

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. Students will be able to explain what the Census is and how it is used. Finally, students will complete a family census to share with the class.

Time Allotment:

Taught in two 20-30 minute lessons.

Grade Level: 2-3

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 K-5

1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

3. Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

7. Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Writing Standards K-5

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 3.)

6. With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

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.

Record information to **apply** it to a class census.

Materials

Video

PBS Learning Media - What is the Census - <https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/7ac3c35d-5afc-4beb-b9b2-85d5cc182614/civics-101/>

Handouts

Family Census Worksheet

Introduction & Learning Activity #1: Understanding the Census

Set-up:

Tell the students that this year we are all participating in the Census that happens every 10 years. Explain that the Census is a formal way to count all people in the U.S. Then play the *What is the Census- video linked in the Materials list*. Pause the video to discuss main points as needed and review answers to the questions with the class.

Questions:

- How many people live in the U.S.? A: *327 million*
- How does the census help our community? A: *Provides funding for schools, hospitals, state and local government.*
- What is new about the 2020 census? A: *It is available online for the first time.*
- How does the census affect voting? A: *Based on the number of people, it determines how many electoral votes a state receives.*

Dive Deeper - California gets to send 53 people to the House of Representatives the most of any state. That is because more people live in California than any other state in the US. Everyone who is 18 and older will be to vote this year for the President and some will vote for our Representatives.

Learning Activity #2: Complete a Family Census

Have students complete the family census worksheet which asks them to gather census information on their own family. Compile students' family information. Develop with students' conclusions based on the class Census. Discuss the results as a class.

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 brief page reflection on what they have learned about the U.S. Census. Identify how the census helps our national government to make decisions about our state and local government.

Learning Activity #2: Complete a census

Recap discussion: Discuss the experience of completing the family census. Ask the class to compare the difference in responses to the census with the class results.

Extension Activity

Learning Activity #1:

To teach the class about representation and voting you will nominate class representatives and hold a vote on a class activity.

- Select three students to nominate three other students to be class representatives.
- Then present the class with the issue of how to spend the last 30 minutes of the class day.
- Present the whole class with two options. (Examples: Drawing/Coloring or Reading. End Class 30 Min Early or Play a Game)
- Tell the students only their Representatives will decide what they get to do.
- Give the Class 5 minutes to talk with their student representatives about which choice they would like.
- At the end of the allotted time allow the Representatives to voice their vote for the activity of their choice.
- Share with the students that this is how our Congress works. We elect representatives to vote on issues that we care about in our state. It is important to know who our representatives are and how to tell them what we want them to decide on our behalf.

Learning Activity #2:

Ask students to interview 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?

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 on class results from the census.