

Race and Ethnicity in the U.S. Census

1790 - 2010

Definitions: Race and Ethnicity

- A modern idea
- Socio-political constructs
- A means to categorize and organize ourselves; self-identified since 1960
- Fluid concepts, adjusted over time
- To many, a compromise
- Defined ultimately by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Principal Reason for the Census

- Apportionment of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives among the States
- Secondary reason originally taxation
 - Enumeration by race was unintentional
 - Slavery had a big impact on how the first census was structured in 1790
 - Were slaves property? Were they people?
 - How were “civilized Indians” to be counted?

1790 – 1800 - 1810

1790	1800 - 1810
Name of head of family	
Free White males under 16 years	
Free White males 16 years and upward	Name of head of family
Free White females	Free White males and females tallied in age distributions
Other free persons (by sex and color)	All other free persons (except Indians not taxed)
Slaves	Slaves

1820 – 1830 - 1840

1820	1830 - 1840
Name of head of family	
Separation of free colored persons and slaves, by sex and age distribution	
Age questions about slaves that were owned	Name of head of family
Number of foreigners not naturalized	Number of White persons who are foreigners not naturalized

1850 – 1860 – 1870 - 1880

1850 - 1860	1870 - 1880
Name of each free person listed	
Two questionnaires: one for free inhabitants and one for slaves	All inhabitants to be counted as whole persons.
Slaves listed by owner, not individually	“C” added for Chinese (for all Asians)
Slaves marked “B” if Black and “M” if Mulatto	“I” added for American Indian

1890 - 1900

1890	1900
The term “race” appears on questionnaires	
Japanese becomes a separate category	“Mulatto” removed from “Color or Race” question
Enumerators instructed to select: White Black Mulatto Quadroon Octoroon Chinese Japanese Indian	<u>Indian Population Schedule:</u> Enumerators instructed to use special expanded questionnaire for American Indians living on reservations or in family groups off of reservations. Included on the questionnaire: “Fraction of person’s lineage that is White”

1910 – 1920

1910	1920
Mulatto re-appears as category	
Question added about the respondent's "mother tongue"	
"Ot" added to signify other races where the race could be written in	Excludes the American Indian Population Schedule
Indian Population Schedule features questions asking the individual's proportion of White, Black, or American Indian lineage	Added to "Color or Race" question: "Hin" - - Hindu "Kor" - - Korean "Fil" - - Filipino

1930 - 1940

1930	1940
<p>Special instructions given to enumerators to report race of interracial persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- - In all situations in which a person had White and some other racial lineage, s/he is to be reported as that other race- - Persons with minority interracial lineages to be reported as the race of their <i>father</i> (thru 1970)	
<p>"Mexican" appears as a race for the first and only time</p>	
<p>"Neg" now signifies Negro or Black</p>	<p>No significant changes in the race question</p>

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1950 - 1960

1950	1960
The word "color" removed from the race question	Questionnaires mailed to about 60% of population and self-enumeration begins on all questions, including race. (In previous decades, a person's race was determined by visual observation on the part of the enumerator, based on definitions in the official instructions.)
Hindu and Korean removed from the race choices	The word "color" re-added to the race question
	"Indian" changed to "American Indian"
	Supplemental American Indian questionnaire returns, but in abbreviated form

1970 - 1980

1970	1980
<p>“Negro or Black” included as choice</p>	<p>Persons with minority interracial lineages to be reported as the race of their <i>mother</i> (thru 1990)</p>
<p>“Korean” and Other Race option both re-added</p>	<p>Term “color” again removed from the race question</p>
<p>Ethnicity (Hispanic) asked of 5% sample of respondents (“long” form), with the following choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mexican Puerto Rican Cuban Central or South American Other Spanish None of these 	<p>Several options added to race question, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vietnamese Indian (East) Guamanian Samoan Aleut

1990 – 2000

1990	2000
Major race groups (5): --White --Black --American Indian or Alaska Native --Asian and Pacific Islander --Some Other Race	Office of Management and Budget (OMB) publishes “Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity,” Federal Register Notice, October 30, 1997, enabling multi-racial respondents to choose more than one race for the first time, and increasing the number of race categories from five to 63.
Broad category “Asian and Pacific Islander (API)” appears for the first time, with checkboxes	Asian and Pacific Islander category split into two: (1) Asian; (2) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

2010

2010

No changes to the major race categories

Checkbox categories revised

Main Uses of Census Data

- Apportionment
- Redistricting
- Allocation of more than \$400 billion annually to the states for programs tied to population counts
- Planning at all levels of government

Specific Uses of Race Data

- Implement Federal statutes
 - Monitor compliance with and enforce bilingual election rules of the Voting Rights Act of 1965
 - Monitor and enforce equal employment opportunities of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Evaluate whether financial institutions are meeting the credit needs of minority populations under the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977

Specific Uses of Race Data (continued)

- Education - - identify hidden inequalities
 - Hiring and teacher placement
 - Curriculum materials
 - Student discipline practices
- Health - - identify disparities
 - Disproportionate occurrences of disease
 - Environmental hazards
- Neighborhoods - - evaluate livability
 - Traffic and safety factors
 - Sidewalks and blight
 - Location of businesses

Specific Uses of Race Data (continued)

- Courts - - assure fairness
 - Disparate treatment on the job
 - Subtle bias in organizations seemingly open to all
- Community organizations
 - Identify target populations
 - Define service areas
 - Plan programs

Composite classification system

- Color
 - Black; White
- Civil status
 - American Indian or Alaska Native tribe
- Nationality
 - Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and six more, summarized as two umbrella races (Asian; Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander)
- Hispanic ethnicity
 - Spanish-speaking country of origin

Why Categorize?

- History of inequalities
- Policy responses to disparities require statistics on groups left behind
- Gauge how new Americans are assimilating
- Express pride in one's heritage



Thank you!

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