

Name _____

Be an Active Citizen

“To vote is like the payment of a debt—a duty never to be neglected, if its performance is possible.”

—President Rutherford B. Hayes

The writers of the United States Constitution were not sure their government would last. No other nation had ever had a government like the one described by the Constitution. No other people had ever had the rights that American citizens had. It would be up to the people to keep their government going and to protect their freedoms. The country would need responsible, active citizens.

Active citizens vote. They stay informed about the nation’s issues. They read newspapers, books, and Internet articles. They watch or listen to the news. Active citizens also volunteer their time. They may register people to vote or work at voting places. They may work for political candidates or go to political rallies.

Citizens have rights in addition to those that are protected by the United States Constitution. They sometimes have special rights under the constitution of the state in which they live. By using their rights, active citizens around the nation can work to improve their government and their communities.

Think About It

1. What are examples of civic participation?
2. Why is it important to be an active citizen? Write a paragraph that supports your opinion. First, state your opinion. Then include two or three reasons that support your opinion. Finally, write a statement of conclusion.