



Activity 1: Taking a census

Suggested level: **elementary**

Subjects: **art, social studies, mathematics, language arts**

Overview

This activity introduces students to the concept of a census and explains why one is taken in Canada every five years.

Duration: 1 class period

Note: See the **Teacher's Guide** for general background on the census and census vocabulary.

Learning objectives

- Explain the term census and name some of the information gathered by the census.
- Use counting techniques to take a census (household and classroom).
- Collect information and organize data.

Vocabulary

census, interviewer, household, population

Materials

- **Teacher's Guide**
- **Handout 1:** The census logo
- **Handout 2:** Taking a census
- Coloured pencils, markers, crayons (not included).

Getting started

Explain to students that a census collects information on every man, woman and child in Canada every five years. A census is taken because Canada is always changing. The next census takes place in May 2011.

The information that the census provides is used to make important decisions. For example, in areas where there are many children, playgrounds and schools may be built.

Census activity

1. Distribute **Handout 1:** The census logo. Explain that the census logo shows a group of people. These people represent everyone who will participate in the census in May 2011. Have the students colour the census logo in the official census colours (red, yellow and green).
2. Tell the students that they are now going to take a census, and distribute copies of **Handout 2:** Taking a census. Read the introduction with them and then have them answer the questions.
3. Ask the students to take the handouts home to remind their families of the census in May 2011.



Activity 1: Enrichment

1. Have the students count the members of the class. They could then organize the data by sex, age, or other characteristics they are interested in. This could be done by having the students form groups for the characteristic in question (e.g., girls on one side, boys on the other). Have them re-group for each characteristic.
2. Expand this activity by designating a few students as “interviewers.” Each interviewer could be responsible for one particular item, e.g., favourite TV shows, types of pets, etc. The results could be listed on the chalkboard, followed by a discussion of the class profile. If desired, students could graph the results.

The class should choose items of interest to the students. These could range from favourite colours to method of getting to school. The aim here is to have students recognize that information can be gathered and that the results influence decisions. For example, favourite colours could determine the colours for a new school crest; method of getting to school could determine the number of bike racks needed in the schoolyard.

Have the students create a bulletin board display of what they have done in class. Add pictures and drawings.

Name:

Date:



Handout 1: The census logo



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Name:

Date:



Handout 2: Taking a census

The census collects information on every man, woman and child in Canada, every five years. The census asks many things about the people living in Canada. The answers help us make important decisions like where to build playgrounds, schools and hospitals.

In May 2011 every household in Canada will be counted in the census. Can you take a census of your household?

1. How many adults live in your household? _____

2. How many boys live in your household? _____

3. How many girls live in your household? _____

4. How many people, in total, live in your household? _____

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