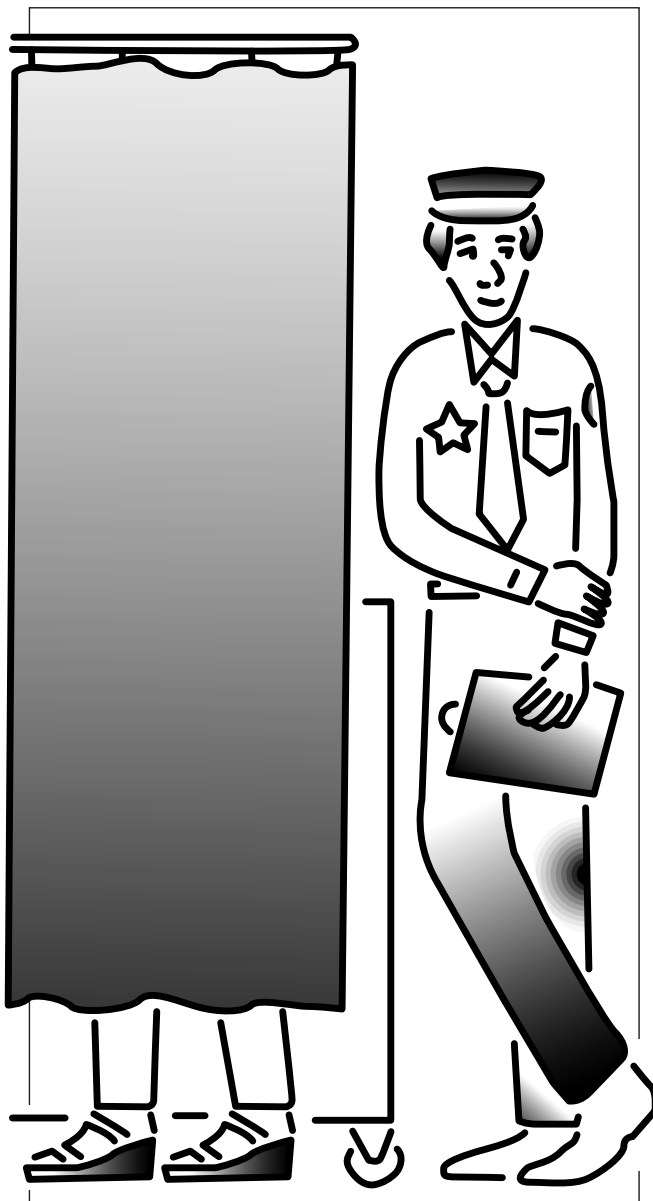
To be eligible to vote in local, state or national elections you must be 18 years old and be registered. To

find out how, when and where to register, call your courthouse or local election board, and ask for the office handling voter registration.

To register you will, under oath, need to identify yourself with name, address and place of birth. You will give your age and establish your residence.

Once you have registered, find out how long it lasts. Is it permanent until you move? Is it for only one year? Is it good until you have missed voting in a certain number of elections?

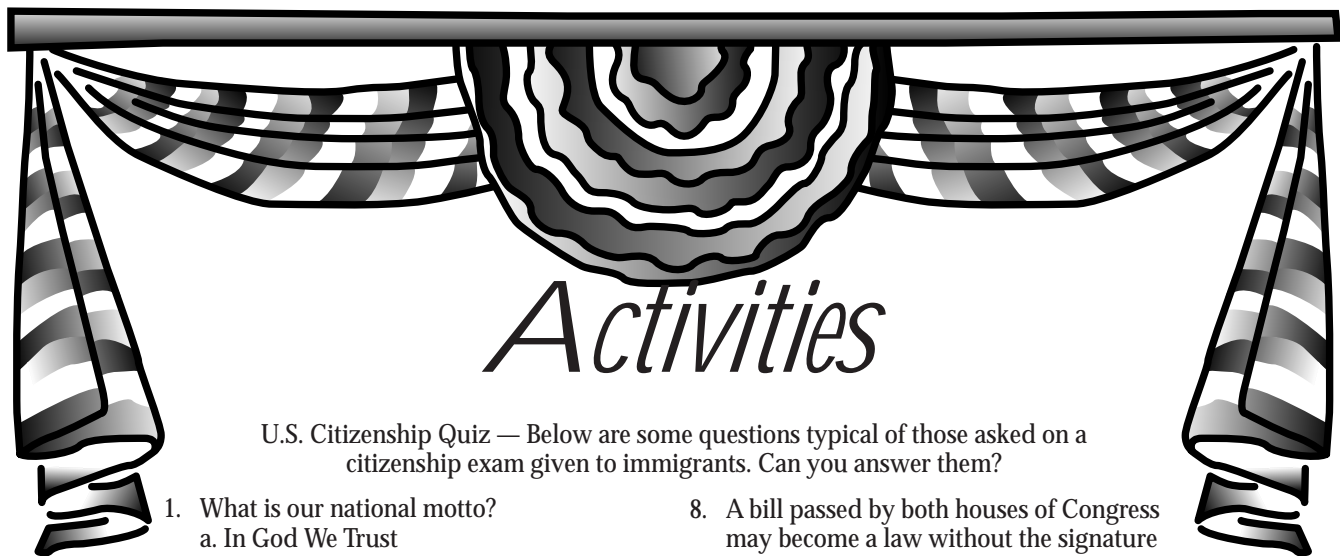
Before you vote in any type of election (school, county, state, etc.), study the issues and the candidates. Find out all you can about each candidate and any past voting record. Then vote for the one you feel will do the best job.



## THINGS TO DO

Select one or more of the following activities .

1. Run for a school, class or club office. Develop your platform, and conduct your campaign.
2. Work with your school officials and student government to set up a school election which follows standard local government voting procedures. Voters must register, candidates should campaign, voting machines or ballot boxes will tally votes and so on.
3. Seek local voter registration cooperation in a voter registration project for high school seniors, providing appropriate information on the registration process and “on the spot registration” of those eligible.
4. Organize a special citizenship ceremony for the soon-to-be voters in your school. Involve all seniors, and conduct the citizenship ceremony during a school assembly.
5. Organize a voter registration drive. Publicize your drive through radio spots, news articles, posters, flyers on automobile windshields. Be sure to secure the permission of the proper officials first.
6. Volunteer to assist at a polling place during an election.
7. Visit the voting headquarters or the courthouse on election night to see the political process in action as the votes are tabulated.
8. Provide transportation to the polls for senior citizens.
9. Provide a babysitting service at the polls to watch children while parents vote.
10. Secure a local election official to discuss the specifics of local elections, as well as voting procedures with your 4-H club or school group.



U.S. Citizenship Quiz — Below are some questions typical of those asked on a citizenship exam given to immigrants. Can you answer them?

1. What is our national motto?
  - a. In God We Trust
  - b. E Pluribus Unum
  - c. Liberty & Justice for All
2. When was the Constitution adopted?
  - a. July 4, 1776
  - b. March 4, 1789
  - c. June 14, 1777
3. What is the Bill of Rights?
  - a. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution
  - b. A treaty with our allies
  - c. The Preamble to the Constitution
4. U.S. Senators have always been elected by the people.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. How many justices in the Supreme Court?
  - a. nine
  - b. seven
  - c. twelve
6. How many Senators are there in Congress?
  - a. 80
  - b. 100
  - c. 196
7. How many Senators are there from each state?
  - a. one
  - b. two
  - c. three
8. A bill passed by both houses of Congress may become a law without the signature of the president.
  - a. True
  - b. False
9. All revenue raising bills must originate with the:
  - a. President
  - b. U.S. Senate
  - c. House of Representatives
10. Name the war in which we won our independence from Great Britain.
  - a. War of 1812
  - b. Civil War
  - c. Revolutionary War
11. How are amendments to the Constitution ratified?
  - a. By popular vote of the people
  - b. By State Convention or Legislatures
  - c. By U.S. House and Senate
12. On what date do we celebrate our nation's birthday?
  - a. June 14
  - b. July 4
  - c. November 11

(continued on page 22)

Match the state capitals with the 50 states outlined on the map below by placing the numbers beside each city on the map within the correct state.



- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Atlanta        | 26 Indianapolis   |
| 2 Sacramento     | 27 Columbia       |
| 3 Hartford       | 28 Des Moines     |
| 4 Little Rock    | 29 Boise          |
| 5 Lincoln        | 30 Dover          |
| 6 Austin         | 31 Baton Rouge    |
| 7 Nashville      | 32 Santa Fe       |
| 8 Montpelier     | 33 Albany         |
| 9 Raleigh        | 34 Bismark        |
| 10 Honolulu      | 35 Charleston     |
| 11 Annapolis     | 36 Phoenix        |
| 12 Tallahassee   | 37 Richmond       |
| 13 Oklahoma City | 38 Lansing        |
| 14 Harrisburg    | 39 Pierre         |
| 15 Madison       | 40 Columbus       |
| 16 Olympia       | 41 Concord        |
| 17 Carson City   | 42 Helena         |
| 18 Montgomery    | 43 Springfield    |
| 19 Denver        | 44 Topeka         |
| 20 Juenau        | 45 Cheyenne       |
| 21 Augusta       | 46 Trenton        |
| 22 St. Paul      | 47 Salt Lake City |
| 23 Jackson       | 48 Frankfort      |
| 24 Providence    | 49 Boston         |
| 25 Salem         | 50 Jefferson City |

# Sources of Information

Local, state, and federal government officials

Local newspapers

Libraries

Major Political Party Headquarters

Democratic National Committee  
430 South Capitol Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Republican National Committee  
310 First Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Libertarian Party  
National Headquarters  
7887 Katy Freeway, Suite 385  
Houston, TX 77024

Major Political Party Student Groups

Young Democrats of America  
430 South Capitol Street, S.E.  
Washington, D. C. 20003

Young Republicans  
310 First Street, S.E.  
Washington, D. C. 20003

College Republicans  
310 First Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Young Americans for Freedom  
Box 1002  
Woodland Road  
Sterling, Virginia 22170

Check for the address of other political parties in your phone directory or at your local library.

Publications — several low-cost publications are available from various organizations. Before you order the publications listed below, write the company and request cost information.

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

“Great Decisions” — Background material for discussion of several current national issues, new each year. Excellent for late teens and adults.

“Foreign Policy Background Briefs” — Information briefs on current national issues. Excellent for late teens and adults.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

Excellent non-partisan bulletins:

“Choosing the President” — Explains the process involved in a presidential election.

“Know Your Community” — An outline for making a survey of your local government.

“Know Your County” — An outline for making a survey of your county government.

“Know Your State” — An outline for making a survey of your state government.

“You and Your National Government” — A brief guide on how the national government is organized and operates.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS HANDBOOK — A GUIDE TO ACHIEVING GOOD GOVERNMENT, The Sperry and Hutchinson Company, 2900 West Seminary Road, Fort Worth, TX 76133.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES  
3501 Newark Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20016

COMMON CAUSE  
2030 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

DOMESTIC POLICY ASSOCIATION  
5335 Far Hills Avenue  
Dayton, OH 45429

SCRIPTO GRAPHIC BOOKLETS, Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., 200 State Rd., South Deerfield, MA 01373

About Congress

About the Constitution

About the Declaration of Independence

About Government

# "MY GOVERNMENT" PROJECT SUMMARY

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in School \_\_\_\_\_ Years in 4-H \_\_\_\_\_

Years in Citizenship Project \_\_\_\_\_ Name of 4-H Club or Group \_\_\_\_\_

My Government Project Goals:

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## American Democracy

What I did \_\_\_\_\_

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What I learned \_\_\_\_\_

How I shared my knowledge with others \_\_\_\_\_

---

## DIVISIONS OF POWER IN A DEMOCRACY

### Local Government

What I did \_\_\_\_\_

---

What I learned \_\_\_\_\_

How I shared my knowledge with others \_\_\_\_\_

---

### State Government

What I did \_\_\_\_\_

---

What I learned \_\_\_\_\_

How I shared my knowledge with others \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Federal Government

What I did \_\_\_\_\_

---

What I learned \_\_\_\_\_

---

How I shared my knowledge with others \_\_\_\_\_

Political Parties in a Democracy

What I did \_\_\_\_\_

What I learned \_\_\_\_\_

How I shared my knowledge with others \_\_\_\_\_

The Voter in a Democracy

What I did \_\_\_\_\_

What I learned \_\_\_\_\_

How I shared my knowledge with others \_\_\_\_\_

Additional government activities in which I have been involved \_\_\_\_\_

(continued from page 19)

- 13. The quote, "Four Score and Seven Years Ago" begins the:
  - a. Declaration of Independence
  - b. Preamble to the Constitution
  - c. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address
- 14. By what margin must Congress vote to pass a bill over the president's veto?
  - a. 2/3
  - b. 3/5
  - c. 3/4
- 15. Our American President has the power to make treaties with foreign powers without consulting Congress.
  - a. True
  - b. False
- 16. Article I of the Constitution prohibits a levy of tax on income. How then, is income tax legal?
  - a. It isn't
  - b. Constitution was amended
  - c. Congress passed a law making it legal

- 5. a. Nine
- 6. b. 100
- 7. b. Two
- 8. a. True
- 9. c. House of Representatives
- 10. c. Revolutionary War
- 11. b. By State Convention or Legislatures
- 12. b. July 4
- 13. c. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address
- 14. a. 2/3
- 15. b. False
- 16. b. Amendment XVI of the Constitution. adopted 1913

Score as Follows:

- 14-16 correct — Congratulations! Your education and patriotism are showing.
- 12-13 correct — A good solid citizen.
- 9-11 correct—Today's typical American. Try reading more news and less comics.
- 6-8 correct — Under-average. You may lose some priceless freedoms.
- 0-5 correct — Have you thought of moving to Siberia?

Answers to Citizenship Quiz

- 1. a. In God We Trust
- 2. b. March 4, 1789
- 3. a. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution
- 4. b. False (elected by people only since 1913 due to Amendment 17, Sec. 1

## Citizenship in Other 4-H Projects

Citizenship responsibilities in earning and spending, and in many other areas of life, are practiced through 4-H projects. These are a central part of your 4-H experience. Learning to sew or build a birdhouse is not citizenship education in itself, but there are citizenship responsibilities that go along with learning such skills. These skills can be used to help you and others. You can help yourself by:

- Broadening your interests and knowledge.
- Developing self-confidence and self-discipline.
- Developing an awareness of job opportunities.
- Learning how to make intelligent decisions.
- Getting pleasure from interesting activities.

At the same time, you can help others by:

- Standing on your own feet and being less dependent.
- Serving family and friends through project skills.
- Helping younger members learn.

## Additional Citizenship Units

Good citizenship involves more than understanding and participating in government. Good citizenship is important in relationships with your family, friends, and neighbors. Good citizenship is important to your 4-H Club and other organizations you belong to. It means understanding and appreciating yourself and your heritage, and having the same respect for other people and their heritages.

The citizenship project is made up of a series of seven units. You have probably used some of these units in previous years and you may take the other units in the future.

The citizenship project consists of the following units:

- Unit 1 Me, My Family and My Friends
- Unit 2 My Neighborhood
- Unit 3 My Clubs and Groups
- Unit 4 Public Adventures
- Unit 5 My Heritage
- Unit 6 My Government
- Unit 7 My World

## 4-H PLEDGE

The 4-H Pledge is an outline for the 4-H Citizenship Project. Citizenship education through 4-H should provide three-fold learning – knowing, feeling, acting.

### I Pledge

*My Head to clearer thinking*

Understanding — using our heads for clearer thinking, getting information and understanding issues.

*My Heart to greater loyalty*

Attitudes — using our hearts to appreciate our rights and feel our responsibilities.

*My Hands to larger service, and*

*My Health to better living for my Club, my Community, my Country, and my World.*

Skills — using our hands and healthy

bodies and minds to put into practice what we understand and feel we should do.



Protected Under  
18 U.S.C. 707

# *4-H Citizenship Pledge*

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We individually and collectively pledge our efforts from day to day to fight for the ideals of this nation.

We will never allow tyranny and injustice to become enthroned in this, our country, through indifference to our duties as citizens.

We will strive for intellectual honesty and exercise it through our power of franchise.

We will obey the laws of our land and endeavor increasingly to quicken the sense of public duty among our fellowmen.

We will strive for individual improvement and for social betterment.

We will devote our talents to the enrichment of our homes and our communities in relation to their material, social and spiritual needs.

We will endeavor to transmit to posterity this nation, not merely as we found it, but freer, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

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**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**

4-H 828

March 2001

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