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# Birthright Citizenship

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## **Videos:**

“What is Birthright Citizenship And Why Is President Trump Trying To End It?”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YK8avFtDyMY> (3:04 minutes)

“How Trump Is Planning to End Birthright Citizenship | WSJ”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIkLgooN9LA> (6:31 minutes)

## **Guide:**

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

## **Analysis Questions:**

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. What is birthright citizenship?
3. Which amendment of the U.S. Constitution concerns birthright citizenship?
4. In the Wall Street Journal video, Adam Cox said that when birthright citizenship was established, three groups were considered to not be subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. What were those three groups?
5. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution says: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.” According to the Heritage Foundation video, what is the “critical, conditional phrase” in that sentence?
6. In the Wall Street Journal video, Matt Platkin said that it's contradictory to say that undocumented immigrants can be removed from the country and that their children are not subject to U.S. jurisdiction. What did he mean by this? Do you agree with him? Why/Why not?
7. The Heritage Foundation said: “Many claim that anyone present in the United States has subjected him or herself to the jurisdiction of the United States.” Do you agree with the people who make that claim? Why/Why not?
8. The Wall Street Journal video included a clip of Trump saying that ending birthright citizenship would "deter more migrants from coming" to the United States. Should we deter migrants from coming to the United States? Why/Why not?

9. The Heritage Foundation referred to “partial territorial jurisdiction” and “complete political jurisdiction.” What is the difference between those two types of jurisdictions?
10. The Wall Street Journal video included the term "birth tourism." What is birth tourism?
11. According to the Heritage Foundation, most countries do not offer universal birthright citizenship. Were you aware of this before watching the video? Does it change how you view birthright citizenship in the United States? Why/Why not?
12. Matt Platkin said that ending birthright citizenship would create a "permanent underclass." What did he mean by this?
13. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
14. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
15. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
16. What else would you like to learn about this topic?