



Community Involvement

FILL IN YOUR FUTURE

★ Grades 5-6



Skills and Objectives:

- Students will explore the theme of Census 2000.
- Students will elaborate on a Census 2000 slogan.

Suggested Groupings:

Small groups

Getting Started:

1. Introduce the lesson by telling students that they will use their creative thinking skills to discuss a Census 2000 slogan: “**This is Your Future. Don’t Leave It Blank.**” In addition, ask your students to design a billboard around the slogan.

- Ask students to think about what the census slogan means. Have students share their ideas with the class. Explain that this slogan emphasizes the need to fill out and return their census questionnaires so that the needs of individual communities and the nation, now and in the future, will be based on accurate information. Many federal, tribal, state, and local programs use census information to allocate funds and to determine the need for roads, schools, etc.
- Explain to students that the number of congresspersons representing their state in Washington is determined by state population totals gathered by the U.S. Census. If one state’s population increases while another state’s decreases, the first state could gain a representative in Congress while the second state could lose one. This reassignment of congressional seats based on changes in state population is called reapportionment. Voting districts can also be changed based on census data. The principle of “one person, one vote” requires that congressional and state districts have approximately equal population totals.

2. Touch upon media literacy with your students. Choose a few advertisements from magazines, and discuss with them what makes these advertisements appealing and successful.

Chalkboard Definitions

slogan: a brief, catchy phrase used in advertising.

congressional representative: an official elected to the House of Representatives.

data: factual information.

billboard: a large, outdoor sign used for advertising.

- What makes a good advertising slogan? Have students give some examples and explain their answers. *(Answers will vary. Students should understand that a good slogan gets to the point and is easy to remember.)*

- Where might you see billboards? *(Possible answers: on a highway; on a building or barn.) Why would a billboard be an effective way to advertise? (Possible answers: because it is large and eye-catching.)*

3. Students can visit the U.S. Census Bureau Web site (www.census.gov) or the library for information they could use in writing copy for their billboards.

Using the Activity Worksheets:

- Distribute copies of the Lesson 3 Activity Worksheets (pages 10 and 11) to your class and introduce students to the lesson.

Wrapping Up:

- As a class, discuss students’ billboard designs. Ask students how they chose their designs? What factors did they consider?

- Where could you place your billboard? Where would the most people see it? *(Answers will vary.)*

- How could the census affect your future? *(Possible answers: new schools, roads, or hospitals could be built; my school district might receive more funding for books and programs.)*

Extension Activity:

- Have older students select a specific target group and direct their billboard designs to that group. Then, have them present their designs to an adult group (PTA, school board, etc.) and display them throughout the community to encourage participation in the census.





Name: _____

Fill in your **Future**

● The U.S. Constitution says the government must do a census every ten years. Filling in the census form is important because it's like filling in the future. Consider these census facts:

- The census count determines how many Congressional representatives your state gets.
- Information from the census helps state and local governments decide where new roads, parks, schools, and other services are needed.
- Businesses use census data to help locate their factories and stores.

By law, all the information collected in the census is kept confidential.

To help people understand the importance of completing and returning their census forms, the U.S. Census Bureau has created a slogan for Census 2000: **“This is Your Future. Don’t Leave It Blank.”** Imagine you have been asked to advertise this slogan. How would you present this idea on a billboard?



1. Copywriting

As a group, discuss the Census 2000 slogan. Then in your own words, explain what you think the slogan means. How could you persuade people to fill out their census forms? What could you say? _____

2. Designing

Work with your group and use your ideas to design a billboard featuring the Census 2000 slogan. What illustrations or symbols would help get the message across?



Name: _____

Fill in your **Future** (continued)

- Use the space below to sketch your billboard design.

