

Form N-400 Glossary

*Simple English Definitions for Challenging Words and Phrases
on USCIS Form N-400, Application for Naturalization*

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Simple English Definitions for Challenging Words and Phrases on USCIS Form N-400, Application for Naturalization

About the Form N-400 Glossary

The purpose of this glossary is to help immigrants pass the USCIS Speaking test at their naturalization interviews. A major part of the interview consists of the adjudicating officer asking questions about the applicant's Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.

Officers occasionally ask applicants to define words or phrases on the Form N-400 to verify that the applicant has understood the question. Here are two examples:

Officer: Were you ever involved in any way with genocide?

Applicant: No.

Officer: What is "genocide?"

Applicant: killing many people because of their religion, race, or other reasons

Officer: Have you ever claimed to be a U.S. citizen?

Applicant: No.

Officer: What does "claimed" mean?

Applicant: you say that something is true

Many of the words and phrases on the N-400 are particularly challenging to English learners. This glossary will help applicants by providing simple English definitions for words and phrases that they are likely to find challenging. The glossary can be used by citizenship instructors in class or by immigrants studying for their interviews on their own.

Organization of the Glossary

Pages 2 - 7	Words and phrases that occur in various parts of the Form N-400* including Part 12
Pages 8 - 12	Words and phrases that occur in <u>Part 12</u> . Part 12 contains numerous questions related to an applicant's moral character, and is the section of the N-400 that is usually the most difficult for English learners. Citizenship instructors often teach the vocabulary and concepts in Part 12 over several classes. Having the words and phrases from Part 12 in a separate section of the Glossary facilitates teaching Part 12.

* This Glossary corresponds to USCIS Form N-400 Edition 09/17/19

Abjure: reject or say no

Accommodation: extra help

Adjudication: a legal decision

Advocate: work for an idea or action

Alien: someone who is not a U.S. citizen

Alimony: money you have to pay a former wife or husband after divorce

Allegiance: loyalty to a person, country, or belief

Alternative sentencing / rehabilitative program: you do something against the law, but you don't go to jail

Annulled: a marriage that was not valid

Armed Forces: military responsible for defending the United States

Arrested: taken to jail by the police

Authorize: give permission

Bear arms: own or use a gun

Bear true faith: believe in and follow

Blind: not able to see

Certify under penalty of perjury: promise that something is true

Charged: the police say you did something against the law

Child support: money that a child's father or mother must pay to support a child after a divorce

Children: sons and daughters

Cited: you must pay a fine or go to court because you did something against the law

Civilian: a person who is not in the military

Civilian direction: orders from someone not in the military

Claimed: you say that something is true

Combat: fighting or war

Commit a crime: do something against the law

Communist: government with no private ownership of land, housing, or business-- like China, North Korea, or Cuba

Confined to a mental institution: stay in a hospital for people with mental health problems

Constitution: supreme law of the land

Contact: communicate with a person

Controlled substance: drugs or special medicine regulated by the government

Convicted: found guilty of a crime by a court

Crime: something against the law, like stealing a car

Current: right now

Declared legally incompetent: a judge or doctor says you are unable to make decisions due to mental health problems

Deferred: delayed to a later date

Deploy: serve as soldier

Deserted: leave the military without permission

Detained: stopped by the police

Detention facility: a jail or place where people wait before going to court

Directly or indirectly: do something in an obvious way (directly) or in a hidden way (indirectly)

Disability: a problem with your body or mind, like blindness (not able to see), deafness (not able to hear), or mental illness

Disclose: tell

Divorced: your marriage was ended by law

Documentation: legal papers that show something is true

Draft: the government requires someone to join the military

Enlist: sign up or register

Ever: any time in your life since you were born

Exemption: permission not to do something

Fail: not do something, or not pass a test

False: not true

Fidelity: loyalty

File a tax return: send tax forms to the U.S. government each year

Forcing sexual contact or relations: touching male or female body parts when someone doesn't want it

Form of government: the U.S. government is a republic, elected by the people

Fraudulent: something is a lie, not true

Gambling: like playing cards for money; gambling may be legal (like the lottery or casinos) or illegal (like dog fights).

Gender: male or female

Genocide: killing many people because of their religion, race, or other reasons

Guerrilla group: people that fight the military or government with weapons

Habitual drunkard: a person who drinks too much alcohol every day

Hard of hearing: not able to hear well

Have you ever: at any time in your life since you were born

Height: how tall you are in feet and inches

Hereditary title: from a royal family, like a king or queen

Illegal: against the law

Illegal gambling: gambling that is against the law, like dog fighting

Immigration benefit: things that help documented immigrants, like being able to work in the United States

Immigration status: a person's legal situation in the U.S., like a lawful permanent resident

Impairment: a physical or mental condition that limits your abilities

Insurgent organization: a group of people that use weapons to fight the government

Jail: a building where police take people who are arrested

Labor camp: a place where people are forced to work

Lawful permanent resident: a person who has a green card and is living in the United States legally; also called a permanent resident alien.

Left: departed or went away

Legally: allowed by law

Legally incompetent: mentally ill and not able to make decisions for self

Lie: say or write things that are not true

Marital status: you are one of these: single and never married, married, divorced, widowed, separated, or marriage annulled

Married: have a legal husband or wife

Mental institution: a hospital for people with mental health problems

Military unit: a group of people that work for a government and fight in a war

Militia: an army that does not work for the government

Misleading: lie to get something you want

Misrepresentation: a lie to get something you want

Mm/dd/yyyy: month, day, year

Examples: February 3, 2012 = 02/03/2012

October 21, 1988 = 10/21/1988

Narcotics: illegal drugs, like heroin or cocaine

Naturalization: process to become a U.S. citizen

Noncombatant: work in the military without using weapons, like working in a hospital, kitchen, or office

Oath: a promise

Oath of Allegiance: a promise you make to be loyal to the United States, made during a naturalization ceremony

Obtain: get something

Occupation: your job

Occupy: control by military force or war

Offense: something against the law, like a crime

Overdue: late

Overthrow: remove a leader or government by force or war

Owe: need to pay money

Paramilitary unit: a group of people who act like the military, but do not work for a government

Parole: leave jail early

Perform noncombatant services: work in the military without using weapons, like working in a hospital, kitchen, or office

Perform work of national importance: do work that is important to the United States during a national emergency

Perjury: lie under oath

Persecute: hurt someone because of religion, race, or other reasons

Potentate: a ruler with power over the people

Prevent: stop

Previous: before now

Prior: before now

Prison: a building where people must stay after breaking the law

Prison camp: a prison for soldiers during a war

Probation: you leave prison early but must report regularly to a probation officer

Procure: obtain or get

Prostitute: a person who has sex for money

Public benefit: money from the government for things like food stamps, medical care, or Social Security payments

Rebel group - people who fight the government for power

Recent: not long ago

Recruit: ask

Register: put your name on a list, sign up

Removal, exclusion, rescission and deportation proceedings: the formal process when a non-citizen must leave the United States because the government believes the person is not allowed to stay

Proceedings: a legal process to decide a person's immigration status

Removal: make someone leave the United States

Exclusion: not allow someone to enter the United States

Rescission: cancel an agreement to stay in the United States

Deportation: arrest and force a person to leave the United States and return to the country they came from

Renounce: you no longer believe in or support something

Residence: where you live, like your house or apartment

Returned: came back to the United States

Self-defense unit: people who fight to protect themselves

Sign Language Interpreter: a person who uses hand signs to translate for people who are deaf or hard of hearing

Single: you are not married now, and you were never married before

Smuggle: bring something into the United States illegally, like drugs

Spouse: your husband or wife

Suspended sentence: you commit a crime, but the judge does not send you to prison or delays sending you to prison

Tax return: tax forms you send to the U.S. government each year

Terrorist: a person or organization that uses fear and violence to control or kill people

Title of nobility: from a royal family, like a king or queen

Torture: hurt someone badly on purpose

Total: the complete amount

Totalitarian: a political system where people have no power and are controlled by a dictator

Trip: travel

U.S. Armed Forces: the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard; they are responsible for defending the United States

Vigilante unit: people who act like the police but are not real police

Weapons: knives, guns, or bombs

Weight: how much you weigh in pounds

Widowed: your husband or wife died, and you did not marry again

Widow: a woman whose husband died and she did not marry again

Widower: a man whose wife died and he did not marry again

Form N-400, Part 12

The following words and phrases appear in Part 12.

Adjudication: a legal decision

Advocate: work for an idea or action

Alien: someone who is not a U.S. citizen

Alimony: money you have to pay a former wife or husband after divorce

Allegiance: loyalty to a person, country, or belief

Alternative sentencing / rehabilitative program: you do something against the law, but you don't go to jail

Arrested: taken to jail by the police

Bear arms: to own or use a gun

Charged: the police say you did something against the law

Child support: money that a child's father or mother must pay to support a child after a divorce

Cited: you must pay a fine or go to court because you did something against the law

Civilian direction: orders from someone not in the military

Claimed: you say that something is true

Combat: fighting or war

Commit a crime: do something against the law

Communist: government with no private ownership of land, housing, or business-- like China, North Korea, or Cuba

Confined to a mental institution: stay in hospital for people with mental health problems

Constitution: supreme law of the land

Contact: communicate with a person

Controlled substance: drugs or special medicine regulated by the government

Convicted: found guilty of a crime by a court

Crime: something against the law, like stealing a car

Current: right now

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Deploy: serve as a soldier

Deserted: leave the military without permission

Detained: stopped by the police

Detention facility: a jail or place where people wait before going to court

Directly or indirectly: do something in an obvious way (directly) or in a hidden way (indirectly)

Disclose: tell

Documentation: legal papers that show something is true

Draft: the government requires someone to join the military

Enlist: sign up or register

Ever: any time in your life since you were born

Exemption: permission not to do something

Fail: not do something, or not pass a test

False: not true

File a tax return: send tax forms to the U.S. government each year

Forcing sexual contact or relations: touching male or female body parts when someone doesn't want it

Form of government: the U.S. government is a republic, elected by the people

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Guerrilla group: people that fight the military or government with weapons

Habitual drunkard: a person who drinks too much alcohol every day

Have you ever: at any time in your life since you were born

Hereditary title: like a king or queen

Illegal: against the law

Illegal gambling: gambling that is against the law, like dog fighting

Immigration benefit: things that help documented immigrants, like being able to work in the United States

Insurgent organization: a group of people that use weapons to fight the government

Jail: a building where police take people who are arrested

Labor camp: a place where people are forced to work

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Lie: say or write things that are not true

Married: have a legal husband or wife

Mental institution: a hospital for people with mental health problems

Military unit: a group of people that work for a government and fight in a war

Militia: an army that does not work for the government

Misleading: lie to get something you want

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