

# Actions That Remind Us of Our Heritage

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It is important to teach our children, and to remind ourselves, of our heritage:

- of why and how we became a nation,
- of the basic principles and documents upon which the country was founded,
- of what it took to achieve today's standard of living,
- of the mistakes we've made and,
- of the individuals and events that have played major roles in shaping the country.

Appreciating one's heritage is a prerequisite for taking actions to sustain it. Being aware of our heritage helps us to appreciate what we have and to see our shortcomings so they can be addressed.

## Teach Our Children

Teaching our children about the country's heritage is important because they know no other way of life. They need to appreciate that the life they have in the United States is not a birth right - but rather it is a gift from the culmination of past generations. It took enormous courage, loss of life, pain, mistakes, hard work and risk to get here. Our children need to be made aware that they are going to be the custodians of this country and be taught how to do that well.

## Remind Ourselves

Reminding ourselves of our heritage is important for similar reasons. However it has additional importance because, as we grow up and become involved in the day-to-day pursuit of our own lives, it is easy to forget that what we have isn't the norm and that a free society requires continuous vigilance and substantial energy. It is easy to become complacent. Reminding ourselves also provides the motivation and justification for active citizenship.

Here are some things each of us can do to teach our children about, and to remind ourselves of, where we came from and how we have evolved as a country.

## Citizen Actions

1. [Ask an immigrant about the fears or conditions that drove them from their native country and what hopes led them to ours.](#)
2. [Attend the naturalization ceremony of new citizens.](#)
3. [Discuss the responsibilities of citizenship with your children.](#)

4. [Hang the flag on national holidays and explain their significance to your children.](#)
5. [Interview your grandparents.](#)
6. [Learn what is being taught about America at your child's school .](#)
7. [Read a book or rent a movie that depicts the sacrifices of war or what people have done to escape oppression.](#)
8. [Read the Constitution, Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence.](#)
9. [Take a car trip across the country.](#)
10. [Take a course on American history.](#)
11. [Teach your children some "Americana-type" songs.](#)
12. [Teach your children the states and their capitals.](#)
13. [Travel to another country.](#)
14. [Visit a national or state park.](#)
15. [Visit an American Indian reservation - after learning about The Trail of Tears.](#)
16. [Visit a war memorial.](#)



**Reader Submitted  
Actions**

## Additional Actions That Support Our Heritage

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