



Dear Colleagues:

We have hit the dreary part of the year. The holidays are over. The weather is cold, damp, or snowy depending on where you are in the U.S. Hopefully, there are exciting things happening in your classrooms to brighten up the month! A few of this month's articles are designed to help students work towards meeting citizenship and job goals.

Many new workers in the country do not realize that they might be entitled to a tax refund. If your students have jobs, mention that in February, they may get a W-2 form to show how much they earned in 2023 and how much tax was taken out. Next month, we'll have an example of the W-2 form and explanations about what is reported on them. Have a great month!

*Carol Brigham*

### A new citizenship test (pages 1 and 10)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell the parts of the current citizenship test and which parts in the new test will change. They will be able to tell how the new citizenship test is being vetted before being put into use.

**Preparation:** Visit [uscis.gov/citizenship](https://uscis.gov/citizenship) to review and download any materials that would be helpful for your group of students.

**Procedure:** Elicit from students their plans for citizenship. Ask questions such as *Do you want to be a U.S. citizen? When will you be eligible to apply for citizenship? Have you applied already? Have you started studying for the naturalization interview? What do you think of the questions? Do you think it is easy or hard and why do you feel this way?* Read the article and check for understanding of the parts of the current citizenship test and the parts that will change if and when the new citizenship test is used.

Practice the speaking exercise from the new test. Show the class pictures of daily life, weather, food, activities, etc. Have

them describe what they see in the photos. Have them practice speaking in complete sentences with proper grammar. This is a good exercise to help build vocabulary and pronunciation even if they won't be taking the new citizenship test. It can help build confidence in students who have limited speaking skills.

### Writing a resumé (pages 1 and 9)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell the important contents of a resumé, and be able to create a sample resumé of their own contact information, experience, and qualifications for a job.

**Preparation:** If appropriate for your classes, become a good resource: Read additional tips and strategies for preparing resumes at [wikihow.com/Make-a-Resume](https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Resume).

**Procedure:** Review or build vocabulary such as *employee, employer, interview, prospective, job applicant, resumé, contact, strengths, accomplishments, job objectives, qualifications, work history, reference*. Explain that the word *REHZ uh MAE* without an accent over the e, appears to be the word *ree ZOOM*. Have students imagine they are the owners of a business such as a coffee shop, a factory, a supermarket, a clothing store, or an auto repair shop. What would they look for in a resumé to decide who to interview or hire? Have students prepare a resumé for themselves, using a template available free at [resumegenius.com/resume-templates](https://resumegenius.com/resume-templates).

### Events in February (pages 2 and 3)

Ask students about their own personal events, holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and school activities that occur in February. Have them write these, plus the holidays and events mentioned in *Easy English NEWS*, on a blank calendar.

**African American History Month:** Explain that in the U.S., some months are dedicated to learning more about the history and heritage of minority groups: women, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and various European groups. See *Heroes and History* on page 7 for the story of the *Underground Railroad* and *Harriet Tubman*. Have students choose famous

African Americans to research and share their stories with the class - *What did they do? What makes them famous? What were their successes and failures?* etc.

**Groundhog Day:** Point out that February 2 is half way between the beginning of winter and the beginning of spring. Ask students if they've ever seen a groundhog. (Explain...it is a large rodent that lives in a hole in the ground and hibernates during the cold months of winter.) *Is there any special event in your native country on February second?* Discuss superstitions. Other examples: *The number 13 is bad luck; Breaking a mirror will bring 7 years of bad luck; Good or bad things happen in threes; It's bad luck to have a black cat cross your path*, and so forth. Elicit superstitions students have in their native cultures.

**Chinese New Year:** Chinese New Year starts in February this year. Have an Asian student or a visitor to your class speak about his or her customs on Lunar (Chinese) New Year. Talk about the foods that are eaten because their names have other, lucky, meanings. *Which customs for Chinese New Year are interesting to you? Do you have a special time for cleaning up your whole house? For paying back money that you owe to people? Is this a good New Year's custom? Why?*

**Mardi Gras:** Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday" which is the day before Ash Wednesday, but there may be celebrations for weeks before in many cities around the world. Ask any students who have been to a Mardi Gras event to tell about it.

**Lent and Ash Wednesday:** Ask any Catholics in the class or others who mark Lent to explain what they do, what the purpose is, and how they feel when they have given up some favorite food or activity for Lent.

**Super Bowl:** Ask about students' interest in American football. Contrast with *futbol* in Spanish, which is *soccer* to Americans. *Do you play (or have you played) American football? Do you watch football on TV? Do you have a favorite team?* The teams that will play in the Super Bowl had not been decided when *Easy English NEWS* went to press. They'll have been

determined by the time you get this paper, however.

**Valentine's Day:** Ask questions such as: *What customs do you have in your home country for Valentine's Day? Do you have plans for Valentine's Day?* Have students create Valentine cards for a classroom teacher, administrator, school secretary, crossing guard, custodian, special friend, etc. to show appreciation. Stores sell packages of small valentine cards so elementary school children can send one to each person in the class.

**Brainstorm:** *What is love? Are there different kinds of love? How do you know if you love someone? How do you show your love? How do you choose a life partner? (Or how did you?) How do you keep a partner? How do you want your partner to treat you?*

**Susan B. Anthony's Birthday:** This day is not a holiday, but it's a great February birthday to know about. Susan B. Anthony led her followers through a long struggle, for 50 years. Susan B. Anthony voted in an election in 1873, and was arrested. She was tried in court, found guilty, and fined \$100. She never paid the fine. Anthony's struggles caused a slow revolution. Four states gave women the right to vote by the time she died.

**Presidents Day:** Elicit information from the students such as: *Who was the first president (or leader, or king) of your home country? Are there any special stories about him or her that everyone knows? Is there a holiday to honor that person?*

Before reading about Washington and Lincoln, examine the bills and coins that their faces are on. Look online to find businesses or cities named for these presidents. You might find streets named for them in a street map of your town. *Why do Americans honor these men so greatly?* Write the two names on the board at the top of two columns and elicit what students already know about each president. Ask questions such as: *Was your home country ever a colony of another country? Which one? Was there a hero who led people in the fight for independence? Who? How does your home country honor that person today?*

For Abraham Lincoln: Ask questions such as: *What is a civil war? Was there ever a civil war in your country? Why was it fought? When was it?* Elicit what students already know about the American Civil War: *What were two reasons for the American Civil War?* Then read the article about Abraham Lincoln. **BONUS!**

You can find the full text of Lincoln's Gettysburg address as well as an easy English "translation" and Word Help for it posted at Elizabeth Claire's website, [www.elizabethclaire.com](http://www.elizabethclaire.com).

### This is your page (page 4)

Read the stories. Ask if students have been in any similar situations. Use the stories to expand language, survival skills, and expressions of emotions.

Ask questions such as: *Have you ever had a stranger help you with something? Have you ever helped a stranger with something? How did you feel coming to the U.S. for the first time? What has been your biggest challenge? Do you like surprises? Why or why not? How do you celebrate "New Year" in your home country?*

### Dr. Ali: One way to breathe (page 5)

**Objectives:** Students will learn and practice a relaxing way of breathing and be able to tell its benefits from their own experiences.

**Procedure:** Ask what students do to relax when they are stressed out. Model the breathing procedure several times and have one student demonstrate it in front of the class. Then read the article, looking at the diagram of the lungs, and build vocabulary.

### Choosing a president (page 6)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to read a flow chart. They'll be able to tell seven steps in the election and inauguration of a U.S. president and the dates when those events will happen. **More information:** [icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/electoral-process](http://icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/electoral-process)

**Procedure:** Have students notice that the left hand column gives seven steps in the election of a president, starting in January 2024 and continuing on to January 2025. We are now (February 2024) at *Step One*, the primary elections and caucuses. Ask questions about what happens at each step. Have students respond to your asking "when" questions. Post a copy of this page on your bulletin board to refer to later. The steps will become clearer as the events actually happen.

### Heroes and History: The Underground Railroad (page 7)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell that slavery existed in some states before the Civil War, that it was often cruel, and that many slaves tried to escape. They will be able to tell who helped slaves get

to the northern states, the dangers for the runaways, and the dangers for those who helped them. They will be able to tell why the system was called the *Underground Railroad* and the terms it used. They will be able to tell the roles played by Levi Coffin, William Still, and Harriet Tubman. Preparation: See [teachertube.com/video/underground-railroad-19374](http://teachertube.com/video/underground-railroad-19374) for a video to show the class.

**Procedure:** Elicit what students already know about slavery and the Civil War. Tell them that many slaves escaped to the north using the Underground Railroad. Have them guess what the underground railroad was. Using the map, show which states held slaves, and which didn't. Eleven slave states seceded from the Union in 1861, but four slave states stayed with the Union. Ask students what dangers they think that runaway slaves faced. (Fear, separation from family and friends, getting lost, getting caught and shot or whipped, facing wild animals, hunger, no safe water to drink, being sick, frightened, cold, barefoot, injured, having no money).

Mention that the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 greatly increased the distance slaves had to travel to be free. Before then, if they got to Pennsylvania, or if they crossed the Ohio River, they were in a free state. After the law, slave hunters could come after them, even in free states, to take them back to their owners. They had to get to Canada to be free.

### ANSWERS

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. b                  | 16. F (Civil War)    |
| 2. c                  | 17. F (first)        |
| 3. d                  | 18. T                |
| 4. a                  | 19. F (November)     |
| 5. c                  | 20. F (president)    |
| 6. d                  | 21. B (cruel)        |
| 7. b                  | 22. C (severely)     |
| 8. a                  | 23. I (Big Dipper)   |
| 9. a                  | 24. G (abolitionist) |
| 10. c                 | 25. J (disguise)     |
| 11. T                 | 26. D (cellars)      |
| 12. F (weeks)         | 27. H (conductor)    |
| 13. F (Ash Wednesday) | 28. F (route)        |
| 14. T                 | 29. A (plantation)   |
| 15. F (February)      | 30. E (commercial)   |

## February 2024 Quiz I

Choose the best answer. Write its letter on the line in front of the number.

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|---|--|
| <p>_____ 1. When does USCIS want the new citizenship test to be ready?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) 2026</li><li>b) 2024</li><li>c) 2029</li><li>d) 2025</li></ul> <p>_____ 2. What must people taking the citizenship test now show?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) They are citizens already.</li><li>b) That they have a job.</li><li>c) That they can read, speak, and write English.</li><li>d) That they are married.</li></ul> <p>_____ 3. Where does the examiner get the questions for the speaking test now?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) the list of 100 civics questions</li><li>b) a guide for new Americans</li><li>c) the Constitution</li><li>d) the N-400 form</li></ul> <p>_____ 4. Where will the examiner get the questions for the new speaking test?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) pictures of daily life</li><li>b) the N-400 form</li><li>c) the list of 100 civics questions</li><li>d) a guide for new Americans</li></ul> <p>_____ 5. For the Chinese New Year, what is the animal that represents this new year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) rabbit</li><li>b) pig</li><li>c) dragon</li><li>d) rat</li></ul> | <p>_____ 6. People use resumés when they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) want to get visas.</li><li>b) become citizens.</li><li>c) get married.</li><li>d) apply for jobs.</li></ul> <p>_____ 7. A resumé should be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) a first draft.</li><li>b) just one or two pages.</li><li>c) three to four pages.</li><li>d) on colored paper.</li></ul> <p>_____ 8. On a resumé you should never</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) write your Social Security number.</li><li>b) give your email address.</li><li>c) tell your volunteer work.</li><li>d) tell any honors you have received.</li></ul> <p>_____ 9. Employers are not allowed to ask you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) your age.</li><li>b) your qualifications for a job.</li><li>c) your military experience.</li><li>d) your strengths and weaknesses as a worker.</li></ul> <p>_____ 10. Who would be a good reference for a young woman applying for a job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) her brother or sister</li><li>b) an employer who fired her</li><li>c) her teacher</li><li>d) a neighbor</li></ul> |
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## II. From Here and There

**True or False?** Write “T” for true, and “F” for false. If the sentence is *false*, *make it true*. Write a word to replace the underlined word.

- \_\_\_\_ 11. February is African  
American History Month.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 12. If a groundhog sees his shadow on February 2, there will be six more days of winter.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 13. Mardi Gras is the day that Lent begins.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 14. A special day for sweethearts is Valentine's Day.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 15. The extra day in a leap year is January 29.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 16. Abraham Lincoln was president during the American Revolution.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 17. George Washington was the 16th president of the United States.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 18. In primary elections and caucuses, voters choose delegates to their party's national convention.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 19. The general election is October 5, 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ 20. At noon on January 20, 2025, the new governor of the United States will take office.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## III. Building Vocabulary

Write the best word to complete each sentence. Write the letter of that word on the line in front of the number.

### Word List

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| A. plantation | F. route        |
| B. cruel      | G. abolitionist |
| C. severely   | H. conductor    |
| D. cellars    | I. Big Dipper   |
| E. commercial | J. disguise     |
- \_\_\_\_ 21. Slavery in the U.S. was a very \_\_\_\_\_ system. Owners forced their slaves to work without pay.
- \_\_\_\_ 22. A slave might be \_\_\_\_\_ punished if he or she tried to run away.
- \_\_\_\_ 23. Slaves used the \_\_\_\_\_ and the North Star to show them the way to the North.
- \_\_\_\_ 24. A person who worked to end slavery in the U.S. was an \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_ 25. A person who doesn't want others to know who he is might wear a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_ 26. Slaves hid in \_\_\_\_\_ on the way north to freedom.
- \_\_\_\_ 27. A person who helped slaves escape on the Underground Railroad was called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_ 28. A path or road that goes to a certain place is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_ 29. A large farm in the South was called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_ 30. The Tide \_\_\_\_\_ made me want to buy laundry detergent.