

# 14th Amendment

The 14th Amendment was ratified on July 9, 1868, following the Civil War that ended in 1865. The 14th Amendment says the government cannot “deny any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws.” This means the government cannot decide to treat one citizen differently from another citizen just because it wants to.



Some people who come to the U.S. from other countries can choose to become an American citizen through a process called naturalization. To become a U.S. citizen, a person must meet certain requirements, such as having a green card, living in the U.S. for a certain period of time and being a person of “good moral character,” meaning they must not have committed certain crimes or participated in other illegal activities. They also have to be able to speak, read and write English and answer questions about U.S. history and government. If they pass their citizenship test, they take an Oath of Allegiance to the United States where they promise to support the Constitution, renounce or give up any allegiance to other foreign countries, defend the Constitution and laws of the United States against all enemies and, when required by law, bear arms on behalf of the U.S., perform work for the military or help with work of national importance.

## STUDENTS – Let’s Write a letter

Use the “coffee technique” to age the paper you are going to use before writing your letter – *this will turn your letter into a work of art* (visit You Tube to find how-to videos).

After you’ve aged your paper, write your letter using your best cursive (or calligraphy). Imagine your family has lived to see the end of the Civil War, and you are now writing a letter to Congress in support of ratifying the 14th Amendment. Why is it important that all Americans be extended the same rights and citizenship under the 14th Amendment? Choose a prompt question to answer within the body of your letter. For a list of prompt questions by grade, visit the contest landing page below.

**For instructions on submitting your entry into this year’s Law Day Contest visit:**

**[www.okbar.org/public/Outreach/LawDay/contest](http://www.okbar.org/public/Outreach/LawDay/contest)**

Here you will find contest *rules & prizes* as well as a list of *writing prompts and grading rubrics*.