

Tricky vocabulary in Part 9 of the N-400 application

USCIS examiners should not be testing English by asking for definitions of words in Part 9, because these advanced legal terms are not “words in ordinary usage.” Nevertheless, students are reporting that they have been asked to explain the meaning of words in Part 9, and have failed when they were unable to do so. The matter has been causing students a lot of anxiety lately.

Below, Lynne Weintraub has indicated the word or phrase in each question on Part 9 that is most likely to be unfamiliar to students. Next to it you will see a way that a student can (minimally) describe the word/phrase. While these are in no way precise definitions, it is hoped that they will be enough to convince an examiner that the student has some idea of what the question is about.

#	word/phrase	explanation
1.	claimed	lied (about being a citizen)
2.	registered	signed up
3.	owe	not paid yet
4.	called yourself a non-resident on tax return	lied on a tax form
5.a.	communist	like Karl Marx (Pol Pot, Chairman Mao, or Ho Chi Minh)
5.b.	advocated	worked for
	opposition	fighting against something
	totalitarian dictatorship	a government with no freedom
	overthrow	get rid of
	assaulting	hurting someone
	damage property	breaking something
	sabotage	breaking something/stopping something
6.a.	weapons	guns and bombs
6.b.	kidnapping	taking a person away and asking for money to give them back
	assassination	killing
	hijacking transportation	making a ship, plane, car, or truck go to a different place
7.a.	torture	hurt people
7.b.	genocide	killing many people
7.c.	killing	murder
7.d.	injuring	hurting someone
7.e.	forced sexual contact	rape
7.f.	practice religion	go to church (or temple or mosque)
7.g.	causing harm	hurting someone

8.a.	military unit	army
8.b.	paramilitary, self-defense, vigilante, rebel, guerrilla	army (people who fight with guns and bombs)
9.	prison, detention facility, labor camp	a kind of jail
10.a.	used (or threatened to use) weapons	tried to use guns and bombs to hurt people
10.b.	—	
10.c.	—	
11.	provided or transported weapons	gave or brought people guns or bombs
12.	weapons training	learn to use guns
	military training	learn to be a fighter
13.	recruit, enlist, conscript (a person under 15)	made a child be a fighter
14.	used (a person under 15)	made a child be a fighter
15.a.	committed a crime or offense	do something that is against the law
15.b.	arrested, cited, or detained	have problems with police
16.	—	
17.a.	engage in prostitution	get paid for sex
	procure or import prostitutes	pay for sex; try to buy or sell a person for sex
17.b.	produced controlled substances	made drugs
	distributed controlled substances	gave or sold drugs to people
	smuggled/trafficked controlled substances	brought drugs into the U.S.
17.c.	[married to more than one person]	
17.d.	married to obtain a benefit	faked a marriage
17.e.	enter the country illegally	come here with no visa
17.f.	gambled/gambling	like playing cards for money (or making bets)
17.g.	failed to support dependents	decided not to pay child support money
	failed to pay alimony	decided not to pay money to an ex-wife or ex-husband
17.h.	misrepresentation to obtain public benefits	fraud
18.	give information that is fraudulent or misleading	tell lies
19.	lied to gain entry	lied in order to get a visa (get into the U.S.)
20.	placed in removal/deportation	a judge said you had to leave the U.S.
21.	removed/deported	got sent back to your country
22.a.	born as male, between 18 and 26th birthday	young man
22.b.	register for Selective Service	put your name on the list
23.	left to avoid being drafted	went to another country so you don't have to fight for the U.S.
24.	exemption	a reason for not joining the army
25.	served in U.S. armed forces	been a soldier for the U.S.
26.	—	
27.	—	
28.	—	
29.	—	

30.a & b.	title of nobility	like a prince or princess
31.	support the Constitution	agree with the laws and the kind of government in the U.S.
32.	Oath of Allegiance	promise you make when you become a citizen
33.	unable to take Oath	cannot make the promise
	because of a disability/impairment	because you have a handicap
34.	willing to take the Oath	say “yes” to the promise
35.	bear arms	carry a gun/serve in the military
36.	perform non-combatant services	help the soldiers
37.	work of national importance	help your county

* *While students are likely to be more familiar with the word “crazy” than “mentally ill,” they should know that you can describe an idea this way, but it is offensive to describe a person with an illness this way.*