

# 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 in the United States?"

If you weren't, your dream ends there.

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

The U.S. Constitution says that no American citizen born in another country can be 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Orrin Hatch, a U.S. senator from Utah, thinks the law is outdated.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 foreign-born Americans be allowed to run for president? Read both sides of the debate on the next page. 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's a bitter pill to swallow, but not all Americans are created equal.

The president is top dog. He or she must be completely loyal to the United States. A foreign-born president 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 on U.S. soil.

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 was born in Austria
- 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 law requiring the President to be born in the United States.
- B The author describes facts about the law requiring the president to be born in the United States, 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 native-born or not

6. Why does the U.S. Constitution say that the president must be born in the United States?

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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. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some Americans were not born in 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 no American citizen born in another country 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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## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 690

**Featured Text Structure:** Argumentative – the writer presents evidence for both sides of an argument

**Passage Summary:** In the first part of the article, the author sets forth facts about the law that requires the president of the United States to be born in America. In the second part, the author states arguments for and against this law.

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

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- B The author describes facts about the law requiring the president to be born in the United States, 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.
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3. It can be inferred from the passage that

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- C the United States has never had a foreign-born President**
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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."

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5. This passage is mostly about

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- 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 native-born or not**

6. Why does the U.S. Constitution say that the president must be born in the United States?

**Suggested answer:** The U.S. Constitution says that the president must be born in the United States because the Founders believed this law would prevent another country from putting a spy in charge of the U.S. government. [paragraph #8]

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”?

**Suggested answer:** You can infer that someone who is born in another country and a U.S. citizen might make an excellent President, and that the current law harms the United States by not allowing that person to run for office. [paragraph #15]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word below that best completes the sentence.

Some Americans were not born in the United States \_\_\_\_\_they cannot run for President.

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- B so
- C although
- D however

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

The Founding Fathers made a law that no American citizen born in another country can become President because they believed it would be safer for America.

Who? the Founding Fathers

(did) What? **made a law that no American citizen born in another country can become President**

Why? **because they believed it would be safer for America**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

**Vocabulary Word:** loyal

**Step 1:** Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (loy · al)
- b. Teacher says: “This word is loyal. What is the word?” [All students reply together out loud: “loyal.”]

**Step 2:** Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: “Loyal means showing support for someone or something.”
- b. Teacher says: “In the text, the author argues that the law stating that the President must be born in the United States keeps loyal citizens out of the White House. This means that the law stops people who might show strong support for the United States from becoming president.”
- c. Teacher says: “What is the word?” [All students reply together out loud: “loyal.”]

**Step 3:** Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to our students.

- 10a.**
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.

**Step 4:** Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 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?

**Suggested answer:** Telling a secret is not a loyal thing to do. A loyal person would stay true to the promise and would not break it by telling the secret.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary:* design, spy, opportunity, soil, conflicts, roots