

# Celebrating Our Nation's Diversity

## Summary

Through the use of a real-world experience, students communicate in a variety of ways, and retrieve, organize, and synthesize data to develop an understanding of diversity. Students develop an understanding of what a census is, why it is conducted, and the procedure for doing so.

## Main Core Tie

Mathematics Grade 3

[Strand: MEASUREMENT AND DATA \(3.MD\) Standard 3.MD.3](#)

## Time Frame

8 class periods of 15 minutes each

## Group Size

Large Groups

## Materials

### Software

Multimedia-authoring (e.g., HyperStudio), desktop-publishing or word-processing (e.g., AppleWorks, Easy Book) or any software for recording in electronic journals, publishing class books, or creating school newspapers; Web page creation; graphing (e.g., Tabletop, Graph Club, GraphPower)

### Hardware

Digital cameras, scanners

## Background for Teachers

In this lesson, students conduct a class census to measure diversity. The lesson is aimed at having a discussion of the key concepts associated with diversity and then writing or drawing about current impressions, thoughts, observations, and questions before looking at actual statistical data.

Note: Depending on developmental level and technology experience, students may need parental or volunteer assistance to complete tasks.

## Instructional Procedures

Using a globe, point out various countries and discuss their location in relation to the United States. Facilitate a discussion about the definition and concept of a country, differences and commonalities, including ancestors and heritage. In an effort to help students find out about their own heritage, assign e-mail interviews or telephone interviews with older relatives. Students should document their findings in print or electronic journals. Refer to the Census Bureau Web site for some discussion ideas (see Tools and Resources). Use graphing software to represent locations of ancestors and living relatives.

As the activity progresses, have students gain an appreciation for obtaining factual information about the United States using a Census Bureau Web site. Have students identify the racial and ethnic groups represented in their class; the country or countries where their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents were born; their own birth place; and what language(S) are spoken at home. Keep lists or drawings of information for discussion.

Discuss the information collected in the last activity in light of measuring conclusions and testing the accuracy of the census data collection. Focus the discussion by dividing the class into four

groups. With the assistance of parent helpers (if needed) assign each group a topic centered around the theme of diversity-ethnicity, ancestry, language spoken at home, or the students' place of birth. Each group can develop several questions centered on their assigned topic. Each group examines actual questions asked by the Census Bureau in the 2000 Census, using the sample questionnaire found on the Census Bureau Web site. Some students may want to use the sample questions to guide the development of their own forms (using any word-processing software). Using questions similar to the sample questions will make it easier for students to compare their answers with those from the 2000 Census. Ask younger students to draw pictures of their families and grandparents. Some students may need to probe back to great-great grandparents to discover their ancestry. Have students design the questionnaire such that it helps them identify their ancestry.

Students present the questions they have developed to the rest of the class. As a group, help students develop a format for their questionnaire to create a class questionnaire. Students determine if they will put their names on the queries, how they will keep track of the questionnaires, and what they will do about missing forms. Each group member can take his or her questionnaire home. Adults may need to help complete the forms.

Extension: Students create additional questionnaires for their families, another classroom, the rest of the school, and/or another part of the community. The students can add additional questions to their queries to find out other information about their classmates and families. Require the students to include instructions on the document, such as when and where it should be returned. Writing directions is a valuable exercise!

Collect all questionnaires. Each group can enter data into a teacher-made database that has fields corresponding to the questionnaire. Students use graphing software to create graphs representing their group's census information. Have the group analyze individual data, then collaborative group data. The whole class analyzes, compares, and contrasts all data collected. Students may post a questionnaire on the class Web site to collect data from other classrooms in the school, then compare that data.

When the census questionnaires have been completed, students summarize and present the information in various forms. Discuss the diversity of the United States. As a class, explore the pictures on the Census Bureau site and note how the data is presented. Explain to students the differences between information displayed in tables, pie charts, and various bar graphs. Discuss the scales, the parts of the tables such as the stubs and headers, map legends, and ranked items. The level and age of students will dictate the amount of detail the students will comprehend. Have each student create a graph of their ancestral country of origin, comparing his/her family to the class profile. (Later, this graph will be imported into a multimedia stack.) Students write about the data presented in their print or electronic journals, and write and talk about the results of their census. Do they believe that most students in the class have similar or different ancestries? Students reread some of their previous journal entries. Do their present findings confirm or refute their original thoughts about the diversity of the class? Encourage students to write their impressions about the process of reporting data and what they found. Have them publish these results in a school newspaper using word-processing software. Each group creates a multimedia presentation based on the information collected on the assigned theme. Each presentation should contain at least one graph, one digital image, and a short paragraph describing family ancestry. Groups use digital cameras to take pictures of living relatives or have parent helpers scan pictures of ancestors. Import graphs made earlier into the stack.

Students hold an international festival that includes native food, dress, literature, music, and multimedia presentations. Students write about the festival and the information they have learned about the countries of their ancestors and other countries. Students share some of their

journal entries with the rest of the class and then create a class book entitled Our Diverse Classroom using desktop-publishing software. Students can contribute portions of their journals and pictures of their families to the book. The book might also include the class census results, graphs, and tables. Publish the book on the class Web site so that it can be shared with diverse audiences.

Extension: Invite other classes, the whole school, and/or the local community to the festival. Establish pen pals with students in other countries and across the United States. Invite civic leaders and others to visit the class to speak about their race and ancestry.

### Extensions

We have found that the classroom is the perfect place to discuss issues of diversity and equity. By being a part of the U.S. Census in 2000, our students will have the opportunity to learn through a real-world experience. Students use what they have learned by conducting a class census and by being a part of the U.S. Census, thereby developing respect for diverse cultures and their place in society.

### Assessment Plan

The teacher can take anecdotal records while observing students throughout each activity and create rubrics to evaluate the electronic or print journals, graphs, multimedia presentations, and group presentations.

### Bibliography

The Utah Education Network received permission from ISTE (The International Society for Technology in Education) to share this lesson.

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