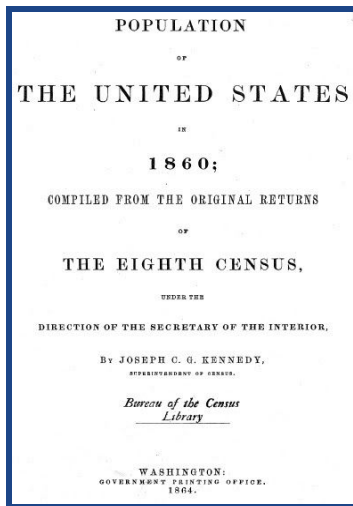




## Conduct a Census

The United States Constitution stresses how important it is to know how many people are living in the country. Not only does the number decide how many people represent your area in Congress, but it also determines how much money goes to resources for your local schools and hospitals.

Every 10 years, the country does what's called a **census**, an official count of all people living in the country. People go out and knock on doors or mail letters to get the count right. They also collect a lot of information, including your name, how old you are, and what you do for work. Because of this, previous censuses are important records for historians in understanding the past.



The way we do the census today is a big change from how we did it 160 years ago (and it changes a little bit each time). In 1860, just before the Civil War, the population of the United States was 31,443,322 including almost 4 million enslaved African Americans. The enslaved were recorded separately, without names or family connections on documents recording property and livestock. Even though the census counted them as part of the population for representation in Congress, an enslaved African American was only counted as 3/5ths of a person because of a compromise written in the Constitution.

After the Civil War saw the end of slavery, the census looked a lot different. The population was higher (38,558,371 people) and there was no longer a separate section for enslaved people. In fact, with the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, *all* African Americans were counted as full citizens.

2020 is a census year and in addition to going from door to door, some of us can even do the census online! The information we give today will shape how we are represented in government now, and will even provide a record of your life that future historians might explore.

### GIVE IT A TRY

Now it's your turn. Take a census of the people in your life. It can be just your friends or family, or it can be anyone you can think of. Ask them in person if they are around, or give them a call.

Whatever way you contact them be sure to ask them:

- Their **NAME** (or even their nickname)
- How old they are (**AGE** is important for the Census)
- What they do, or maybe what their **DREAM JOB** is (especially for young people)

You'll find a sample on the next page where you can fill out all of the answers you get. But it doesn't have to be just those three questions. It's your census, so ask away! Ask for help if you need it. Make your count, count!

\_\_\_\_\_ 'S PERSONAL CENSUS

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DREAM JOB:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DREAM JOB:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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