Electing Our Presidents: Who Counts?
The Electoral Process and the U.S. Census

Presented by Joshua Montanari, Education Specialist
enumeration*

/əˈn(y)oʊməˈrɑSH(ə)n/

noun

The action of establishing the number of something.

*Remember for the Writing and Language portion of the SAT!!!
What is the Census?

**Article I, Section 2**

“The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct.”

**Article I, Section 9**

“No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or enumeration herein before directed to be taken.”

Right: The Preamble and Article I of the United States Constitution (National Archives Identifier: 1667751)
Planning Dinner…Five Years in Advance

- Taken every five years
- Only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every county in the nation
- Helps farmers make informed decisions about their operations

Learn more about the Census of Agriculture from the United States Department of Agriculture

Right: Dover County of Strafford, Cotton Factory – Questions to be Addressed, ca. 1820 - ca. 1821 (National Archives Identifier: 5730497)
Far Right: "Farmers, Uncle Sam asks you...To get Ready for the Census Taker" 1941-1945 (National Archives Identifier: 514239)
Economic Census

How’s That Nation Business?

• Conducted every five years
• Data collected from 4 million business locations
• Relied upon by nation for economic development, business decisions, strategic planning
• Statistical benchmark for current economic activity

Left: Anxious Depositors Making a Run on a Bank, 2/28/1933 (National Archives Identifier: 849137)
Decennial Census of Population and Housing

The One That Counts Us

• Carried out by U.S. Census Bureau every ten years since 1790
• Counts every resident in the U.S., regardless of status
• Responses are strictly confidential
• Evolves with America, checked by Judicial Branch

Left: An Enumerator collects a family’s information for the 1940 U.S. Census (National Archives Identifier: 6200775)
Checks & Balances

Federal Courts & The Census

- Supreme Court: Census not limited to population headcount, ‘necessary and proper’ counts for enumeration okay
- In *Morales v. Daley*, District Court rules Census does not violate right to privacy under *Fourth Amendment*, information collected is confidential; affirmed by U.S. Court of Appeals
- Described by Supreme Court as “linchpin of the federal statistical system…”

*Left: U.S. Supreme Court Building, Washington, D.C. (National Archives Identifier: 594954)*
Evolving With America: 1790-1860

Enslaved Constituents: Separate & Unequal

- Enslaved Persons counted as 2/3 of a person in the Census to boost support for slavery in Congress
- Passage of 14th Amendment is catalyst for counting whole person, regardless of race

Access more resources about the Slave Trade for your students from the National Archives

Right: Map Showing the Distribution of the Slave Population of the Southern States of the United States, 1861 (National Archives Identifier: 86455714)
Evolving with America: Segregation

Card Punch Operators Working on Population Cards, Negro Section (National Archives Identifier: 7741404)

Card Punch Operators Working on Population Cards (National Archives Identifier: 7741405)
Evolving With America: Innovation

From Manual Counts to Digitization

- Increased capacity and efficiency in carrying out enumeration
- Variety of data products available
- Expanding accessibility

Find out more about the History of Tabulation and Processing from the U.S. Census Bureau

Far Right: “Coming Soon! United States Census 2020” Digital Poster (U.S. Census Bureau)
Evolving With America: 2020

Accommodating English Speakers of Other Languages

- 60 million U.S. residents are ESOL
- 4.9 million students learning English in public schools
- Online Census Content available in 59 languages

Right: 2020 Census I Count Poster, Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau)
But What Does It Do?

The Census Hits Home

- Billions in federal aid your state receives for Medicaid, Medicare, community development and other programs
- What your school district receives in state aid for education, school meals
- Your state’s number of U.S. House members & your town’s number of state legislators; determines states’ number of Electoral College votes

How many U.S. House Members does your state have?

Right: Political Cartoon, “14th Census” 12/18/1920 (National Archives Identifier: 306177)
Throwing Your Hat in the Ring?

It Could Verify Someone’s Eligibility to Run for President

- Verifies Jimmy Carter’s Place of Birth as Georgia
- Confirms “Age at last birthday”
- Shows established residency on U.S. soil for more than 14 years

Visit the National Archives to investigate more [U.S. Presidents in the Census Records](https://www.archives.gov)

Right: Transcript of Jimmy Carter in the 1940 U.S. Census ([National Archives](https://www.archives.gov))
Electiong Our President

Census-Electoral Math

1. A person running for President must win the most **Electoral Votes**

2. Electoral Votes of a State = **Number of U.S. House Members + 2 U.S. Senators**

3. National average = **1 U.S. House Member per 720,000 people**; the Constitution gives each state **2 U.S. Senators**, no matter how many people reside there

4. The candidate with the **most votes in each state wins all of its Electoral Votes**

5. With 538 total Electoral Votes at stake, 270 are needed to win:

   
   $538 \div 2 = 269, \; + \; 1 \; \text{for majority} = 270 \; \text{Electoral Votes Needed to Win}$
Case Study: State of Georgia

• Population in 2010 U.S. Census: 9,687,653

• One representative for every 720,000 people living in a state

• $9,687,653 \div 720,000 = 13.5$ U.S. House Members, but we can’t have half of a representative, so round up to **14 U.S. House Members**

• $14$ U.S. House Members + 2 U.S. Senators = **16 Electoral Votes**
Technically, Everybody in America Does

- Ineligible voters still count towards allocation of U.S. House Members & their state’s number of Electoral Votes
- Participants provide crucial data to policymakers, economists, farmers & many others that impact our daily lives
- Being counted in the Census is probably the easiest Civic Duty for anyone to fulfill

Right: 2020 Census Poster, “Every Person Counts. Respond to the Census” (U.S. Census Bureau)
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