

U.S. Virgin Islands: Inhabitants Then and Now

Topic(s):

Diversity, race, Hispanic origin, social characteristics, economic characteristics, data collection, census

Grade Level:

9-12

Approx. Time Required:

45 minutes

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify how a census helps governments meet people's needs.
- Evaluate the similarities and differences in census data for the U.S. Virgin Islands across different time periods.
- Analyze census data to draw conclusions about social and economic changes within the islands.
- Examine census data to describe the impact of diversity on the islands.
- Support hypotheses using reasoning based on census data.

Introduction

The 2020 Census Statistics in Schools (SIS) program is designed to educate students about the decennial census and to teach them educational concepts and skills, such as data literacy, through the use of census data in the classroom. Responses to the 2020 Census affect plans for hospitals and schools, support for local programs, improvements in emergency services, and construction of roads. They also inform businesses that are looking to add jobs. By educating students about the 2020 Census, you can help encourage a complete count.

The 2020 Census SIS program can be used with educational standards across the country. You can use the topics and learning objectives above to determine which subject and unit plan or theme this activity will best fit into.

About the 2020 Census

In addition to the information that is built into instructions for this activity, the following points provide an easy, grade-appropriate way to explain the census to your students.

- The decennial census is a count of every person living in the United States and its territories that occurs every 10 years.
- It is important that every person be counted to make sure the government can provide money to each community for things like roads, schools, and hospitals.
- Make sure an adult in your home counts you in the 2020 Census.





Materials Required

- Printed student worksheets

Worksheet Description

Students will learn about the history of the U.S. Virgin Islands and its inhabitants through the use of census data. They will compare data on the people and their culture in the U.S. Virgin Islands from the late 20th century to the present, noting similarities and differences in the island populations between the different time periods. Students will also learn how the islands became so diverse and the social and economic impact of that diversity. Based on changes in the census results, students will draw conclusions about changes in the U.S. Virgin Islands since the census began on the islands.

Before the Activity—10 Minutes

1. Ask students what they know about the decennial census. Let students share their answers, and then explain the following key points:
 - The federal government counts the number of people living in the United States and its territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands, every 10 years in what's called the decennial census.
 - The census uses questions to learn about the residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands. These questions help the government find information about the people who live in each subdistrict, such as their age, their sex, and how many people live in each home.
 - The government then uses this information to determine what services the people living in the U.S. Virgin Islands need.
 - Information about age, sex, languages spoken, and economic status plays a big part in the U.S. Virgin Islands' planning decisions.
 - It is our responsibility to make sure we are counted so that the government can distribute billions of dollars to communities like ours for things like roads, schools, and hospitals.
2. In a class discussion, have students define social and economic characteristics that they think the government might ask about in the decennial census.



During the Activity—30 Minutes

1. Divide your students into four groups as you hand out student worksheets. Assign each group a data category to examine in **Activity Item: U.S. Virgin Islands Census Data, 1980-2010**. Categories include Population, Race and Hispanic Origin, Social Characteristics, and Economic Characteristics. Have students compare the data for their category in all four charts: 2010, 2000, 1990, and 1980.

Students should use the following questions to guide their group discussion:

Question #1: How did the numbers in your category change over the years (1980-2010)?

Question #2: In what years did the most dramatic changes in data occur?

Question #3: What could have led to these changes?

Question #4: How does the data reflect the changes in diversity on the islands?

Note: Let students know that the median household income and median family income data is adjusted for inflation to show an accurate depiction of change over time.

2. After members of each group have discussed Questions #1 through #4 among themselves, have them record their answers on their student worksheets. Come together as a class and have each group take turns presenting its information to the class. Encourage other groups to ask questions about the information presented or to ask the presenting group to clarify any questions.
3. After all groups have shared, direct students to select five questions to answer from the list on their student worksheet. (Questions are listed below for your reference. Students should answer these questions individually, not as a group.)
 - a. What events could have led to the increase in the total population in the U.S. Virgin Islands from 1980 to 2000?
 - b. What events in the islands could have prompted the decrease in population from 2000 to 2010?
 - c. During what years did the highest growth occur for the Black or African American and White populations under the race and Hispanic origin section of the table? What economic or social change during that period might be the cause?
 - d. What race groups do you think the “Other races” category includes? Why does the census not list these race groups individually?

Example answers include Asian or American Indian or Alaska Native, which are not listed separately because they make up such a small percentage of the population.



- e. Did the number of people who are enrolled in school decrease or increase throughout the years? What might have caused this change?
- f. Look at data on high school graduates, as well as median household and family incomes, from 1980 to 2010. How does the number of people who graduated from high school affect the socioeconomic status of households and families?
- g. Analyze the data for the number of people in the labor force and determine if there was an increase or decrease over the years. What could have led to this change? What could be an effect of this change on the island's economy?
- h. What could have led to the increase in the number of people who speak a language other than English at home?
- i. How does the percentage of people in poverty affect the overall economy of the islands?

Note: If students do not finish answering the questions, they can take the assignment home for homework and bring it to class the next day.

After the Activity—5 Minutes

Summarize for students the importance of the decennial census and why it's imperative we get an accurate count in 2020. Mention the following points:

- The decennial census is a mandatory questionnaire that helps the government learn more about the people who live in each subdistrict, such as their age, their sex, and how many people live in each home.
- The government uses this information to decide which services the people living on the island need most.
- It is our responsibility to make sure we are counted so that the government can distribute federal funds every year to communities like ours for things like roads, schools, and hospitals.

Home Extension

Teachers, please read the instructions for the students' homework assignment out loud to the class:

Take your worksheet home and share it with an adult in your home. Tell them what you learned today about the changes in demographics in the U.S. Virgin Islands when comparing data from 1980 through 2010. Then explain the importance of the decennial census and ensuring that everyone in your community is counted.



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Activity Item: U.S. Virgin Islands Census Data, 1980-2010

2010 Census Demographic Profile Data

Population	
Total population	106,405
Male population	50,867
Female population	55,538
Race and Hispanic Origin	
Race	
One race	104,202
Black or African American	80,908
White	16,646
Other races	6,648
Two or More Races	2,203
Hispanic Origin	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	18,504
Not Hispanic or Latino	87,901
Social Characteristics	
Population age 3 and over enrolled in school	27,015
High school graduate or more	48,791
Native	70,838
Foreign born	35,567
English only spoken at home	70,864
Language other than English	28,041
Economic Characteristics	
In labor force	54,541
Not in labor force	28,093
Median household income (in 2009 dollars)	37,254
Median family income (in 2009 dollars)	45,058
Individuals below poverty level	22.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, U.S. Virgin Islands



Activity Item: U.S. Virgin Islands Census Data, 1980-2010 (Cont.)

2000 Census Demographic Profile Data

Population	
Total population	108,612
Male population	51,864
Female population	56,748
Race and Hispanic Origin	
Race	
One race	104,820
Black or African American	82,750
White	14,218
Other races	7,852
Two or More Races	3,792
Hispanic Origin	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	15,196
Not Hispanic or Latino	93,416
Social Characteristics	
Population age 3 and over enrolled in school	32,119
High school graduate or more	39,727
Native	72,525
Foreign born	36,087
English only spoken at home	74,740
Language other than English	25,319
Economic Characteristics	
In labor force	51,042
Not in labor force	27,223
Median household income (in 2009 dollars)	31,834
Median family income (in 2009 dollars)	36,794
Individuals below poverty level	32.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, U.S. Virgin Islands

<https://www.census.gov/census2000/pdf/usvifullprofile.pdf>



Activity Item: U.S. Virgin Islands Census Data, 1980-2010 (Cont.)

1990 Census Demographic Profile Data

Population	
Total population	101,809
Male population	49,210
Female population	52,599
Race and Hispanic Origin	
Race	
Black or African American	78,003
White	13,775
Other races	10,031
Hispanic Origin	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	14,579
Not Hispanic or Latino	87,230
Social Characteristics	
Population age 3 and over enrolled in school	32,658
High school graduate or more	31,453
Native	69,984
Foreign born	31,825
English only spoken at home	70,442
Language other than English	22,137
Economic Characteristics	
In labor force	47,553
Not in labor force	22,770
Median household income (in 2009 dollars)	36,851
Median family income (in 2009 dollars)	40,170
Individuals below poverty level	27.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, U.S. Virgin Islands

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1990/cp-2/cp-2-55.pdf>



Activity Item: U.S. Virgin Islands Census Data, 1980-2010 (Cont.)

1980 Census Demographic Profile Data

Population	
Total population	96,569
Male population	46,204
Female population	50,365
Race and Hispanic Origin	
Race	
Black or African American	76,951
White	14,280
Other races	5,338
Hispanic Origin	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	13,735
Not Hispanic or Latino	82,834
Social Characteristics	
Population age 3 and over enrolled in school	34,934
High school graduate or more	22,514
Native	65,838
Foreign born	30,731
English only spoken at home	69,754
Language other than English	16,102
Economic Characteristics	
In labor force	38,082
Not in labor force	21,228
Median household income (in 2009 dollars)	34,631
Median family income (in 2009 dollars)	35,679
Individuals below poverty level	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980 Census, U.S. Virgin Islands

https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980/1980censusofpopu80155u_bw.pdf