

# Activity 2: Our class, our community

## Overview

Junior-level students will think about their class as a community and will consider how they are similar to other small groups of people who live in Canada. They will learn how data can be used to make sure people in communities have services to support their needs. They will make decisions for their class community, using survey data to inform those decisions.

### Estimated completion time:



### Suggested grade level:



## Objectives

- Draw connections between the types of information gathered in a survey and how that information can be used to make decisions for the benefit of a community.
- Make decisions about allocating resources by using survey data to inform decisions.

## Subject-specific learning objectives

### Mathematics

- Collect data by conducting a survey about themselves or their community.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how datasets can be samples of larger populations.
- Read, interpret and draw conclusions from primary data.

### Social studies

- Gain a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local governments.
- Begin to discuss how needs are met in communities.

## Materials

### Supplies

- Board or poster paper
- Chalk or marker

### Handouts

- Classroom community questions
- Take-home activity: Our Canadian class (*optional*)

## Vocabulary

- Census:** A collection of information from every household in a country, on topics that are important to that country, that is used to help all levels of government, businesses, associations, community organizations and many others make decisions.
- Census of Population:** An enumeration of every household and person in Canada, conducted once every five years. Topics include age, marital status, household members and languages spoken.
- Census reference day:** The point in time relative to which census information is recorded. The reference day for the 2021 Census is May 11, 2021.
- Data:** Facts that can be studied and considered to form ideas or make decisions.
- Population:** The total number of people living in a given area.
- Statistics:** Numerical facts.
- Survey:** An activity where a specific group of people is asked a series of questions to find out information.

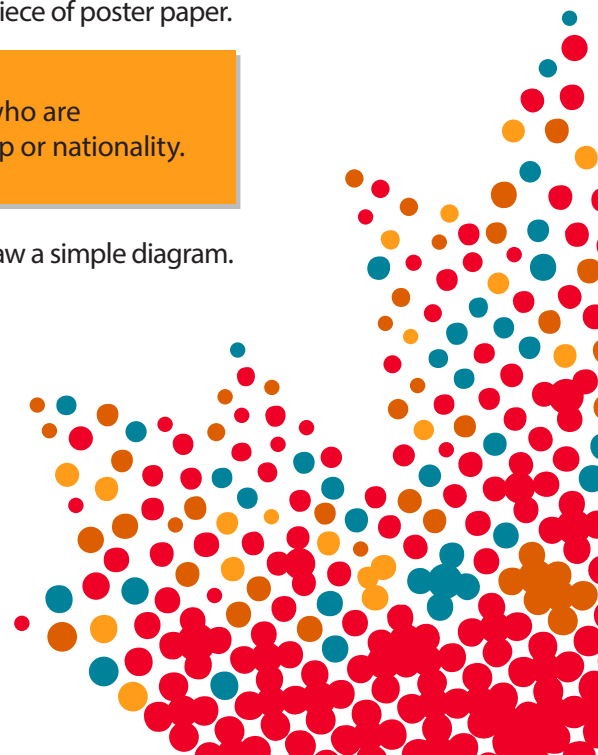
## Part 1: Getting started (15 to 30 minutes)

1

Write the following definition of “community” on the board or on a large piece of poster paper.

**Community:** A group of people who live in one particular area or who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group or nationality.

To explain the concept of community in a more visual way, you can also draw a simple diagram.



**2** As a class, briefly discuss the definition.

If time allows, encourage students to add words or phrases to the definition. You can ask students to write their own words, phrases or definitions of community on the board, or provide them with sticky notes (Post its) if you are using poster paper.

**Guiding questions:**

- Do you think our definition and this definition are similar or different? How?
- What kinds of things bring people together into a community? Is community just about where you live, or do community members share other things?
- Who is part of your community? How far does it extend?
- Is our class a community? Is it also part of another community?
- What other communities do you know? For example, can you name any First Nations or Métis settlements?

**Part 2: Activity (30 to 45 minutes)**

**3** Tell students that the Government of Canada conducts a Census of Population every five years. Most households receive the short-form questionnaire, but a sample of households receive the long-form questionnaire, which also includes the questions from the short form. The census is conducted to get an overall picture of who lives in Canada at one specific point in time. This information is used to make decisions about the types of services and support that communities need.

The census asks questions about all people living in Canada on a specific day (census reference day), and topics include

- people's age
- marital status and relationships of people living in a household
- number of people living in a household
- languages spoken

**4** Ask students to work with a neighbour and think about some of the services that they have heard of or used and that are provided by the Canadian government.

Services may include

- schools and daycares
- emergency services, such as fire protection, police or medical services
- roads and public transit
- community services, such as health care, education or employment.



**5** Ask students to think about their class as a small community within the larger community of their school. Tell students that they are going to answer a few questions inspired by the census. This will allow them to gather some information (statistics) about their class and class resources so that they can make decisions about services or resources that their class needs.

**6** Distribute the **Classroom community questions** handout and read all of the questions aloud to the class before answering them. Ensure that students know that they should select only one answer for each question.

Alternatively, if time and classroom resources allow, you can input the questions from the **Classroom community questions** handout into a free online survey tool so that the survey can be completed on a computer or mobile device.

**7** Read each question aloud and ask students to raise their hands when the answer applies to them. Count the number of raised hands, tally the student responses on the board and ask students to record the numbers on their handouts.

Alternatively, if time allows, divide students into groups to complete smaller tallies, and then add all the results together. Create class statistics or investigate small group survey results with the class as a whole.

### Part 3: Consolidation of learning (15 to 30 minutes)

**8** When the information has been collected and recorded, have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss and propose one service that their class needs.

Allow students to choose their own service, or provide groups with an assigned service category. (See below for survey category suggestions.)

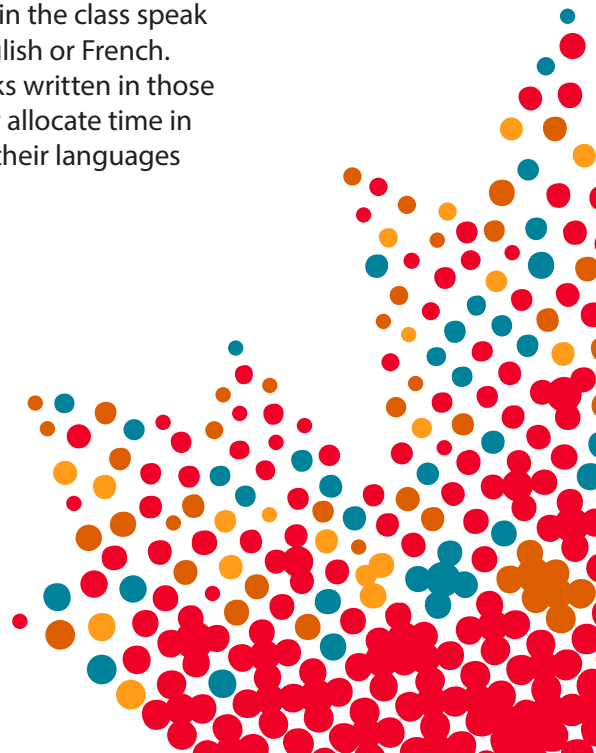
#### Possible categories and proposed services

##### Health

“Most students take the bus or are driven to school in a car. We should have a longer recess, more gym time, or do yoga in class so we can get more exercise.”

##### Education

“Seven out of 30 students in the class speak a language other than English or French. We should add some books written in those languages to the library or allocate time in class to learn more about their languages and cultures.”



## Modifications

### If students require additional support, try the following:

- Reduce the number of topics or questions in the survey, or focus on a different topic every day for several days.

### If students require an additional challenge, try the following:

- Encourage students to represent the data in different ways by calculating percentages, or by creating graphs, diagrams or infographics using online illustration tools.
- Ask students to consider how these data might change if the same students were asked the same questions in five years—what information would stay the same (e.g., birthdays) and what information would likely change (e.g., fewer people preferring to use a pen as technology advances)?
- Encourage students to create their own questions to learn more about their class, and include these questions in the discussion

## Next steps

### To continue this activity, try the following:

- Ask another class (or several classes) in the school to complete the same activity, and compare the data.
- Have students read a book such as *If the World Were a Village* by David J. Smith and Shelagh Armstrong (ISBN-10: 1554535956, ISBN-13: 978-1554535958) or visit websites with a similar theme to further investigate how the characteristics and composition of a community (including a global one) may be represented numerically.
- Have students work together to select the top three proposals for services for the class; establish evaluation criteria, such as interest level in the class, long-term benefit, feasibility and cost to implement. When a single service has been selected, have students write a letter to the principal, school council or parent groups asking for support in implementing the service.

## Optional take-home activity: Our Canadian class

Use the information students have gathered about their class to create a visual “snapshot” of their class as a Canadian classroom. Encourage students to represent details about their class in different ways (e.g., illustrations, written facts, graphs or charts, infographics) within a maple leaf outline. Once complete, the leaves can be cut out and posted in the school community, or scanned and shared on a class website or social media page.

