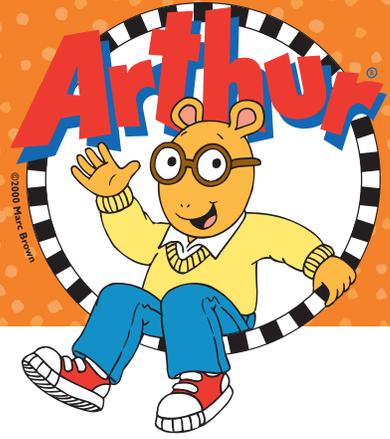


Arthur Civics Family Guide



What exactly is civics?

Civic education is learning about your rights and responsibilities as members of a community. In the United States, we learn about what it means to live under the U.S. Constitution and commit to making our community and country a better place for all. Citizens play an active role in creating laws and determining how these laws are governed. Through civics, students learn that citizens have rights: the freedom to express our opinions, to vote, to have a fair trial by jury, and more. We also have responsibilities, such as defending our Constitution; participating in the democratic process; and respecting the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others.

Why teach civics?

Civic education directly ties into the Common Core Standards for English language arts. That means your child is practicing important language skills while they learn about civics. The Comprehension and Collaboration standards include participating in collaborative conversations, following agreed-upon rules for discussion, building on a topic by responding to others' comments, and asking questions to clear up confusion. All of these skills are practiced naturally when students learn civics! In addition, civic education addresses important social justice standards, such as treating all people with respect, exchanging ideas with an open mind, recognizing bias, and standing up against injustice.

What does civics look like for young children?



Civics for younger and older children touch on many of the same concepts and skills. However, civics in the early grades includes something children are already practicing—living together as members of a community. Their first community is their family, but as they get older, their community includes their classroom, neighborhood, town, and beyond. In each of these communities, children learn and practice key social-emotional skills:

- taking responsibility
- respecting self and others
- being open-minded and empathic
- resolving conflicts

Beyond these social–emotional skills, civic education teaches children how government and leaders, as well as rules and laws, help keep a society healthy. Using their classroom as a model community, the teacher is the leader and students follow the shared rules of the classroom. In other words, students in the primary grades learn about civics by forming their own community and being citizens in the classroom.

Why use ARTHUR?

The PBS KIDS series ARTHUR reaches millions of families every day. The characters include Arthur, his friends, and teachers at Lakewood Elementary. In each episode, the characters grapple with an important issue or topic that kids can relate to—like making friends, understanding differences, or dealing with illness or natural disasters. The stories explore the same values that a good citizen possesses. When they watch the show, kids learn important lessons about respecting and understanding others, problem solving, and being a good friend (in addition to being entertained!).

What can I do to extend the learning?

There are lots of things you can easily do to reinforce civics at home. In fact, you might already be doing some of them now!

Talk about current events

Talk with your child about something that’s going on in the world, nation, or your community. Choose events that model good citizenship—neighbors helping each other after a natural disaster, standing up for an important cause, a great achievement due to hard work or cooperation. Point out what people did and how they overcame any difficulties.

Once your child understands what good citizenship means, introduce current events that might touch on difficult topics, such as racism, equal rights, immigration, or poverty. Choose these news stories carefully and explain what’s happening without giving too many details. (Avoid letting your child watch the news or see graphic photos in the newspaper, which can be scary.) Explain how you feel about the issue and ask your child how they feel. Be sure to validate their feelings and reassure them that they are safe.

Your child may come to you with questions or want to talk about things they see or hear. Listen, validate any feelings they may have (such as fear, anxiety, or confusion), and offer support. You don’t have to have all the answers to the questions your child asks, but it’s important that your child talk to trusted sources for information when they explore these topics.



Get involved

Think about things you and your child can do to show your civic participation or exercise your rights.

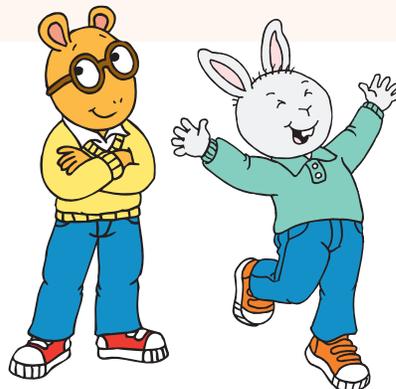
Volunteer with a local organization that's important to you. Help at a food bank, an animal shelter, a senior center, the library, or somewhere else. If possible, see if there are opportunities to involve your child. If not, take pride in being a strong role model and creating a path for your child to volunteer in the future. Talk with your child about the reasons you choose to volunteer and why you support the specific organization. Make connections to the community—explain that it's important to build a community that values all of its members and provides them with things they need.

Help your child choose outgrown items to donate, like books, clothing, or toys. Explain the importance of helping others and giving our belongings a second life. (You can also talk about the importance of recycling and reducing waste.) Share information about where the proceeds go and whom they help. If possible, let your child do some shopping at the thrift store, organization, or event where they donated their items.



Vote in community or nationwide elections and take your child to the polls with you. By exercising your right to vote, you're showing your child that it is important to participate in the democratic process. Let them wear the "I voted" sticker for the rest of the day (and maybe even longer!). Or have your child make signs to post in your windows or yard. The signs might include an inspirational or political message or support a candidate for election. Talk with your child about your views on important issues or the reasons you support a particular candidate. These conversations are one way to communicate your values to your child and talk about what's important in your community.

Bring your child to a peaceful march or protest. Discuss the reasons for the protest and how you feel about the issue. Emphasize that protests are necessary when people are treated unfairly or their rights as citizens are being ignored. Remember to prepare your child for what they might see or hear at the protest and make sure your child feels safe.



Read to your child

Head to the library and check out books that address important civics topics. The table below gives some suggestions as well as questions you can ask to discuss the book with your child.

Book	Summary	What to talk about
<i>Don't Touch my Hair</i> by Sharee Miller	Everyone loves Aria's tall, dark, and bouncy curls! They love them so much that they want to reach out and touch them, even without asking for her permission.	
<i>That Fruit is Mine!</i> by Anuska Allepuz	Five elephants find a new fruit tree in the forest, and it's a race to see who can claim the first fruit. Can they succeed on their own, or will they need to work together to reach their goal?	
<i>My Mouth is a Volcano</i> by Julia Cook	Louis interrupts everyone—he can't keep the words from erupting from his mouth. But when classmates interrupt him, he learns the importance of listening to others and waiting his turn to speak.	
<i>Do Unto Otters: A Book About Manners</i> by Laurie Keller	When otters move in next door, Rabbit is worried about how they'll get along. Owl says to treat otters the same way you'd like them to treat you.	
<i>What Can a Citizen Do?</i> by Dave Eggers and Shawn Harris	By doing one small thing at a time, a group of children turn a lonely island into a vibrant community.	
<i>The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade</i> by Justin Roberts	Sally is small but notices everything that happens at school. When a classmate is bullied on the playground, Sally stands up for what's right.	



© 2021 WGBH Educational Foundation. All rights reserved. "Arthur" & the other Marc Brown ARTHUR characters and underlying materials (including artwork)™ and © Marc Brown. All third party trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Used with permission.

ARTHUR is produced by WGBH Boston and Oasis Animation, Inc.



Funding for the ARTHUR series is provided by public television viewers.



Corporate funding is provided by

