

# Citizenship Education: Definition, Introduction and Concept

*“Refugees: Respect and Rights”*

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# Federal Agency for Civic Education

[www.bpb.de](http://www.bpb.de)

- *It is a federal public authority providing citizenship education and information on political issues for all people in Germany.*
- *Its work focuses on fostering an awareness of what democracy is and on furthering participation in politics and social life.*

# Citizenship Education

*Citizenship education* can be defined as educating children, from early childhood, to become clear-thinking and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society. 'Society' is here understood in the special sense of a nation with a circumscribed territory which is recognized as a state.

# Citizenship/Civic/Political Education

**Understanding civic duties and responsibilities are essential components of any social studies curriculum.**



# Components Of Citizenship

- **Global Responsibility**
- **National Responsibility**
- **Local Responsibility**
- **Family Responsibility**

**“I have a responsibility as a citizen to my community. It is both a responsibility and a privilege, because as I work to make my community a better place, I receive intrinsic benefits as well.”**  
- Anna Morton

## Essential Questions

- **What does it mean to be a responsible citizen?**
- **Who are you responsible to?**
- **Why teach citizenship?**
- **How does it benefit young people?**
- **What are its essential elements?**
- **Who else does it benefit?**

## What does it mean to be a responsible citizen?

- Responsible citizens have **knowledge** about their role in their communities, their country, and their world.
- Responsible citizens **participate** in activities that make their world a better place.
- Responsible citizens are **change agents** that act out against social, economic, and environmental injustices.

## Who are you responsible to?

### **The country you live in now with its Legal, Social and Moral Obligations**

- No one can be a responsible citizen without staying within the law.
- We should help our communities and those who live in them, e.g. by volunteering
- Different people have different moral codes. But one place we can all start is in helping the environment.

## Why teach citizenship?

- **Citizenship education is important because it builds character and develops the soft skills such as communication, initiative, social interaction and teamwork.**
- **Democracies need active, informed and responsible citizens; citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities and contribute to the political process.**

## How does it benefit young people?

- It helps them to develop **self-confidence** and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges;
- It gives them a **voice**: in the life of their schools, in their communities and in society at large;
- It enables them to **make a positive contribution** by developing the expertise and experience needed to claim their rights and understand their responsibilities and preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of adult and working life.

## What are its essential elements?

- **Knowledge and understanding:** About topics such as: laws and rules, the democratic process, the media, human rights, diversity, money and the economy, sustainable development and world as a global community; and about concepts such as democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and the rule of law;
- **Skills and aptitudes:** Critical thinking, analyzing information, expressing opinions, taking part in discussions and debates, negotiating, conflict resolution and participating in community action;
- **Values and dispositions:** Respect for justice, democracy and the rule of law, openness, tolerance, courage to defend a point of view and a willingness to: listen to, work with and stand up for others.

## Who else does it benefit?

**Citizenship** also brings benefits for schools, other educational organizations and for society at large by producing **motivated and responsible learners**, who relate positively to each other and the surrounding community. For society it helps to create an **active and responsible citizenry**, willing to participate in the life of the nation and the wider world and play its part in the **democratic** process.