

How to Read a Green Card

The current version of the Permanent Resident Card, best known as a “green card,” was introduced by U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS) in May 2010. Unlike its predecessors, the current green card utilizes some significant new security features. State-of-the-art technology prevents counterfeiting, obstructs tampering, and facilitates quick and accurate authentication of the card.

Reading the Front of a Green Card

The front of a green card is mostly self-explanatory. It includes biographic information such as name, country of birth, birth date, sex, card expiration date, and the date of admission as a permanent resident. USCIS# describes the cardholder’s alien registration number or “A-number.” All permanent residents have a unique 8- or 9-digit A-number. Perhaps the most



mysterious information on the front of a green card is the category. Category describes the immigrant visa category that was used to admit an immigrant to the U.S. as a permanent resident or conditional permanent resident. The field is also known as “class of admission” in other USCIS documents. The field is typically one or two letters followed by a number. The State Department maintains a [complete list of immigrant visa categories](#).



Second Line of Characters

- 1-6: birth date (in YY/MM/DD format)
- 7: not documented, assumed to be a check digit
- 8: gender
- 9-14: expiration date (in YY/MM/DD format)
- 15: not documented, assumed to be a check digit
- 16-29: country of birth
- 30: not documented, assumed to be a check digit

Third Line of Characters

Last name, first name, middle name, first initial of father, first initial of mother (this line is spaced with "<<" between the last name and first name). Depending on the length of the name, the father's and mother's initials may be omitted.

About CitizenPath

CitizenPath makes USCIS immigration forms easy to prepare. The online service provides tips and alerts to help applicants avoid costly delays and even lets them know when to contact an attorney. Most people can prepare Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card, in about 15 minutes. [Try it out for free.](#)