



## **Citizenship**

Being a citizen and being a good citizen are far from the same thing. Being a good citizen and exhibiting signs of good citizenship is far removed from the legal distinction of being a

examples of how we can be better citizens. Above all, good citizenship is about putting the needs of the community and the needs of others above one self's own preferences.

## What Does It Mean To Be A Citizen?

The question of what does it mean to be a citizen has no simple answer. On a purely definition-based description, what it means to be a citizen is that a person is a legally recognised inhabitant of the country they live in – in the UK, this means they pay taxes and are entitled to the help of the benefits and NHS systems. However, in practice, answering the question what does it mean to be a citizen has a lot of nuance.

true citizen – with regards to being part of the culture. Being part of the culture though goes much further than this. It is about integration with others, about bringing your views and experiences to the table and sharing them to make the whole culture richer from the experience of everyone in it. It can be about having a public service job, about volunteering and about giving back. It is about working together for the greater good.

And therein lies the eternal answer to what does it mean to be a citizen. Legally, a citizen is someone who has the required passport, a piece of paper. But truly, a citizen is someone who shares with their communities and who gives back what they take out. Make no mistake, there are plenty of people in the UK who were born here but could not be said to be true citizens – it is about an emotional state and mindset just as much as a geographical and legal term.

# Questionnaire: How Good A Citizen Are You?

more as she doesn't recognise you.

c) Run on ahead to the block and tell the warden there that the lady is alone and confused.

**5. You hear of a children's sports team which needs chaperones, even if they are not qualified coaches. It may fold if it does not find anyone but you hate sport. What do you do?**

a) Volunteer – the children would be so disappointed if they could not play anymore, especially over something so trivial.

b) Ask around everyone you know – plenty of your friends love sport and would relish the chance to get involved.

c) Nothing – if it was music, you'd jump at the chance, but sport really isn't your thing.

### **Mostly As**

You are a bona fide good citizen. This does not only mean that you give up your free time to help others, which you clearly do. But it also means that you care about your community and what happens within it. If there is anything you could do to improve your citizenship, it could be as simple as encouraging others around you to follow at least part of your example and be half as good a citizen as you clearly already are.

### **Mostly Bs**

There can be no doubt that you care about your community and want to be a part of any differences made therein. If there is anything you could do to improve your citizenship, you should look at the wider community. You are already very good at helping out in your particular sector, be it in church, sport or helping out in schools. But you could widen your focus and look at helping the community in other areas as well.

### **Mostly Cs**

While it would be unfair to say that you are not a good citizen on the basis of a short quiz, it is clear that you could do more in your community to be a good citizen. Why not think of giving up some free time to volunteer. There are plenty of volunteering opportunities in all sectors of life so there should be no excuse for not being able to find something to suit you. You may well find that you enjoy it so much you actually want to do more and more.



And they can be linked in with other obligations. For example, if you have a compost bin but no plants to use the compost on, you could give it to people who have plants but live alone, making them less likely to generate a huge amount of compost themselves.

Being a responsible citizen should not be a hard thing but it should be something which occasionally requires a little extra effort. This is because being a responsible citizen is, at its core, about being a less selfish person, and putting the needs of society before your own needs. It does not mean you have to sacrifice all your free time to volunteer or help others, but it does mean taking a little time to think about the impact of your actions on others.



### **Participating in a community activity:**

There are lots of things that you could do to be a part of the community from using the local shops, to supporting local trade, or volunteering at a bake sale!

Some simple ideas:

- Recycling your rubbish
- Taking the bus/train
- Joining a local club/team

