

Examples of US Citizenship Privilege

(Many of these apply to Western privilege in general)

1. Most if not all of the time I am able to surround myself with people who share a common or collective history, who understand the norms of U.S. society, who speak the same language that I do, and who understand my culture.
2. I can see my nation as “default” – it is normal, everybody else is “different”.
3. I can view my cultural norms as universal.
4. I do not know what is like to have war in my homeland.
5. I expect people in other countries to speak my language when I travel abroad.
6. I can assume everybody knows, or should know, my culture (for example, “American Idol” contestants).
7. I can assume no one else has any of the technological advantages I have (for example, assuming others do not know how to use a computer or oven).
8. I can easily ignore the fact that most news stories are told from the US-American or Western point of view and are not a universal truth.
9. I assume everybody wants to live in the United States, since I have been trained to believe is the best place to live (even without universal health care).
10. I see people from other countries as inferior to me, even if they are highly educated and successful.
11. I have access to plenty of movies and TV shows in my language, full of people from my country, showing my culture and way of life.
12. Becoming famous or successful is much easier for me even if others are more competent.
13. I often assume everyone on the Internet is US-American.
14. I believe everybody else wants to adopt the US-American or Western way of life. If they do not, I can view them as inferior and seek to convince or even force them to do so.
15. I can choose whether or not I take part in discussions surrounding how my lifestyle or the actions of my government have impacted the lives of those in other countries.
16. I can take the liberty of shortening or changing people’s names if they are hard for me to pronounce.
17. I can believe the United States is fair and free. Everybody else lives in a mess.
18. I can unknowingly assume everyone wants the USA to help them.

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19. I view the USA as the best nation there is and remain unaware of reasons others feel the same about their own countries.
20. I don't have to constantly worry that a small misstep could lead to my deportation, even if I currently have legal papers to be in the U.S. I can apply for a passport that will allow me to travel back and forth to most countries in the world.
21. I can think nothing of crossing the border to visit Tijuana, Mexico, for a day of shopping and sightseeing, while Mexican citizens must qualify economically to obtain even a tourist visa to enter the U.S., and there are a great many who do not qualify.
22. I can go into any bank and set up a checking account without fear of discrimination, thus knowing my money is safer than on my person or elsewhere.
23. If a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my perceived immigration status.
24. I can be reasonably sure that if I need legal, medical advice, or help, my citizenship status will not be a consideration.
25. I can vote in any election on policies or for people who will make laws affecting my way of life and my community.
26. I may consider running for political office to serve my community.
27. I, or a member of my family, can apply for scholarship aid to the institutions of higher education that are supported by my family's tax dollars.
28. I have not been forced to ask myself what would compel me to risk my life to enter the U.S. Whether crossing a barren desert for days without food or water, traveling over seas in the hull of ship, or any other dangerous form of transport, I have not been forced to leave my family, my home, and my roots behind me to enter a country that not only feels hostile to me, but is also difficult to understand at times.
29. If I am treated violently or inappropriately by a federal entity, I have some hope of legal recourse.
30. If I decide to organize politically or speak out about my country's unjust policies, I am likely to be addressing systems that I was raised around and understand. Also, those in power are more likely to listen to me and credit my arguments than a non-citizen.
31. I can remain unaware of reasons people do not like the USA or those who think it is not perfect. I can assume they are jealous while remaining unaware of the historical, political, and social factors that have created anti-US or anti-Western attitudes.