

# Born to Run?

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to be president of the United States?

You would get to live in the White House. You would invite your friends to huge dinner parties. You would ride in a limousine with bulletproof tires. You would fly in your own airplane known as *Air Force One*.

You would also be the most powerful leader in the world. You would meet with other leaders to try to solve many problems. You could help bring peace to the world.

Sounds pretty cool, right?

Before you dream about being president, though, you need to ask yourself this question: "Was I born a citizen of the United States?"

If you weren't, your dream might end there.

People say that in the United States any dream is possible. However, that is not true for millions of Americans who were born outside this country.

In Article II, Section 1, the U.S. Constitution says "no Person except a natural born Citizen...shall be eligible to the Office of President." The Founders believed the law would help keep the United States safe. The law was designed to keep other countries from putting a spy in charge of the U.S. government.

Orrin Hatch, a U.S. senator from Utah, thinks the law is outdated. He is pushing to change the law. He and many other citizens want all Americans to have the right to become president.

Should Americans who were not born citizens be allowed to run for president? Read both sides of the debate, and then decide for yourself.

## **Yes! Every American citizen should have the right to be president**

If you have earned the right to be an American, you should have the full rights of an American. Your place of birth should not hold you back from becoming anything you want in this country.

Foreign-born U.S. citizens pay taxes. They also are allowed to vote.

In times of war, they are expected to serve in the armed forces. Any person willing to die for this country should also be allowed to hold its highest office.

The country's greatest strength is its people. Most U.S. citizens have their roots in other lands. Few people are truly native Americans.

The presidency law works against the United States. It keeps millions of loyal citizens out of the White House.

It's time the United States lived up to its promise as the land of opportunity for all. All citizens should be able to become president.

### **No! The U.S. president should be born on American soil**

It may be a bitter pill to swallow, but not all American citizens should have the same opportunities.

The president is top dog. He or she must be completely loyal to the United States. A president who was not born a citizen might have ties to his or her birth country. That could create conflicts with the job.

Arnold Schwarzenegger was born in Austria. He was elected governor of California in 2003, but the presidency is a whole other story.

Americans might have less respect for a foreign-born president.

They might think that he or she does not understand them. That could make the president look weak. In turn, the country would look bad.

The Founding Fathers of our country were very wise. We should trust their judgment. It's not too much to ask immigrants to establish roots in this country before expecting to lead it. After all, an immigrant's U.S.-born child could become the president!

The job of president should be only for people born as citizens of the U.S.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. According to the passage, why can Arnold Schwarzenegger be governor of California but not President of the United States?

- A because he is not ready to be President
- B because he is not a natural born citizen
- C because he is pushing to change the law
- D because he doesn't get enough respect

2. Which of the following best describes the structure of this text?

- A The author tells why it is good to be President, then describes how Orrin Hatch and other citizens want to change the Constitutional law so that all Americans have the right to become president.
- B The author describes facts about the law requiring the president to be a natural born citizen, and then puts forth arguments for and against the law.
- C The author shows how American citizens born in another country pay taxes, vote, and serve in the armed forces and therefore should be able to become President of the United States.
- D The author shows how the President must be respected by all citizens and also totally loyal to the United States and therefore the President should be born in the United States.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A a foreign-born President would not be loyal to the United States.
- B the next President of the United States will be foreign-born.
- C the United States has never had a foreign-born President.
- D many people are in favor of electing a foreign-born U.S. President.

4. Read this sentence from the passage: "The law was **designed** to keep other countries from putting a spy in charge of the U.S. government."

In this sentence the word **designed** means

- A decided
- B planned
- C discussed
- D pictured

5. This passage is mostly about

- A whether the president of the United States is completely loyal to the United States or not
- B whether the president of the United States has the full rights of an American or not
- C whether the president of the United States is the most powerful leader in the world or not
- D whether the president of the United States needs to be a natural born citizen

6. Why does the U.S. Constitution say that the president must be born a natural born citizen?

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7. What can you infer from the argument that that the current presidency law “works against the United States [by keeping] millions of loyal citizens out of the White House”?

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8. Choose the answer below that best completes the sentence.

Some Americans are not natural born citizens of the United States \_\_\_\_\_they cannot run for President.

- A but
- B so
- C although
- D however

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

The Founding Fathers made a law that only natural born citizens can become President because they believed it would be safer for America.

Who? the Founding Fathers

(did) What? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

**Vocabulary Word:** loyal (loy · al): showing support for someone or something.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **loyal**.

1. You want your friends to always support you, so it is important to choose friends who will be loyal.
2. Dogs have the reputation of being very loyal pets.
3. It was hard for the voters to stay loyal to the President after he changed his mind.
4. He worked for the U.S. Government for over 30 years and everyone agreed he was a loyal government employee.
5. Many people find that the most loyal people in their lives are their family members.

10b. Which of the following pictures shows a loyal pet?



11. If a person tells a secret they have promised not to tell, is that a loyal thing to do? Why or why not?

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