

Inquiry Question: *Why is it important for all Californians to participate in the U.S. Census?*

Day 1

60 minutes

Learning Objective

Students will examine the purpose of the national census by answering questions using U.S. Census documents and data and participating in a civil dialogue.

Background Information

- General information on the Census: <https://www.census.gov/>
- *Factfinder for the Nation: History and Organization (especially pages 1-4)* from the U.S. Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2000/comm/cff-04.html>

Introduction

Part 1 - Hook Question: You are hosting a birthday party at your house. You invite 20 guests, but on the day of your celebration 40 guests show up to your party. What do you do with the extra 20 guests? How do the extra guests affect your party?

* This scenario is designed to get students thinking about why an accurate count of the population is important. Since population counts determine the amount of federal funds and Congressional representation given to the state, an “undercount” on the 2020 census could mean not enough federal resources to address California’s needs. This is similar to a birthday party with too many guests leaving some without birthday cake or prizes.

Part II - Have students create **KWL chart** and list what they now **Know** about the Census (this can be anything they have heard, and teacher simply records student responses) and then list what they **Want to Know** about the Census. At the end of the lesson students will note what they have learned about the U.S. Census, and teachers are encouraged to revisit the questions generated in the “What I want to Know” part of the chart.

What I know?	What I want to know?	What I learned?

15 minutes

Evaluation of Sources

Part III: Reading and Research Activity: Students gather evidence to address their “**What I want to know**” and to help them answer several inquiry questions posed on the student worksheet.

- After students answer two questions based on excerpts from *Factfinder for the Nation: History and Organization (from the U.S. Census)* teachers discuss with students why the Census is important both politically in terms of Congressional representation, and economically in terms of the distribution of government resources.
- If desired, teachers and students discuss why Census data is considered a reliable source of information about U.S. population trends. It is not important to go into detailed information about census methodology, but teachers wishing to learn more about how the census is conducted can do so at [census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

30 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using online data from the U.S. Census (<i>Internet access needed, or teacher may provide hard copy printouts to accompany the student worksheet</i>) students respond to 3 inquiry questions on the student worksheet (NOTE: this could be done individually or in teams/pairs). Teachers and students debrief the answers <p><u>Optional: Revisit the KWL Chart</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers may wish to revisit the KWL chart at this time to verify the accuracy of any of the “What I know” statements or any of the “What I want to know?” questions that were posed at the beginning of the lesson <p><u>Optional EL and/or SPED Differentiation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jigsaw- Students start in Home Groups of 5-6 students, with each student assigned a specific Supporting Question as their Expert Group. Students will then move to their Expert Group to work together to gather evidence to help answer their inquiry questions. Students then report back to their Home Group the evidence found. 	
Closing	<p><u>Part IV: Civil Dialogue Strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: Socratic Seminar: Students sit in a circle and one of the key questions is posed by the teacher or student discussion leader. Students discuss their claims for the question based on evidence. Students may also sit in a fishbowl arrangement. Half of the students sit in the inner circle and participate in the discussion while the other half sit in the outer circle and observe the conversation and take notes. Students may trade places at some point during the discussion (after a specific time, after each new question, or by “tapping in”) so that all students may have an opportunity to contribute to the conversation. Option 2: Concentric Circles: Students form two circles, one inside and one outside circle. Each student on the inside is paired with a student on the outside; they face each other. The teacher poses one of the inquiry questions and asks the pairs to discuss possible answers to the inquiry question to prompt discussion between the student pairs. Students will share possible answers and cite evidence to support their claims. After a specific time (e.g., 2 minutes) students on the outside circle rotate one space to the right (or left) so they are sitting in front of a new partner. A new inquiry question is posed and the new student pairs discuss their claims and evidence. 	15 minutes