Name: _____ Date: _____

The Census Taker at the Door

Circle group

In 1790, soon after the country began, officials rode on horses from house to house. They carried paper and ink. They asked who lived inside. This was the first census, a count of everyone in the country. The United States has done it every ten years since. The Constitution says to.

The main goal is fairness. The number of people in a state decides how many seats it gets in the House of Representatives. If a state grows faster than others, it may gain seats. If it grows slower, it may lose one. Without a count, power would slowly drift away from where people really live.

The census also helps with plans. Cities and states use the numbers to decide where to build schools, roads, and clinics. Governments use them to share money. If many families in a neighborhood are not counted, that neighborhood may get less than it needs for years.

People worry about privacy, so the law protects what they say. Answers about one person cannot be used to harm them. They are kept secret for many decades. Only summaries are shared.

Today most homes answer online, by mail, or by phone. Workers visit only homes that do not answer. Being counted is a small act of citizenship. It takes a few minutes. But it shapes how a community is served for ten years.

Questions

1. How often does the United States hold a census?

_____

_____

2. What does a state's population decide in the House of Representatives?

_____

_____

3. What are two things communities plan with census numbers?

_____

_____

4. Why could a neighborhood suffer if many families are not counted?

_____

_____

5. How does the census help keep government fair?

_____

_____

6. How does the law protect the privacy of people who answer?

_____

_____

Words to know

census: an official count of all the people living in a country
representatives: people chosen to speak and vote for a group
clinics: places where people go for basic medical care
citizenship: the role and duties of being a member of a country

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Census Taker at the Door

Triangle group

In 1790, shortly after the United States was founded, officials on horseback rode from house to house with paper and ink, asking who lived inside. They were conducting the first census, a count of everyone in the country. The United States has repeated this count every ten years since then, and the reason is written into the Constitution.

The main purpose is fairness in government. The number of people in each state decides how many seats that state receives in the House of Representatives. When a state's population grows faster than others, it may gain seats, and a state that grows more slowly may lose one. Without a regular count, the map of power would slowly drift away from the real map of where people live.

The census also guides practical decisions. Cities and states use the numbers to decide where to build schools, roads, and clinics. Governments use them to share money among communities. If many families in a neighborhood are left out of the count, that neighborhood may receive less than it needs for years afterward.

Because people worry about privacy, the law protects what they tell the Census Bureau. Individual answers cannot be used to harm a person and are kept secret for many decades. Only summary statistics are published.

Today most households answer online, by mail, or by phone, and workers visit only those who do not respond. The census is a reminder that being counted is a small act of citizenship. It costs only a few minutes, yet it shapes how a community is represented and served for ten years.

Questions

1. How often does the United States hold a census?

_____

_____

2. What does a state's population decide about its role in the House of Representatives?

_____

_____

3. What are two things communities use census numbers to plan?

_____

_____

4. Why could a neighborhood suffer if many families are left out of the count?

_____

_____

5. How does the census help keep the government fair?

_____

_____

6. How does the law protect the privacy of people who answer?

_____

_____

Words to know

census: an official count of all the people living in a country
population: the total number of people living in a place
representatives: people chosen to speak and vote for a group
clinics: places where people go for basic medical care
citizenship: the role and duties of being a member of a country

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Census Taker at the Door

Square group

In 1790, shortly after the United States came into being, officials traveling on horseback went from house to house carrying paper and ink and inquiring who resided inside. They were conducting the nation's first census, a count of everyone in the country. The United States has repeated this count every ten years ever since, and the requirement is written into the Constitution itself.

The central purpose is fairness in government. The number of people living in each state determines how many seats that state receives in the House of Representatives. When a state's population increases more rapidly than that of other states, it may gain seats, whereas a state that grows more slowly may forfeit one. Without a regular count, the map of political power would gradually drift away from the actual map of where people live.

The census additionally guides a variety of practical decisions. Cities and states rely on the figures to determine where to construct schools, roads, and clinics, and governments use them to distribute money among communities. If many families in a neighborhood are omitted from the count, that neighborhood may receive less than it requires for years afterward.

Because people are understandably concerned about privacy, the law safeguards what they report to the Census Bureau. Individual answers cannot be used to harm a person and remain confidential for many decades, and only summary statistics are published.

Today most households respond online, by mail, or by telephone, and workers visit only those who fail to reply. The census is a reminder that being counted is a modest act of citizenship. It demands merely a few minutes, yet it shapes how a community is represented and served for an entire decade.

Questions

1. How frequently does the United States conduct a census?

_____

_____

2. What does a state's population determine about its role in the House of Representatives?

_____

_____

3. What are two things that communities use census figures to plan?

_____

_____

4. Why might a neighborhood suffer if many families are omitted from the count?

_____

_____

5. In what way does the census help keep the government fair?

_____

_____

6. How does the law safeguard the privacy of people who respond?

_____

_____

Words to know

census: an official count of all the people living in a country
population: the total number of people living in a place
representatives: people chosen to speak and vote for a group
clinics: places where people go for basic medical care
citizenship: the role and duties of being a member of a country

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Census Taker at the Door

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Census Taker at the Door

Easier · 225 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.6

1. Every ten years.
2. How many seats the state gets.
3. Schools, roads, clinics, or how money is shared.
4. It may get less money and fewer services than it needs.
5. It updates how many seats each state has to match where people live.
6. Answers about one person are kept secret for many decades, and only summaries are shared.

Triangle: The Census Taker at the Door

This passage · 264 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.4

1. Every ten years.
2. How many seats the state receives.
3. Schools, roads, clinics, or how money is shared.
4. It may receive less money and fewer services than it needs.
5. It updates how many seats each state has so they match where people live.
6. Individual answers are kept secret for many decades, and only summaries are published.

Square: The Census Taker at the Door

Harder · 283 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 11.7

1. Every ten years.
2. How many seats the state receives.
3. Schools, roads, clinics, or how money is distributed.
4. It may receive less money and fewer services than it requires.
5. It adjusts how many seats each state has so that they match where people live.
6. Individual answers remain confidential for many decades, and only summary statistics are published.