

Independent Projects

Project 1: Civic Action Project- Census 2020	
Estimated Time	10 total hours
Caregiver Support Option	Adults can discuss texts with students and participate as interview subjects.
Materials Needed	Notebook or Journal
Question to Explore	How will you make sure everyone is counted in the 2020 Census?
Student Directions	In this activity you will learn about the US Census, why it is important, and come up with an action plan to make sure everyone is counted.

A census is a count of the people who live in a country. It also tells things about those people—their backgrounds, what they own, and how they live. Governments and businesses use censuses to guide important decisions. It is hard to count every person in a country! Through completing this activity, you will help us figure out how to make sure everyone is counted!

PHASE 1: What is the Census and why is it important?

Phase 1, Step 1: Read this information about the census and answer the reflection questions.

Source A: What Is the Census from [Britannica School](#)

- A census is a count of the people who live in a country. It also tells things about those people—their backgrounds, what they own, and how they live. Governments and businesses use censuses to guide important decisions.
- Censuses are expensive and take a long time. Governments in many countries, including the United States, take a census only once every 10 years. Other countries take a census every five years.
- Census workers use a combination of methods to try to reach every person. They mail question forms to homes. They also interview people face-to-face or over the phone. Most people have to answer only a few basic questions. But some people are asked for more information. The questions cover topics such as where the person lives, how old they are, whether or not they are married, and how many children they have.
- The questions also ask about a person's job, religion, ethnic background, language, and education.
- After the information has been collected, census workers sort and study it. They put the information into reports that show different characteristics of the population. For example,

census workers can report how many people live in rural areas compared to how many live in cities, or they might report the size of the average family in a particular state.

- The United States uses census results to make sure that different parts of the country are represented fairly in government. States with more people get to send more representatives to Congress. Governments also use census information as a guide for providing money and services. For example, a government might send more money for schools to areas that have a lot of children.
- Some businesses use census results to help sell products and services. They decide what kinds of things to sell in different places based on the kinds of people who live there. For example, a company might try to sell its most expensive cars in places where people make a lot of money

Reflection Questions: Answer these questions on a new sheet of paper.

- What do you know about the U.S. Census now that you didn't know before?
- How does the Census affect your life?

Phase 1, Step 2: Connect with and collect information from others.

Interview two or more family or community members by phone, email, or social media. Focus on different ages over 30 years old. Use the questions below and other questions you want to ask.

Sample questions for interviews:

- What is the U.S. Census?
- Have you ever completed the census? Why or why not?
- How will the census impact you or your family?

Reflection:

- What do you know now that you didn't know before?
- Did the responses from any of the people you interviewed surprise you? Why or why not?

PHASE 2: Plan and take action.

Phase 2, Step 1: Plan your action project.

Here you will take action to make sure everyone is counted in the Census! You will **create awareness** for what the Census is and why it is important, and get as many people as you can to complete the U.S. Census. Follow these steps to organize your work.

Step 1: Reflect on what you learned about the census and why it's important. Decide which information will be most important to share with other people.

Step 2: Identify **what** you want to say and **how** you want to say it. What could you say to this audience that will make them complete the Census?

Step 3: Next, choose the best way to reach people to make sure they complete the Census. A letter

or email? A tweet? A Tik Tok? Posters? Phone calls?

Step 4: Finally, design your **message**.

Step 5: Try it out! Can you convince someone in your home that it is important to respond to the Census?

Phase 2, Step 2: Reflect and share!

After completing your action, share with others what you learned about the census and why it's important to engage in civic life!

- What did you learn throughout the process?
- What did you learn about yourself and your community?
- Why should young people know about the census?
- Why should everyone complete the census?

Project 2: Elections

Estimated Time	10 hours
Caregiver Support Option	Adults can discuss texts with students and participate as interview subjects.
Materials Needed	Notebook or Journal
Question to Explore	How do we get people to vote?
Student Directions	Thank you for your commitment to our community! This guide is designed to help you take action for elections. Follow the directions for each phase to help you understand, investigate, reflect, and act to answer the question, "How do we get people to vote?"

***Printable Version - NOTE: if you have access to a digital device and internet, use this version instead:**
<http://bit.ly/elections4-5>

There is an important election in 2020! We will be voting for the U.S. President and Congress, as well as state and local offices. **EVERYONE** can have a real impact on the election - even those who can't vote! In this activity, you will learn about elections, why they are important, and how people vote. Then you will come up with an action plan to convince more people to vote!