

***Please highlight and label 3 examples EACH of logos (proving with facts, evidence); pathos (connecting through emotions and values); ethos (showing credibility using experts, counterclaims, and personal experiences); and underline the claim (thesis sentence).***

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Require Citizenship Test in Schools, by the Editorial Board

Jay Leno's old Tonight Show man-on-the-street quizzes were particularly hilarious — and depressing — when he tested Americans' knowledge of their own government.

One woman thought the colonies won their independence from Greece; a college instructor guessed that U.S. independence was won in 1922; and a man said the general who led our troops in the Revolutionary War was Winston Churchill.

Funny stuff, until you remember that these are the same citizens who elect the leaders who shape the nation's future, if they bother to vote at all. Nor are these know-nothings outliers.

Surveys and tests repeatedly show that Americans' knowledge of civics is pathetic. In 2010, just one in five eighth-graders tested proficient in civics on a national performance assessment — worse even than their dismal performance in reading and math.

A poll of Millennials, out last week, found that 77% of these 18- to 34-year-olds could not name even one of their home state's U.S. senators.

A 2012 survey of adults by Xavier University found that one in three native-born citizens failed the civics portion of a test given to immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship. The pass rate for immigrants: 97.5%.

So a decision last month by Arizona and North Dakota to require high school students to pass that same 100-question test to graduate is a welcome acknowledgment of the problem.

Like just about everything else in education, however, their simple idea is becoming contentious. It is under attack as yet another test-prep intrusion on education that could prompt schools to dumb down civics education — if that's possible.

Students used to master the basic workings of government in grade school. But in the past 20 years, civics has been eclipsed by a focus on reading, math and science, made even more intense by the No Child Left Behind law, which mandated annual tests in these subjects.

Fortunately, an eclectic group of leaders from government, education and the arts, including retired Supreme Court justice Sandra Day O'Connor, has championed a return to civics. They're making progress. Today, almost all states require civics classes in high school. About half the states already test students on civics or social studies.

Arizona and North Dakota, the first states to introduce the citizenship exam to schools, are not among them, but they at least now have a tool teachers can use.

Some questions are easy or trivial. But many about voting, the First Amendment, states' rights and the Supreme Court offer jumping-off points for enticing discussions about current events. In the hands of a good teacher, they can make students realize how much the American system of government affects their lives. The test can provide a floor on civics learning. It doesn't have to set the ceiling.

When just 26% of Americans can name the chief justice of the United States, there's nowhere to go but up.

***Please highlight and label 2 examples EACH of logos (proving with facts, evidence); pathos (connecting through emotions and values); ethos (showing credibility using experts, counterclaims, and personal experiences); and underline the claim.***

Opposing View: Good Citizenship Transcends a Test, by Peter Levine

Requiring students to pass the citizenship exam will reduce both the amount and the quality of civic education in our schools.

The test is easy. You can see all the questions and answers in advance and just memorize the right choices.

If passing this exam comes to be seen as adequate preparation for citizenship, schools will notice that their students can pass after cramming for a couple of hours. They will cut their semester-long civics courses as unnecessary preparation. They will prefer to dedicate that semester to math or science, which involve much more sophisticated and challenging tests.

Requiring the citizenship exam would make sense if our students didn't already study civics or face tests. It would establish a floor, a minimal level of competence. But more than 90% of recent high school graduates have spent a semester in a civics course, and most have also spent a year on U.S. history. Their teachers gave them tests. In many states, they also faced a standardized test on civics or social studies.

Then why do so many adults fail basic questions about the U.S. political system? Because we have forgotten what we learned in civics class. Too often, the subject wasn't inspiring or challenging and didn't build habits of following and discussing the news.

The problem with civics is not that we fail to teach it. The problem is that civics is often viewed as a set of disconnected facts, not as a challenging and inspiring subject that will continue to interest us after high school.

Arizona's measure requiring that students pass the citizenship test will make that problem worse. The citizenship exam requires, for instance, that you know that "27" is the correct answer when you're asked how many constitutional amendments have been passed. You don't need to understand reasons for or against those amendments, or have any sense of why they were important.

A month after students pass this test, they will forget the number 27. But they might retain the message that being a good citizen is a matter of memorizing some random information. That seems like an excellent way to turn people off.

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