Where to Next?

Topic(s):
College and career readiness, financial literacy, career exploration

Grade Level:
9-12

Approx. Time Required:
35 minutes

Learning Objectives:
Students will be able to:

- Analyze U.S. Census Bureau data to determine favorable personal career options based on factors such as required post-secondary education, average salary, and industry demographics.
- Integrate quantitative or technical analysis with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

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 decennial 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.

Materials Required

- Printed student worksheets
- A computer or tablet with internet access for each student
  - This activity could also be done in pairs (requiring a computer or tablet for every two students); however, this lesson requires internet access for students.
- *QuickFacts* (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts)
- Optional: *QuickFacts tutorial video* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO8bZcuOPog) to reference prior to class

Worksheet Description

Students will use census statistics to determine which career they would like to pursue after high school. They will consider factors such as the type of post-secondary-school education they might need, which cities or states have the best job opportunities for people in their chosen profession, and the average salaries and median age and sex in the profession.

Before the Activity—10 Minutes

1. Write the following questions on the board:
   - Where do I think I want to live?
   - What is the cost of living where I want to live?
   - What kind of job or career path am I interested in?
   - What does that career pay?
   - What sort of educational attainment do I need to enter that industry?
2. Hand out the student worksheets. Then model what went into your own decisions to become a teacher, to choose a particular college, and to choose where to live after college.
3. Ask students what kinds of things are important to them in deciding where to live or pursue more education. For example, "Would you rather live in a rural or an urban area?" "Would you rather have walkability and a small apartment or less walkability with a larger house?" "Do you want to live in a city with a lot of people your own age?" "Would you want to move far away from where you live now or stay closer to home?" Direct students to answer Question #1 on their student worksheet.

4. Give students three minutes to take turns answering the questions on the board with a partner. Then ask three or four students to share where they think they might want to live, what profession they want to enter, and what kind of education they think they will need for that career field.

5. Explain that to make decisions for your life, you need data, and one place to find this data is the Census Bureau. Every 10 years, the Census Bureau conducts a complete count of all people living in the United States. This count is called the decennial census. Information collected in the census is used to decide how many seats each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives. It also affects how $675 billion a year is spent on federal programs. The next census is the 2020 Census, and it will provide data that we use to make decisions for the next 10 years.

   Note for students that although the decennial census is best known for tracking population data, the U.S. Census Bureau tracks all kinds of data, from age, sex, and race to types of housing or average household size. This varied information helps the federal government better understand and make decisions for the people. Today we will look at census data from the American Community Survey.

During the Activity—20 Minutes

1. Lead a class discussion about the factors students may want to consider when it comes to standard of living. Some examples are median household income, housing affordability, the availability of certain jobs or industries, demographics, and walkability.

2. Tell students they will select four places (which could be larger cities or smaller towns or counties) that they would consider moving to for a new job or educational opportunity. Make sure students know that this can include staying where they currently live or moving to a town or place very close by. (For some students, it is less realistic to move far away, so adjust the language used in your classroom based on your students.) Then students will use QuickFacts to find relevant data to help them make the best decision for them.

3. Model for students how to use *QuickFacts* (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts), beginning first with navigating to the website. Show students how to enter cities, states, or ZIP codes in the top left search bar to find data for a new area. Point out that students can compare multiple cities, towns, and states at once, or they can delete sets of data they no longer need. Guide students for two minutes. Then direct them to complete the table and answer the questions on their student worksheet.

   Note: QuickFacts provides statistics for all states and counties and for cities and towns with a ***population of 5,000 or more***, so students can select any place with 5,000 or more people to analyze. (If a town they want to include has a population of less than 5,000, have them try the county name instead.)

4. Monitor the room as students work, answering questions or prompting students if they get stuck.

After the Activity—5 Minutes

Ask for two or three volunteers to share what conclusions they came to about potential cities in which they'd like to live. Lead a brief discussion about the steps students could take in the short term to reach their career, education, or life goals.

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 what influenced their decision to live in your current city and state, then tell them about what you might want to do after high school. Share that you found your data through the Census Bureau's website and ask who will be completing the 2020 Census for your household.

Activity Item: 15 Fastest-Growing Cities in the U.S. (Between July 1, 2017, and July 1, 2018, With Populations of 50,000 or More on July 1, 2017)

Rank	Area name	State name	Percent increase	2018 total population
1	Buckeye city	Arizona	8.5	74,370
2	New Braunfels city	Texas	7.2	84,612
3	Apex town	North Carolina	6.8	53,852
4	Frisco city	Texas	6.1	188,170
5	Meridian city	Idaho	6.1	106,804
6	McKinney city	Texas	5.4	191,645
7	Georgetown city	Texas	5.2	74,180
8	Rowlett city	Texas	5.1	66,285
9	St. Cloud city	Florida	5.0	54,115
10	Ankeny city	Iowa	4.6	65,284
11	Dublin city	California	4.5	63,445
12	South Jordan city	Utah	4.4	74,149
13	Midland city	Texas	4.4	142,344
14	Castle Rock town	Colorado	4.3	64,827
15	Round Rock city	Texas	4.3	128,739

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Population Estimates

https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2019/subcounty-population-estimates.html

Activity Item: 15 Fastest-Growing Cities in the U.S. (Between July 1, 2017, and July 1, 2018, With Populations of 50,000 or More on July 1, 2017) (Cont.)

Source: The 15 Fastest-Growing Cities

https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2019/comm/15-fastest-growing-cities.html