

Name _____

The Census and Apportionment

1. Review the following vocabulary:

- **Legislative branch:** One of the three main parts of the U.S. government. It consists of the U.S. Congress. The legislative branch drafts laws, confirms or rejects presidential nominations, and has the authority to declare war.
- **Congress:** The legislative branch of the U.S. government. The U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate work together to create laws.
- **Senate:** The smaller, upper assembly of the U.S. Congress. The Senate has two members from each state.
- **Electoral College:** A body of people representing the states of the U.S., who formally cast votes for the election of the president and vice president.
- **U.S. House of Representatives:** The lower chamber of congress where seats are distributed based on population determined through the decennial census.
- **Representative:** A person who speaks and acts on behalf of another person or a group of people.
- **Constitution:** The basic written set of principles and precedents of federal government.



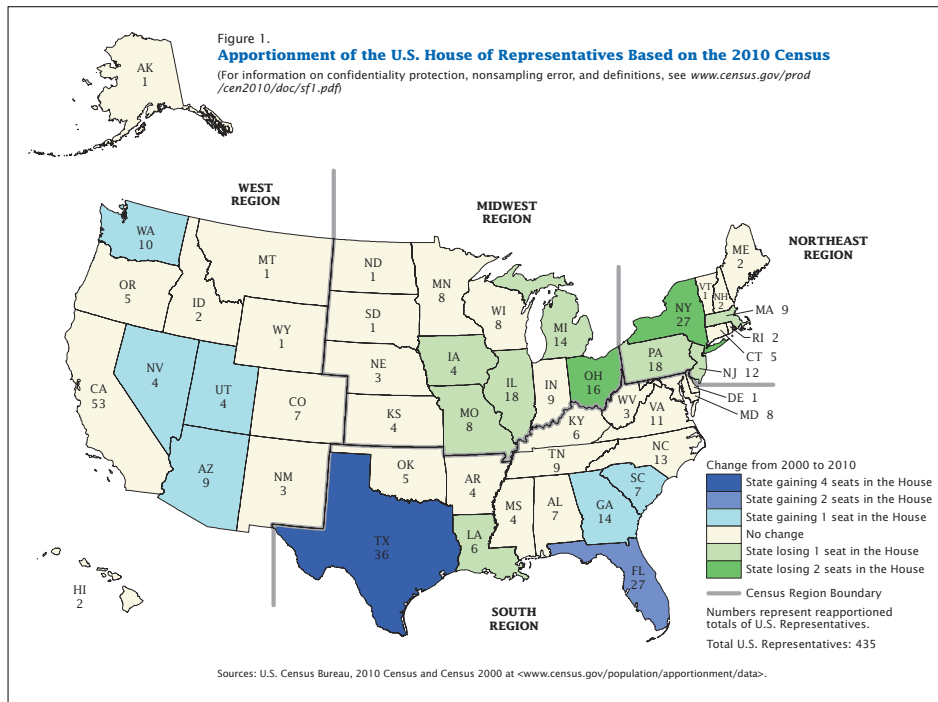
2. Read the following article with your class.

What is apportionment?

Apportionment is the dividing up of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives among the 50 states, according to the states' population, as determined by the U.S. census.

A brief history lesson: How does apportionment work?

The U.S. government has a **legislative branch**, called **Congress**, which makes laws. Congress has two parts: the **Senate** and the **U.S. House of Representatives**. All states have two senators, but the number of **representatives** that each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives depends on the **population** of that state. The **U.S. Constitution** says that each state must have at least one person in the U.S. House of Representatives, but the total size of the House is 435 seats. The more people a state has, the more representatives it will have, but only if counted in the decennial census.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Congressional Apportionment, 2010 Census Briefs*
<https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-08.pdf>

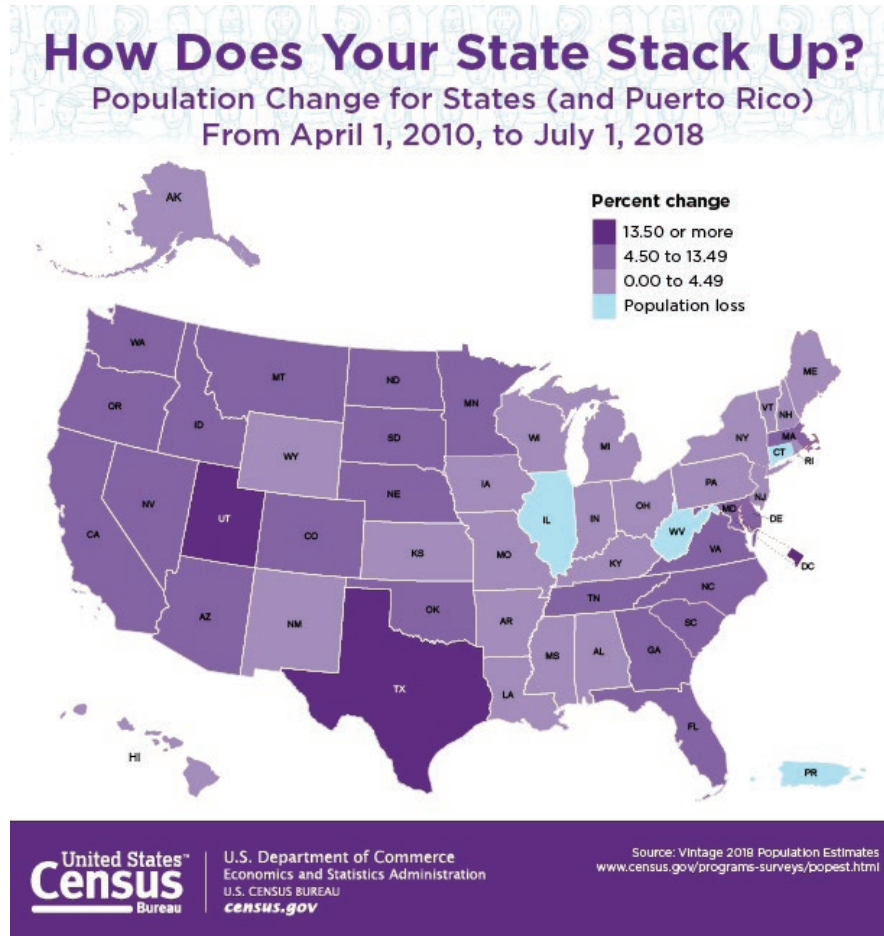
What happens after the census?

One of the main reasons for doing the census every 10 years and keeping track of population changes is to apportion, or divide, the membership of the U.S. House of Representatives among the 50 states. Following a census, the seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are automatically divided according to the census data. If a state has gained population, it may receive more seats. If a state has lost population, it may lose seats, meaning it would also lose votes in presidential campaigns.



Why is this important?

Apportionment helps us achieve the principle of “one person, one vote”—a fundamental part of our democracy. Apportionment also affects presidential elections. In the **Electoral College**, each state has the same number of “votes” to elect the president as it has representatives and senators in Congress. Therefore, apportionment ensures that your voice is being heard, both in legislative decisions and in elections.



Link to access data:

<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/population-change-2010-2018.html>

Use the infographic above to answer the questions on the next page.



3. Which states had a population increase from the 2010 Census to 2018?

4. After the decennial census, which states do you think will have the highest percent change in population between 2010 and 2020, based on what you have learned?

5. Why is apportionment important?

6. How does participating in the census help make sure your voice is heard?

Home Extension

Take your student worksheet home and share it with another person in your home. Then visit [My Congressional District](https://www.census.gov/mycd) (<https://www.census.gov/mycd>) and research your own congressional district to learn its total population and the characteristics of its population.

