

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS GRAPHIC ORGANIZER (TEACHER)

Responsibilities of Citizenship	What Does This Mean?	Why Is This Important to Democracy?
<p><b>Understand How the Government Works</b></p>	<p><i>As citizens, we should know the structure of our government, how the different parts of our government work, and how those things impact our communities.</i></p>	<p><i>A democratic government gets its power from the people, so it is important for the people—the government’s citizens—to know how the government is structured and how it functions. This is what ensures that the people participate in and protect our democracy.</i></p>
<p><b>Participate in the Democratic Process</b></p>	<p><i>Since the power of a democratic government comes from the people, it is essential that the people participate in our democracy at the local, state, and national level. This means voting, running for office, and communicating with elected officials.</i></p>	<p><i>A democracy cannot function without the engagement and participation of its citizens. For the government to reflect the will of the people, people must vote and be involved in advocating for issues they care about.</i></p>

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<b>Be Informed</b>	<i>Citizens should be informed about the issues that impact their lives and their communities.</i>	<i>For citizens to effectively participate in democratic processes and make informed decisions, they should be aware of what is going on in their communities at the local, state, and national levels.</i>
<b>Respect the Rights, Beliefs, and Opinions of Others</b>	<i>It is important to accept that people are entitled to have their rights, beliefs, and opinions respected.</i>	<i>Diversity is an inherent part of a democratic society. To create a society that promotes equality for all, each citizen must respect the rights and beliefs of others, even those who are different.</i>
<b>Participate in Your Local Community</b>	<i>Be engaged and involved in what is going on in your community. With our time, energy, and resources, we can help ensure our community is a place that is good for everyone.</i>	<i>It is up to us as citizens to make sure our voices are heard within our own communities. Democracy does not happen on its own—people must make it happen.</i>

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<b>Protest Injustice</b>	<i>When we as citizens believe that our democratic ideals are being violated, we must protest peacefully. By showing our elected officials that we disapprove of certain laws, we may inspire them to make changes to those laws. This ensures that the rights of all people are protected and upheld.</i>	<i>As citizens of a democracy, we must speak up to ensure that the laws and practices that impact our communities reflect the democratic ideal that liberty, equality, and justice are meant for all of us, not just some of us.</i>
<b>Obey Laws</b>	<i>Our laws are made by groups of people that we elect at the local, state, and national levels. Therefore, it is expected that we obey the laws created by these representative bodies.</i>	<i>Laws are meant to ensure order, cooperation, and the protection of our rights, all of which are important to maintaining an effective democratic government.</i>
<b>Pay Taxes</b>	<i>Citizens are required to pay taxes to their local, state, and national governments. Taxes are income for the government, enabling us to pay collectively rather than individually for services and resources that benefit all of us.</i>	<i>Democratic governments need money to fund services that promote the general welfare of citizens. The government gets this money from its citizens in the form of taxes.</i>

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<b>Serve on Juries</b>	<i>Citizens are required to participate in the justice system by serving on juries when they are assigned to jury duty.</i>	<i>In a democracy, the rights of those accused of crimes must be protected. To do this, citizens serve as impartial jurors. Juries are promised in the U.S. Constitution.</i>
<b>Support and Defend the Constitution and the Country</b>	<i>Citizens must actively promote our democratic ideals and fight for them if they are being threatened or violated. This could include serving in the military.</i>	<i>Our democratic institutions and ideals are not guaranteed. We cannot take them for granted. They must be protected by our activism and engagement.</i>