The rights of citizenship are important. To vote means you can choose who represents you in government. It means you can say what you think the laws and rules that affect your life should be. Voting is one of your most precious freedoms. The right to a trial by jury is guaranteed in the BILL OF RIGHTS of the United States CONSTITUTION. It is everyone's responsibility to serve on jury duty to be sure our legal system always means justice for all.
Vocabulary

**Bias** - a strong feeling for a group or race. *Bias in favor of one religion might keep you from being fair to people of other religions.*

**Citizen** - (1) a person born in a country/ a person who chooses to live in a country and become a member there. *I am a citizen of the United States.* (2) a person who lives in a town or city. *A group of citizens got together to clean the playground at the city park.*

**Citizenship** - being a legally recognized member of a country and having all the rights, duties, and privileges of the country. *People from other countries who want citizenship in the United States must study and take a test to qualify.*

**Custody** - the care and keeping of another person. *My grandmother is taking care of us because she has custody of my sister and me.*

**Felony** - a serious crime. Murder is a serious felony crime. *A felony conviction stays on your criminal record permanently.*


**Misdemeanor** - a law that has been broken! a crime that is not as serious as a felony. *Disturbing the peace is a misdemeanor charge.*
**Precinct** - a part of a town or city. *I need to know my precinct number so I know where to go to vote.*

**Prejudice** - (1) an opinion that has been made before all the facts are known. *Juryors who do not listen to all the facts in a trial are showing prejudice.* (2) hatred or unfair treatment of a group, such as members of a race or religion. *A company that does not hire women is showing prejudice.*

**Qualify** - to be fit for something/ to meet the requirements. *To qualify for citizenship a person from another country must study and pass a test about the history and government of the United States.*

**Qualification** - something that makes a person fit for a job, an award, or benefits. *A qualification for a delivery job is knowing how to drive a truck.*

**Register** - to sign your name on an official list or record! to sign up to be able to do something. *Three ways you might register are sign up to vote, sign up a child in school, and sign up for a job interview.*

**Require** - to force, order, demand, or expect. *Traffic laws require you to obey the speed limits.*

**Requirement** - something that is necessary. *The ability to read and write is a requirement for jury duty.*

**Resident** - a person who lives in a certain place for a period of time. *I have been a resident of this city for twelve years.*

**Vote** - to make a choice. *In some countries citizens do not have the right to vote for the leaders of the government.*
**Guarantee** - The right of a person to a trial by jury is a guarantee of the BILL OF RIGHTS in our CONSTITUTION.

**Privilege** - Voting is a privilege I have earned because now I am a citizen.

**Responsibility** - I have the responsibility of taking care of my car.

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**Voting**

Every citizen of the United States has the privilege and responsibility to vote. There are requirements to vote.

1. You must be a citizen of the United States.
2. You must be 18 years of age or older.
3. You must be a resident of the state.
4. You must vote in the precinct where you live.
5. You must register to vote by 30 days before the election.

If you meet these requirements, you may register to vote. The place to sign up is the Voter Registration Office. This office is probably in your County Court House. There may be other places to register voters, like schools. It is possible for the disabled and others to register by mail. Sometimes a voter registration drive is held by community groups to sign up voters. This information may be found at the court house. The telephone number will be in your telephone book.

You must register by 30 days before the election or you cannot vote.
Jury Duty

Another responsibility citizens have is to serve on a jury. The right to a jury trial is one of our guarantees in the BILL OF RIGHTS. Jury duty is an important part of our court system. To serve as a juror you must meet these requirements:

1. Be a resident of the county and state in which you are to serve as a juror.
2. Be qualified under the constitution and laws in your county.
3. Be of sound mind and good moral character.
4. Be able to read and write.

To serve as a juror you CANNOT:

1. Have a felony conviction.
2. Have an indictment for misdemeanor, felony theft, or other felony.
3. Have served as a juror for 3 months before in county court or 6 months before in district court.

People are called to serve on a jury by a letter from the court. The names for jurors come from the Voter Registration Lists and Driver License Records of the county. You have to go to the Court House on the day and at the time you are told in the letter. There will be other people there. You will wait to be called for a jury panel. You may not be chosen for a panel. Sometimes people are excused from duty after they go to the Court House.
There are special reasons to be excused from jury duty. The kind of job a person has, such as teacher or policeman, is not a reason. Even a judge or lawyer can be chosen for a jury. A judge will excuse people from jury service for these reasons:

1. Someone over 65 years old.
2. Someone who has legal custody of a child younger than 10 years and no one to care for the child or children.
3. Someone who is a student in school or college.
4. Someone who has an illness.

A student in high school who is 18 years old does not have to be excused from jury duty. A high school student who is 18 may serve on a Jury.

If you are chosen to be a member of the jury panel, you will go to court. You and the other members of the panel will be questioned by the lawyers and the judge. This is how a jury is selected for a trial. Some people will be excused from this group for special reasons, such as bias, prejudice, or interest in the case. A witness to a crime would be excused. A person who knows the defendant, the attorneys, or any others in the case would probably be excused. After these questions, a final jury of 6 or 12 members will be picked. They will listen to the trial and decide the outcome.

Your employer has to give you time off from work for jury service. He does not have to pay you for the time you are gone. Jurors are paid by the county for the time they serve on a jury. They serve on the jury until the case for which they were selected is finished.