

# Census in Schools Week: 15-minute activities



Get your students thinking about the **2010 Census** with these fun, quick classroom activities.

Each one can be done in as little as 15 minutes. As you review, please note that each activity is intended for use by specific grade levels. However, we invite you to adjust the activity to best fit your students' needs.

Grades  
K-4

## Census Role-Play

1. Divide students into pairs and hold a census role-play. Begin by giving them some basic information about the census. Explain that the Census Bureau is a part of the government that has the job of counting every person who lives in the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. A correct count of the population is important to understand what each place needs. Leaders use the information to decide where to provide services such as new schools and roads.
2. Remind students that the census works by having people fill out a form or speak to a census worker. Sometimes census workers go door-to-door and gather information by asking questions. These questions call for basic facts about the people living in each household.
3. Tell students that they will perform a role-play where one character plays a census worker and the other plays a resident who answers the door. Have students work with a few simple questions based on the real census form. (For example: **How many people live in your house?**) Students can conduct the role-play one pair at a time in front of the class or simultaneously at their desks.

Grades  
5-8

## How Do We Use the Census?

1. Remind students that the census is very important to their community. The results of the **2010 Census** will help leaders decide where money and resources are sent.
2. Remind them that one of the most important uses of census data is to determine how federal funds are distributed to communities. Tell students that basic data include the number of people living in an area, their ages, and the kinds of housing they live in.
3. Divide students into groups of four to five. Have students brainstorm five kinds of decisions businesses or the government can make based on having information about population in a community.
4. Bring students back together and ask volunteers from each group to read their collected ideas.

All  
Grades

## Write a Letter

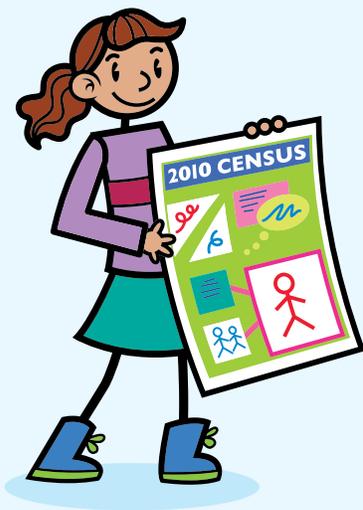
1. Have students write a letter home to their families or to a local newspaper. The letter should discuss what the students have learned about the census and why an accurate count of the population is so important to their school and the community.
2. Distribute the **STUDENT WORKSHEET** from this brochure to help students to learn about the parts of a letter. Remind students that their letters should be clear, polite, and persuasive. They should also use proper spelling and grammar.
3. To help students decide what to write, ask them to summarize what they have learned about the census and why it is important. Suggest that students select their audience (family or newspaper) before they start writing so they can make sure that their language is appropriate.
4. When they are finished, ask volunteers to read their letters to the class before the letters are sent.

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Grades  
K-4

## Make a Poster

1. Invite your students to make colorful posters celebrating **Census in Schools Week**. Briefly explain how your school is celebrating **Census in Schools Week** and list the different schoolwide events on the board. Tell students to make a poster about one of these events.
2. Review the following facts about the **2010 Census** to help students decide what to include on their posters:
  - The census happens every 10 years.
  - The census counts everyone living in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas.
  - Every home will receive a census form.
  - Census Day is April 1, 2010.
3. Distribute blank poster board to students to decorate. Instruct them to include the words “Census in Schools Week” and the date of your school’s event on the poster in addition to any images or messages they want to use. Encourage students to make the posters colorful.
4. Display the posters throughout your school. You can even have a competition to see who made the best poster!



Grades  
5-8

## Create a Census Cartoon

1. Have students draw a cartoon celebrating the census. The cartoon can be in the form of a single panel, a comic strip, or a page from a comic book. If possible, show the class examples of cartoons that communicate an idea, such as editorial cartoons.
2. Ask students why they think cartoons can be effective at communicating ideas. Discuss how the art and the text work together to make a point or provide information.
3. Instruct students to use their knowledge of the census to create their cartoon. If students need help getting started, suggest that the main character be a census worker or a resident opening a door for a census worker. Tell them that the quality of the drawing is not as important as the idea being communicated. Display the finished cartoons around the classroom.

All  
Grades

## State Facts Quiz!

1. Create a quiz about one of the 50 states using the facts available at [www.census.gov/schools/facts](http://www.census.gov/schools/facts). Every state is listed, so you can tailor the quiz to your own state. If you live in Puerto Rico or the Island Areas, have students choose a state that they want to learn about or visit!
2. Write a multiple-choice quiz using facts from the three categories of information: population, geography, and business. Available information includes state population, state rank, median age, largest city, population density, and the number of different types of businesses, such as toy stores or amusement parks. Choose topics/questions that best fit your students' learning level.
3. Set up the quiz like *Jeopardy*. Divide the class into three equal rows. Have one student from each row come up to answer a question. Whichever group gets the question right earns a point. Once a question has been answered correctly, have a new set of three students come up. After each student has gone twice, add up the total points for each row. The row with the highest score wins!

