

Main Idea

Being a U.S. citizen includes certain rights and responsibilities. The federal government regulates citizenship through its immigration and naturalization policies.

Reading Focus

1. In what ways do people receive U.S. citizenship, and what civic responsibilities do citizens have?
2. What immigration policies has the federal government adopted in its history?
3. How has the federal government responded to the challenge of illegal immigration?

Key Terms

jus soli
 jus sanguinis
 naturalization
 denaturalization
 expatriation
 undocumented alien
 deportation

U.S. Citizenship (pp. 342–344)

To fully participate in American democracy, one must be a citizen. There are several ways to become a citizen.

Citizenship by Birth Most Americans become citizens by birth. Citizens may be born in the United States or a U.S. territory, or be born on foreign soil to parents who are U.S. citizens. The principle of citizenship by birthplace is known as **jus soli** (YOOS SOH-lee), a Latin phrase that means “law of the soil.” The main exception to jus soli is people who are born in the United States but are not subject to U.S. control, such as the children of foreign diplomats. The principle of becoming a citizen by being born on foreign soil to parents who are U.S. citizens is known as **jus sanguinis** (YOOS SANG-gwuh-nuhs), a Latin phrase meaning “law of the blood.”

Citizenship by Naturalization Another way to gain citizenship is by **naturalization**, the legal process by which an immigrant becomes a citizen. Naturalized citizens enjoy the same rights and privileges as native-born citizens, with one exception. They cannot become president or vice president of the United States.

Naturalization typically begins after someone enters the country and meets certain requirements, including the ability to read, write, and speak English and a belief in the principles of the U.S. Constitution. An applicant for citizenship must pass a citizenship exam and take an oath of allegiance to the United States. The U.S. government may also grant citizenship to an entire group of people, such as residents of a new territory, through collective naturalization.

Losing Citizenship There are several ways a person can lose his or her citizenship.

- Becoming a citizen by fraud, or dishonest means, can lead to loss of citizenship through **denaturalization**.
- Committing serious crimes against the U.S. government, such as treason.
- Serving in a high-level government or military position in another country's government.
- Giving up citizenship voluntarily. The legal process for giving up one's citizenship voluntarily is called **expatriation**.

Civic Responsibilities Citizenship carries duties and responsibilities. They are:

- Respect and obey the law and accept responsibility for consequences of your actions.
- Respect the rights of others and be willing to defend the rights of everyone.
- Be loyal to the government and its principles.
- Serve in the armed forces if called upon.
- Pay taxes and participate in the political system by voting and being informed about issues.
- Serve on juries when called.

Citizens may also run for office or support a political cause.

Civic Identity Americans share a common identity through their commitment to civic responsibilities. Devotion to key ideas of American democracy is also part of our civic identity. These ideas are expressed in the nation's founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Reading Check Identifying

Supporting Details What are the two main ways of achieving citizenship in the United States?

Immigration Policies (pp. 344–345)

Early in U.S. history, there were few barriers to immigration. Over time, however, the government created national immigration policies.

Encouraging Immigration Congress did little to regulate immigration during the first 100 years of the country's history.

Immigration was generally encouraged. By the late 1800s, however, the country's population had grown dramatically. With less land available, tensions grew between some immigrants and native-born Americans. The sources of immigration had also changed. Previously, immigrants had come mostly from northern and western Europe. Now they were coming from southern and eastern Europe. Cultural and language differences contributed to rising tensions.

Restricting Immigration In 1875 Congress barred entry to criminals. In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, effectively ending immigration from China for 10 years. The Quota Law of 1921 and National Origins Quota Act of 1924 restricted immigration by country and established a total number of immigrants to be allowed into the United States annually. Quotas were based on country of origin. The new laws effectively banned immigration from Asia and Africa and heavily restricted immigration from Latin America.

This system remained in place until Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The new law set a limit of total immigrants annually without regard to national origin, with 120,000 from the Western Hemisphere and 170,000 from the Eastern Hemisphere. Special preference was given to people with certain job skills and to relatives of U.S. citizens. In 1990 the total number of immigrants was increased to about 675,000 annually.

Political Asylum and Refugees

Separate rules apply to refugees and people seeking political asylum, or protection. The United States accepts more refugees than any country in the world.

Reading Check Sequencing How has immigration in the United States changed over time?

Illegal Immigration (pp. 346–347)

Illegal immigration has been one of the most difficult challenges facing the country. Undocumented immigrants continue to enter the country in large numbers.

The Situation Today An unauthorized immigrant, or **undocumented alien**, is someone living in a country without authorization from the government. If caught, undocumented aliens are subject to **deportation**—the legal process of forcing a noncitizen to leave a country. Most undocumented immigrants are from Mexico and Latin America and come here for jobs. About half enter the country at the U.S.–Mexico border. Others enter the country legally but then stay after their tourist or student visas have expired.

The Debate over Illegal Immigration

Some people are concerned that undocumented immigrants take jobs from U.S. citizens and are a drain on schools and hospitals. Others believe it is simply wrong to enter a country illegally. Undocumented workers and their supporters argue that most are hardworking people trying to build a better life. They say that they support the

economy by buying goods and services and filling low-paying jobs that most Americans choose not to do.

Illegal Immigration Policies In the early 1900s, the United States began patrolling the U.S. border trying to prevent illegal immigration. The Border Patrol was created in the 1920s. In 1954 the Border Patrol sent around 1 million undocumented aliens back to Mexico. The operation drew complaints of discrimination and was ended.

In 1986 Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act. This act gave undocumented aliens a one-time amnesty, or general pardon from the government for people who have broken the law. The law gave an estimated 2.7 million people citizenship. It also made it illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers.

The number of unauthorized immigrants continued to increase, however. The Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 increased the size of the Border Patrol and changed other policies. After the 2001 terrorist attacks, the Border Patrol was increased yet again. Fencing and barriers also increased, especially in large border cities. In 2006 President George W. Bush ordered more than 6,000 National Guard troops to assist the Border Patrol. By early 2008 Congress remained unable to pass major immigration reform, however, because of party divisions over certain issues.

Reading Check Summarizing What policies has the federal government created to deal with illegal immigration?

SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

1. **Define** Define the following terms: **jus soli**, **jus sanguinis**, **naturalization**, **denaturalization**, **expatriation**.
2. **Recall** When did the United States first make laws restricting immigration?

3. **Describe** What are some of the basic issues concerning illegal immigration today?