



These materials have been adapted, with permission from The Florida Bar Benchmarks Adult Civic Education Program, for use in Louisiana. Principal authors of the Florida Benchmarks Program are Annette Boyd Pitts and Richard Levenstein. For assistance with adaptation in other states, contact staff@flrea.org

COULD YOU PASS THE TEST?

Topics addressed:

- Lack of knowledge of government
- U.S. Constitution
- Citizenship

Time needed: 30 minutes minimum

Overview: This session will introduce participants to their role as citizens and increase their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution.

Format: This is a fast-paced, multi-dimensional presentation that relies on active audience participation. This is more than giving a speech. You are the ringmaster out in the audience actively engaging participants.

Preparation:

- Ideally you will know the number of participants and room set-up. Ask in advance for this information. Make copies of citizenship flashcards. Print in color on card stock paper and cut along the lines. Separate cards into two stacks -- one with the questions; the other with answers. On the front of each question card, you'll see a number. Write corresponding numbers from question cards on the backs of answer cards in small print so they will not be noticeable.
- Review background paper about many citizens lacking knowledge of their government.

Group size: This activity works best for groups of 40 or fewer. However, various group sizes can be accommodated by duplicating the flashcards.

Handouts:

- Citizenship flashcards
- U.S. Citizenship Test

**30
minutes
needed**



Q & A will take additional time



Prepare flashcards before meeting

This activity works best for groups of **40 or fewer**



Handouts:
Citizenship flashcards; US Citizenship Test

Timing: Pace yourself! Allow five minutes for opening remarks. Allow 10 minutes for handing out flashcards and having audience members match questions and answers. Allow 10 minutes for debriefing. Allow five minutes to close. As time permits, allow for questions and answers.

Getting Started

Opening: Begin with brief remarks about recent studies citing the limited knowledge Americans have about their government, the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. You will be walking around the audience distributing flashcards as noted below as you make these introductory remarks. You may use the optional Power-Point showing poll findings.

Distributing flashcards: Flashcards are divided into one stack of questions and another stack with the answers to those questions. For **classroom or theater style set-up**, hand out the questions to half of the room and the answers to the other half. Make sure you distribute the correct answers to the actual questions you have selected. (Keep a copy of the questions and answers for debriefing.)

Tell participants that half of the room has questions and the other half has answers. At this point, have the audience move throughout the room going from person to person to find matching questions and answers. **DO NOT TELL THEM ANYTHING ABOUT THE CORRESPONDING NUMBERS** or where the questions came from. You want them to talk to as many people as possible and see the questions and answers everyone has. When they find their match, have one member of the pair keep both cards for debriefing or have both stand together for debriefing. Depending on the time, you may need to wander throughout the audience and help people find their matches. After 10 minutes, begin the debriefing.

Debriefing: Ask the audience some of the flashcard questions. **Make sure to use at least the first 15 flashcard questions and answers during the debriefing.** Example: Ask participants “What is the rule of law?” See if anyone found a match to that card or knows the answer. Read the answer to each question.

When completed, ask the audience if they know where the questions came from. Let them know these questions are taken from the U.S. Citizenship Test. Distribute copies of the test with selected questions. **Ask how many audience members would be U.S. citizens if they had to take this test today.**

Closing

Civics education: Discuss the importance of understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens and how our government works particularly as it relates to the rule of law and the legal system. Let participants know that most people learn about the Constitution and U.S. government from a high school government course.

Pace Yourself!



Allow 5 minutes to open

Give half the audience flashcard questions; the other half answers.



If table setup is used, give half of each table questions; the other half answers.

Allow 10 minutes for card matching



Read at least 15 of the flashcard questions



Provide copies of the pocket constitution, if available. Contact Peggy Cotogno at peggy.cotogno@lsba.org to request pocket constitutions to bring with you.

Let participants know that the Constitution is like a rule book:

- Outlining the structure and function of government.
- Setting limits on the powers of government.
- Listing some of the rights Americans enjoy.

Ask participants: Who does the Constitution protect you from? (Answer: The government.) Let them know if they would like to learn more about the Constitution, perhaps monthly sessions could be scheduled to provide forums for future exercises.



Allow 10 minutes for debriefing



Allow 5 minutes for closing