



The New Naturalization Test: Questions and Answers from the CIS Ombudsman's E-mails

1. The new test indicates that people who live in the US for 20 or more years and who are 70 or older are eligible to take the naturalization test with 20 questions in lieu of 100. Our question is: In what language? English or native language.

Response from USCIS: The new naturalization test did not change the regulations that allow exemptions for testing based on age and time as a permanent resident.

An applicant qualifies to take a modified civics test if on the date of filing the application, the applicant was 65 years old and has been a lawful permanent resident for at least 20 years. If this exception applies, the applicant will be administered a simpler version of the civics examination in the applicant's language of choice. This modified civics test is a sample of 20 civics questions from the list of 100.

The sample civics questions have been identified for applicants qualifying under this exception and will soon be announced.

2. After October 1, 2008 when the new test becomes effective, will the current rule "English Exemption for people 55 or older and resident in the US for 15 or more years" be still applicable?

Response from USCIS: Currently the people who meet these requirements are eligible to take the naturalization test in their native language. The new naturalization test did not change the regulations that allow exemptions for testing based on age and time as a permanent resident.

The English language requirement may be waived for an applicant who on the date of filing the application, was over 50 years old and has been lawful permanent resident for at least 20 years, or was over 55 years old and has been a lawful permanent resident for at least 15 years. If either exception applies, the applicant may take the civics examination in the applicant's language of choice.

Further, an applicant qualifies to take a modified civics test if on the date of filing the application, the applicant was 65 years old and has been a lawful permanent resident for at least 20 years. If this exception applies, the applicant will be administered a simpler version of the civics examination in the applicant's language of choice. This modified civics test is a sample of 20 civics questions from the list of 100. The sample civics questions have been identified for applicants qualifying under this exception and will soon be announced.

If applicants qualify for a waiver of the English proficiency requirement, they must bring an interpreter to their naturalization interview.

3. The new test has a list of reading vocabulary and a list of writing vocabulary. Please explain how the reading and writing test will be administered? Will the applicants be required to make sentences using the vocabulary on the list?

Response from USCIS: The format for the reading portion of the redesigned English test is similar to the current test. Applicants will be provided with up to three chances to correctly read a sentence in English. USCIS has released a vocabulary list containing all of the words found in the redesigned test items. The content items for the reading portion focus on civics and history topics.

The format for the writing portion of the redesigned writing test is also similar to the current test. Applicants will be provided with up to three chances to correctly write a sentence dictated by the adjudications officer in English. USCIS has released a vocabulary list containing all the words found in the redesigned writing test. The content items for the writing portion also focus on civics and history topics.

USCIS has posted the reading and writing vocabulary for the new test on <http://www.uscis.gov/newtest>.

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