

2020 CENSUS STUDENT ACTIVITY

Name _____

How the Census Helps My Community

Review key vocabulary with your class:

- **Census:** A complete count of a population.
- **Decennial:** Occurring every 10 years.
- **Statistics:** The practice or science of collecting and analyzing numerical data in large quantities.
- **Population:** All people, male and female, child and adult, living in a given geographic area.
- **Census Bureau:** The U.S. Census Bureau is a division of the federal government in the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Census Bureau is responsible for conducting the U.S. census at least once every 10 years to count the entire population of the United States.
- **Questionnaire:** A set of questions for obtaining statistically useful or personal information from individuals.
- **Confidentiality:** Keeping information private.

For the U.S. census, *confidentiality* also means the guarantee, written in law (Title 13, United States Code), that personal information given in answers to the census will not be disclosed to others. In other words, by law the Census Bureau cannot disclose any private information that identifies a person or a business.



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1. Read the following article about the U.S. census with your class.

What Is the U.S. Census?

The **census** is a count of people who live in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Island Areas. It is required by the U.S. Constitution, according to the Census Act of 1790. The census is **decennial**, which means it happens every 10 years. It can be taken online at 2020census.gov, by phone, or mailed in.

What information does the census give us?

The census provides **statistics** on the numbers and characteristics of the U.S. **population**, including age and sex, race and origin, education, and housing. This information can be easily viewed at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>. For example, the population of the United States in 2010 was 308,758,105.

Why is the census important?

Census data is used in many ways. It helps the nation decide how and where to spend money. That money goes to new roads and schools. It goes to health care programs. It goes to services for children and seniors.

How is the census taken?

The census is taken by having all households in the country complete a form. In the past, people were only able to receive and answer the census by mail. But in 2020, for the first time, people will also be able to answer the census online. This means your family has two ways to participate: online or by mail. If you participate online, one person in each household will fill out the form, which has 10 questions. Once you have answered all the questions, your census form will be submitted automatically.

If you participate by mail, you will receive a census form, sometimes known as a **questionnaire**, at your house in March 2020. One person in each household will fill out the form, which has 10 questions. You should mail the form back immediately in the postage-paid envelope that comes with the form. Remember, you only need to respond *once*.

Who is counted?

Everyone is counted! All adults in a home are counted. So are children and babies.

How does the U.S. Census Bureau protect my information?

Your responses to the U.S. census are strictly **confidential**. Federal law prohibits the U.S. Census Bureau and its workers from sharing any information they collect from individuals and businesses. It is a crime to share any information collected through the census. Other agencies will not see the facts about you and your household.





2. What are two things you learned about the U.S. 2020 Census today?

3. Why is the U.S. 2020 Census important to you, your family, and your community?

Home Extension

Take your student resources home and share them with a friend or a family member in your community or home.





Activity Item 1: KWL Chart

Topic: _____

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Have Learned