

Patina Education

N-400 Interview Vocabulary · Español

Las palabras que usa el oficial durante la entrevista de naturalización, agrupadas según dónde las encuentras. Cada una tiene una definición sencilla, el español y una frase que muestra cómo se pregunta en realidad.

Esto es material de estudio. No es asesoría legal ni una lista de las preguntas que te harán.

Your name and personal information

given name

Your first name — the name your family gave you, not your last name.

nombre de pila — tu primer nombre, no el apellido

The officer points to the form and asks, "What is your given name?" You say your first name.

family name

Your last name, also called your surname — the name you share with your family.

apellido — el nombre de familia que va al final

"What is your family name?" means the officer wants your last name.

legal name

Your full, official name exactly as it appears on your legal documents.

nombre legal — tu nombre oficial completo en los documentos

"Is this your current legal name?" The officer is checking the name on your records is correct.

date of birth

The exact day you were born — the month, day, and year.

fecha de nacimiento — el día, mes y año en que naciste

"What is your date of birth?" Give the month, day, and year you were born.

country of birth

The country where you were born.

país de nacimiento — el país donde naciste

"What is your country of birth?" Name the country where you were born, even if you left as a child.

nationality

The country you legally belong to as a citizen.

nacionalidad — el país del que eres ciudadano

"What is your country of nationality?" Say the country whose citizen you are now.

marital status

Whether you are single, married, divorced, or widowed.

estado civil — si eres soltero, casado, divorciado o viudo

"What is your marital status?" You answer with one word, like "married" or "single."

sex

Whether you are male or female, as shown on your records.

sexo — masculino o femenino

The officer checks that the sex marked on your form matches your documents.

A-Number

Your Alien Registration Number — a number USCIS uses to find your immigration file. You do not need to memorize it.

número A (de extranjero) — el número que USCIS usa para tu expediente

"Can you confirm your A-Number?" It is the number that starts with the letter A on your green card.

Family and marriage

spouse

The person you are married to — your husband or wife.

cónyuge — tu esposo o esposa

"What is your spouse's date of birth?" The officer is asking about your husband or wife.

divorced

No longer married because a court legally ended the marriage.

divorciado(a) — ya no casado porque un tribunal terminó el matrimonio

"Are you divorced?" Say yes only if a court officially ended your marriage.

widowed

No longer married because your husband or wife has died.

viudo(a) — ya no casado porque tu esposo o esposa murió

If your spouse has died, you tell the officer you are widowed.

dependents

The people you support with your money, usually your children.

personas a su cargo / dependientes — las personas que mantienes, normalmente tus hijos

"How many dependents do you have?" Count the people, like your children, who rely on you for money.

biological child

A child who is related to you by birth, not adopted or a stepchild.

hijo(a) biológico(a) — un hijo de nacimiento, no adoptado

The form may ask if a child is your biological child or your stepchild.

stepchild

The child of your husband or wife from another relationship.

hijastro(a) — el hijo de tu cónyuge de otra relación

"Is she your biological daughter or your stepchild?" A stepchild is your spouse's child, not yours by birth.

maiden name

The family name a person had before they married.

apellido de soltera — el apellido antes de casarse

"What was your wife's maiden name?" The officer wants her last name before marriage.

Where you have lived

lawful permanent resident

A person allowed to live and work in the U.S. permanently — a green card holder.

residente permanente legal — alguien con green card que puede vivir y trabajar aquí

"When did you become a lawful permanent resident?" Give the date on your green card.

residence

The place where you live.

residencia — el lugar donde vives

"What is your current residence?" Tell the officer the address where you live now.

physically present

Actually being inside the United States, not traveling in another country.

presencia física — estar de verdad dentro de Estados Unidos

"How many days were you physically present in the U.S.?" This counts the days you were really here.

continuous residence

Living in the U.S. without long trips away since you got your green card.

residencia continua — vivir aquí sin viajes largos desde la green card

Long trips abroad can break your continuous residence, so the officer asks about time spent outside the U.S.

mailing address

The address where you receive your mail, which can be different from where you live.

dirección postal — donde recibes el correo

"Is your mailing address the same as where you live?" Say no if your mail goes somewhere else.

abroad

In a country outside the United States.

en el extranjero — fuera de Estados Unidos

"Have you spent time abroad since becoming a resident?" Abroad means any country that is not the U.S.

Work and school

employer

The company or person you work for.

empleador / patrón — la empresa o persona para la que trabajas

"Who is your current employer?" Give the name of the company where you work.

occupation

Your job or the kind of work you do.

ocupación — tu trabajo o profesión

"What is your occupation?" You might answer "cook," "nurse," or "student."

self-employed

Working for yourself in your own business instead of for a company.

trabajador por cuenta propia — tienes tu propio negocio

"Are you self-employed?" Say yes if you run your own business.

unemployed

Not having a job right now.

desempleado(a) — sin trabajo en este momento

"Are you currently employed or unemployed?" It is okay to say you are unemployed.

Trips outside the United States

trip

A time when you traveled outside the United States and came back.

viaje — una salida del país y regreso

"How many trips have you taken outside the U.S.?" Count each time you left and returned.

absence

A period of time when you were away from the United States.

ausencia — un período fuera de Estados Unidos

"How long was your longest absence?" The officer wants the number of days you were away.

passport

An official travel document from your country that lets you cross borders.

pasaporte — el documento oficial para viajar entre países

"Which passport did you use to travel?" Show the document you used to leave and enter.

reentry

Coming back into the United States after a trip.

reingreso — volver a entrar a Estados Unidos

The officer may ask about your reentry — the day you came back into the country.

Taxes

file a tax return

To send your tax forms to the government, usually once a year.

presentar la declaración de impuestos — enviar tus formularios de impuestos al gobierno

"Did you decide not to file a tax return?" Say no if you send in your tax forms each year.

owe

To have money you still must pay to someone, like the government.

deber — tener dinero que todavía tienes que pagar

"Do you owe any overdue taxes?" The officer asks if you still must pay taxes from the past.

tax return

The form you send the government each year that reports the money you earned.

declaración de impuestos — el formulario anual sobre lo que ganaste

"Did you file a tax return last year?" That is the yearly form about your income.

overdue

Late — something that should have been paid or done already.

vencido / atrasado — algo que ya debía estar pagado

"Do you have any overdue taxes?" Overdue means taxes you were supposed to pay but did not.

Selective Service

Selective Service

A U.S. system where most men register in case the country ever needs a military draft.

Servicio Selectivo — registro de hombres por si el país necesita un reclutamiento militar

"Did you register for the Selective Service?" Most men who lived here between ages 18 and 26 had to register.

register

To officially put your name on a government list.

registrarse / inscribirse — poner tu nombre en una lista oficial

"When did you register?" The officer asks for the date you signed up for the Selective Service.

draft

When a government requires people to join the military.
reclutamiento obligatorio — cuando el gobierno obliga a servir en el ejército

The Selective Service exists so the government could call people for a draft if it were ever needed.

Groups and organizations

organization

A group of people who join together for a shared purpose.

organización — un grupo de personas con un propósito común

"Have you been a member of any organization?" This can include a club, union, or political group.

member

A person who belongs to a group or organization.

miembro — alguien que pertenece a un grupo

"Are you a member of any groups or clubs?" Tell the officer about groups you have joined.

associated with

Connected to a group or a person in some way.

asociado con — conectado de alguna forma con un grupo o una persona

"Have you EVER been associated with this group?" The officer asks if you are connected to it.

Military service

armed forces

A country's official military — its army, navy, air force, and similar groups.

fuerzas armadas — el ejército oficial de un país

"Have you served in the armed forces of any country?" This means an official national military.

combat

Active fighting in a war.

combate — lucha activa en una guerra

"Did you take part in combat?" The officer asks if you fought in actual battles.

deserted

Left the military without permission and did not come back.

desertó — abandonó el ejército sin permiso

"Have you ever deserted from the military?" This means leaving the armed forces without permission.

discharge

The official end of a person's time in the military. A "dishonorable" discharge is given for serious misconduct.

baja militar — el fin oficial del servicio; "deshonrosa" es por mala conducta grave

"Did you receive a dishonorable discharge?" This asks how your military service ended.

bear arms

To carry and use weapons, especially as part of military service.

portar armas — llevar y usar armas, sobre todo en el ejército

The oath asks if you are willing to bear arms for the United States if the law requires it.

noncombatant service

Helping the military without fighting, such as medical or office work.

servicio sin combate — ayudar al ejército sin pelear, como tareas médicas

"Are you willing to perform noncombatant service?" This means helping the military without fighting.

Good moral character

good moral character

Behaving in an honest, responsible way that most people would consider right.

buen carácter moral — comportarse de forma honesta y responsable

The law says you must show good moral character, so the officer asks about your honesty and your record.

arrest

When police stop and hold a person because they may have broken the law.

arresto / detención policial — cuando la policía te detiene por una posible falta

"Have you ever been arrested?" Say yes even if you were let go, and bring any papers.

cited

Given an official ticket or notice by police, often for a small offense.

citado / multado — recibir una multa o citación de la policía

"Have you ever been cited by the police?" A traffic ticket is one example of being cited.

detained

Held by police or officials and not free to leave.

detenido — retenido por la policía o autoridades, sin poder irte

"Have you ever been detained?" This means officials kept you and you were not free to go.

charged

Officially accused of a crime by the government.

acusado / imputado — acusado oficialmente de un delito

"Have you ever been charged with a crime?" Being charged means the government formally accused you.

conviction

When a court officially decides a person is guilty of a crime.

condena — cuando un tribunal te declara culpable de un delito

"Have you ever had a conviction?" Say yes if a court found you guilty, even long ago.

probation

A period when a person must follow strict rules set by a court instead of going to prison.

libertad condicional / libertad a prueba (probation) — reglas estrictas del tribunal en vez de prisión

"Were you placed on probation?" This means a court let you stay free under supervision.

parole

Being let out of prison early, under strict rules and supervision.

libertad bajo palabra (parole) — salir de prisión antes de tiempo, con supervisión

"Were you ever on parole?" This means you were released from prison early under rules.

sentence

The punishment a court gives a person after a conviction.

sentencia / condena — el castigo que da el tribunal

"What was your sentence?" The officer wants to know the punishment the court ordered.

controlled substance

A drug whose use is limited or banned by law, such as cocaine or heroin.

sustancia controlada — una droga limitada o prohibida por la ley

"Have you ever sold a controlled substance?" This means illegal drugs controlled by law.

gambling

Playing games for money, especially in an illegal way.

juego de apuestas — apostar dinero, sobre todo de forma ilegal

"Have you earned money from illegal gambling?" This asks about money from illegal betting.

smuggling

Secretly and illegally bringing people or goods across a border.

contrabando / tráfico — pasar personas o cosas por la frontera de forma ilegal

"Have you ever helped smuggle anyone into the U.S.?"
Smuggling means bringing people or goods in illegally.

fraud

Lying or tricking someone on purpose to get money or a benefit.

fraude — engañar a propósito para obtener dinero o un beneficio

"Have you ever committed fraud?" Fraud means lying on purpose to gain something.

Eligibility and the oath

genocide

The deliberate killing of a large group of people because of their race, religion, or nationality.

genocidio — matar a un gran grupo por su raza, religión o nacionalidad

"Were you ever involved in genocide?" The officer must ask everyone; answer honestly.

torture

Deliberately causing severe pain or suffering to a person.

tortura — causar dolor o sufrimiento grave a alguien a propósito

"Have you ever committed torture?" This is a required question for every applicant.

totalitarian

Describing a government that has total control over life and allows no opposition.

totalitario — un gobierno con control total que no permite oposición

"Were you ever a member of a totalitarian party?" This asks about parties that allow no other voices.

misrepresentation

Giving false information on purpose to get an immigration benefit.

declaración falsa — dar información falsa a propósito para un beneficio migratorio

"Did you ever give false information to immigration?" That is misrepresentation, and honesty matters here.

failed to support dependents

Not giving money you were required to give to care for your children or family.

no mantener a las personas a su cargo — no dar el dinero que debías para tus hijos o familia

"Have you failed to support your dependents?" This asks if you did not pay required support, like child support.

communist party

A political party that believes the government should control property and the economy.

Partido Comunista — partido que cree que el gobierno debe controlar la economía

"Have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?"
Answer honestly; the officer asks everyone.

guerrilla group

A small armed group that fights using surprise attacks, not a regular army.

grupo guerrillero — grupo armado pequeño que ataca por sorpresa

"Have you belonged to a guerrilla group?" These are armed fighters who are not part of a national army.

overthrow

To remove a government by force.

derrocar — quitar a un gobierno por la fuerza

"Have you tried to overthrow a government?" This means trying to remove a government by force.

weapon

An object used to hurt or kill, such as a gun, knife, or bomb.

arma — un objeto para herir o matar, como una pistola o cuchillo

"Did you ever use a weapon against another person?" A weapon is anything used to harm someone.

hijack

To take illegal control of a plane, ship, or vehicle by force.
secuestrar (un avión) — tomar el control por la fuerza de un avión o vehículo

"Have you ever helped hijack a plane?" This is one of the required security questions.

kidnapping

Taking and holding a person against their will, often for money or power.

secuestro — llevarse y retener a una persona contra su voluntad

"Were you ever involved in a kidnapping?" This means taking a person by force.

assassination

The killing of an important person, often a leader, on purpose.

asesinato — matar a propósito a una persona importante, como un líder

"Have you EVER engaged in kidnapping, assassination, or hijacking?" The form lists these together.

recruit

To get people to join a group — a serious problem when the people are child soldiers.

reclutar — conseguir que personas se unan a un grupo (grave si son niños soldados)

"Did you ever recruit a child soldier?" To recruit means to sign people up to join a group.

prostitution

Exchanging sexual activity for money or payment.

prostitución — intercambiar actividad sexual por dinero

"Have you ever engaged in prostitution?" This is a required good-character question.

married to more than one person

Being married to more than one person at the same time.

casado con más de una persona a la vez — estar casado con dos o más personas al mismo tiempo

"Have you EVER been married to more than one person at the same time?" The form asks this directly.

deportation

When the government forces a person to leave the country.

deportación — cuando el gobierno obliga a una persona a salir del país

"Have you ever been ordered deported?" Deportation means being removed from the United States.

removal

The legal word for ordering a person to leave the United States — the same idea as deportation.

expulsión / remoción — la palabra legal para deportación

"Have you ever been in removal proceedings?" Removal is the modern legal word for deportation.

nobility

A royal or noble rank passed down in a family, such as prince, duke, or baron.

nobleza / título nobiliario — un rango real heredado, como príncipe o duque

"Do you have a title of nobility?" You may be asked to give up any noble title at the oath.

allegiance

Loyalty and support that you give to a country.

lealtad — el apoyo y fidelidad que das a un país

At the ceremony you take the Oath of Allegiance, promising your loyalty to the United States.

renounce

To formally give up something, such as loyalty to another country.

renunciar — dejar algo de forma oficial, como la lealtad a otro país

The oath asks you to renounce, or give up, allegiance to any other country.

oath

A serious, formal promise. New citizens take the Oath of Allegiance.

juramento — una promesa formal y seria; los nuevos ciudadanos hacen el juramento de lealtad

"Are you willing to take the full Oath of Allegiance?" The oath is the promise you make to become a citizen.

constitution

The set of basic laws that the United States is built on.

constitución — las leyes básicas sobre las que se funda Estados Unidos

The oath asks if you will support the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

claimed to be a U.S. citizen

Saying you are a U.S. citizen when you are not. This is a serious problem on the form.

afirmar ser ciudadano estadounidense — decir que eres ciudadano sin serlo

"Have you EVER claimed to be a U.S. citizen, in writing or any other way?" Answer carefully and honestly.

willing

Ready and agreeing to do something.

dispuesto(a) — listo y de acuerdo en hacer algo

"Are you willing to defend the Constitution?" "Willing" means you agree to do it if needed.

armed group

A group that carries weapons and is not a country's official military.

grupo armado — un grupo que lleva armas y no es el ejército oficial de un país

"Have you EVER served in, been a member of, assisted, or participated in any armed group?" The form explains this means a group that carries weapons.

causing harm or suffering

Hurting someone because of their race, religion, national origin, social group, or political opinion.

causar daño o sufrimiento — hacer daño a alguien por su raza, religión, origen, grupo social u opinión política

"Causing harm or suffering to any person because of his or her race, religion, national origin, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion?" This is one of the Yes/No questions.

advocated

Supported and promoted an idea or a cause. The form gives you this meaning inside the question.

defendió (apoyó y promovió) — apoyó y promovió una idea o una causa

"Advocated (supported and promoted) any of the following..." The form explains the word in the question itself.

incited

Encouraged other people to do something, usually something harmful.

incitó — animó a otras personas a hacer algo, normalmente algo dañino

"...conspired (planned with others), prepared, planned, advocated for, or incited (encouraged) others..." The form explains incited as encouraged.

sabotage

Damaging or destroying something on purpose, often property or equipment.

sabotaje — dañar o destruir algo a propósito, a menudo propiedad o equipos

"Engaged (participated) in kidnapping, assassination, or hijacking or sabotage of an airplane, ship, vehicle, or other mode of transportation?"