Involve your students in the 2010 Census

This teaching guide will help you bring the census to life and help your students develop valuable language skills while understanding this important government process.

INSIDE

Free Lesson Plans
Complete lessons and activities for an adult audience

Reproducible Student Worksheets
Printable assessment, activity, and skills pages that link to lessons

Great Resources
Teaching tools including census facts, teaching tips, and more

Find additional support materials at www.census.gov/schools and visit www.2010census.gov for additional language support
The last count of the U.S. population was on April 1, 2000. In the 10 years since then, our nation has become increasingly diverse. Students taking advantage of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes represent a wide range of cultures, languages, and family living situations. That means that your skills as an instructor or manager of ESL programs are more important than ever. And it means that you are a crucial part of the effort to include everybody in the upcoming 2010 Census. In fact, we’re counting on you!

Census forms will be sent to all households in March 2010 and questionnaires should be returned right away. The 2010 Census “short” form has only 10 questions for each person in each household. It is quick and easy. But it will provide important information that will allow government leaders to decide how and where money should be spent for community services such as transportation, education, and health care. Census forms are also available in other languages along with language-assistance guides.

All data collected during the 2010 Census are confidential. By law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share respondents’ answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of non-disclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data.

The U.S. Census Bureau is committed to making sure everybody is counted, regardless of his or her proficiency in English. This guide to the upcoming census has been created especially for your ESL classroom.

In addition to communicating information about the census, this guide helps you meet your teaching objectives for reading, comprehending, speaking, and writing English.

**About the Census** helps students understand and organize facts about the decennial count.

**Who Counts?** guides students as they evaluate households and who will—or won’t—be counted.

**Your Part in the Process** helps students master the skill of filling out a form, as well as understanding the importance of their participation in the census.

**It’s Confidential** encourages writing and conversation skills while providing assurance that U.S. law protects everyone’s privacy.

**Census Conversations** allows students to act out a “Reader’s Theater” script involving a visit from a census worker.

Each lesson includes start-up discussion ideas, reproducible worksheets, activities using the worksheets, activity extension ideas, and “Know and Say” vocabulary words tied to the census process.

We hope this guide will encourage your students to take an active role in the census. And we thank you for being an advocate for the census in your classroom.

**It’s in Our Hands!**
Census Fact Sheet

What is the U.S. Census?
The census is a count of people who live in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. It is required by the U.S. Constitution. The count is taken every 10 years.

Why do we need the census?
Census data are used in many ways, helping 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?
- In March 2010, a census form will arrive at almost every home in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas.
- A member of each household will fill out the form. The form has about 10 questions. It should be mailed back immediately. The census form includes a postage-paid envelope.
- Census workers will visit the homes of people who do not return forms. They will collect the data in person.

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?
Some people may be unsure about how their personal information will be used. Federal law prohibits the U.S. Census Bureau and its workers from sharing any information they collect from individuals and businesses.

It is a punishable crime to share any information collected through the census. Other agencies will not see the facts about you and your household.

The census is your chance to be counted. It’s in Our Hands!
Answers to Your Questions

1. **Who should be counted?**
   Everyone! All adults living in your home are counted. Children and babies are counted, too.

2. **Does the U.S. Census Bureau protect my data?**
   Yes. It is a crime for a census worker to share facts about your household. The data are sealed for 72 years.

3. **Are my answers private?**
   Yes. The data are not shared with any other agencies, including tax and immigration offices.
About the Census

Skills and Objectives
- Read and share the facts about the 2010 Census
- Organize the facts into an easy-to-use chart
- Update and use the form as new facts are learned

Materials: Census Fact Sheet, Take-Home Flyer, and Putting Everything in Order Student Worksheet 1

Getting Started
1. Tell students that an important event is coming up for the nation. The 2010 Census will count every person in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. Acknowledge that they may already know some details about the census.

Using the Student Worksheet
2. Make copies of Putting Everything in Order Student Worksheet 1. Explain that students will use a chart—known as a K-W-L chart—to organize information they already know about the census, information they want to find out, and information they learn as they proceed through the lesson.

3. Review the directions on the worksheet. Then have students fill out the first column of the chart with facts they may already know about the decennial census. Finally, have them include facts they want to learn in the second column.

4. Make and distribute copies of the Census Fact Sheet and the Take-Home Flyer announcing the 2010 Census. The two sheets include important information about the census. Have students review the information individually or in pairs. Then ask individual students to share what they’ve learned. Write these facts on the board:
   a. The census is required every 10 years by the U.S. Constitution.
   b. It counts every person in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas.
   c. The data are used to determine how and where to spend money for services. They also are used to determine representation in state and national capitals.
   d. The U.S. Census Bureau will provide questionnaires for each household in March 2010.
   e. The form includes 10 questions for each person in the household.
   f. The Census Bureau will not share the information with anyone else.
   g. The forms should be mailed back immediately.
   h. Census workers will follow up to gather information from households that haven’t returned the form.

5. Explain that this unit will help them understand how people are counted, how to fill out the census form, and the privacy laws that govern the census. As they proceed through the unit, encourage them to update their K-W-L charts to reflect what they’ve learned and can share.

Wrap-up
Encourage students to post the Take-Home Flyer in a place where all members of their household can see the flyer.

Answers
Answers in students’ K-W-L charts will vary.
The 2010 Census is important to the nation. But some of the details may seem confusing.

The chart below is divided into three columns:
- The first column is for facts that you already **KNOW** about the census.
- The second column is for facts you **WANT** to learn about the census.
- The third column is for facts that you have **LEARNED** about the census.

Use this chart to organize facts about the census. First list facts you already **know**. Then list things you **want** to learn about the process. As you **learn** new things, fill in the third column. Update it as you find new information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Facts you already KNOW</strong></th>
<th><strong>Facts you WANT to learn</strong></th>
<th><strong>Facts you have LEARNED</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Example:</em> Census forms will be mailed in March 2010.</td>
<td><em>Example:</em> Will all census forms be in English?</td>
<td><em>Example:</em> The forms should be mailed back right away.</td>
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Who Counts?

Skills and Objectives
- Comprehend instructions
- Understand how the census counts people in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas

Materials: Count Me In! Student Worksheet 2

Getting Started
1. Explain to students that the census counts everybody who lives in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. The U.S. Census Bureau must be careful not to miss anyone or count him or her more than once. To accomplish this, it gives each household several guidelines for who to include on the census form.

Using the Student Worksheet
2. Make copies of Count Me In! Student Worksheet 2. Students can complete the worksheets individually or in pairs.
3. With students, review the guidelines for counting people in the United States. What seems to be the main criteria?
4. Using this information, have students review the different living situations at the bottom of the page. Then have them answer the questions that follow each scenario. For each situation, should the person be counted? If not, encourage them to share why that is the case.

Wrap-up
5. This activity may stimulate additional questions that reflect students’ individual concerns. Rather than revealing personal situations, encourage them to ask hypothetical “What if?” questions that expand on the worksheet scenarios. Have the class work together to resolve the questions related to the circumstances and the census form.

Extension Activity
The worksheet asks students to evaluate a variety of living situations. Challenge them to think beyond these situations to the ones that might reflect their own lives.

Now break the class into teams. Challenge each team to create their own scenarios and test another team. Have them check their answers against the guidelines outlined on the worksheet and on the sample census form.

Answers
1) Yes; 2) Yes; 3) No; 4) No; 5) No

WORDS TO KNOW AND SAY
Assisted care (uh-SIS-tehd KEHR): A facility for people who need long-term health care
Guidelines (GIDE-linez): A set of instructions or policies

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WORDS TO KNOW AND SAY
Assisted care (uh-SIS-tehd KEHR): A facility for people who need long-term health care
Guidelines (GIDE-linez): A set of instructions or policies
**Count Me In!**

**Who is counted in the 2010 Census?** The census form gives you some guidelines that are listed below. Use them to answer the questions at the bottom of the page. They will test your knowledge of who is counted!

**Include** these people on your census form:
- all people who live in your household most of the time
- people who live in your home most of the time while working, even if they have another place to live
- people living in your home on April 1, 2010, who have no other place to live

**Do not include** these people on your census form. They will be counted where they are living:
- college students who live away from home
- people who live in an assisted-care facility or mental hospital
- people who are in the U.S. military and living away from home
- people who are in jail

**Read the following examples. Then check “yes” or “no” to answer each question:**

1. I am a child. I am 5 years old. I live with my parents. Should they include me on their census form?  
   - Yes  
   - No

2. I am a grandmother. I live with my daughter and her family. I help take care of the children. Should she include me on her census form?  
   - Yes  
   - No

3. I am a college student. I go to school in the town where my parents live. But I live in a dormitory. Should my parents include me on their census form?  
   - Yes  
   - No

4. I live in an assisted-care facility. I often visit my son in his home. Sometimes I spend the night. Should my son include me on his census form?  
   - Yes  
   - No

5. I am in the U.S. Navy. I am living on a ship. My wife is the head of our household. Should she include me on her census form?  
   - Yes  
   - No
Your Part in the Process

Skills and Objectives
- Complete forms in English
- Construct a narrative in English
- Understand the steps in the census process

Materials: *Filling Out the Form* Student Worksheet 3a; *March to the Mailbox* Student Worksheet 3b

Getting Started

**NOTE:** Before students work through the process of filling out a sample census form, tell them that they will not share their private information with you or anybody else in class. This statement will help establish trust in the process.

1. Even for native English speakers, filling out forms can be confusing. Ask students for examples of forms they have completed, such as job applications or medical forms. Encourage them to share their experiences. What strategies did they use to make the process easier?

2. Explain to students that 2010 Census forms will be available in other languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian. But to become more familiar with the census form and the language, they will complete a “working copy” of the form in English.

Using the Student Worksheet

3. Make copies of *Filling Out the Form* Student Worksheet 3a. Explain to students that this is the first page of the census form. It asks 10 questions of “Person 1.” That person is generally the owner or renter of the home or the head of the household. Tell them this will give them a chance to fill out a “rough draft” of the census form in preparation for their “March to the Mailbox.”

4. The text provided outside of the form is intended to guide their answers. Remind students that their information is confidential. They may ask you questions as they work on the form. But they should not provide you with their information or share it with others.

5. When they finish the forms, ask students to check them for potential errors. Remind them that the “real” form should be completed clearly and neatly. Encourage students to take these “draft” forms home. They may want to enlist another English speaker in their household to check the information. Remind them that they will answer questions for all members of their households.

Wrap-up

6. After students complete their draft forms, ask them to evaluate the experience. Was it easier than they expected? Was it harder than they expected? How do they feel about filling out the “real” forms in March?

Extension Activity

Student Worksheet 3b gives students an opportunity to construct a narrative in English.

1. Make copies of the worksheet. Review the instructions on the sheet. Students may complete this individually or in pairs.

2. Based on their knowledge of the census process so far, ask students to number the steps in the order that they will occur. Then have them match each picture to its corresponding step.

3. Now students will have a set of “storyboards” that will allow them to plan a print or television advertisement, a brochure, or a set of computer animations. Challenge them to form teams to create one of these projects. Have them share their projects with the class or as a final activity at the end of the unit.

Answers

**Student Worksheet 3a:**
Answers will vary. Be sure that students do not share this information with others, including you.

**Student Worksheet 3b:** 4, 2, 3, and 1.
Filling Out the Census Form

Forms are a way to organize information. We often fill them out when we visit the doctor. We also use them to apply for jobs or to file taxes.

The 2010 Census form is easy to fill out. There are about 10 questions for each person. Use this sample form as a “rough draft.” When you finish, check for any errors. Take this sample home as your “working copy.” Then you will be ready to fill out the real form when it arrives!
The U.S. Census Bureau has a message for everybody living in the United States:

“We can’t move forward until you send it back!”

You can send the same message about the 2010 Census. Below are the steps in the U.S. Census process. But they are not in the right order. Number them from 1 to 4 to show the steps in the right order. Then draw a line from the picture to the statement describing that step. Write a label for each picture on the line below it. You now have a set of “storyboards.” You can use those storyboards to plan a print or TV ad that explains the census.

- Households mail their completed forms immediately.
- Households fill out their census forms.
- Census workers visit households that have not returned forms.
- The U.S. Census Bureau sends out forms in March 2010.
Census Conversations

Skills and Objectives

- Practice conversational English
- Understand the role of U.S. Census Bureau workers

Materials: A Visit from a Census Worker—a Reader’s Theater Script Student Worksheet 4

Getting Started

1. Assess your students’ knowledge of the census process by asking this question: What happens when individual households do not fill out and return their census forms?

2. Explain that workers for the U.S. Census Bureau will visit households that have not returned the forms. Mention that workers are trained to help answer questions about the census process. They also will guide members of those households through the form’s 10 questions and collect the information.

3. By now students should know that information collected by the U.S. Census Bureau is confidential by law. Emphasize that the law also extends to individual census workers. It is illegal for workers to share the information with anyone, either inside or outside of the U.S. Census Bureau.

4. Tell students they will have a chance to practice their conversational English by participating in a short skit. Choose four students—or ask for volunteers—to play three speaking roles and one acting role.

Using the Student Worksheet

5. Student Worksheet 4 is a script for a short Reader’s Theater production of A Visit from a Census Worker. Copy the script for the four speakers/actors, as well as the rest of the class. Other students can follow the script as it is acted out.

6. Before students act out the script, review any words or phrases that may be unfamiliar to the class. Some of those words are in the Words to Know and Say box on this page.

7. Have student volunteers perform the skit. What words and phrases seemed difficult for the actors to speak? Review the words and their definitions if necessary.

8. Encourage the four students to take turns, so that everybody has a speaking role. Or recruit other members of the class to perform the skit.

Wrap-up

9. As a class, discuss the information communicated in the play’s script. Ask these questions:

- What does a census worker do?
- What is a census worker required to show?
- What is against the law for a census worker?
- Who was being counted in the Alcala household? Why?

Extension Activity

Challenge students to write and perform their own short scripts using the information they’ve learned about the process and the importance of the census.

WORDS TO KNOW AND SAY

Identification (eye-DEHNT-ih-fih-kay-shun):
Something that proves a person’s identity

Representation (rehp-ree-zehn-TAY-shun):
The act of speaking on another person’s behalf
Scene

A Saturday lunch at the home of Enriqué Alcala. The family has just eaten. They are relaxing with fruit juice.

Characters

Enriqué Alcala
Elena Alcala, his wife
Teresa Alcala, his mother
Nicolas Alcala, his infant son
Ann Lee, a worker for the U.S. Census Bureau

Script

(A knock is heard at the door.)

Enriqué Alcala: Who can that be? I was hoping to get an afternoon nap!

Elena Alcala: (laughing) You’ll have to wait. I’ll get the door.

(She opens the door. A young woman is standing there. She is holding a clipboard.)

Ann Lee: Good afternoon! My name is Ann Lee. I am a worker for the U.S. Census Bureau. Here is my identification. (She holds up a badge.)

Elena: (looking nervous) Good afternoon. Enriqué? This is Ann Lee. She is with the U.S. Census Bureau.

Enriqué: Good afternoon. We received our census form. But I’m afraid we did not mail it. Please come in.

Ann: (stepping inside the home) Yes, I came to help you fill out the form.

Enriqué: We were not sure about a few things on the form. My mother is living with us now. She is helping us care for our new son. (On cue, a baby’s cry is heard in the background. Teresa Alcala hurries to another room.) Should we count her on our form?

Ann: Yes. Everybody in your household should be counted. I can help answer any of your questions.

Enriqué: I have to be honest. I was also not sure about giving out this personal information. Who sees it?

Elena: Please have a seat. Would you like some water or fruit juice?

Ann: Water would be fine. Thank you. It’s getting very warm outside!

Enriqué:
Ann: I understand your concern. But there is no reason to worry. The U.S. Census Bureau is the only agency that sees the information. We cannot share it with any other agency. In fact, it is a crime for us to do that. We collect the data only to have statistics about the people who live here.

Elena: (returning from the kitchen) Is that important?

Ann: Yes. Counting everybody helps the government decide how to spend money in your town. For example: Your son will be included in the count. That information could help decide whether to build new schools. (She turns to Enrique.) Your mother also will be counted. That will be helpful to people who plan services for seniors.

Enrique: Yes. I can see how being counted can help our family. Are there other reasons to be counted?

Ann: Yes. The count also decides our state’s representation in Congress. As the state grows, the number of elected officials goes up, too.

Elena: That is important. We live here. We pay taxes. We want our state’s voice to be heard.

Enrique: It sounds like we should have mailed back our form.

Ann: That’s why I’m here. We can fill it out now. I can help answer any of your questions. Let’s get started!
It’s Confidential

Skills and Objectives
- Practice conversational English
- Read and write English dialogue
- Understand the laws surrounding the census process

Materials: Your Side of the Story Student Worksheet 5

Getting Started

1. Your students now know how and why the U.S. government conducts a decennial census. But they may have concerns about the privacy of their information.

2. Conduct a classroom discussion that openly addresses these concerns. Encourage individual students to explain to the rest of the class any questions they might have. They may think that their populations might not be counted or they may be unsure about how their information might be used.

3. Tell students that U.S. Census Bureau workers take an oath of confidentiality. This means that workers promise not to share information about any person or household with any agency inside or outside the government. The oath is renewed every year. Breaking it is a crime.

4. Explain to students that an oath is a serious promise, usually in a legal sense. Ask them for examples of an oath. They may offer the following examples: An oath taken before serving on a jury or testifying in a trial; an oath taken by a politician before entering office; or the ethical oath taken by doctors before practicing medicine.

Using the Student Worksheet

5. Your Side of the Story Student Worksheet 5 presents the concerns of a hypothetical neighbor. Make copies of the worksheet. Depending on skill levels, you may want to assign pairs of students to complete the worksheet together.

6. Tell students that one side of the dialogue is being voiced by a neighbor. Based on their knowledge of the confidentiality laws surrounding the U.S. Census, have them write sentences that provide their own side of the conversation.

Wrap-up

7. Have student pairs read their conversations aloud, with one partner reading the dialogue of the neighbor and the other partner reading the other side. Have them practice until the conversation seems fluid and natural. Challenge them to present their conversations to the rest of the class.

Extension Activity

Challenge students to explore the Web site for the U.S. Census Bureau. By visiting www.2010census.gov they can learn more about the census and its history. Encourage them to add any new information they find to their K-W-L charts, which they began in Lesson 1.

Answers to the Student Worksheet

The following are sample lines of dialogue that students might use for their side of the conversation:

1. I have read that the census has only 10 questions. It should take only about 10 minutes to fill out.

2. The form asks you to list the people in your household. It also asks for their name, sex, race, and date of birth.

3. The government can use the information to help our community. The count also helps decide how many representatives we have in the state capital and in Congress.

4. The U.S. Census Bureau is the only agency that sees your information. It keeps it private.

5. It is against the law for the U.S. Census Bureau to share your information with other agencies.

6. Your information is sealed for 72 years.

7. I’m happy to share what I know about the census! Go to www.2010census.gov to find out more information about the census.
Imagine you are talking to a neighbor. Her name is Aziza. She has heard about the U.S. Census. She is confused about it. She does not know why some questions are being asked.

Her side of the conversation is below. Complete your half of it. When you are finished, read the conversation aloud with a partner. Practice until it sounds natural.

**Aziza:** I have heard about the census. But I have never filled out a form. I wonder if it is hard to do.

**You:**

**Aziza:** I did not know it was only 10 questions. What questions does the form ask?

**You:**

**Aziza:** Some questions seem personal. Why would I want to share that information?

**You:**

**Aziza:** What prevents the U.S. Census Bureau from sharing it with other agencies?

**You:**

**Aziza:** But how long does it stay private?

**You:**

**Aziza:** You know a lot about the census! How can I find out more?

**You:**

**Aziza:** Who else sees my information?

**You:**
Give short answers to these questions:

1. When does the government count people who live in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas?

2. What historical document requires the census?

3. Name two ways census data are collected:
   a. 
   b. 

4. From the list below choose four pieces of information that the census collects:
   - income
   - telephone number
   - employment
   - race of residents
   - sex of residents
   - country of origin
   - date of birth
   - work address
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 

5. From the following list, choose the people who should be counted on a household’s census form:
   - adults living in the home
   - relatives in nursing homes
   - adults serving in the military
   - children living in the home
   - children away at college
   - babies living in the home
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 

6. The following statements may be true or false. Circle whether they are true or false. If a statement is false, rewrite it to make it true.
   a. The U.S. Census Bureau shares census data with other government agencies.
      True       False
   b. The U.S. Census Bureau seals private information for 72 years.
      True       False
   c. Census data are used to decide how and where government money is spent.
      True       False
   d. Census data do not influence your state’s voice in government decisions.
      True       False

Answers to the quiz are on the next page.
# Additional Resources and Tools

Explore and bookmark these sites to learn more about what the U.S. Census Bureau is offering to educators!

## Census Web sites
- **U.S. Census Bureau:** [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- **2010 Census** (FAQs, facts, and news about the upcoming census): [www.2010census.gov](http://www.2010census.gov)
- **Census in Schools:** [www.census.gov/schools](http://www.census.gov/schools)
- **American FactFinder** (including facts on origins, language, race, and ethnicity): [http://factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)
- **Census Information Centers** (contact information for centers serving emerging populations): [www.census.gov/cic/](http://www.census.gov/cic/)
- **State Facts for Students:** [www.census.gov/schools/facts](http://www.census.gov/schools/facts)
- **Census Bureau YouTube Channel:** [www.youtube.com/user/uscensusbureau](http://www.youtube.com/user/uscensusbureau)
- **State Data Center:** [www.census.gov/sdc/www/](http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/)

## Other Government Web sites
- **United States House of Representatives:** [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)
- **United States Senate:** [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- **The White House:** [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)
- **Supreme Court of the United States:** [www.supremecourtus.gov](http://www.supremecourtus.gov)

**Quiz Answers:**
1. Every 10 years
2. U.S. Constitution
3. Census forms are sent to all households; those households fill out the form and send it back. Census workers collect data from households that have not returned a form.
4. Telephone number, sex of residents, race of residents, date of birth
5. Adults living in the home, children living in the home, babies living in the home
6. a. False. It is against the law for the U.S. Census Bureau to share census data with other government agencies. b. True. c. True. d. False. Census data are used to determine the number of representatives to Congress.
Find Us Online!

The U.S. Census Bureau provides content-rich materials for educators at all levels at

www.census.gov/schools

- Printable classroom wall maps
- Lesson plans for all grade levels in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas
- Profile America, a daily bilingual feature
- Teaching ideas based on current events
- History of the U.S. Census
- Facts for Features, statistics centered around Cinco de Mayo and other observances
- USA QuickFacts based on state, county, and large-city data
- The Census in Schools Educator Update, a newsletter to keep you informed about current and upcoming census data and ideas for using the data in the classroom