Citizenship in the Nation

Merit Badge Presentation

Requirement 1

"And so, my fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you– ask what you can do for your country."
- President John F. Kennedy

- Citizenship in the Nation
  - Treating others the way you would want to be treated
  - Obeying the laws
  - Protecting the private property of others
  - A good citizen is an informed citizen
    - Knowing the national issues
- Citizens' duties
  - Vote in elections
  - Pay taxes
  - Serve on a jury
  - Register for the draft

Requirement 2

Homework

Do **TWO** of the following:

- **1**- Visit a place that is listed as a National Historic Landmark or that is on the National Register of Historic Places
  - Tell your counselor what you learned about the landmark or site and what you found interesting about it.
- **2**- Tour your state capitol building or the U.S. Capitol
  - Tell your counselor what you learned about the capitol, its function, and its history. Describe what you learned.
- **3**- Tour a federal facility
  - Tell your counselor about what you saw there.
  - Describe what you learned about the facility's function in the local community and how it serves this nation.
- **4**- Choose a national monument that interests you. Using books, brochures, the Internet (with your parent's permission), and other resources, find out more about the monument.
  - Give the name and location of the monument you have chosen
  - Tell your counselor and describe what you learned
  - Explain why the monument is important to this country's citizens

Requirement 3

Homework

- Watch the national evening news five days in a row **OR** read the front page of a major daily newspaper five days in a row
  - Record the name of station you watched or newspaper you read
  - Discuss the national issues you learned about with your counselor
  - Choose one of the issues and explain how it affects you and your family

Requirement 4

Documents

- The Declaration of Independence
  - The final declaration of freedom from the rule of Britain
  - Its beginning talks about the right of the people in overthrowing tyranny
  - Goes into a series of strongly worded complaints against King George III
  - Without the Declaration of Independence, there wouldn't be a United States

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

Requirement 4

Documents

The Constitution Center in Philadelphia

- Preamble to the Constitution
  - Basically a table of contents for the Constitution
  - Outlines the most important aspects of the Constitution and explains the reasoning for having one
  - Affirms that the people have the absolute authority to establish the Constitution as the supreme law of the land
  - Important because it helps people to better understand the constitution and why we have it

Requirement 4

Documents

- The Constitution
  - Explains the philosophies and reasoning behind the U.S. democracy
  - Talks about the different rights and freedoms all citizens must be given
  - Essentially an instruction manual for the U.S. government
  - Important because it's what our entire country is based upon

American Democracy:
"…government of the people, by the people, for the people."
- President Abraham Lincoln

Requirement 4

Documents

The Bill of Rights

- One of the greatest documents protecting individual rights
- Includes the first 10 amendments to the Constitution
  - The basic rights of citizens of the United States
- Life in the U.S. could be constricted and more federally controlled without one
- These basic rights are vital for a truly free country

Requirement 4

Bill of Rights continued

First Amendment

- Freedom of:
  - Religion
  - Speech
  - The press
  - Peaceful assembly

Second Amendment

- Right to have a well-regulated militia
- Right of the people to have and carry weapons

The right to…..

Requirement 4

Bill of Rights Continued

Third Amendment

- Protects citizens from being forced to take soldiers into their homes to feed and board them
- Exception during wartime if Congress enacts a law requiring it

Fourth Amendment

- Prohibits unreasonable search and seizure of people and their private property
- Search warrant required

Requirement 4

Bill of Rights Continued

Fifth Amendment

- Rights of citizens in criminal cases
  - Grand jury must decide there is enough evidence to bring a person to trial for a serious crime
  - May not be tried twice for the same offense
  - May not be forced to testify against oneself
  - No person deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law
  - Government prevented from taking property without paying the owner at a fair price

Sixth Amendment

- Right to a fair trial
  - Speedy and public, heard by an impartial jury
  - Informed of charges, allowed witnesses, etc.

Requirement 4

Bill of Rights continued

Seventh Amendment

- Right to trial by jury in civil cases where disputed amount exceeds $20

Eighth Amendment

- Forbids cruel and unusual punishment
  - Punishment should fit the crime

Requirement 4

Bill of Rights Continued

Ninth Amendment

- First eight amendments include certain but not all the rights of citizens
  - The people retain any rights not specifically listed in the Constitution

Tenth Amendment

- Asserts that the states or the people retain those powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution

Requirement 4

Documents

- Amendments to the Constitution
  - 27 total, including the Bill of Rights
  - 11th secures the right to sue a state
  - 12th defines the election of President and Vice President and the fallback system if one should die in office
  - 13th abolishes slavery
  - 14th specifies the post-Civil War requirements, freed slaves are citizens
  - 15th specifically dictates that all races have full rights
  - 16th modifies the tax system
  - 17th lays out the system for replacement of senators
  - 18th bans alcohol
  - 19th gives women the right to vote
  - 20th patches some basic government functions
  - 21st makes the 18th amendment inactive, thereby un-banning alcohol
  - 22nd amendment states that no one can be elected President more than 2 terms
  - 23rd modifies the Electoral College
  - 24th states that no one can be kept from voting because of tax status
  - 25th reinforces the replacement system for the President and Vice President
  - 26th moves the voting age to 18
  - 27th deals with the payment of representatives

Requirement 5

Six Functions of Government

- 1. Form a more perfect Union
  - States working together
- 2. Establish Justice
  - Make and enforce laws
- 3. Ensure Domestic Tranquility
  - Peace in our country
- 4. Provide for the Common Defense
  - Keep country safe from an attack
- 5. Promote the General Welfare
  - Contribute to and promote happiness
- 6. Secure the Blessings of Liberty to Ourselves and our Posterity
  - Make sure we stay free and keep our rights

- How do these functions affect your family and local community?

Requirement 6

Homework

- With your counselor's approval, choose a speech of national historical importance.
  - Find out about the author and tell about the person who gave the speech
  - Explain the importance of the speech at the time it was given
  - Tell how this speech applies to American citizens today
  - Choose a sentence or two from the speech that has significant meaning to you and explain why

Requirement 7

Branches of Government

- The Executive Branch
  - **Function:**
    - Enforces the laws
  - **How citizens are involved:**
    - Voters elect the President through a system called the Electoral College
  - **Importance of checks and balances:**
    - Courts may declare executive actions to be unconstitutional
    - Congress must approve certain appointments and must pass a bill before the President can sign the bill into law

Requirement 7

Branches of Government

- The Legislative Branch
  - **Function:**
    - Makes the laws
  - **How citizens are involved:**
    - Voters elect senators in statewide elections and elect members of the House from congressional districts
  - **Importance of checks and balances:**
    - The President can either veto a bill or sign it into law
    - Congress has the power under certain circumstances to override a veto

Requirement 7

Branches of Government

- The Judicial Branch
  - **Function:**
    - Interprets the laws
  - **How Citizens are Involved:**
    - Citizens are often asked to serve on juries, an important aspect of the judicial branch
    - Many of the cases dealt with in the courts involve individual citizens and their problems or concerns
  - **Importance of checks and balances:**
    - Most federal and state courts in the United States may exercise judicial review, which is the power of deciding the constitutionality of an act of government in any branch
    - The Supreme Court has the final authority to interpret the meaning of the Constitution and determine if the law is being applied correctly and fairly

"Jury Duty" Clip from The Grinch

Requirement 7

Requirement 8

Homework

- Name your two senators
- Name the member of Congress from your congressional district
- Write a letter about a national issue and send it to one of these elected officials, sharing your view with him or her
- Keep a copy of the letter you wrote and any response you receive and show it to your merit badge counselor
- If you get a response, show it to your counselor

The end