



THE NATURALIZED

Introduction

Every year, more than one million people choose to become American citizens. Traveling across oceans and borders, often leaving behind loved ones, they face enormous challenges on the path to citizenship. Yet the promise of a new life in the United States continues to draw people from every point on the globe. *The Naturalized* follows the heartwarming stories of several new arrivals to the U.S. as they navigate the American immigration system and attempt to start their lives anew.

The Naturalized combines contemporary stories of struggle and success with insightful interviews from notable naturalized citizens, including Fareed Zakaria, Alan Cumming, David Rakoff and Isabel Allende. Throughout this program, viewers learn about the Citizenship Test administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which is designed to make sure new citizens understand the foundations of American democracy. How many amendments are in the Constitution? To become an American, not knowing is not an option. This two-hour film provides an excellent opportunity for students to explore the process of citizenship and discuss their own thoughts about what it means to be a U.S. citizen.



Curriculum Links

The Naturalized would be useful for History, Civics, Social Studies, and Politics courses. It would also be relevant for after-school activities or community programs.

Vocabulary

Using a dictionary, encyclopedia or other resources, you may want to ask students to define the following terms used in this program:

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| Accelerate | Naturalization | Republic |
| Bureaucracy | Permanent Residency | Subjectivity |
| Industrious | Political Asylum | Turpitude |

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the reasons people relocate to the U.S. from other countries? What do they gain by making this choice? What are some of the sacrifices they make to move to this country?
2. What is a “green card” and why is this document so important to those who are hoping to become U.S. citizens?
3. What are some of the rights promised to U.S. citizens that are appealing to immigrants to this country?
4. Why do you think new immigrants to the U.S. are required to take a test before they can become U.S. citizens? Do you think you could pass this test?
5. Some of the people interviewed in this film talk about the bureaucracy they face when they go through the process of becoming a citizen. What does the term bureaucracy mean, and why do you think it exists?
6. Which of the stories or people in this film did you find most compelling or interesting, and why?
7. Why do you think voting is such an important experience for new citizens? Did the scenes in this film of new citizens voting for the first time change what you think about the voting process? Discuss.
8. One of the men in this film describes leaving his country as “pushing a pause button that never got pressed again.” What do you think he means when he describes leaving his country in this way?
9. Imagine that the tables were turned and you were considering moving to another country permanently. How would you feel about making that change? What are the most important things you would need to consider?
10. How did *The Naturalized* change the way you think about living in the United States?

Extended Activities:

1. **Take the Citizenship Quiz!** HISTORY® developed the Citizenship Quiz as a way to challenge all Americans to learn the answers to the 100 questions on the test required of all new citizens. Visit us online at the History.com link listed below to take this quiz and learn more about the USCIS test.
2. **Immigration Stories.** One of the most meaningful ways for students to learn about becoming a U.S. citizen is to speak to someone who has gone through this process firsthand. Ask students to find a family member, friend, or community member who has become a U.S. citizen and conduct an oral history with this person to learn about their citizenship story.
3. **Becoming American.** *The Naturalized* traces the stories of several new arrivals to the U.S. Ask students to imagine they have just arrived in the U.S. Have them write a letter about the experience, keeping in mind what they learned from watching this film about the benefits and sacrifices involved in moving to a new country.
4. **Charting the Path to Citizenship.** Throughout U.S. history, immigrants have arrived in waves based on circumstances in their host countries. Working in small groups, ask students to create a timeline or chart of U.S. immigration history, starting in 1850. These presentations can be organized in PowerPoint format, on roll-out paper, or any other format.



Books

- Bodnar, John. *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*. Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Gallo, Donald R. *First Crossing: Stories about Teen Immigrants*. Candlewick Press, 2007.
- Handlin, Oscar. *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Ruben G. Rumbaut. *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. University of California Press, 2006.

Websites

- Take the Citizenship Quiz on History.com:
www.history.com/interactives/citizenship-quiz
- Learn more about the citizenship process at the USCIS official site:
www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis
- Explore the nation’s founding documents at the National Archives website:
www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html
- A timeline with landmarks in immigration history:
www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/immigration_chron.cfm

