



Count Yourself In!
May 16, 2006

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. Students relate the census to counting of households, in order to help them understand how and why a census is taken in Canada every five years. (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 of their household and classroom.
- Collect information and organize data.

Vocabulary

Census, 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, on a particular day. We take a census every five years because the number of people in Canada is always changing. The next census takes place on May 16, 2006.

The numbers that the census provides are used to make important decisions. For example, playgrounds will be built close to where a lot of children live.

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 be counted in the census on May 16, 2006. Have the students colour the census logo in the official census colours (yellow, red 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 Census Day on May 16, 2006.

Extension/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.

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 almost anything can be counted 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.

2. Expand this activity by designating a few students as “census takers.” Each census taker 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.

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



Handout 2: *Taking a Census*

The census collects information on every man, woman and child in Canada, every five years, on a particular day.

The census tells us many things. It tells us how many people are old and how many are young. It tells us what languages people speak.

The answers we get from the census help us make important decisions. For example: How many children are there in your neighbourhood? Are there enough playgrounds for all these children? Do we need to build another playground?

On May 16, 2006 every household in Canada will be counted in the census. Can you take a census of your household? Be sure to count every person.

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? _____