

ELLIS PORTER

US CITIZENSHIP · N-400

The Citizenship Interview & Test Prep Sheet

What to bring, what the officer asks, how the English and civics tests actually work, and what happens if you stumble.



Prepared by the Ellis Porter content team. This prep sheet has not been reviewed by an attorney for your specific situation. It is general information, not legal advice; your interview notice and current USCIS materials control.

INTERVIEW DAY

What to bring

Check your interview notice first; it lists what to bring for your specific case. In general:

- ☐ Your green card (permanent resident card)
- ☐ Your interview appointment notice
- ☐ Your passport(s) and any travel documents
- ☐ Anything USCIS specifically requested
- ☐ Documents reflecting changes since you filed: updated tax records, marriage or divorce documents, anything relevant to eligibility

The two tests

ENGLISH

- ☐ Read a sentence in English
- ☐ Write a sentence in English
- ☐ Speak and understand basic English (assessed through the interview itself)

The standard is basic English, not fluency. Most applicants who use English in daily life clear it comfortably.

CIVICS

- ☐ An oral test on US history and government: the officer asks a set number of questions from an official study list, and you must answer a required number correctly
- ☐ USCIS publishes the full list of possible questions and acceptable answers, so you can study the precise material; get the current official list from uscis.gov

GOOD TO KNOW

Who can take a different path

Not everyone takes the standard test. English exemptions based on age and years of residence (commonly called the 50/20 and 55/15 rules, where age plus years as a permanent resident meet a threshold) let some older, long-resident applicants take the civics test in their own language with an interpreter. Disability accommodations are available with proper documentation for applicants with qualifying medical conditions. Confirm the current exemption rules with USCIS; the details matter for who qualifies.

If you do not pass the first time

One stumble is not the end of the road. If you fail the English or civics portion at the interview, you are generally given a second opportunity to retake the portion you failed, usually within a set period. If you fail again, the application can be denied, but you can reapply later. Because a retake exists, applicants who are close often pass on the second try with more study.

Preparing well

- ☐ Study from the official USCIS materials for the current test version
- ☐ Re-read your N-400 before the interview; the officer's questions start from what you filed
- ☐ Gather the documents above the week before, not the night before
- ☐ If an exemption or accommodation might apply to you, confirm the current rules before the interview

YOUR NOTES

Questions for your interview prep

Anything on your N-400 that changed, anything you are unsure how to answer, any document you still need.

Getting ready for citizenship?

See the naturalization requirements and how Ellis Porter can help you file:

ip.ellisporter.com/citizenship

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