

# EVERYBODY COUNTS: LEARNING ABOUT THE CENSUS

## A UNIT in Two Lessons

### Unit Overview:

Since 1790 there have been 23 censuses taken in the United States. This year will mark the 24th US census. The Census is important both to understand the needs of each individual community throughout the country but also to track changes in our Nation, Cities and Neighborhoods over time.

### Unit Summary:

The Country is working to complete the 24th Census of the United States this year. This lesson will help students to learn what the Census is and why it is important to our daily lives. They will have the opportunity compare and contrast the 1890 Census with the 2010 Census and learn what information it holds and how the questions on the Census have changed over time. Students will be able to explain what the Census is and how it is used and also connect it to the current election cycle.

### Time Allotment:

Taught in two 20-30 minute lessons.

### Grade Level: 4-5

### Standards

#### *History-Social Science Content Standards*

#### **Chronological and Spatial Thinking**

1. Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.

#### **Research, Evidence, and Point of View**

1. Students frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research.
2. Students distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories.
3. Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author's perspectives).

#### **Historical Interpretation**

1. Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.
2. Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long-and short-term causal relations.
3. Students explain the sources of historical continuity and how the combination of ideas and events explains the emergence of new patterns.
4. Students recognize the role of chance, oversight, and error in history.
5. Students recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.

## Reading Standards for Literature 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
3. Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
7. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

## Writing Standards 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
  - a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
  - c. Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., *another*, *for example*, *also*, *because*).
  - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

## Reading Standards for Literature 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
3. Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
7. Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

## Writing Standards 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
5. With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

## Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

**Define** census is and describe what it is used for.

**Describe** how the information collected in the Census has changed over time.

**Compare and contrast** the census report questions from the past to today.

## Materials

### Videos

2020 Census Promo - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXJz7ZfzAuM>

What's the Census and Why is it so Important - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn4K3XoywLY>

### Documents

1890 Census Form from the US Department of Commerce

2010 Census Form from the US Department of Commerce

### Handouts

What's the census and Why is it so important - Questions and Answer (Answer Key Provided)

My Family Census Worksheet

## Introduction Activity: Foundational Knowledge

**Set-up:** Tell the students that this year we are all participating in the decennial Census. Define Decennial as once every 10 years. Have students watch on their own the: 2020 Census promo to gain a brief understanding of the Census.

## Learning Activity #1: Understanding the Census

Provide students with the *What's the Census and Why is it so Important* - questions (handout). Tell them to write down the answers to the questions as they watch the next video.

Together as a class watch the youtube video *What's the Census and Why is it so Important* Pause the video to discuss main points as needed and review answers to the questions with the class.

Call on students to share their answers to the questions.

Dive Deeper - Talk with the class about the fact that the Census helps to determine how many elected officials each state send to the House of Representatives. Based on our population in the last Census - California has 53 representatives, the most of any state.

This is an election year in which we will vote not only for the President of the United States but also for some of our Representatives.

Ask the class to stand up if they were born after 2010 (this should be everyone). All students who are standing will be counted by the Census for the first time this year. Tell the class that there will not be another Census until 2030. That means that they will all be able to vote before there is another Census to determine how many representatives California can send to Congress. So, this Census is very important to each of them.

## Learning Activity #2: Compare and Contrast the 1890 Census with the 2010 Census

Provide students with the 1890 Census form and the 2010 Census form.

Share with students that these two documents were developed over 100 years apart and are both for the same purpose - to count every person living in the country.

Ask each student to identify 3 similarities and 5 differences between the two forms.

### Similarities

- Asks how many people are living in the home
- Asks for full name, Age and Sex of each person
- Asks for persons' race

### Differences

- 1890 schedule has 20 more questions than the 2010 census
- The 2010 census asks for a phone number, the 1890 census does not. (Most people did not have a telephone in 1890)
- Asks for place of birth and naturalization information (citizenship question)
- Asks for occupation
- Asks if people can read and write

Discuss as a class why they think the questions have changed overtime. Share with students that there are other departments of government that did not exist in 1890 that can collect the information that we no longer ask on the census. Example: The Department of Education can track literacy rates and help people who need to learn to read and write today, there was no Department of Education in 1890.

## Assessment

Use the following questions to guide a recap discussion, as a quiz, or a guideline for a quick writing assignment.

### Learning Activity #1: Understanding the Census

**Quick write:** Have students write a 1-page reflection on what they have learned about the U.S. Census and identify how it impacts our state and local government.

### Learning Activity #2: Compare and Contrast the 1890 Census with the 2010 Census

**Quick write:** Have students write a 1-page paper to compare the differences in the information collected on the Census over 160 years ago compared to the information collected now.

## Extension Activity

### Learning Activity #2: Family Census

Distribute the Family Census handout and ask students to complete the document and record one of their family members telling them to answer the following questions:

- How do you keep track of family history?
- What holidays do you celebrate as a family and why?
- How do you learn about the news and important information?

Discuss the results of the Family Census as a class.

## Distance Learning Options

- Hold discussions via video conferencing software like Zoom or Teams. Alternatively, require students to contribute to an online discussion board 3-5 times per discussion session.
- Hold live stream or video presentations in which each student is required to fill 1 minute of time.
- Have students present their family census via Zoom or Teams.