

What is a Census?



- How many pieces of candy do you have stashed around the house?
- How many steps does it take to get from your bed to your toothbrush?
- How many T-shirts do you own? Do you own more shirts or pants?

Questions, questions – and each involves numbers. To find the answers, you have to count. That’s exactly what a census is, a counting of something – anything.

On April 1, 2010, a big census will be taken in the United States. That’s the day our government counts all the people who live here.

Every ten years, the U.S. Census Bureau – the government agency that is the biggest number collector in the world – takes the census. An adult in every house fills out a form telling the government how many people live in the house

and some information about them. You’re included. The federal government is counting every head to find out how big we are.

The U.S. Census Bureau gathers numbers in order to take a census. Then the Bureau adds them up to find the results. But the Census is not about numbers. It’s about what the numbers tell us. It’s about how we live.

Activity: Survey five friends who brought lunch to work or school today. Find out what they brought and tally the numbers. What do the numbers tell you about eating habit? For example, do more people eat veggie or meat sandwiches? Do most bring fruit or cookies for dessert?



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