

Handout A: A Good Citizen

Students are likely to think of some of the following:

What a good citizen knows:

- *names of their elected representatives*
- *which government body makes the laws in their state*
- *which level of government (county, city, state or federal) is responsible for areas such as*
 - *setting the school bus schedule*
 - *operating the jail*
 - *putting out fires in the town or city*
 - *administering tests for driver licenses*
 - *issuing passports*
- *what the first ten amendments of the United States Constitution are called*
- *what the legal voting age is in their state*
- *how a law is made*
- *role of political parties*
- *what government official to contact to get things done*
- *basic principles and organization of the United States Constitution*
- *contributions of great American heroes*
- *major wars/battles in American history*
- *problems facing the country today*
- *impact of racism and other forms of injustice throughout American history*
- *knows when government needs to be checked*

What a good citizen believes:

- *compromise is valuable*
- *people are equal and deserve respect*
- *you must respect the views of people with whom you disagree*
- *organizing and taking action with others can bring about results*
- *members of the community can serve as citizen role models*
- *freedom is protected in America*

- *voting is a responsibility as well as a right*
- *ethnic diversity enriches the nation*
- *the American political system has many strong points*
- *an individual can make a difference in his or her community*
- *people are generally trustworthy*
- *individuals have a responsibility to make society better*

What a good citizen does or says:

- *communicates ideas to others*
- *listens to others*
- *obeys just laws*
- *works to change unjust laws*
- *works to reach compromises*
- *weighs pros and cons*
- *stays informed about public affairs*
- *acts considerately toward those who are different from them*
- *reports suspicions of crime or terrorism*
- *helps victims of injustice*
- *stands up for his or her beliefs*
- *persuades others*
- *writes letters to public officials*
- *speaks in public at community meetings*
- *volunteers in the community*
- *participates in organized groups and clubs such as*
 - *religious groups*
 - *political groups*
 - *environmental groups*
 - *youth organizations*
- *runs for political office*
- *works for political candidates*
- *displays campaign buttons, signs or stickers*
- *contributes to political campaigns*
- *communicates views to public officials*
- *writes Letters to the Editor*

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- *expresses opinions on radio talk shows*
- *signs petitions*
- *refuses to buy a product because of conditions under which it was made*
- *works to solve community problems*
- *serves in the military*
- *votes in elections*
- *works for the government*
- *reads the newspaper*
- *reads news articles on the Internet*
- *watches news programs*
- *listens to news on the radio*
- *talks about current events*
- *pays taxes*
- *serves on a jury*
- *helps to raise money for charities*
- *marches or demonstrates in support of positions*

SOURCES:

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