

Featured Activity: I Count, You Count!

Topic(s):

Counting, one-to-one correspondence, comparing numbers (older than 2 years old.)

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Count using one-to-one correspondence.
- Identify if one group has more items than another group.

Grade Level:

Preschool (2-year-olds)

Approx. Time Required:

20 minutes

Introduction

The 2020 Census Statistics in Schools (SIS) program is designed to educate students about the decennial census and to teach them educational concepts and skills, such as data literacy, through use of census data in the classroom. Responding to the census helps your community get its fair share of funding. Census data guides how more than \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed to states and communities each year. These funds support vital community programs that help children, such as schools, hospitals, housing, and food assistance. By educating students about the 2020 Census, you can help encourage a complete count.

About the 2020 Census

In addition to the information that is built into the instructions for this activity, the following points provide an easy, grade-appropriate way to explain the census to your students.

- Every 10 years, everyone living in the United States gets counted. It's called the census.
- It is important that every person be counted, so that all communities have enough money for things like roads and parks.
- Make sure a grownup in your home counts you in the 2020 Census.



Materials Required

- Printed student worksheets

Worksheet Description

The featured worksheet for preschool students focuses on counting. It introduces the children to the idea that knowing how many students are in the class helps us figure out how many things we need (such as how many tables and chairs). Afterward, the worksheet expands the idea of counting to the students' community and neighbors, and highlights the message that everyone in the classroom needs to be counted in the 2020 Census.

Before the Activity—3 Minutes

1. Lead students in singing the SIS song "[Everyone Counts!](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/2020-resources/pre-k.html)" (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/2020-resources/pre-k.html>) to introduce the U.S. Census Bureau and counting people.
2. Ask students, "How many students are in our class?" Then lead students in counting. Support the students in counting, using one-to-one correspondence by pointing to or touching each child, as you count: "1... 2... 3..." When you and the class have counted everyone, say, "There are _____ children in our class."
3. Explain that counting people gives us helpful information, such as how many chairs you need for the class or how many snacks, markers, crayons, cubbies, or pencils you need to be sure there are enough for each student. (Select three options to share with the class.) Use statements such as, "I see four children right here. How many chairs do we need so that everyone has a chair?" Then have the children sit down in a chair, one at a time, counting up to the number of students in the classroom. When every student is sitting, say something like, "If we have four students, we need the SAME number of chairs. So that's four chairs."
4. Briefly explain that the census is a count of everyone in the country. Tell students that there's a big count coming up called the 2020 Census. Say that counting everyone in our community is a big job, and we need everyone's help to make sure we count all the people.



During the Activity—15 Minutes

Take students on a counting walk:

1. Lead students on a walk around the classroom, guiding them to count items they see (for example, cubbies, backpacks, art supplies, chairs). Count out loud and encourage students to count along. As locations allow, you can expand this activity to walking around the school or even outside.
2. Guide students in making connections during the walk, such as how many stickers you would need for each student to get one or how many children can sit at a table at one time. You can also get ideas from the children about things or people they want to count.

After the Activity—2 Minutes

1. Summarize what the students saw and counted on their walk (for example, that if there are four students, they would need four chairs). Then count the class together out loud. Conclude the lesson by leading students in the SIS song "[Everyone Counts!](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/2020-resources/pre-k.html)" (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/2020-resources/pre-k.html>)

Home Extension

Adults at Home: Let your child draw a picture of everyone who lives in your home. Then guide them in counting how many people live in your home.