

The USCIS Naturalization Test Redesign Project

May 2007




U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Why Redesign the Naturalization Test?

A series of studies in the late 1990s found that the naturalization test lacked:

- Standardized test content
- Standardized test instruments
- Standardized test protocols
- Standardized scoring system
- Ability to assess whether applicants have a meaningful understanding of U.S. History and government

Sources: *Coopers and Lybrand (1997); U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform (1997); Department of Justice Office of Inspector General (2000)*





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Goals for the Redesigned Naturalization Test:

To create a test and testing process that is **fair** and **meaningful**.

- Fair:** Applicants taking the citizenship test will have consistent testing experiences nationwide.
- Meaningful:** The test preparation process will be infused with as many opportunities for civic learning as possible, such as through the availability of preparation materials.





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What's Different about the Revised Test?

Making the Test More Fair:

- USCIS Adjudications Officers will be trained to administer and score the test in the same way.
- Questions will be weighted to ensure that all test forms are at the same cognitive and language level.
- The revised test is currently being piloted to ensure that the new items and vocabulary are appropriate.
- Testing procedures will be uniform nationwide.




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What's Different about the Revised Test?

Making the Test More Meaningful:



<p><u>Current Test</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 questions that cover facts on U.S. civics Only one correct answer for most questions English items cover a range of topics There is no study guide 	<p><u>Pilot Test</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 142 questions (to be pared to 100) that cover facts on civics and concepts about democracy Range of acceptable answers so applicants can learn more about a topic and select answer meaningful to them English items will be civics-based Study guide will accompany final test
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Revised U.S. History and Civics Test:

- Will still consist of 100 questions and answers publicly available for self-study.
- Will include new history and civics questions in addition to some questions from the current test.

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Revised U.S. History and Civics Test:

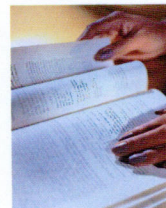
- Applicants must still answer 6 out of 10 questions correctly during the naturalization interview.
- Due Consideration will still be applied, as required by law.



The Revised English Test

English Reading Test:

- Applicants will be asked to read a sentence in English and will have up to three chances to do so correctly.
- Study materials for the English reading test will consist of a vocabulary list rather than a list of study sentences.
- The vocabulary list will be based on civics and written at a basic English level.
- The revised reading test will include scoring rubrics for District Adjudication Officers.



The Revised English Test

English Writing Test:

- Applicants will be asked to write a sentence in English and will have up to three chances to do so correctly.
- Study materials for the English writing test will consist of a vocabulary list rather than a list of study sentences.
- The vocabulary list will be based on civics and written at a basic English level.
- The revised writing test will include scoring rubrics for District Adjudication Officers.



The Revised English Test

English Speaking Test:

- The English speaking test will still consist of questions routinely asked during the N-400 interview.
- A glossary of words on the N-400 will be included in the study guide to help applicants prepare for their citizenship interview.
- District Adjudication Officers will be provided with rephrased N-400 questions targeted at a basic English level to help those applicants with limited English.



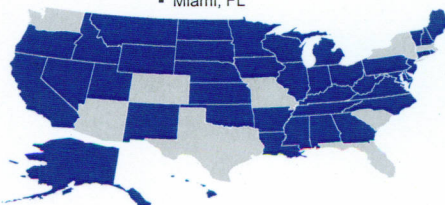
How will USCIS Ensure that the Revised Naturalization Test Works?

- USCIS is piloting the new Naturalization Test to ensure that the new test is appropriate.
- Approximately 6,000 tests are being piloted in 10 different cities through June 29, 2007.
- Allow for a one year period after the pilot to educate stakeholder communities on the new test.



Where are the Pilots being Held?

- Albany, NY
- Boston, MA
- Charleston, SC
- Denver, CO
- El Paso, TX
- Kansas City, MO
- Miami, FL
- San Antonio, TX
- Tucson, AZ
- Yakima, WA



How will the Pilot Work?

- Applicants scheduled for an interview at the pilot sites are being notified by mail that they have the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the national pilot.
- Applicants at pilot sites are being given the U.S. history and civics questions and answers and the English vocabulary for study around the time they receive their appointment notice.



What is on the Pilot Test?

- There are 142 questions to study from for the pilot. Questions that are not successful in the pilot will be dropped.
- Only a Civics and English reading and writing tests are being piloted.
- The speaking test will remain the N-400 interview.



What Happens if I Fail the Pilot Test?

- An applicants who volunteer to take the pilot test can immediately take the current test if they fail the pilot—this gives them an additional chance to pass the Naturalization Test.
- Applicants only have to take the portion of the pilot naturalization test that they fail. For example, if they fail the pilot reading test, they only have to retake the current reading test.

Is Participation Mandatory?

- No. Applicants can decline participation in the pilot naturalization test.
- Those who choose to decline can take the current test.



Timeline

- Test development and pilot planning.
- Piloting of redesigned test. Preparation of study materials.
- Test implementation in 2008.



USCIS is committed to giving communities a year to prepare for the test.



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