Count Me In!
Exploring the historical foundations and importance of the US Census

Inquiry lessons for 5th, 8th, 11th, and 12th grade teachers

12th Grade Economics Inquiry:
How does the U.S. Census impact society’s economic health and its people?
Let us know who you are!

It is very important that we learn how the Census 2020 curriculum modules improve the accuracy of the upcoming census. When you download a curriculum module, please click on the link below so that we can compile information about which modules were used and in which part of the state. In the spring, we will be sending out a short survey that asks for your opinion of the curriculum modules and the estimated level of implementation of the modules. All information will be kept confidential by the project evaluator.  

Acknowledgements

The Count Me In! Census 2020 Curriculum Project is the product of a collaborative partnership between the Government Operations Agency, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and the Sacramento County Office of Education.

Without the following individuals’ expertise and guidance, this document would not have been possible. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the Count Me In! Census 2020 Project.

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### Lesson Title
**The U.S. Census: A Way to Measure and Impact U.S. Economic Health**

**Grade Level**: 12th Econ  
**Duration**: Two (2) periods (about 100 minutes)

### HSS Standards
**ECON.12.4.1 California Economics: Principles in Action**
Understand the operations of the labor market, including the circumstances surrounding the establishment of principal American labor unions, procedures that unions use to gain benefits for their members, the effects of unionization, the minimum wage, and unemployment insurance.

**ECON.12.5.1 California Economics: Principles in Action**
Distinguish between nominal and real data.

### ELA Standards
**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### Other Curricular Connections
- Visual analysis
- Identifying claim, evidence
- Completing graphic organizers

### Lesson Sequence Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Question</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Performance Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is poverty?</strong></td>
<td>Day 1-50 minutes</td>
<td>Students will discuss supporting questions prior to starting a KWL chart on the related question topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are some causes of poverty?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How is poverty measured in the U.S.?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will gather Census data and complete related charts to analyze the information in groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How many people are poor in the U.S.?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Who is more likely to be poor in the U.S.?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will share their specific information with remaining groups to get longitudinal data from the Race, Age, and household tables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the U.S. Census?</strong></td>
<td>Day 2-50 minutes</td>
<td>Students will return to their KWL charts to complete them with new learning and wonderings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does the census impact the distribution of funding and congressional representation?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Describe the economic health of the U.S.?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How can participation in the census help to better address poverty?</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Summative Task
Students will complete an informal, timed response, or quick-write, to respond to the following prompt: “Based on the information you have gathered and learned about poverty from the U.S. Census, how would you describe the overall economic health of the nation and are there any policy decisions on spending you might suggest to leaders in your community that would better address poverty in the U.S.?”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How is poverty measured in the U.S.? Who is more likely to be poor in the U.S.?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be able to: 1. Define who is poor according to government standards and 2. Describe the causes of poverty.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Background Information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. Census is a nationwide population count which occurs every ten years as mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. Census counts include all persons living in U.S residential structures and housing units, including U.S. citizens, legal residents (Green Card holders), long-term visitors (VISA holders) and undocumented residents. The Census Bureau is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and in the years between the census, the Bureau issues estimates through the American Community Survey (ACS), which is not a full population count but a “sample” of homes designed to monitor certain population trends, including people’s ethnic origins, gender, age, housing status, as well as their relationship status. Because political power in Congress and economic resources distributed to the states are connected to the census, both the methodology and the results of the census are often contested. For example, in 2018 the Trump administration announced plans to include a citizenship question in the 2020 census, which has not been asked since 1950. In response, California sued the Trump administration, arguing that the proposed citizenship question was designed to intimidate immigrants, resulting in inaccurate data on minority community populations in the state. As the largest state in terms of population with nearly 40 million residents, a census “undercount” could cost California billions in federal dollars to the state, and it could also reduce the size of California’s Congressional delegation in the House of Representatives after the 2020 Congressional reapportionment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In completing this lesson AND the accompanying Count Me In: Taking Informed Action lesson that is part of the high school Census 2020 curricula, students will create a Count Me In! Campaign to educate families and community members about the importance of the U.S. Census – its impact on their daily lives and the consequences of not fully participating. The objective of the campaign is to promote full participation in the 2020 Census among people across California. Students may utilize a number of strategies, including the distribution of informational brochures, creating public service announcements, giving presentations, leading town hall meetings, or a variety of other ways, to take informed action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty can be controversial particularly when government needs to make decisions based on the trade-offs between purchasing “guns and butter”. How does the U.S. Census measure economic health and how can U.S. Census information be used to inform policy decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will need access to a digital device and internet (unless hard copies of the various XL sheets for all years will be provided). IMPORTANT NOTE: be sure to explore the “Historical Poverty Tables that house the data at the U.S. Census website prior to assigning the research to students as you will want to familiarize yourself with the format and layout of the tables: <a href="https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html">https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frame this Day 1 lesson by sharing the compelling question “How does the U.S. Census impact society's economic health and its people?” that students will inquire around for the next two days. Be sure to explore the elements of this question to ensure that all students understand what it is asking. Explaining key concepts such as “economic health” and the purpose and brief history of the Census may be necessary. Share with students that the focus of today’s lesson will be on poverty. Introduce the learning objectives before sharing the Day 1 supporting questions.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Share with students that the Federal Government of the U.S. takes a census every ten years to attempt to count the number of people in every state, regardless of residency status. The resulting “count” helps to determine how much federal support, or funding, and how much representation every state will get in Congress based on its updated population, via the census.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Evaluation of Sources | Pose some, or all, of the supporting questions for this lesson (bulleted above). This brief conversation will support the creation of a KWL chart (Know, Want to Know, Learned) during the next activity.  
- Materials: whiteboard or screen to list supporting questions  
- Accommodations and Supports: allow students to discuss with a partner or small groups prior to responding independently.  

After some paired/small group discussion, have students independently create a KWL chart to assess their background knowledge and to share what they perceive to be poverty and its causes in the U.S.  
- Materials: line paper, journal or composition book  
- Accommodations and Supports: students may alternatively complete this task digitally using Google Docs, Padlet or some other electronic platform to further support peer collaboration.  

| Divide class into 8-9 small groups (3 or 4 per group) with each group assigned to gather information for one of the following years: 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2010, or 2015. Each group will focus on gathering data from the United States Census for their assigned year (number of groups and size may vary depending on class size).  
- Accommodations and Supports: teacher may demonstrate how to use the link to access and open the XL sheet at the Census website AND models for students, using one year that was not assigned to any group, how to interpret the data and properly extract the correct data from the XL sheet and add to the student charts provided. Complete this for all three categories (i.e., Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Household).  

The jigsaw approach described above will next allow the class to divide and conquer the work and ensure peer collaboration and further discussion. Students will then work with the members of the other groups to obtain the Census data for the other years not assigned to them. This will give all groups the opportunity to complete their charts and get a longitudinal look at this data over time (1975-2015).  
- Materials: access to a digital device and internet, printed copies of the charts for each student (as all students should complete the Reflections after analyzing all three tables) once all data is obtained.  
- Accommodations and Supports: students may work individually or in pairs to visit the other 8 groups. Using shared Google Docs for each table could easily expedite the process of sharing data across all years.  

| Closing | As a whole class, allow students to share out new questions and learning as a result of analyzing the data taken from the Historical Poverty Tables. Teacher should use this group discussion as an opportunity to collect feedback, clarify misconceptions, offer additional expert insights, and formatively assess student learning.  
- Materials: KWL charts, completed data charts (Reflections will be completed on Day 2).  
- Accommodations and Supports: most students will benefit from access to Language Frames and Sentence Starters designed and written with the explicit verbiage that will allow them to extend/expound on, contest/disagree with, and support/agree with their classmates, the data, and experts in the room.  

Review the learning objectives with students (should be able to: 1. Define who is poor according to government standards and 2. Describe the causes of poverty). Then, direct students to return to the KWL charts, to add information. Be sure to collect KWL graphic organizers as a check for understanding. Looking at the work, minimally, of a low, medium, and high performing student in each class will provide vital feedback prior to the Day 2 lesson.  

|  | 25 minutes | 15 minutes |

Directions: working with the members of your group, use the U.S. Census demographics from tables 2 and 3 located in the XL Sheet at https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html, to look at race and ethnicity information to complete all three charts below only for the year your group was assigned. Once the data for your group’s year is gathered, work with all other groups to gather data for the remaining years. The Reflection below each table (3 total) will be completed on Day 2 of this lesson.

U.S. Poverty Rate (1975-2015): By Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. Poverty Rate</th>
<th>White, not Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection (to be completed on Day 2):**

According to race, which group of people has the greatest poverty rate? What might be some of the factors you think contribute to poverty among this group?
### U.S. Poverty Rate (1975-2015): By Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. Poverty Rate</th>
<th>Under 18</th>
<th>18-64</th>
<th>65 and over</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection (to be completed on Day 2):**

According to age, which group of people is more likely to be poor? What might be some of the factors you think contribute to poverty among this group?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Families</th>
<th>Single Female Household</th>
<th>Family of two or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection (to be completed on Day 2):**

Which family structure is more likely to be poor? What might be some of the factors you think contribute to poverty among this group?
### Day 2

**50 minutes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Students should be able to: 1. Analyze the distribution of income in the United States and 2. Explain how Census data can inform policy to diminish poverty and its negative effects on the people of the U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Introduction

To start Day 2 of this lesson, review what students worked on yesterday and share any highlights or necessary corrections based on the formative feedback gleaned from examining the KWL charts from the day before. Then direct students to return to their data charts that they completed the day before (with the exception of the Reflections) to analyze the data across all years and groups noting any trends or patterns they see. After a few minutes, allow students to have a small group discussion to share what they notice and to offer possible factors that lead to poverty in the U.S. Direct students to add to their charts and/or notes insights and learning shared by their classmates to help inform the Reflections they will soon be writing.

Prior to completing the Reflections, ensure that students are clear about each of the Reflection questions. Lead a brief class discussion about each of the Reflection questions to prompt student thinking. Students will now briefly answer the Reflection questions at the end of each chart. All students will complete the Reflections independently now that they have had another opportunity to analyze all three tables and discuss their thinking with classmates.

- **Materials:** each student has their completed charts and notes in hand.
- **Accommodations and Supports:** allow students to use their notes and charts with data.

#### Evaluation of Sources

Teacher facilitates short (10-minute) class discussion regarding the importance of census information and being counted in the U.S.. Use a standard protocol to randomly choose student volunteers. Be sure to circle back to students who were unable to answer questions after listening to correct responses from other classmates and the teacher. This discussion should remain focused on the elements of the writing prompt to elicit replies around what students have learned and already knew about poverty and the impact of policies that address economic inequality and/or improve economic opportunity. Students should cite evidence from their charts (Historical Poverty Table data) and their own Reflection responses, as well as firsthand experiences that inform their thinking.

Using the Historical Poverty Table data collected in their charts, students will now have 10 minutes to respond to the prompt below in Quick Write form (see the accompanying Quick Write guide below). Students will be expected to use vocabulary learned from the lesson and the research they gathered from the U.S. Census (sample rubric is attached for evaluating quick-writes). Be sure to leave to dedicate 5-10 minutes to frontload students with the rubric provided (also below), to ensure all students have their own copy of the Quick Write response paper (provided below), and to read the prompt aloud and ensure that all students are clear about the two embedded questions and the writing task in general.

#### Closing

Review the learning objectives with students (should be able to: 1. analyze the distribution of income in the United States and 2. explain how Census data can inform policy to diminish poverty and its negative effects on the people of the U.S.). Be sure to collect the Quick Write responses as a check for understanding and summative task for this two-day lesson.

### Describing the economic health of the U.S.? How can participation in the census help to better address poverty?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>To start Day 2 of this lesson, review what students worked on yesterday and share any highlights or necessary corrections based on the formative feedback gleaned from examining the KWL charts from the day before. Then direct students to return to their data charts that they completed the day before (with the exception of the Reflections) to analyze the data across all years and groups noting any trends or patterns they see. After a few minutes, allow students to have a small group discussion to share what they notice and to offer possible factors that lead to poverty in the U.S. Direct students to add to their charts and/or notes insights and learning shared by their classmates to help inform the Reflections they will soon be writing.</td>
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<td><strong>Evaluation of Sources</strong></td>
<td>Teacher facilitates short (10-minute) class discussion regarding the importance of census information and being counted in the U.S.. Use a standard protocol to randomly choose student volunteers. Be sure to circle back to students who were unable to answer questions after listening to correct responses from other classmates and the teacher. This discussion should remain focused on the elements of the writing prompt to elicit replies around what students have learned and already knew about poverty and the impact of policies that address economic inequality and/or improve economic opportunity. Students should cite evidence from their charts (Historical Poverty Table data) and their own Reflection responses, as well as firsthand experiences that inform their thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closure</strong></td>
<td>Review the learning objectives with students (should be able to: 1. analyze the distribution of income in the United States and 2. explain how Census data can inform policy to diminish poverty and its negative effects on the people of the U.S.). Be sure to collect the Quick Write responses as a check for understanding and summative task for this two-day lesson.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the information you have gathered and learned about poverty from the U.S. Census, how would you describe the economic health of the nation and are there any spending recommendations you might suggest to congressional leaders that would diminish poverty levels in the U.S.? Please explain your answer.
**Quick Writes** can be used before, during, or after a lesson or a reading. Its purpose is to allow students an opportunity to briefly reflect (just a few minutes) on their learning in writing. When used before reading, it helps to activate prior knowledge. It provides students an opportunity to reflect, make connections, and summarize new information during and after reading. Another benefit is that it allows the teacher to quickly assess prior knowledge and student understanding. Overall, quick writes are a relatively simple and adaptable strategy that can be used in any content area.

**Great Idea:** A way to incorporate technology with quick writes is for students to maintain a blog. This allows you and your students to have a more permanent record of reflections throughout the school year. This can be an excellent way for your students to look back and reflect upon their learning.

Ways I can use a quick-write:

- Use at the beginning of a class as a pre-reading strategy to informally assess and activate students’ background knowledge on a topic, concept, or text.
- Stop in the middle of a class discussion or reading and ask learners to write about what has been said, what they read so far, and what key points they made individually or as a group (if they were working in small groups).
- Give at the end of the class and ask students to prepare at home and use as an opening activity for next class.
- After reading, working in a small group, or after researching a topic, ask students to do a quick-write to summarize, analyze, synthesize, evaluate or explain a concept/idea/problem.
- Read a poem or speech and ask students to do a quick-write about the entire poem/speech or some key aspect you would like them to reflect upon and write about.
- Use quick writes to encourage student-student or teacher-student discussion.
- Use quick writes as an exit slip.
- Split the class into groups: give 3 groups a minute to quick-write about the beginning of the book/story/text/topic, 3 groups to write about something that happened in the middle of the story, book, or event, and 3 more groups can write about the end. Collect all quick-writes and build the story/event/discussion/topic from students’ writing and ask them to evaluate as a class how well they captured the story, book, text, discussion, or event.
“QUICK WRITE” RUBRIC
(for journal entries, schema activators, learner log entries, or 5-10 minute writing tasks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAITS OF WRITING</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>SUPPORT AND ELABORATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **4**             | • **Tightly focused** on responding to the prompt  
|                   |       | • Ideas are introduced in a mostly logical and effective order  
|                   |       | • Ideas can be easily understood by reader  
|                   |       | • Perceptive and insightful opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Superior explanation of ideas  
| **3**             | • **Largely focused** on responding to the prompt (may stray in areas, but gets quickly back on topic)  
|                   |       | • Ideas are introduced in a generally logical and effective order  
|                   |       | • Ideas can be understood by reader  
|                   |       | • Logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Sufficient explanation of ideas  
| **2**             | • **Somewhat focused** on responding to the prompt (may have difficulty getting back on topic or may stray often)  
|                   |       | • Ideas are introduced in a seldom logical order  
|                   |       | • Ideas can be sometimes understood by reader  
|                   |       | • Some logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Somewhat limited explanation of ideas  
| **1**             | • **No attempt to focus** on the prompt or substitutes a different task  
|                   |       | • Ideas are randomly presented or merely listed  
|                   |       | • Illogical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Little or no attempt at explanation of ideas  
|                   | • Demonstrates deep understanding of key ideas  
|                   |       | • Perceptive and insightful opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Superior explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Sufficient explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Some logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Somewhat limited explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Illogical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Little or no attempt at explanation of ideas  
|                   | • Demonstrates understanding of key ideas  
|                   |       | • Logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Sufficient explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Some logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Somewhat limited explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Illogical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Little or no attempt at explanation of ideas  
|                   | • Demonstrates gaps in understanding of key ideas  
|                   |       | • Logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Sufficient explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Some logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Somewhat limited explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Illogical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Little or no attempt at explanation of ideas  
|                   | • Demonstrates little or no understanding of key ideas  
|                   |       | • Logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Sufficient explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Some logical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Somewhat limited explanation of ideas  
|                   |       | • Illogical opinions and interpretations  
|                   |       | • Little or no attempt at explanation of ideas  
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