

# **CITIZEN NATION**

## **Education Toolkit**

A new series from

**RETROREPORT** &  **PBS**



## **The Series**

**Watch as a new generation discovers what it means to show up, be civil and tackle the big issues straight on. In “Citizen Nation,” an inspiring new Retro Report documentary series, teams of high school students from every corner of the United States bring varied backgrounds and political sensibilities to a national civics competition called “We the People.”**

**The series airs on PBS Stations, Tuesdays in October at 9 p.m. ET**

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# **CITIZEN NATION**

## **EPISODE 1: CITIZEN NATION “Chasing Victory”**

**Premieres: Tuesday, October 8, 9:00 – 10:00 p.m. ET**

**The premiere episode introduces contestants as they begin the school year. Two teams from Wyoming embody the state’s independent spirit. A Las Vegas team includes students whose families are recent immigrants from Nigeria, Thailand and the Philippines. Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School in Richmond, Va., is the defending national champion and the team to beat.**

## **EPISODE 2: CITIZEN NATION “In the Fray”**

**Premieres: Tuesday, October 15, 9:00 – 10:00 p.m. ET**

**In Episode 2, the pressure heats up. One contestant from Virginia becomes eligible to vote in an election where his father, the coach of a rival team, is a candidate. Students on a West Virginia team confront fallout from poverty and opioid addiction in their community yet remain steadfast in their hope of attending college. A Las Vegas team must overcome grief and persevere after a deadly shooting rampage at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.**

# **CITIZEN NATION**

## **EPISODE 3: CITIZEN NATION “The Hustle”**

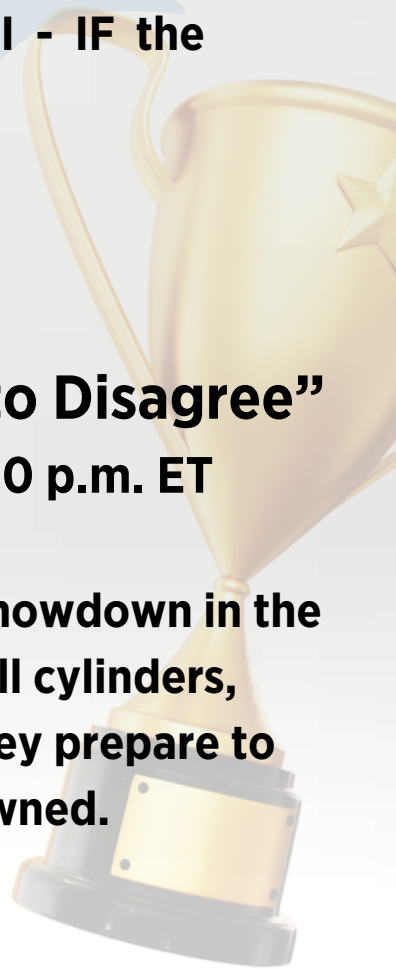
**Premieres: Tuesday, October 22, 9:00 – 10:00 p.m. ET**

**In Episode 3, stakes are high as teams across the country prepare for their state competitions; only the winning teams will advance to Washington DC. Balancing deeply personal challenges, and tricky team dynamics, star students from Wyoming, Nevada and Virginia push themselves to the limits. A strong new contender emerges from Wauwatosa, WI - IF the team can survive a competition derailed by a blizzard.**

## **EPISODE 4: CITIZEN NATION “Agree to Disagree”**

**Finale: Tuesday, October 29, 9:00 – 10:00 p.m. ET**

**The series wraps up at a thrilling championship showdown in the heart of Washington, D.C. Finalists are firing on all cylinders, giddy and nervous and dressed to the nines as they prepare to be challenged by contest judges. A winner is crowned.**



# **CITIZEN NATION**

## **How can you use this toolkit?**

- **Spread the word with our “Tune In” cards for each episode**
  - **Host a screening for educators or view an episode in your classroom**
  - **Play BINGO! Identify key Civics Skills as you watch**
  - **Use and share classroom resources from the Retro Report & PBS LearningMedia collections**
  - **Connect with Retro Report Civics Fellows in your area**
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# **CITIZEN NATION**

## **Screening Guide**

**Step 1: Decide on a goal and frame for viewing. You can use “Citizen Nation” to examine civic education, political discourse and polarization, the challenges and triumphs of students and educators, and much more.**

**Step 2: Choose discussion questions based on your audience.**

### **General Audience:**

- How do the students in “Citizen Nation” demonstrate what it means to be civically engaged in America?
- In what ways do the students’ experiences challenge or affirm your view of young people today?
- What lessons can political leaders and ordinary citizens learn from the students’ approach to political, social and economic issues?
- “Citizen Nation” features students from across the country. How important is it for citizens to engage with people who hold different beliefs and political opinions?
- Were there specific students or educators you identified with?
- What insights did you gain from watching the next generation engage with democracy? Does it raise your level of hope or concern?



# **CITIZEN NATION**

## **Screening Guide**

### **Audience of Educators:**

- **What lessons about civic education should we take away from “Citizen Nation?”**
  - **Was there a teacher or student that you identified with or recognized from your own experiences in education?**
  - **What strategies have you found effective in encouraging students to participate in discussions about current events and political issues? What barriers have you encountered?**
  - **What can schools do to create more opportunities for civic engagement and skill development?**
  - **What can non-school organizations, like Retro Report do to promote civic engagement and skill development?**
  - **“Citizen Nation” follows a diverse group of students with different backgrounds and political perspectives. What lessons can your school take away about how to foster dialogue and respect in a diverse classroom?**
  - **The students in “Citizen Nation” grapple with many different real world issues. How can educators help students make sense of those topics and make civic education relevant to their lives and communities?**
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# CITIZEN NATION Bingo!

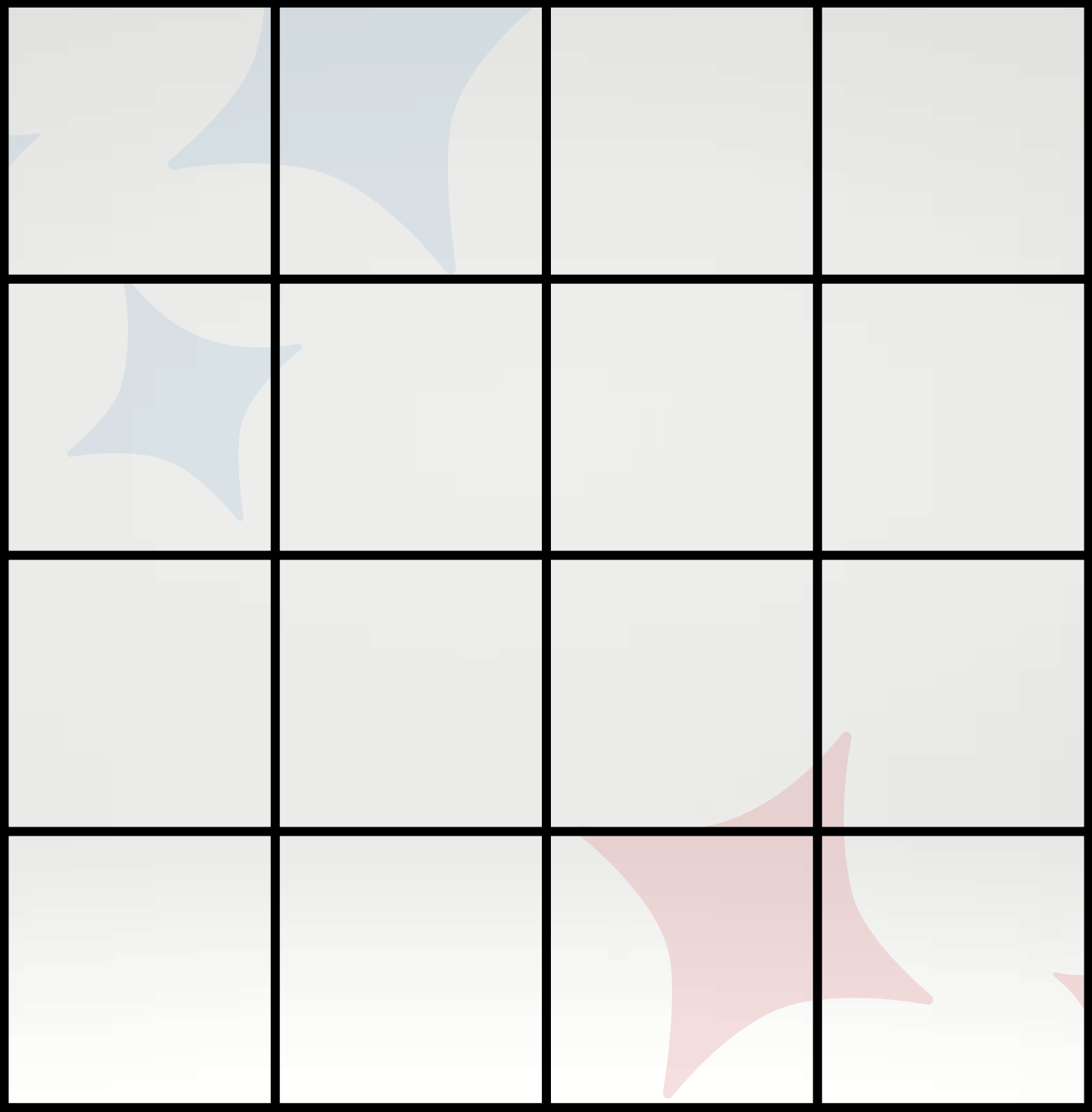
**Directions: Use the terms below to construct your BINGO card. When you identify a connection, write down a relevant quote or scene from the show.**

- **Civil discourse:** The engagement in conversation intended to enhance understanding. It involves respectful, thoughtful, and constructive dialogue between individuals with differing perspectives.
  - **Civic Knowledge:** Understanding the structures, functions, and processes of government and civic institutions at local, state, and national levels.
  - **Empathy:** Understanding and sharing the feelings of others to foster mutual respect and understanding.
  - **Open-Mindedness:** Being willing to consider different viewpoints and perspectives without prejudice.
  - **Constructive Feedback:** Offering feedback that is aimed at improving understanding and dialogue rather than criticizing or belittling.
  - **Media Literacy:** The ability to critically evaluate media sources and information, recognizing bias, misinformation, and propaganda.
  - **Inquiry and Questioning:** Asking thoughtful questions to clarify understanding and explore different aspects of an issue.
  - **Nonverbal Communication:** Being aware of body language, eye contact, and facial expressions that can influence the tone of the conversation.
  - **Humility:** Acknowledging one's own limitations and being open to learning from others.
  - **Seeking Common Ground:** Identifying areas of agreement to build on and foster collaborative solutions.
  - **Advocacy:** Skills to support and argue for causes, including organizing campaigns, public speaking, and lobbying.
  - **Digital Literacy:** Proficiency in using digital tools and platforms for civic engagement, including social media, online petitions, and digital advocacy.
  - **Civic Writing:** Crafting letters, petitions, and policy proposals to communicate with public officials and stakeholders.
  - **Understanding Rights and Responsibilities:** Knowing and exercising individual rights and responsibilities as a citizen.
  - **Conflict Resolution:** Addressing disagreements and finding mutually acceptable solutions.
  - **Ethical Decision-Making:** Making decisions based on ethical principles and considering the impact on others.
  - **Empathy and Cultural Competence:** Understanding and respecting diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
  - **Organizational Skills:** Planning, organizing, and managing civic projects and events.
  - **Legal Literacy:** Understanding laws, legal processes, and how they affect civic life.
  - **Self-Awareness:** Being aware of one's own biases, emotions, and communication style, and how they affect interactions with others.
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**CITIZEN  
NATION**

**Bingo!**



# **CITIZEN NATION** Bingo!

**Go further! When you've achieved a BINGO, explain the connection you made between the Civics Skill/Concept and the show.**


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# **CITIZEN NATION**

## CIVICS SKILLS

**This collection of six short videos and accompanying lesson plans is designed to empower students to participate confidently in civic life. In these videos, high school students demonstrate essential skills and strategies for civic engagement, critical thinking and respectful communications that have value far beyond the classroom.**



**Access the Entire Collection at:**  
**[bit.ly/RR-Civics](https://bit.ly/RR-Civics) or at [PBS LearningMedia](#)**

# CITIZEN NATION

CIVICS SKILLS

**These two videos are an excellent way to introduce research habits and help students make personal connections with their learning**

## **Strategies for Analyzing Challenging Texts**

Learn how to approach a complex topic – in this case, housing discrimination – by sharpening skills in annotation and analysis. The student in this short video breaks down the process step by step, offering tips on how to navigate tricky topics with confidence.



## **Evaluate Sources to Build an Argument**

Want to improve students' research game? Sharpen skills with this short video, where a high school student shows how he finds credible sources and supports his argument. Watch as he goes step by step through his research process and shares tips on how to gather solid evidence.



# CITIZEN NATION

CIVICS SKILLS

**Learn from students as they engage in civil discourse and develop skills for classroom discussions and debates.**



## **How to (Respectfully) Disagree**

**Watch as high school students dive into a discussion about whether certain books should be banned from school libraries. Their conversation isn't just about the books themselves; it shows how to tackle difficult issues with civility and respect. Students share their views and listen to differing opinions without being disagreeable.**

## **Sweeten Your Argument**

**The mission: convince a “judge” that one candy bar represents America. In this courtroom-style debate, student groups present evidence on their candy bar’s history, popularity and cultural impact to support their case. They bring their best arguments but keep it respectful as they try to sway the jury.**





# CITIZEN NATION

CIVICS SKILLS

**Civic knowledge and skills are essential, but learning is far more meaningful when students are active participants. These videos highlight examples of students in action.**



## **Engaging Your Community Through Voter Education**

**What does it mean to be an engaged citizen?**

**High school students are or may soon be eligible to vote for the first time. Some are taking steps to become involved in the community by encouraging neighbors to vote. Here are some ways to inspire others and be a voice in your community.**

## **How the Supreme Court's Tinker Ruling Affects Students**

**In the landmark decision in *Tinker v. Des Moines*, the Supreme Court ruled that a symbolic protest, where public school students wore armbands, was protected under the First Amendment. Where should schools draw the line between students' rights and the school's need to maintain order?**





## **How Can I Use These Materials?**

**The full collection features more than 15 different lessons and student activities, designed for both Middle and High School classrooms. These lessons are a perfect fit for Social Studies, ELA/English and Humanities courses.**

**Engage your students by:**

- **Practicing annotation skills with the Declaration of Independence**
  - **Developing norms for group discussions**
  - **Collecting oral histories**
  - **Fact-checking social media posts**
  - **And much, much more!**
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# **CITIZEN NATION**

CIVICS SKILLS

**But wait, there's more!!**

**Each Wednesday, after an episode airs, we will be adding to the collection! Check back each week for exclusive clips and lessons to accompany each episode. Resources can be found at:**

**[bit.ly/RR-Civics](http://bit.ly/RR-Civics) or [PBS LearningMedia](http://PBS LearningMedia)**



**Coming Soon!**

**An interactive map featuring  
students and schools from  
the show!**

# RETROREPORT

## Connect with the Retro Report Civics Fellows!

The Citizen Nation: Civics Skills collection was developed with the help of 27 educators from across the country. We'd love to connect you with our team of teachers.

Katie Boland  
Trumbull, CT

Shari Conditt  
Woodland, WA

Ron DeGregorio  
Perrysburg, OH

Eric Fields  
Jacksonville, FL

Dunn Franco  
Greenville, SC

Patricia Garza  
Monte Alto, TX

Sarah Greif  
Fargo, ND

Stephanie Hasty  
Germantown, MD

Amanda  
Henderson  
Powhatan, VA

Tonya Howard  
Wichita, KS

Kevin Jackson  
Petaluma, CA

Michael LaFlamme  
Delaware, OH

Allie Niese  
Chicago, IL

Catherine O'Keefe  
Monmouth  
Junction, NJ

David Kendrick  
Loganville, GA

Amanda Perschall  
Lebanon, MO

Lauren Sanders  
Kissimmee, FL

Amanda Sandoval  
Eastvale, CA

Christian Scott  
Boston, MA

Kyle Smith  
Superior, WI

Patrick Sprinkle  
New York, NY

Sally Stanhope  
Chamblee, GA

Luke Sundermeier  
Marysville, OH

Karen Wagner  
Cody, WY

Mark Westphal  
South St. Paul, MN

Ryan Werenka  
Troy, MI

Kennedy Williams  
McIntosh, AL

# **RETROREPORT**

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