

## Census in Schools Educator Update January 2010



### 2010 Census

The Census Bureau is officially kicking off the Census in Schools program around the nation. Kickoff events have taken place in Baltimore, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Broward County, Florida. One more will take place in Delaware by the end of January.

"The census is a vital part of our democracy and children have historically been undercounted," U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said at Digital Harbor High School in Baltimore. "When local schools decide to include census ideas in their curriculum, kids will learn about the important role the census has played throughout American history and increase their awareness of the upcoming 2010 Census."

For more information on the kickoff events, go to <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/>>. The Census in Schools materials are available free online at <[www.census.gov/schools](http://www.census.gov/schools)>.

### Census in Schools Week

The Census Bureau is asking schools and teachers to designate a "Census in Schools Week" sometime between the end of January 2010 through May 2010. This week will be dedicated to 2010 census lessons and related activities to teach the entire school body and/or individual classes about the census.

In mid-January 2010, the Census Bureau will send to every K-8 school principal in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas student-take-home materials to support their "Census in Schools Week". These materials will include five fifteen-minute lessons that highlight the census student-take-home materials. All the materials will be posted on <[www.census.gov/schools](http://www.census.gov/schools)>.

### 2010 Lesson Plans – About the Census Strand

In the last three newsletters, we have summarized the "It's About Us" lesson strands 2, 3, and 4 (see archived September, October, and November 2009 issues of *Educator Update* electronic newsletters at <[http://www.census.gov/schools/for\\_teachers/](http://www.census.gov/schools/for_teachers/)>).

We saved the "About the Census" strand until last so that schools can use this information to plan a Census in Schools Week sometime during January through

March 2010. This strand helps students to understand the decennial census, presents a variety of student experiences, and includes the development of reading, listening, and map-reading skills. These brief summaries of lessons indicate grade-level activities related to the K-12 lessons in the About the Census strand.

## **K-2**

In the lesson “It’s About Us,” students examine the relationship between laws, civic responsibility, and the role of a good neighbor. Students learn that everyone has a responsibility to participate in the census, and they make handprint badges called “good neighbor badges.” Students also read a story, answer questions about who is counted on a census form, and examine a wall map discussing population changes in the last decade.

## **3-4**

Students in grades 3-4 examine the concept of responsibility in the lesson titled, “It’s About Us.” Building on this understanding, the lesson introduces the term “government,” and students generate a list of government’s and of individuals’ responsibilities.

Using a Reader’s Theater Script, “First We Count,” students complete a worksheet with reading questions and write in their journals about the importance of census information confidentiality and privacy. A wrap-up activity encourages students to write a news article about the importance of census participation.

## **5-6**

The “About the Census” lesson begins with a brainstorming activity followed by a role-playing activity in which students learn about who should be considered and who should not be considered a member of a household. A second worksheet enables students to use maps and data to become informed about a city, town, or state. In the culminating activity, students examine their own state’s median age, family income, and average family size and indicate how that data provides clues about their state.

## **7-8**

Students in grades 7-8 use information from a student worksheet, “Snapshot of a Nation,” to examine how the questions on the 1790 and 1890 censuses reflected the social and economic lives of Americans. In a second activity, students form pairs representing a household. Students create a description of a selected character and determine according to provided census guidelines whether the person should be considered a household member. Students then complete a provided sample copy of the census form.

A culminating activity examines issues of privacy, confidentiality, and residency. After learning information about the Census Bureau's protection of information, students interview an adult about his or her census participation and answer worksheet questions.

## **9-12**

Lesson 1, "A Nation Counts," examines the historical factors that affected the origins and development of the census and census changes that have occurred throughout American history. Students then complete a time line with ten census-related events or milestones and answer questions about census-related issues.

Lesson 3, "What's the Point?" presents an explanation and of who uses census data and how that data are used. Students divide in pairs and complete a worksheet, "The Census Makes a Difference." Students use provided Web sites to research how census data are used in the distribution of public funds, in business and industry use, and in government planning. Applying this information, students create a poster or other graphic that indicates their research findings.

Lesson 5, "Census and Redistricting," presents the topic of redistricting (see a discussion of reapportionment in Lesson 4 under the "Managing Data" strand). After learning the history of the redistricting process and examining how the boundaries of congressional districts often change, students participate in a simulation activity assuming the roles of urban and rural voters and analyzing how these groups could reflect their own interests when voting in an election. A worksheet directs students to research their own congressional district and write a short essay about the social and economic factors of the district. A second activity directs students to examine all sides of the reapportionment issue and provides a debate statement and debate tips for students to consider.

Lesson 8, "A Slice of the Census," examines the actual census form and the methodology of decennial census taking. Students use information learned in previous lessons to discuss each census question and the usage of the resulting data. Students consult a worksheet, "Census Forms and Confidentiality," to learn about the history and legislation of census confidentiality. The culminating activity is a two-paragraph essay; students write their opinions about issues chosen from topics provided by several writing prompts.

Lesson 12, "What Do You Know?" is the culminating lesson and students divide into seven topic-focused groups. Students review the census-related topics and chose a representative to review the information with the class. A comprehensive four-part quiz examines students' knowledge through multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and questions that require students' application of data from a chart and map.

## **Contact Census in Schools**

If you would like to share any thoughts or ideas about ways to introduce the 2010 Census to your students, please call 1-800-396-1167 or e-mail us at:

<[Census.in.Schools@census.gov](mailto:Census.in.Schools@census.gov)>.

Additional information about Census in Schools can be found at our Web site:

<<http://www.census.gov/schools>>.

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