

LESSON PLAN 2: CRITICAL THINKING, CAUSE & EFFECT

NATIONAL PAGES 6-7
Lexile level: 1230L

Who's Allowed to Be President?

The Constitution is vague about whether an American born outside the U.S. can be president. Is it time to settle the issue?



Additional Resources upfrontmagazine.com

Print or project:

- **Article Quiz** (also on p. 9 of this Teacher's Guide)
- **Making Connections** (analyzing cause and effect, also on p. 12 of this Teacher's Guide)

Download: A high-level legal commentary on the meaning of "natural born citizen"

Analyze the Article

1 Read: Students should read the article, marking the text to note key ideas or questions.

2 Discuss: Ask students to answer the following critical-thinking questions, citing evidence from the text:

- ▶ **Why do some argue that the "natural born citizen" clause of the Constitution has outlived its intent? Do you agree or disagree?** (At the time the Constitution was written in 1787, the nation had recently finished fighting for its independence. The Founding Fathers wanted to make sure that Britain—or any other foreign country—couldn't unduly influence the U.S. government. Some argue that this is less of a threat today. Student opinions will vary.)
- ▶ **The text cites several examples of presidential candidates (current and past) whose qualifications**

have been questioned because of the "natural born citizen" clause. Based on these examples, what are some of the questions the Supreme Court would have to address if it chose to rule on the phrase? (Based on the questions raised about the candidacies of Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and John McCain, a Supreme Court ruling would have to clarify whether a person could run for president who was born to American citizen parents living abroad, born in the U.S. to noncitizen immigrant parents, or born to American citizen parents on U.S. military installations.)

3 Core Skill Practice

Print or project the activity **Making Connections** (on p. 12 of this Teacher's Guide). Have students complete the organizer to analyze causes and effects described in the article.

Extend & Assess

4 Writing Prompt
Based on what you've read, write an essay explaining how you think the "natural born citizen" clause should be interpreted today.

5 Classroom Debate
Support your view: Does a person need to have been born to American parents within U.S. borders to qualify for the presidency?

6 Paired Text
Have advanced students download and analyze the legal commentary on the "natural born citizen" clause available on the *Upfront* website.