

Citizenship



Someone who is legally recognized to be a participating member of a political community like a state, or a country is called a citizen. There are ways to become a citizen of a country. Anyone born in a country is automatically considered a citizen of that country. The second way is to go through a legal process called naturalization. Through naturalization, a person applies for citizenship and then has to show they meet that country's legal requirements to be a citizen.

The concept of citizenship is Western in origin. Many historians believe it came from Ancient Greece, where it was based on two ideas:

- All men should be subject to the same rules
- All men born into the same community should share in its power and have equal responsibility for it.

Citizenship in Ancient Greece was characterized by political participation. The Romans also had a concept of citizenship, though a slightly different one than the Greek. Roman citizenship was less about political participation and more about an individual's relationship with the state based on law, which broadened the limits of who could be a citizen. In Europe in the Middle Ages, the concept of citizenship evolved to be about belonging to emerging nation-states. What all of these concepts share is that shared citizenship creates a bond between people who do not otherwise have anything in common to which non-citizens are excluded.

Today, people who share citizenship in the same country disagree about what that means. The liberal/individualist perspective sees the citizen as a passive member of the country. It emphasizes the rights of citizens and their protection. The civic/republican perspective is that citizens should actively participate in political processes. It emphasizes the relationship between the individual and the state, through which the individual both receives specific privileges and undertakes specific obligations.

QUESTIONS: Citizenship

Circle the correct answer.

1. How does a person become a citizen?
 - A. by being born in a country
 - B. through a legal process called naturalization
 - C. both A and B
2. Where do historians believe the concept of civilization originated?
 - A. United States
 - B. Ancient Greece
 - C. Ancient Rome
 - D. the Middle Ages
3. How did the concept of citizenship differ between Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome?

4. What idea do all historical concepts of citizenship share?

5. Which modern concept of citizenship emphasizes participation in political processes?
 - A. liberal/individualist
 - B. civic/republican
6. Which modern concept of citizenship emphasizes the rights of citizens and their protection?
 - A. liberal/individualist
 - B. civic/republican