



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

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Age, Education, Ethnic and Partisan Gaps

MOST VIEW CENSUS POSITIVELY, BUT SOME HAVE DOUBTS

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Age, Education, Ethnic and Partisan Gaps

MOST VIEW CENSUS POSITIVELY, BUT SOME HAVE DOUBTS

As the federal government gears up for its decennial count of the country's population, most Americans think the census is very important and say they will definitely participate. But acceptance of and enthusiasm for the census are not universal. Certain segments of the population such as younger people, Hispanics and the less well educated are not as familiar with the census and are less inclined to participate. In addition, there are partisan differences in opinions about the value of the census, and in personal willingness to participate.

The national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press was conducted Jan. 6-10 among 1,504 adults reached on cell phones and landlines. This is the first in a series of studies about the public's knowledge of and attitudes toward the 2010 U.S. Census.

The survey finds that nine-in-ten Americans describe the census as either very (60%) or somewhat (30%) important for the country, and about eight-in-ten say they will either definitely (58%) or probably (23%) participate. But 8% describe the census as unimportant for the country, and twice that number says that they either "might or might not" participate (10%) or definitely or probably will not (6%). The share saying they may not participate is particularly high among younger Americans, as well as those in lower socio-economic categories.

Most Americans are at least somewhat familiar with the census: 84% have heard of "the United States Census" without any description, and another 8% recognize it when it is described as the count of all

Views of the Census	
	General public
<i>How important is the census for the U.S.?</i>	%
Very important	60
Somewhat important	30
Not too important	5
Not at all important	3
Don't know	<u>3</u>
	100
<i>How likely are you to participate in the census?</i>	
Definitely will	58
Probably will	23
Might or might not	10
Probably will not	4
Definitely will not	2
Don't know	<u>2</u>
	100
Awareness of the Census	
<i>Have you heard of the U.S. Census?</i>	
Yes	84
Yes, after description*	8
Never heard of it	<u>8</u>
	100
<i>Is participation in the census required by law?</i>	
Yes (correct)	31
No	46
Don't know	<u>23</u>
	100
<i>Is the census used to decide how gov't money is distributed?</i>	
Yes (correct)	59
No	21
Don't know	<u>20</u>
	100
<i>Is the census used to decide congressional representation?</i>	
Yes (correct)	64
No	20
Don't know	<u>17</u>
	100
<i>Is the census used to locate illegal immigrants for arrest?</i>	
Yes	11
No (correct)	68
Don't know	<u>20</u>
	100
* Respondents who had not heard of "the United States Census" are given a description: "the census is the count of all the people who live in the U.S." and asked if they have heard of that. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.	

people who live in the United States. Awareness of the census is a critical factor in views about participation. Among the 16% who say they either will not or may not participate in the census, 39% have not heard of the census in the first place. More broadly, the poll finds that a lack of familiarity with the census and its goals is a far more important factor driving intention to participate than are concerns about privacy or political considerations.

Most Americans are aware that the census is used to decide how many representatives each state will have in Congress (64%) and how much money communities will get from the government (59%). About two-thirds (68%) correctly say that the census is not used to locate illegal immigrants so they can be arrested, though 11% incorrectly believe that it is used for this purpose. However, only 31% of Americans are aware that participation in the census is required by law. Nearly half (46%) believe that it is not required, and 23% say they don't know.

Awareness of the Census

Unfamiliarity with the census is most widespread among younger and Hispanic Americans. Roughly a third of each (31% of 18-29 year olds, 33% of Hispanics) say they have not heard of the U.S. Census, and 17% of each group say they are still unfamiliar with it even when it is described as the count of all people living in the country.

Recognition of the census increases with age – 85% of those 30 to 49 have heard of the U.S. Census, as have 92% of those 50 to 64 and 91% of people age 65 and older. More than three-quarters of African Americans (78%) and 88% of whites have heard of the U.S. Census.

Familiarity is also closely linked to education and income. One-in-four Americans (25%) with no more than a high school degree have not heard of the U.S. Census, and 13% still do not recognize it after it is described. The proportions are identical among people with household incomes under \$30,000. By contrast, 97% of college graduates recognize the U.S. Census, as do 96% of people with family

	Some Unfamiliar with the Census				
	Heard of the U.S Census?		Heard when described		N
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	
Total	84	15	92	8	1504
18-29	69	31	83	17	232
30-49	85	15	93	7	432
50-64	92	8	97	3	452
65+	91	9	94	6	366
White, non-Hispanic	88	11	94	6	1124
Black, non-Hispanic	78	22	90	10	147
Hispanic	66	33	83	17	130
College grad+	97	3	99	1	526
Some college	88	12	95	5	385
HS or less	75	25	87	13	588
<i>Family income</i>					
\$75,000 or more	96	4	98	2	403
\$30k-\$74,999	87	13	93	7	480
Less than \$30,000	75	25	87	13	392
Republican	89	11	95	5	359
Democrat	83	17	94	6	484
Independent	84	16	90	10	605
<i>Will you participate?</i>					
Definitely/probably	90	10	96	4	1277
Might not/will not	60	39	74	26	198
QC1/QC2. Figures read across. The first two columns show who has heard of "the United States Census." The next two columns include the percent who have heard of the Census when it is described as "the count of all people who live in the United States."					

incomes of \$75,000 or more.

While Republicans are less committed to participating in the census and rate it as less important than do Democrats, this is not out of a lack of familiarity with it. Republicans are slightly more likely than Democrats (89% vs. 83%) to have heard of the U.S. Census.

When asked whether they had seen or heard anything about the census within the last month or so, fewer than half (44%) say they have. There are some demographic differences, similar to those in overall awareness of the census. Younger Americans, those with lower educational attainment and those with lower family incomes are less likely than others to have seen or heard anything recently.

Most Say Census is Important for the Country

Sixty percent of Americans say the census is very important for the nation, 30% describe it as somewhat important, with 8% saying either it is not too (5%) or not at all (3%) important.

Younger Americans, who are less likely to have heard of the census, are also the least convinced of its importance. Fewer than half (45%) of those younger than 30 say the census is very important for the country, compared with nearly two-thirds (64%) of those age 30 and older. But young people do not discount the census entirely – just 10% say it is not important. Instead, young people are more likely than older Americans to describe the census as “somewhat” important.

There is a significant partisan gap in ratings of the importance of the census. While 71% of Democrats say the count is very important, just 56% of Republicans agree. Instead, Republicans are more likely to rate it as somewhat important (36% vs. 24% of Democrats); few in either party (5% of Republicans, 4% of Democrats) say it is not important. Independents are about as likely as Republicans to rate the

How Important is the Census to the Country?					
	<u>Very</u>	Some-	Not too/	<u>DK</u>	<u>N</u>
	%	what	Not at all	%	
		%	%		
Total	60	30	8	3=100	1504
18-29	45	40	10	5=100	232
30-49	65	27	7	2=100	432
50-64	61	30	7	2=100	452
65+	69	23	4	3=100	366
White, non-Hispanic	57	33	7	2=100	1124
Black, non-Hispanic	74	17	5	4=100	147
Hispanic	72	19	7	2=100	130
College grad+	61	30	7	2=100	526
Some college	63	29	7	1=100	385
HS or less	58	31	7	4=100	588
<i>Family income</i>					
\$75,000 or more	64	30	5	1=100	403
\$30k-\$74,999	57	34	7	2=100	480
Less than \$30,000	64	24	8	4=100	392
Republican	56	36	5	3=100	359
Democrat	71	24	4	1=100	484
Independent	54	31	10	4=100	605
Registered voter	62	29	7	2=100	1214
Not registered	55	31	7	7=100	290
QC5. Figures may not add to 100 because of rounding.					

census as very important for the country (54%). One-in-ten (10%) independents say it is not important.

There is little difference of opinion about the importance of the census along educational or income lines: Roughly equal numbers of higher and lower income Americans, as well as those with more and less education, rate the census as very important for the country.

But perceptions of the importance of the census do vary by race and ethnicity. More than seven-in-ten African-American (74%) and Hispanic (72%) respondents rate the census as very important for the country. Far fewer whites (57%) agree.

Correlates of Intention to Participate

As with ratings of the importance of the census, age is the strongest correlate of participation. Just 36% of Americans younger than 30 say they will definitely participate. That is equal to the 36% who say they either might or might not take part (22%), or probably or definitely will not participate (14%). One factor may be that some young people still living with parents or relatives may not be required to fill out a form personally.

While Hispanics are more likely than whites to rate the census as very important for the country, they are less certain about whether they will participate. Just under half (47%) of Hispanics say they definitely will fill out and mail the forms, compared with 57% of blacks and 61% of whites.

Education and income are also powerful correlates. Roughly three-quarters (73%) of college graduates say they definitely will send in their forms, compared with about half (49%) of those

	Definitely will %	Probably will %	Might/ not %	Will not* %	DK %	N
Total	58	23	10	6	2=100	1504
18-29	36	26	22	14	1=100	232
30-49	57	26	9	5	3=100	432
50-64	72	18	6	2	2=100	452
65+	68	18	4	6	3=100	366
White, non-Hispanic	61	22	10	5	1=100	1124
Black, non-Hispanic	57	22	9	10	3=100	147
Hispanic	47	24	12	9	7=100	130
College grad+	73	17	5	4	1=100	526
Some college	60	22	12	5	1=100	385
HS or less	49	27	13	8	3=100	588
<i>Family income</i>						
\$75,000 or more	75	16	5	3	1=100	403
\$30k-\$74,999	59	24	10	5	1=100	480
Less than \$30,000	50	23	14	9	3=100	392
Republican	54	26	11	7	2=100	359
Democrat	67	21	7	4	1=100	484
Independent	54	22	13	8	3=100	605
Registered voter	66	22	7	4	1=100	1214
Not registered	37	26	19	13	5=100	290
Heard of census**	65	22	8	4	2=100	1332
Have not heard	25	29	25	17	5=100	172

QC4. Figures may not add to 100 because of rounding.
 * Definitely will not or probably will not participate.
 ** Heard of United States Census (QC1) without additional description.

who have not attended college. The divide is equally large between people in households with incomes of \$75,000 or more and those with incomes below \$30,000; 75% of the former say they will definitely send in their forms compared with 50% of the latter.

There is also a clear political divide in expected participation: Two-thirds (67%) of Democrats say they will definitely mail in their forms, compared with 54% of both Republicans and independents.

What Drives Nonparticipation

For the most part, people who lean against participating in the census do so based on practical, not principled, considerations. The main reasons people offer for not taking part in the census have more to do with their lack of personal interest and awareness of the process than with privacy or political concerns.

When the small minority (6%) of Americans who say they definitely or probably will not participate in the census are asked why, most say it is mainly because they will be too busy or aren't interested or because they don't know much about the census or haven't participated in it before. Far fewer cite concerns about the government or the census or say they worry about their personal privacy. Based on the overall population, these kinds of privacy or political concerns are raised by only about 2% of Americans.

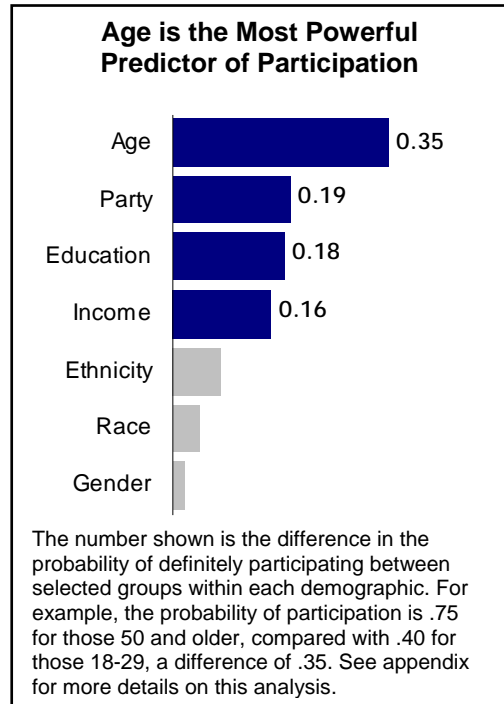
Why Won't You Take Part?	
(Asked of those who definitely or probably will not.)	
%	
32	Too busy/No time/Not interested
25	Don't know much about it/Haven't done before
18	Distrust government/Census is not important
8	Privacy concerns
12	Other
14	No reason
(N=81)	
Open ended question. Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.	

A lack of awareness of the census is clearly an important factor in participation. Nationwide, 16% of Americans say they have not heard of the U.S. Census, and expected participation within this subgroup is particularly low. While 65% of Americans who have heard of the census say they will definitely take part, just 25% of those who have not heard of it say the same. Instead, many who have not heard of the census say they might or might not (25%) or definitely or probably will not (17%) take part.

In other words, 39% of Americans who say that they will not or might not participate have not heard of the U.S. Census. And even when reminded that the census is a count of all the people who live in the United States, 26% still had not heard of it. By contrast, just 10% of people who said they would definitely or probably participate did not recognize the census when first mentioned, and that falls to 4% when the census is described.

A multivariate analysis was used to better understand which factors matter most in predicting participation in the census. By far, age was the most important predictor of intention to participate, all other things being equal. But party affiliation, education and income also were significant predictors in the analysis. Race, ethnicity and gender were not significantly related to intended participation in the census, after controlling for other demographic characteristics.

Younger Americans are less likely than older people to say they definitely will participate, even when controlling for other demographic characteristics. For those younger than 30, the probability of saying they will definitely fill out the census form is .40, compared with a probability of .75 for those 50 and older when all other variables are held constant at their mean. There also is a partisan divide in intention to participate; all other things being equal, the probability of Democrats saying they definitely will participate is .75 while the probability for Republicans is .56.



Those with lower educational attainment and lower family incomes also are less likely to say they definitely will complete the census form. The probability of definitely participating for those with a high school education or less is .56 compared with a probability of .74 for those with a college degree. Similarly, the probability of saying they definitely will participate is .61 for those with family incomes of less than \$30,000 while those with incomes of \$75,000 or more have a probability of .77, when all other variables are held constant at their means.

Most Unaware that Census Participation is Required

When asked about what the census is used for, a majority of the public knows that the census is used to decide how many representatives each state will have in Congress (64%), but 20% say it is not used for this and 17% are unsure. Similarly, 59% say the census is used to decide how much money communities will get from the government, while the rest say it is not used for this purpose (21%) or that they are unsure (20%).

Awareness of how census information is used divides along age and educational lines. Younger Americans are less likely than older Americans to know that the census is used to decide the number of congressional representatives and how much money communities will receive from the government. Similarly, those with a high school education or less are less likely than those with some college education to know the census is used for these purposes.

Knowledge about whether the census is used to decide the number of representatives each state has in Congress also varies across partisan lines; Republicans (71%) are more likely than Democrats (61%) and independents (64%) to know the census is used for this.

Most Know About Census But Significant Differences by Age and Education								
	<u>Total</u>	<u>18-29</u>	<u>30-49</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>65+</u>	<u>Col grad+</u>	<u>Some col</u>	<u>HS or less</u>
<i>Percent who correctly say Census is ...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Not used to locate illegal immigrants	68	58	72	75	61	78	67	62
Used to decide # of representatives	64	49	63	74	70	81	67	52
How much money communities get	59	45	60	67	59	67	61	52
Required by law	31	15	27	42	40	37	26	29

QC7-QC10. Figures show percent offering correct answer.

About two-thirds (68%) of the public correctly says that the census is not used to locate illegal immigrants so they can be arrested, but 11% incorrectly believe that it is used for this purpose and 20% are unsure. Hispanics (12%) are no more likely than non-Hispanic whites (10%) or non-Hispanic blacks (18%) to say incorrectly that the census is used to locate illegal immigrants. Similar to the other knowledge questions, there also differences by age and education.

Nearly half (46%) of Americans incorrectly believe that participation in the census is not required by law; only 31% correctly say that their participation is required and 23% don't know. Only 15% of those younger than 30 think that participation is required, compared with 27% of those ages 30 to 49 and 41% of those 50 and older. College graduates are more likely than those with less education to know that filling out the census is required.

Knowledge about the census also has a direct effect on the likelihood of participation. Those who correctly know what the census is and is not used for, as well as those who know it is required by law, are much more likely to say they will definitely participate, even after controlling for demographic characteristics.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a national sample of 1,504 adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older, from January 6-10, 2010 (1,000 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 504 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 201 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2009 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2009 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,504	3.0 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Michael Remez, Senior Writer
Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian, Jocelyn Kiley and Alec Tyson, Research Associates
Jacob Poushter, Research Assistant

APPENDIX

A logistic regression analysis was conducted on the unweighted full sample (N=1504) to determine the independent impact of each of a series of factors on likelihood to participate in the Census. The dependent variable was intention to participate in the Census (coded as 1=definitely will participate, 0 otherwise). The independent or predictor variables were recoded as dummy variables (0 or 1) based on the standard analytical groups used in the bivariate analysis.

The predicted probability in the graphic shows the difference in probabilities for the various groups:

- Age: 50 and older minus 18-29
- Party: Democrat minus Republican
- Education: College graduate minus high school or less
- Income: Family income \$75,000 or more minus less than \$30,000
- Ethnicity: Hispanic minus non-Hispanic
- Race: Non-Hispanic white minus non-Hispanic black
- Gender: Women minus men

The likelihood ratio chi-square for the model is $\chi^2=223.4$, $p=.000$.

A second logistic regression model was conducted that also included the four knowledge questions (QC.7-QC.10) where the correct answer was coded as 1 and incorrect and don't know responses were coded as 0. The likelihood ratio chi-square for the second model that included the demographic and knowledge variables is $\chi^2=364.0$, $p=.000$.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JANUARY 2010 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
January 6-10, 2010
N=1,504

QUESTIONS 1-3F1, 5-13F1, 17F2-19, 31-32, 35-41, 45F1-48 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED.

QUESTION 4F1, 30aF1-30wF2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE.

NO QUESTIONS 14-16, 20-29, 33-34, 42-44.

ASK ALL:

On a different subject ...

QC.1 Have you ever heard of the United States Census, or have you not heard of this?

Jan 6-10

2010

84	Yes, have heard
15	No, have not heard
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF HAVE NOT HEARD OF THE CENSUS (QC.1=2 OR QC.1=9) [N=172]:

QC.2 The Census is the count of all people who live in the United States. Have you ever heard of that before, or have you not heard of that?

BASED ON TOTAL:

Jan 6-10

2010

8	Yes, have heard
8	No, have not heard
0	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
84	<i>Have heard of Census (Q.C1=1)</i>

ASK IF HAVE HEARD OF THE CENSUS (QC.1=1 OR QC.2=1) [N=1,418]:

QC.3 Have you seen or heard anything recently—within the last month or so—about the Census, or have you not seen or heard anything recently?

BASED ON TOTAL:

Jan 6-10

2010

44	Yes, have seen or heard recently
48	No, have not seen or heard recently
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
8	<i>Have not heard of Census (QC.2=2)</i>

ASK ALL:

QC.4 How likely are you to participate in the 2010 Census? By participate, we mean fill out and mail in a Census form. Would you say you **[READ]**?

Jan 6-10

2010

58	Definitely will
23	Probably will
10	Might or might not
4	Probably will not
2	Definitely will not
2	Don't know/Refused(VOL.)

ASK IF WILL NOT PARTICIPATE (QC.4=4 OR QC.4=5) [N=81]:

QC.4a Why are you NOT likely to participate in the Census? **[RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE. DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTION, RECORD IN ORDER OF MENTION]**

BASED ON THOSE WHO SAY THEY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE [N=81]

32	No time/No interest/Not important (NET)
17	No time/Too busy
15	Not interested/Not important to me
25	Don't know much about it/Never done before
18	Distrust government/Census/Don't think Census is important
8	Privacy concerns
12	Other
14	Don't know/Refused

Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple response.

ASK ALL:

QC.5 How important do you think the Census is for the United States? Would you say it is **[READ]**?

Jan 6-10

2010

60	Very important
30	Somewhat important
5	Not too important
3	Not at all important
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

QC.6 Do you believe that answering and sending back your Census form would personally benefit you in any way, personally harm you, or neither benefit nor harm you?

Jan 6-10

2010

27	Personally benefit me
3	Personally harm me
66	Neither benefit nor harm me
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

QC.7 As far as you know, does the law require you to answer the Census form, or are you not required to answer it?

Jan 6-10

2010

31	Yes, it is required
46	No, it is not required
23	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

RANDOMIZE ORDER OF QC.8/QC.9/QC.10:

ASK ALL:

QC.8 As far as you know, is the Census used to decide how many representatives each state will have in Congress, or is it not used for this?

Jan 6-10

2010

64	Yes, used for this
20	No, not used for this
17	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

RANDOMIZE ORDER OF QC.8/QC.9/QC.10:

ASK ALL:

QC.9 As far as you know, is the Census used to locate illegal immigrants so they can be arrested, or is it not used for this?

Jan 6-10

2010

11	Yes, used for this
68	No, not used for this
20	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

RANDOMIZE ORDER OF QC.8/QC.9/QC.10:

ASK ALL:

QC.10 As far as you know, is the Census used to decide how much money communities will get from the government, or is it not used for this?

Jan 6-10

2010

59	Yes, used for this
21	No, not used for this
20	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)