


Note to the Reader:

This is a modified version of the discussion booklet for *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants*.

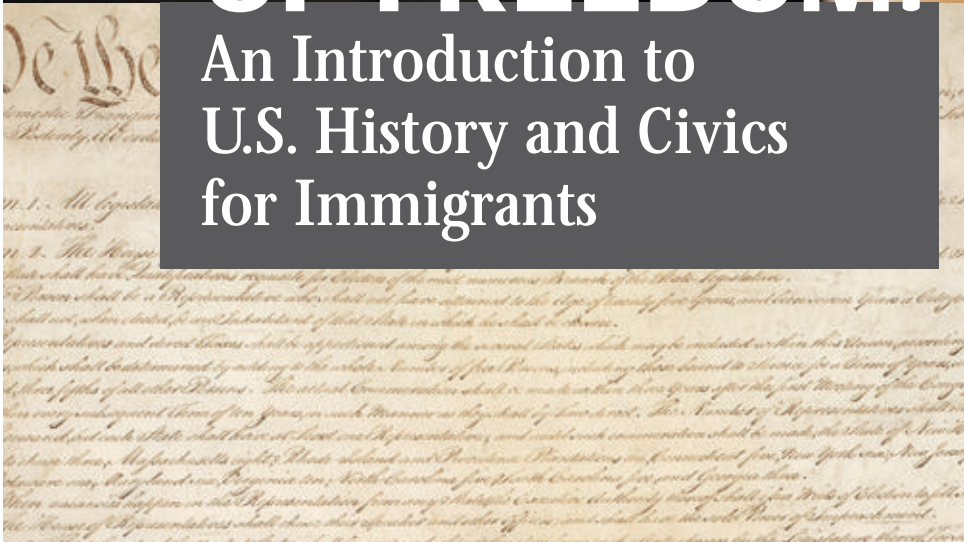
This modified version allows easier reproduction (e.g. printing, photocopying) and distribution to students and other audiences.

Please note that it does not fold as a booklet. Staple the pages together as you would a normal document.

You may download a PDF version of this booklet at www.uscis.gov



A PROMISE OF FREEDOM: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Welcome

Dear viewer:

For more than 200 years, the United States has remained strong because of the common civic values proclaimed in our founding documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants* is a short film outlining the history of these documents and their relevance to immigrants today.

The film will help immigrant viewers understand how our nation was founded, how it is governed, and what they will be able to do with the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities that accompany U.S. citizenship. This booklet is a useful study tool for both teachers and viewers to review and discuss the concepts presented in the film.

If you are interested in becoming a U.S. citizen, we hope this film will be useful to you in your journey toward citizenship. We look forward to calling you a fellow citizen. Over time, America’s promise of freedom has expanded to include more and more people, and with each person who joins the nation, “We the People” becomes even stronger.

We hope you enjoy this inspiring and informational film.

Sincerely,
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
National Constitution Center



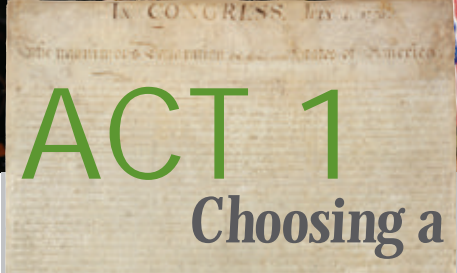
How to Use This Booklet

This booklet will help you review the basic concepts found in *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants*. You can use this booklet as you watch the film or at its conclusion, either on your own or in a group discussion.

The booklet follows the three acts, or sections, of the film: “Choosing a Promise of Freedom,” “Creating a Promise of Freedom,” and “A Promise of Freedom.” Each act, or section, has two pages; the first page contains quotes from the film and the second page contains questions for discussion. The quotes from the film will help you answer the questions. For each question, write down your thoughts in a few phrases. Feel free to write your own questions and ideas to discuss with others.

Think about the question below and write down your thoughts. Try to answer the question before watching the film. Discuss your ideas with the group.

What does “We the People” mean to you?



ACT 1

Choosing a Promise of Freedom

“We the People...”

the first three words of the United States Constitution, a document that is the foundation for the freedoms and responsibilities of U.S. citizens. In the United States, a country with people of many different backgrounds, the principles of our Constitution unite all of us as a nation.

The Declaration of Independence

announced that the colonies were free and independent states. It stated that all men are created equal and are born with the natural right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.



What unites us as Americans?

What did the Declaration of Independence do?



ACT 2

Creating a Promise of Freedom

A Convention was called in 1787, and delegates from the American states met in Philadelphia. They felt that power must come from the people.

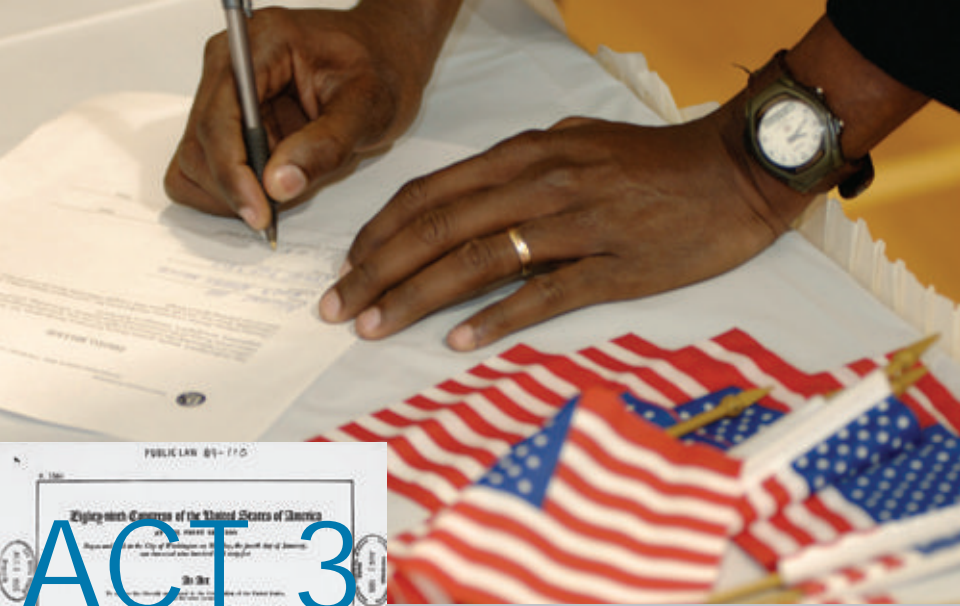
This is what no country had ever done —control power by dividing it, putting it under the limits of a written constitution, and then placing the final authority with the people, who govern themselves through elected representatives.

The delegates wanted the power of government to come from whom?

How do “We the People” have final authority over the government of the United States?

Why did the delegates divide power?

DISCUSSION



ACT 3

A Promise of Freedom

The Constitution has changed through what are called amendments. The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights, and establish some very basic rights of citizens.

For more than 200 years, the U.S. Constitution has had daily impact on the lives of citizens, and over time its promise of freedom has included more and more people. Many groups of people were denied certain freedoms in the past, but have gained equality through amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

With freedoms and rights come important responsibilities: make a commitment to be part of your community, get to know and help your neighbors, discuss the issues that affect your community, learn English and learn about the U.S. government, respect the law, vote, and serve on a jury if called to do so.

What is the Bill of Rights?

How has the Constitution changed to expand the definition of “We the People?”

How can you use your freedoms to improve your community?

REFLECTION

Think again about the question below and whether your answer has changed. Share your thoughts with the group.

What does “We the People” mean to you?

Finding More Information

If you are interested in learning more about U.S. history and civics, you may visit the following websites:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
www.uscis.gov

National Constitution Center
www.constitutioncenter.org

Our Documents
www.ourdocuments.gov

We the People
www.wethepeople.gov

Ben’s Guide
<http://bensguide.gpo.gov>

National Archives
www.archives.gov

U.S. Government Bookstore
<http://bookstore.gpo.gov>

Welcome to U.S.A.
www.welcometousa.gov

Center for Civic Education
www.civiced.org

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Office of Citizenship, *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants*, Washington, DC, 2007.

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A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants is an informational film designed for immigrants interested in learning more about U.S. citizenship. The information presented in the film is not meant to serve as a study tool for the naturalization test. To locate naturalization test study materials, please visit www.uscis.gov.

Acknowledgments:

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System Requirements:

A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants may be played in a standard DVD player connected to a television or in a computer with a DVD drive.

Local Information:



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