

The Census Questionnaire: Then and Now

Topic(s):

Census questions,
education, employment

Grade Level:

9-12

Approx. Time Required:

45 minutes

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- Understand the role of the decennial census and its impact on the nation.

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 use of census data in the classroom. Responding to the census helps your community get its fair share of funding. Census data guides how more than \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed to states and communities each year. These funds support vital community programs that help children, such as schools, hospitals, housing, and food assistance. 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 United States. 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 decennial census to your students.

- The decennial census is a count of every person living in the United States that occurs every 10 years.
- It is important that every person be counted so that the government can properly distribute \$675 billion to communities.
- The population of every state as counted in the census also determines how many representatives each state is given in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- You can do your part by making sure an adult in your home counts you—and every person living in your home—in the 2020 Census.





Materials Required

- Printed student worksheets
- A TV, projector, or interactive whiteboard to play the video [Shape Your Future](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXJz7ZfzAuM) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXJz7ZfzAuM>)
- Computers or tablets with internet access for each student
 - This activity can also be done in small groups, with one computer or tablet per group, or, if student technology is not available, it can be done as a teacher-led activity.
 - If computers are not available, consider printing out the census forms from 1900 and 2010 ahead of time.

Worksheet Description

Students will compare the census questionnaires used in 1900 and 2010 and answer questions about how and why the questions have changed from one century to the next.

Before the Activity—5 Minutes

1. Ask students what they know about the decennial census and the Census Bureau. Show the video [Shape Your Future](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXJz7ZfzAuM) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXJz7ZfzAuM>). Then ask why the census is conducted and how census information impacts our community.

If you or your students want to know more about how the questions on the census are decided, more information is included below:

From 1790 through 1920, the congressional legislation authorizing each census specified the questions asked by enumerators. From 1930 through 1950, the congressional legislation only specified the general subject areas, leaving the content of the specific questions to the Director of the Census Bureau. Title 13 of the U.S. Code, enacted in 1954, now guides the process of determining the subjects and questions in the census.

2. Lead a discussion for students about the decennial census and Census Bureau, ensuring that students understand the following points:
 - The decennial census is a count of every man, woman, and child in the United States, based on where they live.
 - This population and demographic information affects the spending of \$675 billion on federal programs that provide things such as roads, schools, and health care.
 - Population movements also affect how many seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.
 - Getting an accurate count of all people in the country is a huge, yet highly important task.





Hand out student worksheets and printed census forms if you choose not to use technology for this activity.

During the Activity—30 Minutes

1. Direct students to the [historical census forms](https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/questionnaires/2010_overview.html) (https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/questionnaires/2010_overview.html) online or the printed copies you passed out. Guide students to complete the 1900 and 2010 census forms with their own information, and record their answers in the table provided in Question #1. Then have students record their answer to Question #2 on their student worksheet. All questions on the historical census forms are provided at the end of this teacher's guide for easy reference. If students have trouble reading the historical documents, teachers can use these questions to help guide students.

Question #2: What differences did you notice in the forms you filled out? Why do you think those differences exist?

Answers will vary, but students may notice that the 1900 Census did not list options for race, and people simply wrote in their answer. They may also say that the questionnaire asked about place of birth and parents' place of birth, as well as education (asking specifically about being able to read and write and the months the person attended school).

2. Ask what the students noticed about the differences between the 1900 and 2010 censuses.
 - Why do you think the census asks the questions it does?
 - Are there questions that seem unnecessary?
 - Are there questions that should be added?
3. Next, tell the class that they will look at the changes in the census over time, starting with questions about education. Have students complete the first column in the chart in Question #3 of their worksheet with their findings. Students will look at the years 1900 and 2010.
4. Now divide students into groups of four. Tell each group to look at the 2010 Census questions and choose a question topic to explore (e.g., race). The groups should then look at the census form from 1900 and record, in the second column of the Question #3 table, what questions have been asked about the topic in 1900 and 2010. Students should consider:
 - How have the questions changed over time?
 - When did they change?
 - Why do you think they changed when they changed?



Note: Depending on the time period you are studying, you could change the topics you focus on.

Year	Topic: Education What questions were asked?	Topic: _____ What questions were asked?
1900	Can the person read? Can the person write? Can the person speak English?	
2010	The 2010 Census did not ask any education-related questions.	

Note: Students will notice that the 2010 Census did not ask any education-related questions. You can explain to your students that starting in 2010, the Census Bureau only distributed the “short form” for the decennial census, and started using the American Community Survey in 2005 to gather data on additional questions, on topics such as education. The American Community Survey is given to a sample of the U.S. population instead of every person. Images of the education-related questions on the 2019 American Community Survey are included below.

10 a. At any time IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS, has this person attended school or college?
Include only nursery or preschool, kindergarten, elementary school, home school, and schooling which leads to a high school diploma or a college degree.

☐ No, has not attended in the last 3 months → *SKIP to question 11*

☐ Yes, public school, public college

☐ Yes, private school, private college, home school

b. What grade or level was this person attending?
Mark (X) ONE box.

☐ Nursery school, preschool

☐ Kindergarten

☐ Grade 1 through 12 – *Specify grade 1 – 12*

☐ College undergraduate years (freshman to senior)

☐ Graduate or professional school beyond a bachelor's degree (*for example: MA or PhD program, or medical or law school*)



11 What is the highest degree or level of school this person has **COMPLETED**? Mark (X) **ONE** box. If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.

NO SCHOOLING COMPLETED

☐ No schooling completed

NURSERY OR PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 12

☐ Nursery school

☐ Kindergarten

☐ Grade 1 through 11 – Specify grade 1 – 11

☐ 12th grade – **NO DIPLOMA**

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

☐ Regular high school diploma

☐ GED or alternative credential

COLLEGE OR SOME COLLEGE

☐ Some college credit, but less than 1 year of college credit

☐ 1 or more years of college credit, no degree

☐ Associate's degree (for example: AA, AS)

☐ Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, BS)

AFTER BACHELOR'S DEGREE

☐ Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)

☐ Professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)

☐ Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)

F Answer question 12 if this person has a bachelor's degree or higher. Otherwise, **SKIP** to question 13.

12 This question focuses on this person's **BACHELOR'S DEGREE**. Please print below the specific major(s) of any **BACHELOR'S DEGREES** this person has received. (For example: chemical engineering, elementary teacher education, organizational psychology)



5. Give students 10 minutes to complete Question #4 as a group.

Question #4: What changes did you notice in the question(s) for each topic? What events or trends might have led to these changes?

Answers will vary, but students will notice that earlier censuses asked more specifically about the type of profession instead of whether this person was employed or not.

After the Activity—10 Minutes

Keeping these trends in mind, lead a discussion on what questions might be important to ask in 2020 that were not considered in 2010, and which questions students might ask if they were conducting a census. Challenge students to think about things that have changed in everyday life in the past 10 years. Then direct them to answer Question #5 with their final thoughts.

Home Extension

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

Take your student worksheet home and share what you learned about the change in questions on the census over time with an adult in your home. Ask them if they participated in the 2010 Census. If not, ask them if they are aware of the 2020 Census coming up and if they have a plan for who will fill it out.



Activity Item: Census Forms Over Time

7-224

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES

SCHEDULE No. 1—POPULATION

State _____ }
County _____ }
Township or other division of county _____ }
Name of incorporated city, town, or village, within the above-named division, _____ }
Name of Institution, _____ }
Enumerated by me on the _____ day of June, 1900, _____, Enumerator

Supervisor's District No. _____ Sheet No. _____
Enumeration District No. _____

LOCATION			NAME of each person whose place of abode on June 1, 1900, was in this family Enter surname first, then the given name and middle initial, if any Include every person living on June 1, 1900 Omit children born since June 1, 1900	RELATION Relationship of each person to the head of the family	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION							NATIVITY			CITIZENSHIP		OCCUPATION, TRADE, OR PROFESSION of each person TEN YEARS of age and over		EDUCATION				OWNERSHIP OF HOME				
IN CITIES	House Number	Number of dwelling house, in lot order of enumeration			Sex	DATE OF BIRTH Month Year	Age at last birthday	Whether single, married, widowed, or divorced	Number of years married	Number of times married	Number of children living	Place of birth of this person	Place of birth of FATHER of this person	Place of birth of MOTHER of this person	Year of immigration to United States, if born in foreign birth, give the Country only	Year of immigration to United States, if born in foreign birth, give the Country only	Occupation	Male 10 years and over	Female 10 years and over	Can read	Can write	Can speak English	Owned free or mortgaged	Form of house	Number of farm schedule		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 10-70020-1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Census Form, 1900

https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/questionnaires/1900_2.html



All questions asked on the 1900 Census are listed below.

Location

- Street
- House number
- Number of dwelling house, in the order of visitation
- Number of family, in the order of visitation

Name

- Name of each person whose place of abode on June 1, 1900, was in this family

Relation

- Relationship of each person to the head of the family

Personal Description

- Color or race
- Sex
- Date of birth – month and year
- Age at last birthday
- Whether single, married, widowed, or divorced
- Number of years married
- Mother of how many children
- Number of these children living

Nativity

- Place of birth of each person and parents of each person enumerated. If born in the United States, give the state or territory; if of foreign birth, give the country only.
- Place of birth of this person
- Place of birth of father of this person
- Place of birth of mother of this person

Citizenship

- Year of immigration to the United States
- Number of years in the United States
- Naturalization

Occupation, Trade, or Profession (of each person 10 years of age and over)

- Occupation
- Months not employed

**Education**

- Attended school (in months)
- Can read
- Can write
- Can speak English

Ownership of Home

- Owned or rented
- Owned free or mortgaged
- Farm or house
- Number of farm schedule

Activity Item: Census Forms Over Time (Cont.)

Draft 2 (9-25-2008) Fold line → | Fold line → |

Use this section to complete information for the rest of the people you counted in Question 1 on the front page. We may call for additional information about them.

Person 7 Last Name First Name MI
Sex Age on April 1, 2010 Date of Birth Related to Person 1?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Yes ☐ No

Person 8 Last Name First Name MI
Sex Age on April 1, 2010 Date of Birth Related to Person 1?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Yes ☐ No

Person 9 Last Name First Name MI
Sex Age on April 1, 2010 Date of Birth Related to Person 1?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Yes ☐ No

Person 10 Last Name First Name MI
Sex Age on April 1, 2010 Date of Birth Related to Person 1?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Yes ☐ No

Person 11 Last Name First Name MI
Sex Age on April 1, 2010 Date of Birth Related to Person 1?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Yes ☐ No

Person 12 Last Name First Name MI
Sex Age on April 1, 2010 Date of Birth Related to Person 1?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for completing your official 2010 Census form.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
JIC1 JIC2

If your enclosed postage-paid envelope is missing, please mail your completed form to:
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 East 10th Street
Jeffersonville, IN 47132

If you need help completing this form, call 1-866-872-6868 between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., 7 days a week. The telephone call is free.

TDD — Telephone display device for the hearing impaired. Call 1-866-783-2010 between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., 7 days a week. The telephone call is free.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Si usted necesita ayuda para completar este cuestionario, llame al 1-866-872-6868 entre las 8:00 a.m. y 9:00 p.m., 7 días a la semana. La llamada telefónica es gratis.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take about 10 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this burden to: Paperwork Reduction Project 0607-0919-C, U.S. Census Bureau, AMSD-3K138, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233. You may e-mail comments to <Paperwork@census.gov>, use "Paperwork Project 0607-0919-C" as the subject.

Respondents are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a valid approval number from the Office of Management and Budget.

United States Census 2010 This is the official form for all the people at this address. It is quick and easy, and your answers are protected by law.

Use a blue or black pen. Start here

The Census must count every person living in the United States on April 1, 2010. Before you answer Question 1, count the people living in this house, apartment, or mobile home using our guidelines.

- Count all people, including babies, who live and sleep here most of the time.
- The Census Bureau also conducts counts in institutions and other places, so:
 - Do not count anyone living away either at college or in the Armed Forces.
 - Do not count anyone in a nursing home, jail, prison, detention facility, etc., on April 1, 2010.
 - Leave these people off your form, even if they will return to live here after they leave college, the nursing home, the military, jail, etc. Otherwise, they may be counted twice.

The Census must also include people without a permanent place to stay, so:

- If someone who has no permanent place to stay is staying here on April 1, 2010, count that person. Otherwise, he or she may be missed in the census.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010?
Number of people =

2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1? Mark 'X' all that apply.

- ☐ Children, such as newborn babies or foster children
- ☐ Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws
- ☐ Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in baby sitters
- ☐ People staying here temporarily
- ☐ No additional people

3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home — Mark 'X' ONE box.

- ☐ Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? Include home equity loans.
- ☐ Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?
- ☐ Rented?
- ☐ Occupied without payment of rent?

4. What is your telephone number? We may call if we don't understand an answer.
Area Code + Number

OMB No. 0607-0919-C; Approval Expires 12/31/2011.
Form D-61 (9-25-2008)

5. Please provide information for each person living here. Start with a person living here who owns or rents this house, apartment, or mobile home. If the owner or renter lives somewhere else, start with any adult living here. This will be Person 1. What is Person 1's name? Print name below:
Last Name First Name MI

6. What is Person 1's sex? Mark 'X' ONE box.
☐ Male ☐ Female

7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth? Please report babies as age 0 whose child is less than 1 year old. Print numbers in boxes.
Age on April 1, 2010 (Month) Day Year of birth

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
☐ No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
☐ Yes, Cuban
☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print origin, for example, Argentine, Colombian, Dominican, Ecuadorian, Salvadoran, Spanish, and so on.

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark 'X' one or more boxes.
☐ White
☐ Black, African Am., or Negro
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.
☐ Asian Indian ☐ Japanese ☐ Native Hawaiian
☐ Chinese ☐ Korean ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro
☐ Filipino ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Samoan
☐ Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, and so on. ☐ Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.

10. Does Person 1 sometimes live or stay somewhere else?
☐ No ☐ Yes — Mark 'X' all that apply.
☐ In college housing ☐ For child custody
☐ In the military ☐ In jail or prison
☐ At a seasonal or second residence ☐ In a nursing home
☐ For another reason

→ If more people were counted in Question 1, continue with Person 2.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

0-61- (Printed on Recycled Paper) 50% 30% 20% 25% 50% and 100% — Fold Line

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Census Form, 2010

https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/questionnaires/2010_overview.html



All questions asked on the 2010 Census are listed below.

- How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010?
- Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1?
 - Children, such as newborn babies or foster children
 - Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws
 - Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in baby sitters
 - People staying here temporarily
 - No additional people
- Is this house, apartment, or mobile home –
 - Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? Include home equity loans.
 - Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?
 - Rented?
 - Occupied without payment of rent?
- What is your telephone number? We may call if we don't understand an answer.
- Please provide information for each person living here. Start with a person living here who owns or rents this house, apartment, or mobile home. If the owner or renter lives somewhere else, start with any adult living here. This will be Person 1. What is Person 1's name? Print name below.
 - Last name
 - First name
 - Middle initial
- What is Person 1's sex?
 - Male
 - Female
- What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth?
- Is Person 1 Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 - No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
 - Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
 - Yes, Puerto Rican
 - Yes, Cuban
 - Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- What is Person 1's race?
 - White
 - Black, African Am., or Negro
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian Indian



- Chinese
 - Filipino
 - Japanese
 - Korean
 - Vietnamese
 - Other Asian
 - Native Hawaiian
 - Guamanian or Chamorro
 - Samoan
 - Other Pacific Islander
- Does Person 1 sometimes live or stay somewhere else?
 - No
 - Yes – Mark all that apply.
 - In college housing
 - In the military
 - At a seasonal or second residence
 - For child custody
 - In jail or prison
 - In a nursing home
 - For another reason