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Dear Educator:

The **2021 Census Teacher's Kit** has been developed for use in elementary, intermediate and secondary classes across the country. The kit includes four activities that are appropriate for many subjects, including mathematics, social studies, and English or French language studies. These activities also include "next steps" ideas to help connect the subjects with concepts in the sciences and creative arts.

All activities are classroom-ready and have been reviewed to meet curriculum requirements. Through these exercises, students will gain an understanding of what the census is used for, how it is conducted, and the role it has played in shaping present-day Canada. For younger children, the kit includes a fun colouring activity that will allow them to practise counting and exercise their fine motor skills.

Although these activities can be incorporated into classroom studies throughout the school year, the best time to incorporate the Teacher's Kit into your curriculum is early April 2021, right before the Census of Population and the Census of Agriculture are conducted.

If you have questions or comments about the 2021 Census Teacher's Kit, please contact [Census Communications](#).

A digital download of the 2021 Census Teacher's Kit is available on the [2021 Census website](#).

Thank you for helping to share the census message with your students. We welcome and appreciate your feedback. To help us improve the Teacher's Kit for 2026, please complete this [feedback form](#).

Note: A separate **2021 Census Adult Education Kit** is available for instructors who work with adult learners, particularly in adult basic education and English as a second language. To download the 2021 Census Adult Education Kit, please visit the [census website](#).

Teacher's Guide



Introduction

This guide contains useful information for educators who are teaching their classes about the census or who are incorporating activities from the 2021 Census Teacher's Kit into their programs. It contains an overview of the activities included in the kit and background information on the Census of Population and the Census of Agriculture.

Additional information about the 2021 Census of Population can be found on the [2021 Census website](#), and on the [Census Program page](#) of the Statistics Canada website.

Additional information about the 2021 Census of Agriculture can be found on the [Agriculture and food statistics page](#) of the Statistics Canada website.

This kit is designed to

- provide you with ready-to-use activities that make subjects like mathematics and social studies come to life in a fun and dynamic way
- give you and your students access to valuable census data tools for your research projects
- help your students relate to an important part of our Canadian heritage and gain a new perspective on their community.

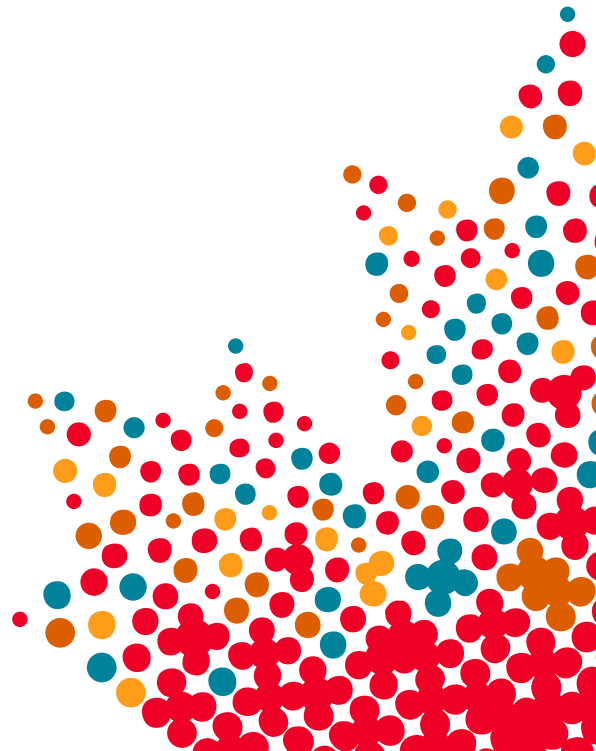
Planning

The best time to incorporate the Teacher's Kit into your curriculum is early April 2021. This will coincide with Statistics Canada's national, provincial and local census awareness campaigns and with the arrival of census information in households across Canada. Teachers are also encouraged to use these activities and concepts, and statistics obtained through the census, throughout the school year.

Teacher-ready activities target five suggested grade levels, and an overview of these activities is provided below for planning purposes. Suggestions are provided, but educators should feel free to adapt activities to their program and student needs.

Each activity plan includes the following:

- **Overview:** A short paragraph outlining what the students will be doing in the activity.
- **Suggested grade level:** A recommended grade range for the activity.
- **Estimated completion time:** An estimate of how long the three-part activity should take to complete with a group of students. Activities range from 75 to 120 minutes of total in-class time, with suggestions for “next steps” to follow. Teachers are encouraged to add or omit sections to meet their classroom needs.
- **Objectives:** A set of census-specific learning goals for each activity.
- **Subject-specific learning objectives:** A set of cross-curricular learning goals for each activity.
- **Materials:** A list of general classroom supplies, online resources and handouts to support each activity. Handouts may include reference material, worksheets or visual aids.
- **Vocabulary:** A list of key terms and definitions related to census concepts.
- **Three-part activity plan:**
 - **Part 1: Getting started**—a brief suggestion for a warm-up activity to help students begin to think about the topics that will be explored in later parts of the activity.
 - **Part 2: Activity**—a set of step-by-step instructions for teachers.
 - **Part 3: Consolidation of learning**—a task for students to complete to demonstrate their learning.
- **Modifications:** A short list of organizational, instructional and enrichment strategies to help teachers accommodate a range of student needs and interests.
- **Next steps:** A short list of extension activities to further investigate or apply census concepts in the classroom after the main activity has been completed.



Overview of activities



Stand-alone activity: Colour and count

Suggested grade level: Kindergarten and Grade 1

Kindergarteners and primary-level students will practise their counting skills while colouring. They will learn that they can count objects in a picture, just as the census counts people. There are three colouring themes to choose from: Enumerating communities, The North and Counting Canada.

Activity 1: Counting classmates

Suggested grade level: Grades 2 to 4

Primary and junior-level students will learn about collecting data to better understand a group of people. They will gather information and compare their findings with simplified statistics derived from the 2016 Census.

Activity 2: Our class, our community

Suggested grade level: Grades 5 and 6

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.

Activity 3: Food, feed and function

**Suggested grade level: Grades 7 to 9
(Secondary 1 to 3)**

Intermediate-level students will learn about the Census of Agriculture and the difference between food, feed and function. They will investigate current data from the Census of Agriculture and become familiar with some of the agricultural products from their region. They will consider geographic factors that contribute to the success of these products and compare their region's production with that of other regions in Canada.

Activity 4: 92 years from now

**Suggested grade level: Grades 10 to 12
(Secondary 3 to 5)**

Senior-level students will investigate some of the questions asked in the census, using the 2016 Census as a tool. They will think critically about the census questionnaire and consider how information gathered from the census would be useful to past and future generations. They will also be asked to create their own census questions.

Resources



A variety of resources are available to inform students, their families and educators about the Census of Population.

Included in this kit

- **Quick census facts** that can be reproduced and sent home with students to help spread the census message.
- **The Census of Population fact sheet**, which is primarily for the teacher's reference and provides a more detailed description of the census and its history.
- **Census vocabulary** that can be reproduced or used as a central reference for basic definitions of census terminology.

Additional resources

- [Library and Archives Canada collections databases](#) contain information provided by Library and Archives Canada. Educators can search and access images, videos, articles, statistics and other featured resources about Canada and its history.
- [Statistics Canada's data repository](#) is an online socioeconomic database of statistics obtained through various Canadian surveys and census questionnaires. Statistics Canada encourages people to download and reuse its data.
- [The Census of Agriculture survey page](#) is an online resource for both general and specific information about the Census of Agriculture, including archived versions of census questionnaires and data from previous years.
- [The Census of Population survey page](#) is an online resource for both general and specific information about the Census of Population, including data sources, methods used by the census and archived versions of census questionnaires.
- [The Indigenous Liaison Program](#) serves as a bridge between Statistics Canada and First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, and Indigenous organizations. Program objectives include increasing understanding of and access to Statistics Canada's data, products and services, and helping to build the statistical capacity of Indigenous peoples and organizations.

Quick census facts



What is the census?

The Census of Population provides a statistical picture of Canada and its people. Almost every country in the world conducts a census on a regular basis.

The Census of Population collects information, in five-year intervals, on every person living in Canada, with some exceptions. For more details, refer to the section “Who will be included in the census?”

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years, at the same time as the Census of Population. The Census of Agriculture collects information on every agricultural operation in Canada.

When will the next census be held?

The next census will take place in May 2021 throughout the country.

Why conduct the census?

The census collects important information that is used for making decisions.

It is the primary source of sociodemographic data for specific population groups, such as lone-parent families, Indigenous peoples, immigrants, seniors and language groups.

According to the *Statistics Act*, a census must be conducted **every five years**, and **every household** in Canada must participate.

Privacy and confidentiality

In Canada, great care is taken to ensure that information collected in the census is clearly in the public interest and cannot be obtained effectively from other sources.

Statistics Canada places the highest priority on maintaining the confidentiality of individual questionnaires. Stringent instructions and procedures have been implemented to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times. For instance, census data are processed and stored on a highly restricted internal network and cannot be accessed by anyone who has not taken an oath of secrecy.

Who will be included in the census?

Included in the census are Canadian citizens, landed immigrants (permanent residents), people who have claimed refugee status (asylum seekers), and people from another country with a work or study permit and family members living here with them.

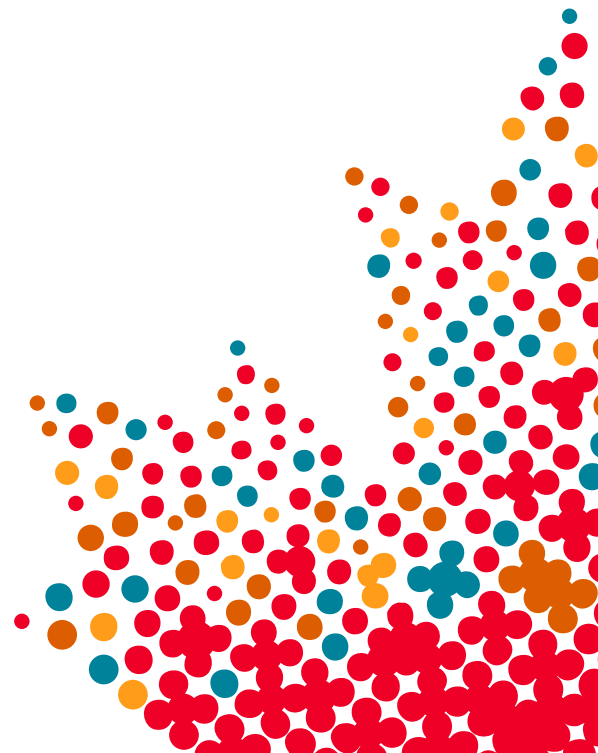
How can I complete the questionnaire?

Most households will receive a letter, delivered by Canada Post or hand-delivered by a census employee, that invites them to complete the census questionnaire online.

Completing the questionnaire online helps to improve data quality, saves time for respondents and reduces paper waste.

Who uses census data?

All levels of government, Indigenous communities, the private sector, social services sectors and other organizations use census data to make informed decisions that affect the lives of everyone in Canada.



Census of Population fact sheet



Census of Population

Statistics Canada conducts the Census of Population every five years. The last census was conducted in May 2016. The next census will be conducted in May 2021.

Census history

Census taking is not a new concept. During the third and fourth centuries BCE, the Babylonians, Chinese and Egyptians enumerated their populations to collect taxes and to fight foreign wars. The Romans were avid census takers and regularly held censuses to learn about areas in their far-reaching empire.

In contrast to early censuses, later censuses became more than just a way to levy taxes or to muster men for fighting. They were seen as an inquiry into the social and economic state of the nation.

The first “Canadian” census was taken in 1666, in New France, by Intendant Jean Talon. Sent by Louis XIV to administer the colony of New France, Talon recognized the importance of having reliable information with which to organize the colony and further its development.

The recorded population (excluding Indigenous people and royal troops) was 3,215. Information was obtained on age, sex, marital status and locality. In addition, the census identified professions and trades for 763 people.

No fewer than 36 censuses were conducted in New France. Each one introduced new questions on topics such as the production of various crops; the number of public buildings, churches, gristmills and sawmills; and the number of firearms and swords.

The first census under the British regime was taken in 1765 and asked many of the same questions as the censuses in the latter part of the French regime. As time passed, new topics appeared on the census, such as race, ethnicity, religion and place of birth.

During the 1800s, separate censuses were held at various times in the Atlantic colonies, in Upper and Lower Canada, and in Manitoba. In 1867, the *British North America Act* (now called the *Constitution Act*) brought about Confederation and called for a Census of Canada to be taken every 10 years, starting in 1871. Census results would be used to determine the number of members in the House of Commons.

A mid-decade agricultural census was first held in Manitoba in 1896.

When the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were created in 1905, the increasingly rapid settlement of the west made the quinquennial (every five years) census a constitutional requirement. A new *Census and Statistics Act* called for additional censuses of population and agriculture to be taken in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1906 and every 10 years after that until the population of each of the three provinces reached 1.25 million. These censuses continued until 1956, when Canada began taking national censuses of population and agriculture every five years.

A census every five years

In 1956, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics began taking national censuses every five years to provide up-to-date information on the nation's rapidly changing population. The mid-decade census was made mandatory in the *Statistics Act* of 1971.

How is the census taken?

In May 2021, every household in Canada will be asked to complete a census questionnaire, either online or on paper. Over 15 million households are expected to participate.

Questionnaires

In 2021, Statistics Canada will be encouraging households to complete their census questionnaire online. The benefits of completing a questionnaire online include improved data quality, time savings for respondents and less paper use. Paper questionnaires and alternative format questionnaires (e.g., large print or braille) will still be available upon request.

Every household in Canada is required to complete a census questionnaire. Most households receive the short-form questionnaire. However, a sample of households receive the long-form questionnaire, which also includes the questions from the short form.

Short-form census questionnaire

The short-form census questionnaire collects basic information on every person living in Canada, with some exceptions.

Long-form census questionnaire

The long-form census questionnaire collects detailed social and economic information about our communities, and provides data for small geographic areas and small population groups. This information is needed to help plan public services such as schools, daycares, family services, public transportation and skills training for employment.



Methodology

In May 2021, approximately 99% of private dwellings will receive a letter inviting them to complete the 2021 Census questionnaire. The census invitation letter contains the information required to complete the census questionnaire online.

Over 90% will have their letter delivered by Canada Post on May 3, 2021. In some rural communities, the letter will be hand-delivered by a census employee between May 3 and May 10, 2021.

Households that prefer to complete a paper questionnaire can request one by calling the phone number included in the invitation letter.

How are the census questions determined?

Determining census content is an ongoing process that involves user consultations, content testing and content approval for the short-form and long-form questionnaires.

Before each census, Statistics Canada conducts user consultations and testing to determine the census questions, taking emerging social and economic issues into account. Results from the user consultation feed into the content testing process. This is followed by the development of recommendations on final questionnaire content and the subsequent approval process.

The final questions are presented to and approved by Cabinet and are then published in the *Canada Gazette*.

Who uses census data?

Governments, Indigenous leadership, businesses, associations, community organizations and many others use census data. The following are some examples:

- The federal government uses population counts from certain census years to realign the boundaries of federal electoral districts and to ensure equal representation of the population in the House of Commons.
- Demographic data from the census are used to produce population estimates. In turn, these population estimates are used to determine representation in Parliament, to calculate transfer payments between levels of government and to support various government programs across the country.



- Government departments use census data to determine population age trends to estimate future demand for child tax benefits and Old Age Security pensions.
- Indigenous leadership uses census information on Indigenous languages to assess the need for services in traditional languages and to create programs to support the learning and growth of these languages in their community.
- Communities use census information on population growth and movement to plan services such as schools, daycares, police services and fire protection services.
- Town planners, social welfare workers and other government agencies use census information on families.
- Life insurance companies base their premium tables on census age data.
- Businesses determine new factory, store and office locations based largely on the size and distribution of the population in different areas, which are determined through census data.
- Manufacturers of household and farm equipment use census data in determining the best market locations for their products. They can also assess the benefits of developing specific products by knowing the characteristics of the population in particular areas.

More than a civic responsibility?

It is vital that decision makers have accurate information when making policies that will shape our country's future. For this reason, answering census questions is more than a civic responsibility—it is required by law. The *Statistics Act* states the legal obligation of every household to participate in the census. Under the same law, Statistics Canada must protect the confidentiality of the personal information provided by respondents.

Privacy and confidentiality

In Canada, great care is taken to ensure that information collected in the census is clearly in the public interest and cannot be obtained effectively from other sources.

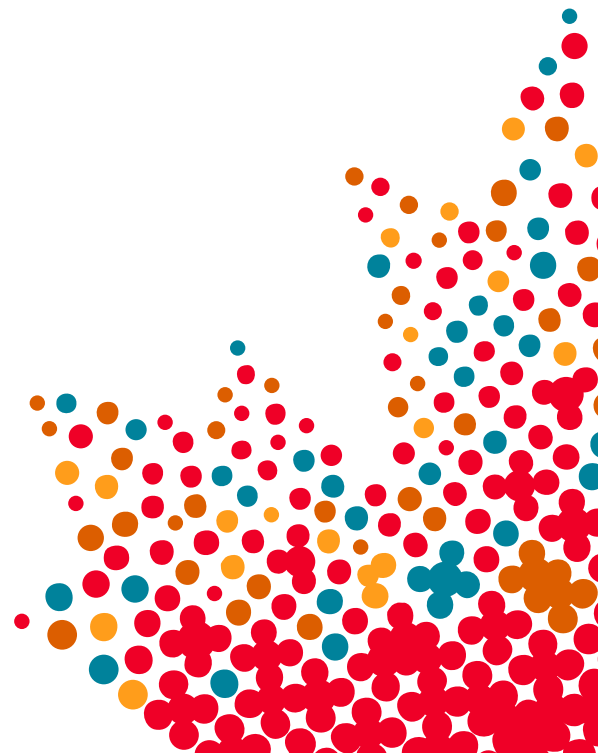
Statistics Canada places the highest priority on maintaining the confidentiality of individual questionnaires. Stringent instructions and procedures have been implemented to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times. For instance, census data are processed and stored on a highly restricted internal network and cannot be accessed by anyone who has not taken an oath of secrecy.



Resources for census material

Census information can be obtained free of charge in many libraries. Academic and large city libraries have a full range of Statistics Canada products in a variety of media formats, while others carry a selection of publications.

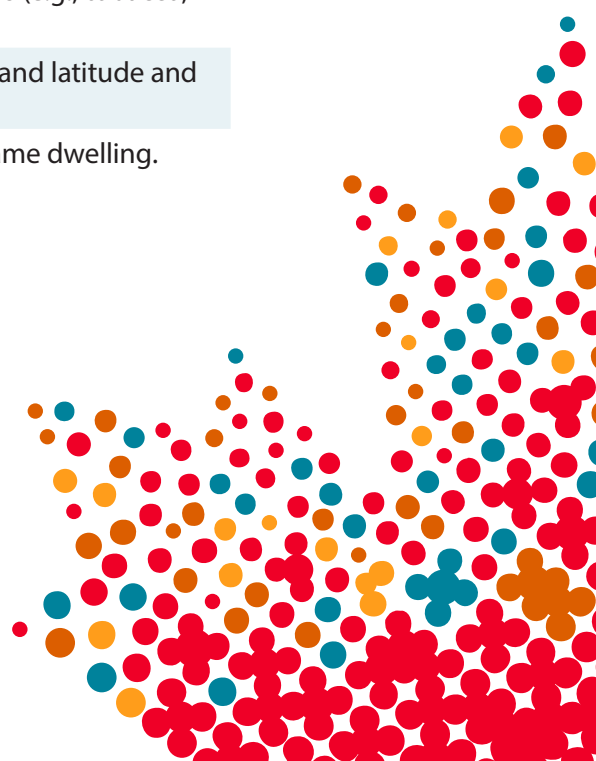
To find specific information about your city, town or community, go to the Statistics Canada website (www.statcan.gc.ca), select the **Census** tab, and then select **2016 Census Profile**.



Census Vocabulary

Agriculture	see Census of Agriculture.
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 agglomeration (CA)	An area that includes one or more municipalities that are centred on a major urban core of at least 10,000 people (e.g., Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island).
Census data	information that comes from the census.
Census division (CD)	A group of municipalities that are next to each other and that work together for regional planning and to manage shared services, such as police or ambulance services. These divisions are smaller than a province, but larger than a census subdivision.
Census farm	A farm, ranch or other operation that produces agricultural products intended for sale.
Census metropolitan area (CMA)	An area that includes one or more municipalities centred on a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core (e.g., Winnipeg, Manitoba).
Census of Agriculture	A census that takes place every five years and asks questions about every farm, ranch or other agricultural operation in Canada, including questions about land use, crops, livestock, agricultural labour, farm income and land management.
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 questionnaire	A written series of questions intended to gather specific information about all household members.
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.
Census subdivision (CSD)	Municipalities or areas treated as municipal equivalents (e.g., First Nations reserves or Indian settlements) for statistical purposes within a census division.

Collection unit (CU)	A geographic area outlined to make census data collection more manageable. In remote areas, an enumerator is responsible for this area.
Complete count	An important goal of the census—to collect information about everyone who is living in Canada, including Canadians working overseas (for federal or provincial governments, Canadian embassies, and the Canadian Armed Forces) and their families.
Confidentiality	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.
Data	Facts that can be studied and considered to form ideas or make decisions.
Dwelling	A place where a person or group of people live or could live. The dwelling’s entrance must be accessible without passing through the living quarters of some other person or group of people.
Enumeration	The completion of a census questionnaire at home, online, on paper, by telephone, or with the help of an enumerator.
Enumerator	A person whose job is to collect census data directly from the population. Enumerators also contact households that have not returned their census questionnaire online or by mail.
Farm operator	A person who is at least 15 years old and who is responsible for the day-to-day management decisions made in operating a census farm.
Farm population	All people who are members of a farm operator’s household who are living on a farm.
Field crop	A crop that does not include fruits or vegetables, such as hay, grains (e.g., wheat and corn), oilseeds (e.g., flaxseed, canola, soybeans and sunflower), pulses (e.g., dry beans and peas, lentils and chickpeas), potatoes and other crops (e.g., tobacco, ginseng, sugar beets and other spices).
Grid	A system of survey lines that follow longitude and latitude and divide an area into counties, sections, lots, etc.
Household	A person or group of people who live in the same dwelling.



Indigenous identity	Refers to whether a person identifies with the Indigenous peoples of Canada on the census questionnaire. This includes those who are First Nations, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (i.e., registered under the Indian Act), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band.
Indigenous peoples of Canada	First Nations, Métis and Inuit, as defined in the <i>Constitution Act</i> , 1982, section 35 (2). A person may be in more than one of these three specific groups.
Mother tongue	The first language(s) learned by an individual at home, in childhood, that they still understand.
Net farm income	A measurement of a farm operation's profit or loss, calculated by subtracting the total farm operating expenses from the total farm operating revenues.
Non-permanent residents	People from another country who are living or staying in Canada for a limited time (not permanently) on Census Day, including people with work or study permits, refugee claimants, and visiting family members.
Overcount	The estimated number of people counted more than once in the Census of Population.
Population	The total number of people living in a given area.
Population centre	An area with a population of at least 1,000 and a density of 400 or more people per square kilometre. This includes small population centres (population between 1,000 and 29,999), medium population centres (population between 30,000 and 99,999) and large urban population centres (population of 100,000 or more).
Reserve	A tract of land, for which the legal title is held by the Crown, which has been set apart for the use and benefit of a First Nation. Some First Nations have more than one reserve.
Rural areas	Areas outside population centres.
Sample	Part of a larger group that can be used to represent the whole (e.g., one out of five households in a populated area).
Statistics	Numerical facts.
Survey	An activity where a specific group of people is asked a series of questions to find out information.
Undercount	The estimated number of people who were not counted in the Census of Population.

