Diversity: Census Questions Over Time

Topic(s):
Diversity, race,
decennial census

Grade Level:
7-8

Approx. Time Required:
45 minutes

Learning Objectives:
Students will be able to:

- Draw conclusions based on analysis of a primary source.

- Analyze and cite recurring themes using text evidence.

- Build vocabulary.

- Calculate the percentage of a given data set.

- Apply mathematical processes to represent and solve problems involving proportional relationships.

- Identify the importance of the decennial census and how it benefits their community.

- Understand how the census has reflected the diversity of the United States.

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 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.

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About the Modifications

- **This activity is a modified version of the 2020 SIS activity Diversity: Census Questions Over Time for seventh and eighth grade classrooms. It has been modified to accommodate K-12 English language learners (ELLs).**
- **Sections have been added to this teaching guide that call out modifications made specifically for ELLs.**

Materials Required

- **Printed ELL student worksheets**
- Chart paper or a board to write on
- A writing utensil
- Calculators for each student

Worksheet Description

Students will analyze historical data on race and ethnicity in the United States over time. Students will note trends around race and ethnicity by looking at data from 2000 and 2010, highlighting the broad diversity of people who live in the United States today. Students will learn why it is important that the U.S. Census Bureau collect this data.

Before the Activity—5 Minutes

For ELLs: Before the lesson, when you hand out student worksheets and activity items to all students, hand out the Word Bank and Vocabulary to English language learners as well. Introduce key vocabulary to your students. Use your discretion in choosing which concepts are already understood and which require previewing. Direct students to the word bank and vocabulary to follow along and view images.

Key Vocabulary for ELLs:

- **Census: A process of counting all the people in a country, city, or town and collecting information about them**
- **Questionnaire: A set of written questions that is given to people to collect facts or opinions about something**
- **Diversity: The ways people are different from one another**
- **Percentage: A number that shows a part of a group**
- **Data: Facts usually represented by numbers**

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For ELLs: During discussions, encourage students to use the word bank in their worksheet to find words to support them in their oral answers. Provide sentence starters on the board for students, as needed, to help them answer questions.

1. Before introducing the activity, break students into groups of three. Hand out one student worksheet to each student.

2. Explain to students that they will be looking at how diversity has changed in the United States over time by looking at the questions asked by the Census Bureau on the decennial census, as well as census data from 2000 and 2010. Tell the class that they'll be focusing specifically on the racial and ethnic makeup of the United States. Explain that the Census Bureau conducts the decennial census every 10 years to get an accurate count of the entire population of the United States. The next census will take place in spring 2020.

3. Explain to students the difference between race and ethnicity.

   - **Race:** A person's self-identification with one or more social groups — as defined by the U.S. government. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race. Survey respondents may report multiple races. The Census Bureau collects racial data in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

   - **Ethnicity:** A person's self-identification as Hispanic/Latino or not Hispanic/Latino — as defined by the U.S. government. The Census Bureau collects racial data in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

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During the Activity—30 Minutes

1. Direct students' attention to their worksheets. In their small groups, students should look at how the question of race and ethnicity on the census questionnaire has changed over time, referencing **Activity Item: Race and Ethnicity Questions on the Census**. Students will complete the table in their worksheet, recording their observations about the census questions. Give students 10 minutes to do this activity as a group, encouraging them to discuss the differences they see with the other members of their group.

   For ELLs: Model for students with the blank row for 1970 in their student worksheet, prompting them with the sentence starter, "I notice_____." Remind students to use their word bank and vocabulary to assist in discussing their ideas with their peers.

   Student answers will vary in their charts but should note the differences in how the questions of race and ethnicity were asked on the various census questionnaires, and the options available to self-identify.

2. Have students record their answers to Question #2: Explain what changes you noticed in how the answer options have changed over time. Why do you think these changed?

   Student answers should note that the questions show how the country has become more diverse over time. Teachers may want to note that the Census Bureau uses race categories that are determined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is the business division of the Executive Office of the President of the United States. OMB standards—which include race categories—were updated in 1977 and 1997. The race categories were updated based on the 1997 OMB categories in 2000, allowing for 5 race selections (plus "Some Other Race") and combinations. In 1990, they were still following the 1977 OMB standards, which meant responses had to pick one from White, Black, American Indian/ Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander.

3. Explain to students that now that they've reviewed what questions were asked, they are going to look at the data that these types of questions have produced in recent years. Turn students' attention to the data tables showing the results of the census in 2000 and 2010.

   Give the class 15 minutes to complete the data tables in Question #3 and answer Questions #4 and #5 on their student worksheet. (An answer key for data tables appears below.)

   For ELLs: While non-English language learners are completing their calculations, review the data table headings and content with English language learners. Ensure that students recognize the difference between the 2000 and the 2010 data. Then give students extra time to complete their answers to Questions #4 and #5.

Question #4: Which races increased in percentage of population from 2000 to 2010? Which races decreased in percentage of population from 2000 to 2010?

For ELLs: Use the following sentence starters:

- **"The races that increased are_____."**

- **"The races that decreased are_____."**

Students will notice that most races increased in percentage from 2000 to 2010—except for White, which decreased. More people are also classifying themselves as "Some Other Race" and "Two or More Races." The Hispanic and Latino ethnicity percentages also increased from 2000 to 2010.

Question #5: Predict the racial makeup of the country in 2020, 2030, and 2040 by percentage of the population, based on the changes you noticed from 2000 to 2010.

For ELLs: Use the sentence starter, "I predict_____, because I notice that _____."

Answers will vary, but students will likely predict a continued rise in most races except for White, as well as an increase in "Hispanic or Latino" ethnicity. Students could also note that those who identify as "Two or More Races" will also increase.

After the Activity—10 Minutes

1. Have students discuss their answers to Question #5 in their small groups. Bring the class back together and ask a few students to share what their group discussed.

   For ELLs: Use the following sentence starters:

   - **"I predict_____."**

   - **"Based on_____, I believe_____."**

   - **"I noticed that_____, so I predict_____."**

Home Extension

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

Take your student worksheet home and share it with an adult in your home. Ask them which boxes they would have checked had they participated in the censuses in 1970, 1990, and 2010. Share your predictions of the population in 2020, 2030, and 2040.

Race and Ethnicity Data Over Time—ANSWER KEY

2000 Census: Number of People per Race

Subject	Number	Percent
Total Population	281,421,906	100.0%
One Race	274,595,678	97.6%
White	211,460,626	75.1%
Black or African American	34,658,190	12.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	2,475,956	0.9%
Asian	10,242,998	3.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	398,835	0.1%
Some Other Race	15,359,073	5.5%
Two or More Races	6,826,228	2.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin and by Race for the United States: 2000 and 2010
https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2011/dec/c2010br-02.pdf

2000 Census: Number of People per Ethnicity

Subject	Number	Percent
Total Population	281,421,906	100.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	35,305,818	12.5%
Not Hispanic or Latino	246,116,088	87.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin and by Race for the United States: 2000 and 2010
https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2011/dec/c2010br-02.pdf

2010 Census: Number of People per Race

Subject	Number	Percent
Total Population	308,745,538	100.0%
One Race	299,736,465	**97.1%**
White	223,553,265	**72.4%**
Black or African American	38,929,319	**12.6%**
American Indian and Alaska Native	2,932,248	**0.9%**
Asian	14,674,252	**4.8%**
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	540,013	**0.2%**
Some Other Race	19,107,368	**6.2%**
Two or More Races	9,009,073	**2.9%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin and by Race for the United States: 2000 and 2010
https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2011/dec/c2010br-02.pdf

2010 Census: Number of People per Ethnicity

Subject	Number	Percent
Total Population	308,745,538	100.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	50,477,594	**16.3%**
Not Hispanic or Latino	258,267,944	**83.7%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin and by Race for the United States: 2000 and 2010
https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2011/dec/c2010br-02.pdf

Activity Item: Race and Ethnicity Questions on the Census

1970

Note: Ethnicity was not a question on the 1970 Census.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970 Census

https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/questionnaires/1970_1.html

1990

7. Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin?

Fill ONE circle for each person.

If **Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic,** print one group. _____→

- ○ No (not Spanish/Hispanic)
- ○ Yes, Mexican, Mexican-Am., Chicano
- ○ Yes, Puerto Rican ■
- ○ Yes, Cuban
- ○ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic
  (Print one group, for example: Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.) ⤵

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census

https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/questionnaires/1990_1.html

2010

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, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* ⤵

9. What is Person 1's race? *Mark* ☒ *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, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* ⤵   ☐ Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.* ⤵

- ☐ Some other race — *Print race.* ⤵

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

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

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