

# The 2022 Naturalization Test Redesign Initiative



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# **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

## **The 2022 Naturalization Test Redesign Initiative**

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**USCIS Office of Citizenship**

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January 12, 2023

# Reminders



- During the Q&A and listening session portions, the operator will provide instructions on how to ask a question or how to provide feedback.
- All lines are muted.
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Welcome Remarks

**Eva Millona, Chief**

**USCIS Office of Citizenship, Partnership and  
Engagement**

# 2022 Naturalization Test Redesign Initiative



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- [Executive Order on Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans](#)
- [Federal Register Notice](#)



## The reason for the proposed changes

- Executive Order 14012 – calls for eliminating barriers in, and otherwise improving, the existing naturalization process, with particular emphasis on the civics and English language tests.
- Create a consistent, fair, and transparent process to ensure that applicants have the information they need to study and prepare for all parts of the naturalization test.

## The reason for the proposed changes



- In compliance with Executive Order 14012, USCIS reviewed the naturalization test to ensure fair and efficient adjudications, analyzing the test against best practices in the field of testing and taking into consideration stakeholder feedback on barriers to naturalization.
- Advances in technology for administering the test.

## The proposed changes



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The naturalization test redesign initiative involves two parts of the naturalization test:

- A new proposed speaking test
- A new proposed civics test

## What will remain the same



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These parts of the naturalization test are **not** changing:

- The reading test
- The writing test

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The reading and writing tests are already standardized and aligned to National Reporting Standard ESL Level 3.

## Proposed speaking test



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USCIS proposes to:

- Standardize and separate the speaking test from the Form N-400, Application for Naturalization interview;
- Align to the National Reporting System (NRS) ESL Level 3 – High Beginner (in accordance with statutory requirement for ordinary usage - INA 312, 8 CFR 312); and
- Use picture prompts that will require applicants to describe the picture using simple words and phrases.

## National Reporting System (NRS) ESL Levels



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- Level 1 Beginner ESL Literacy
- Level 2 Low Beginner ESL
- Level 3 High Beginner ESL
- Level 4 Low Intermediate ESL
- Level 5 High Intermediate ESL
- Level 6 Advanced ESL



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<https://nrsweb.org/resources/test-benchmarks-nrs-educational-functioning-levels-efl-updated-august-2019>

Th reading and writing test are already at NRS Level 3.

## Sample draft speaking test item



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- Teacher gives instructions to volunteer test taker.
- Prompt on Screen: “Tell me about this picture”.



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Image taken from Microsoft PPT stock images.

The teachers in the trial test will give instructions before displaying the prompt and picture.

## Scoring the trial speaking test



The proposed speaking trial test will be scored based on responses containing:

- Relevant content vocabulary
- Simple words and phrases

The proposed passing score would be the same as the current reading and writing test that requires 1 correct answer out of a possible 3 attempts.

## Proposed civics test



The following changes are proposed to the civics test:

- Multiple-choice format.
- Updated content.

## Proposed civics test



The following will remain the same:

- Total number of test items to study is 100.
- Passing score is 6 out of 10.
- The Applicants eligible for the 65/20 English language exemption with will have a reduced study bank of 20 items.

Note: The exact 20 items will change but there will still be 20 items total for 65/20 to study.

## Sample draft civics test item



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Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

- a. George Washington
- b. Thomas Jefferson**
- c. Abraham Lincoln
- d. Martin Luther King Jr.

*(Based on question #62 on the 2008 Civics Test)*

## Trial testing of proposed changes



As part of the naturalization test redesign initiative, USCIS will test the proposed changes with volunteer adult English language learners in ESL classes and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) in adult citizenship education classes.

- The Office of Citizenship will work with volunteer community-based organizations (CBOs);
- Teachers at these CBOs will ask their students to volunteer for the trial test; and
- Participation is voluntary and will not affect a naturalization application filed with USCIS.

## Volunteering for the trial test



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The Office of Citizenship is asking nonprofit organizations that are offering adult ESL classes and/or adult citizenship classes to volunteer for the trial tests. Some eligibility requirements to volunteer are listed below. Volunteer organizations must:

- be a nonprofit with 501(c)3 status;
- be conducting adult education classes during the trial test period; and
- incorporate trial test educational materials provided by the Office of Citizenship in their curriculum.

Email [natzredesign22@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:natzredesign22@uscis.dhs.gov) if you are interested in volunteering.

## The role of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)



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- USCIS will seek recommendations from external subject matter experts to ensure that the test is aligned to NRS Level 3 and that it follows best practices from the field of test design.
- USCIS will contract with external subject matter experts in the fields of language acquisition, U.S. history and civics, and test development.
- The TAG will review draft test items before and after the trial test and provide recommendations.

# Resources



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- [Naturalization Test Redesign Development 2022](#)
- [Federal Register Notice](#)

# Question and Answer Session



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**Please use the Audio Conference Line to share  
your question with us.**

Operator will provide the instructions on how you can share your question **via the phone**.

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- Limit your questions to the topics discussed today.
- Do not share identifying information about children or others.
- We cannot address case-specific questions.

# Listening Session



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## We want to hear from you!

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- You may also share feedback via the Q&A box in WebEx.
- Limit your feedback to the topics discussed today.
- Do not share identifying information about children or others

# Topic 1: Speaking Test Format



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- USCIS is proposing a new speaking test based on picture prompts.

## Topic 2: Civics Test Format



- USCIS is proposing a new civics test in multiple-choice format.

## Topic 3: Civics Test Pass Score



USCIS is proposing to keep:

- the civics test pass score at 6 out of 10;
- the total number of test items at 100;
- the 65/20 special consideration provisions.

# Concluding Remarks



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**Thank you for joining today's session.**

- To provide additional feedback on the **Naturalization Test Redesign**, or to volunteer for the trial tests, please email: [natzredesign22@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:natzredesign22@uscis.dhs.gov)
- For additional information on the naturalization test redesign, please visit our website at [www.uscis.gov/citizenship](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship)
- To provide feedback on **today's engagement**, please email [public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov)



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January 12, 2023

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- Date of last revision: Jan. 11, 2022.
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