

2016 Census Teacher's Kit

Activity 4: 92 Years from now

Overview

Senior-level students will investigate some of the questions asked in the census, using the 2011 Census as a tool. They'll think critically about the census questionnaire and consider how this information would be useful to past and future generations. They'll also be asked to devise their own 'census questions.'

Estimated completion time: up to 90 minutes

Suggested grade level: grades 10 to 12

Objectives	Subject-specific learning objectives
- Become familiar with the kinds of questions asked in the census. - Think critically about why particular questions are asked. - Consider and craft questions to gather additional information about the Canadian population.	Language and communication - Identify and analyse perspectives in text and comment on questions they raise about beliefs, values, identity, and power. - Write for a particular purpose and audience. Social studies - Understand that governments and other decision-making bodies evolve over time and are shaped by the traditions and pressures of the communities they govern. - Formulate research questions. - Investigate demographic trends and how data about the life patterns of individuals is obtained. - Use appropriate information technology to access or transmit information (e.g., surveys).

Materials	Vocabulary
Supplies Access to printed or online census questions (English) www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2010/2010-08-21/html/order-decret-eng.html (French) www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2010/2010-08-21/html/order-decret-fra.html Handouts - What is the Census of Population? - Summary of census topics - Census question worksheet	Census of Population: an enumeration of every household and person in Canada, done once every five years. Topics include age, sex, marital status and languages spoken. Confidentiality: an assurance that all personal information collected in the census is protected by law. Statistics Canada does not release any information that could identify individuals or households without their consent. Enumeration: the completion of a census questionnaire at home, online or on paper, by telephone or with the help of an enumerator. Enumerator: a person who contacts households that have not returned the census questionnaire online or by mail. Sometimes these people will bring a paper copy of the questionnaire to a household or conduct interviews to help households complete the questionnaire.

Getting started (15 to 30 minutes)

- Gather and show students images of their region 100 years ago. As a class, discuss the images and how they feel life would have been different or similar for everyday Canadians in that time period.

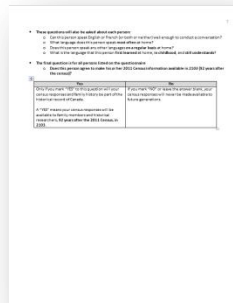
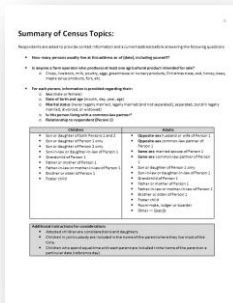
- Provide students with the **What is the Census of Population?** handout and give them a few minutes to read the text and summarize with a partner.



- Tell students that census information provides a 'snapshot' of people living in Canada, on one particular day, every five years. Every household in Canada is required by law to complete it, and Statistics Canada is required by law to keep individual results confidential. Information obtained through the census can be used to learn about people living in Canada in the past, and to help make decisions that affect people living in Canada in the future.
- Encourage students to consider the lives of Canadians at a time when their great-grandparents were alive, 92 years ago. What would they like to know about the life of everyday Canadians 92 years ago? What do they think their own grandchildren might like to know about everyday Canadians in 2016?

Activity (30 minutes)

- Divide the class into small groups and provide them with the **Summary of census topics** handout.



- Ask groups to consider which questions are important to members of the class, and to rank them in order of relevance or interest.

Discussion questions

- What information are these particular questions intended to collect?
- Do all of the questions apply to you and your classmates? Which ones seem more or less relevant?
- If a question is not relevant to you now, will it be relevant to you in five years? Ten years?

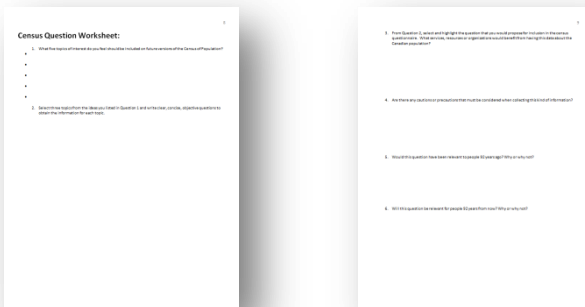
- Draw student attention to the final topic of consent at the bottom of the summary. When it is time for them to complete the census, they will be required to consult with the members of their own family to determine if they would like to give permission to release confidential information in 92 years. Without this permission, individual responses will never be available; instead, this information will be part of the about Canada as a whole.

Discussion questions

- Would you say yes or no? Why?

Consolidation of learning (30 minutes)

- Using the **Census question worksheet** handout, ask students to work individually or in pairs to define five informational topics they feel should be represented in the census data for 2016.



- From these options, ask each student to select three topics and write clear, concise, objective questions to obtain the desired information. Encourage students to consider what makes an effective or useful question.

Considerations for survey question writing:

- Does this question presuppose information? Is it open-ended? Is it objective?
- Is it clear what I'm asking? Will people reading it know what I'd like from them?
- Does the question solicit useful information?

- When they've completed their list of questions, ask students to pair up and test their questions.
- Partners should not only answer each other's questions, but should provide feedback about whether or not the question was effective, as well as suggestions about how it might be improved. Be sure to give students time to reword and refine their questions, based on feedback from their peers.

Modifications

If students require additional support:

Some students may need their teacher to provide a number of examples before they are able to create and test their own. Sample questions from previous census questionnaires can be found at

- (English) www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2010/2010-08-21/html/order-decret-eng.html
- (French) www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2010/2010-08-21/html/order-decret-fra.html.

If students require an additional challenge:

Ask students to investigate previous census data to determine if topics similar to theirs have ever been included in any form of the census questionnaire. If the information has not, to date, been included, ask students to speculate on trends in responses to the question for five, ten or fifteen years in the future.

Data gathered from previous census questionnaires and other surveys conducted by Statistics Canada can be searched by topic, year, region, etc., and can be found here:

- (English) www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/home-accueil?lang=eng
- (French) www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/home-accueil?lang=fra

Statistics Canada encourages the downloading and reuse of data provided in its socioeconomic database (CANSIM).

Next steps

To continue this activity, have students:

- Examine how census questions have changed as Canada and its population have changed. Provide sample questions from past census documents (five, ten or fifty years ago) and have students try to guess which era the questions represent. Have them create a poster featuring a comparison chart with data trends for questions of interest.
- Investigate the history of the census, the data it provides, and how it is used by organizations, media outlets, researchers, and policy makers. Consult the highlights and analysis of 2011 Census data and reflect on interesting or surprising findings and how students relate to those findings personally, or in the long-term, professionally.
- Create a survey from student questions and use free online survey tools to collect data, using the questions from a sample population within the community. If collecting data from people in the local community, ensure that respondents are aware that their participation is voluntary and that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in an informal survey.

What is the Census of Population?

A census is a tool that provides important basic information about a country's residents.

In Canada, the Census of Population is sent to every household, every five years. The goal of the census is to gather important information about every man, woman, and child who lives in Canada. By law, every household in Canada must participate, and by law, Statistics Canada must protect the information that is gathered.

The questions on the census ask about things like age, sex, marital status, who lives in a household, how they are connected to each other, and languages spoken.

The information collected during a census is used by all levels of government, as well by as the health care industry, social service agencies, educators, and the media. Information is used to make decisions about how and where money will be spent for services such as new roads, schools, police and fire protection for communities.

The last Canadian census was conducted in 2011. The next census in Canada will take place in 2016.

Summary of census topics

Respondents are asked to provide contact information and a current address before answering the following questions:

- **How many persons usually live at this address as of (date), including yourself?**
- **Is anyone a farm operator who produces at least one agricultural product intended for sale?**
 - Crops, livestock, milk, poultry, eggs, greenhouse or nursery products, Christmas trees, sod, honey, bees, maple syrup products, furs, etc.
- **For each person, information is provided regarding their:**
 - **Sex** (male or female)
 - **Date of birth and age** (day, month, year, age)
 - **Marital status** (never legally married, legally married [and not separated], separated, but still legally married, divorced, or widowed)
 - **Is this person living with a common-law partner?**
 - **Relationship to respondent (Person 1)**

Children	Adults
• Son or daughter of both Persons 1 and 2 • Son or daughter of Person 1 only • Son or daughter of Person 2 only • Son-in-law or daughter-in-law of Person 1 • Grandchild of Person 1 • Father or mother of Person 1 • Father-in-law or mother-in-law of Person 1 • Brother or sister of Person 1 • Foster child	• Opposite-sex husband or wife of Person 1 • Opposite-sex common-law partner of Person 1 • Same-sex married spouse of Person 1 • Same-sex common-law partner of Person 1 • Son or daughter of Person 1 only • Son-in-law or daughter-in-law of Person 1 • Grandchild of Person 1 • Father or mother of Person 1 • Father-in-law or mother-in-law of Person 1 • Brother or sister of Person 1 • Foster child • Room-mate, lodger or boarder • Other — <i>Specify</i>

Additional instructions for consideration

- Adopted children are considered sons and daughters.
- Children in joint custody are included in the home of the parent where they live most of the time.
- Children who spend equal time with each parent are included in the home of the parent on a particular date (reference day).

- **These questions will also be asked about each person:**
 - Can this person speak English or French (or both or neither) well enough to conduct a conversation?
 - What language does this person speak **most often** at home?
 - Does this person speak any other languages **on a regular basis** at home?
 - What is the language that this person **first learned** at home, **in childhood**, and **still understands**?
- **The final question is for all persons listed on the questionnaire:**
 - Does this person agree to make his or her 2011 Census information available in 2103 (92 years after the census)?

Yes	No
Only if you mark “YES” to this question will your census responses and family history be part of the historical record of Canada. A “YES” means your census responses will be available to family members and historical researchers, 92 years after the 2011 Census, in 2103.	If you mark “NO” or leave the answer blank, your census responses will never be made available to future generations.

Census question worksheet

1. What five topics of interest do you feel should be included on future versions of the Census of Population?
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2. Select three topics from the ideas you listed in Question 1 and write clear, concise and objective questions to obtain the information for each topic.

3. From Question 2, select and highlight the question that you would propose for inclusion in the census questionnaire. What services, resources or organizations would benefit from having this data about the Canadian population?
4. Are there any cautions or precautions that must be considered when collecting this kind of information?
5. Would this question have been relevant to people 92 years ago? Why or why not?
6. Will this question be relevant for people 92 years from now? Why or why not?