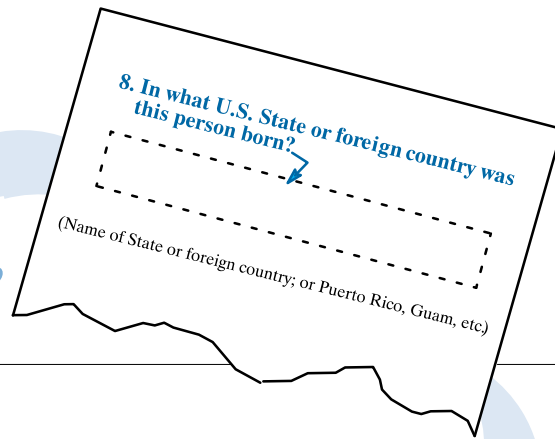


# We asked... You told us

## Place of Birth, Citizenship, and Year of Entry



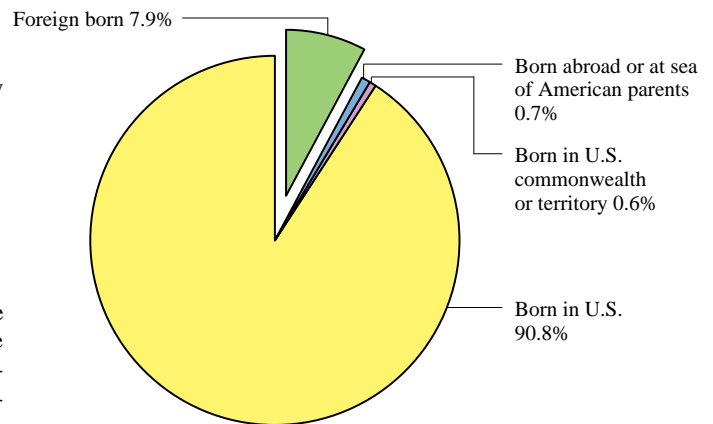
The Census Bureau conducts a census of population and housing every 10 years. This bulletin is one of a series that shows the questions asked in the 1990 census and the answers that you, the American people, gave. Each bulletin focuses on a question or group of questions appearing on the 1990 census questionnaires.

### Place of Birth

In question 8 on the 1990 census forms, we asked people to write in the State, U.S. commonwealth or territory, or foreign country where they were born. Information from this question was used to classify the population into two major groups: native and foreign born. The pie chart shows what you told us in replying to this question.

- About 92 percent of U.S. residents in 1990 reported they were native, and 8 percent reported they were foreign born. Besides those born in the United States, the native population included the small percentages of persons born abroad or at sea of at least one American parent and those born in a U.S. commonwealth or territory (Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Marianas, or American Samoa).

**Nine in Ten U.S. Residents Were Born Here**  
Nativity of the Population: 1990



### Americans Less Likely Than in the Past to Be Living in Their State of Birth

- Nationally in 1990, 67 percent of native persons resided in the State in which they were born, the lowest figure recorded in this century. The corresponding proportions were 79 percent in 1900 and 74 percent in 1950.

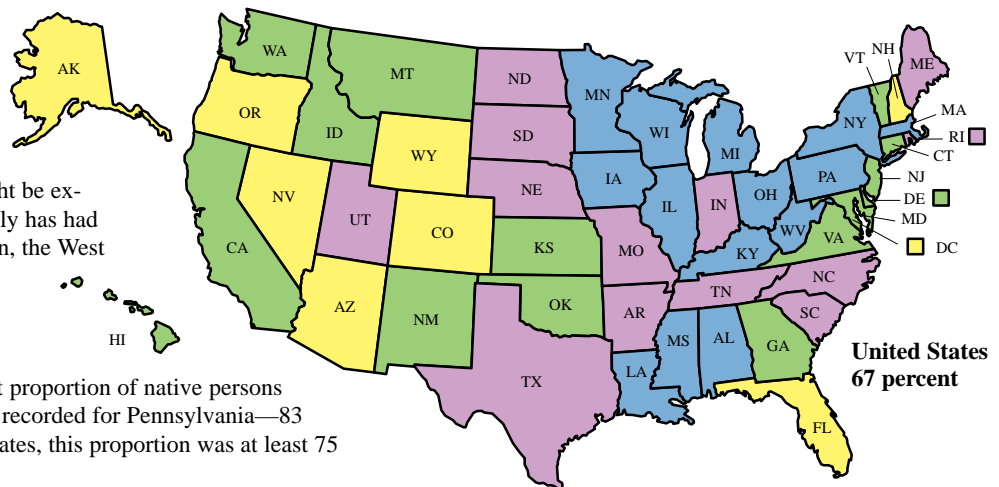
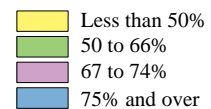
- Among the four regions, the Northeast and Midwest had the highest proportions of native persons still living in the State where they were born—75 percent each. As might be expected of a region that historically has had large gains through net migration, the West had the lowest proportion (54 percent). The proportion for Southerners was 64 percent.

- As for States in 1990, the largest proportion of native persons living in their State of birth was recorded for Pennsylvania—83 percent. For an additional 13 States, this proportion was at least 75 percent (see map).

- At the other extreme, only 24 percent of native Nevada residents were born there. Seven other States plus the District of Columbia had fewer than half their residents born in the State.

### Westerners Less Likely to Live Where They Were Born

Percent of Native Persons Living in Their State of Birth: 1990



*Census Trivia:* Of the cities of 25,000 or more, which one had the largest number of foreign born according to the 1990 census? Which one had the highest percentage of foreign born? (Answer on page 4.)

### The Foreign Born Came From Many Countries

- **You told us** in 1990 that 19.8 million persons, or 8 percent of all U.S. residents, were foreign born. As the top chart shows, this was the highest proportion since 1940, when the foreign-born share was 9 percent. Even so, the 1990 level was still considerably below the peak for this century of 15 percent reported in 1910.
- Although immigrants to the United States historically have come from a variety of countries, the principal countries of origin have shifted over the years, markedly altering the composition of new arrivals. The past several decades have seen an increase in immigrants from Latin American and Asian countries and a decrease in those from European countries.
- The middle chart shows the 10 largest foreign-born groups in the United States in 1990. Each of these countries contributed more than 500,000 persons to the foreign-born population.
- In 1990, as in 1980, Mexico was by far the most prevalent country of birth of the Nation's foreign born. With their numbers nearly doubling during the 1980s, immigrants from Mexico accounted for more than one in five foreign-born residents in 1990. The Philippine-born population jumped from seventh to second position between 1980 and 1990. Canada remained in third place, despite a decline over the decade. Poland and the former Soviet Union—in eighth and ninth positions, respectively, in 1980—had dropped off the top 10 list by 1990.

### Where Did the Nation's Foreign Born Live?

- In 1990, the number of foreign born was largest in the West and smallest in the Midwest. About two-fifths of the Nation's foreign-born population lived in the West, while only about one-fifth of the total population lived there.
- California alone was home to about a third of the U.S. foreign born and, together with New York (14 percent) and Florida (8 percent), made up over half of the foreign-born population.

### Which States Had Large Concentrations of Foreign Born?

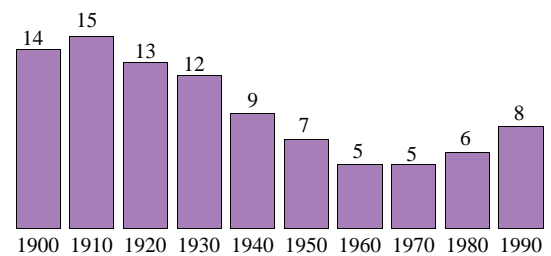
- During the 1980s, California's foreign-born population grew rapidly (by 80 percent), so that by 1990, more than one of every five California residents was born in a foreign country. Only four other States—New York, Hawaii, Florida, and New Jersey—had more than 10 percent of their population foreign born.
- In contrast, for 16 States, almost all of which were in the Midwest or South, fewer than 2 percent of the residents were foreign born. Mississippi, Kentucky, and West Virginia each had fewer than 1 percent foreign born.

### States Varied in the Origins of Their Foreign-Born Residents

- California and New York reflected the widest diversity in national origins, each having 18 individual foreign-born groups of 50,000 or more. Florida had 9 different groups of this size.
- The largest single foreign-born group in California was from Mexico (2,474,000), while in New York, persons from the Dominican Republic (242,000) constituted the largest group. Cubans (498,000) were the largest immigrant group in Florida.
- Thirteen different countries were reported as the principal contributors of foreign-born residents to at least one State and the District of Columbia (see chart to the right). Mexico was the largest country of birth of the foreign-born population for the highest number of States (17); Germany was second, with 10 States. Five countries had only one State each in which they were the predominant foreign-born group.

### Foreign-Born Population at Highest Level in 50 Years

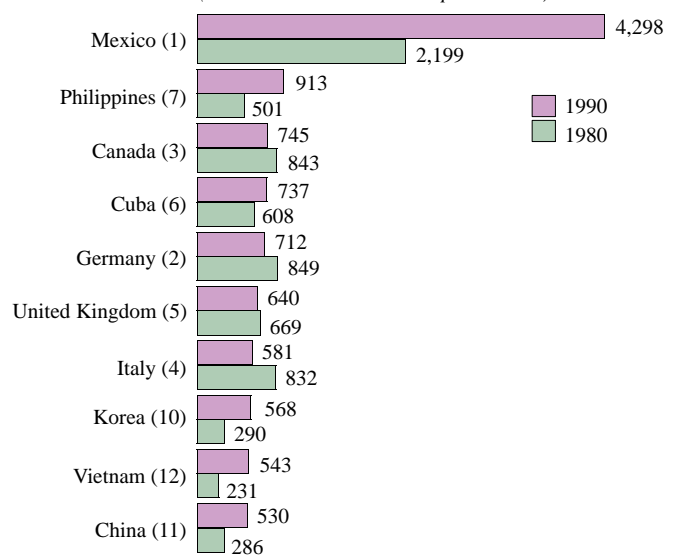
Foreign Born as Percent of Total Population: 1900 to 1990



### Largest Foreign-Born Group Came From Mexico

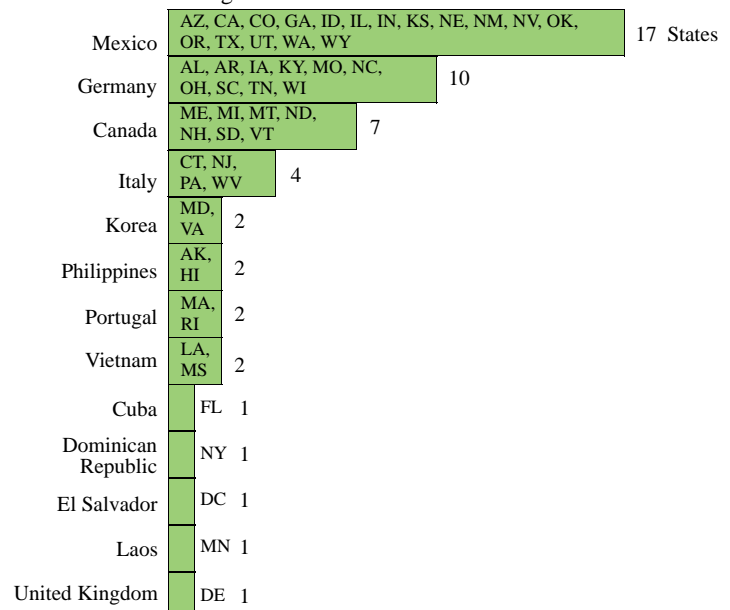
Ten Most Frequently Reported Countries of Birth: 1990

(In thousands. 1980 rank in parentheses)



### States Reflected a Variety of Principal Origins

States by Largest Country of Birth for Foreign-Born Residents: 1990



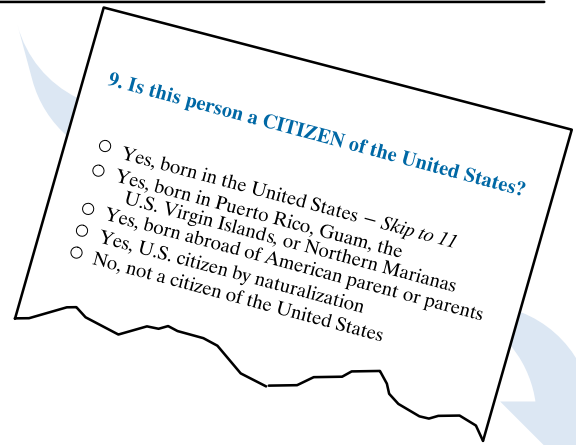
### Citizenship

In question 9 on the 1990 census forms, we asked people to mark whether they were citizens or noncitizens of the United States.

Four categories of U.S. citizenship were listed. Three categories were for persons who were citizens at birth: those born in the United States; those born in a U.S. commonwealth or territory such as Puerto Rico or Guam; and those born abroad of American parents. The fourth category was for naturalized citizens—persons who obtained U.S. citizenship through the judicial system.

From what you told us, we learned that:

- In 1990, 60 percent of the Nation’s foreign-born population were not U.S. citizens, an increase over the 1980 figure of 50 percent.



### Huge Growth in Noncitizens . . .

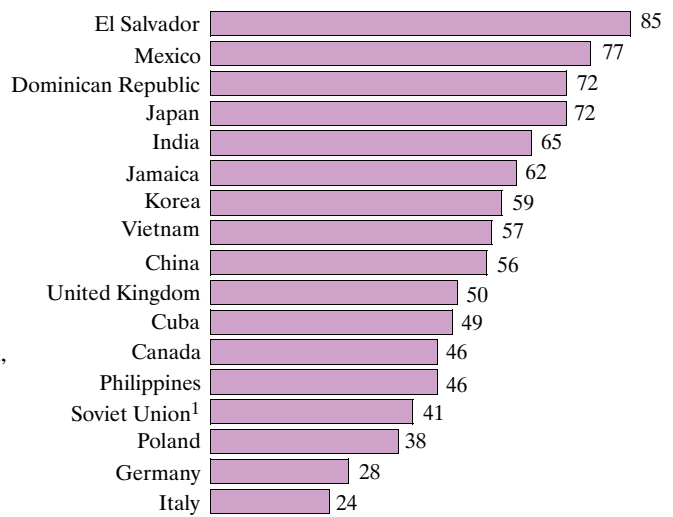
- The number of noncitizens in the United States rose more than five times faster in the 1980s than the number of naturalized citizens—69 percent versus 12 percent. The total foreign-born population increased 40 percent during this period.
- The percentages of noncitizens were higher among immigrants from Latin American and Asian countries than among those from European countries, reflecting, for the most part, the generally more recent arrival of the former groups. Recent immigrants with interest in obtaining citizenship have had less time in this country to complete the naturalization process.

Of the 17 countries with more than 250,000 foreign-born persons in the United States, El Salvador had the highest proportion of noncitizens—85 percent (see chart). More than three of every four U.S. residents born in Mexico were not U.S. citizens. By comparison, the proportion of noncitizens among immigrants from Italy was 24 percent and from Germany, 28 percent.

- As the map shows, the States varied considerably in the percentages of their foreign-born residents who were not U.S. citizens. California had the highest percentage, with nearly 7 of every 10 foreign-born residents not being U.S. citizens. Three other Southwestern States—Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico—as well as Georgia, Virginia, and the District of Columbia had a figure of 60 percent or more. These had large concentrations of the foreign-born groups of recent origin. In eight States, fewer than 44 percent of the foreign born were noncitizens.

### Recent Immigrant Groups Less Likely to Be Citizens

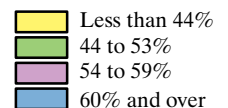
Percent of Foreign Born Who Were Not Citizens for Countries of Birth of 250,000 or More: 1990



<sup>1</sup>Includes the geopolitical entities of the former Soviet Union.

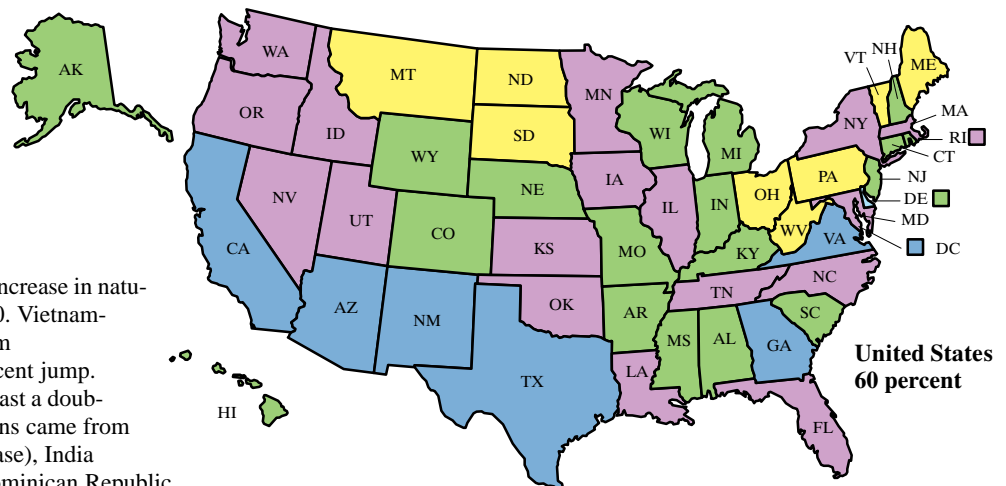
### Majority of Foreign-Born Residents of 30 States Were Not Citizens

Percent of Foreign-Born Residents Who Were Not Citizens: 1990



### . . . But Many New Citizens, Too

- The 1980s also saw substantial increases in the number of naturalized citizens among the Nation’s foreign born. Of the 17 largest foreign-born groups (as listed in the chart), 10 had increases in their naturalized citizens, and 6 of these had at least doubled the number of their naturalized citizens.
- Those born in Vietnam had the largest increase in naturalized citizens between 1980 and 1990. Vietnam-born naturalized citizens increased from 26,000 to 232,000, a dramatic 792-percent jump. Those born in other countries with at least a doubling in the number of naturalized citizens came from El Salvador (430-percent decade increase), India (218 percent), Korea (130 percent), Dominican Republic (123 percent), and the Philippines (120 percent).

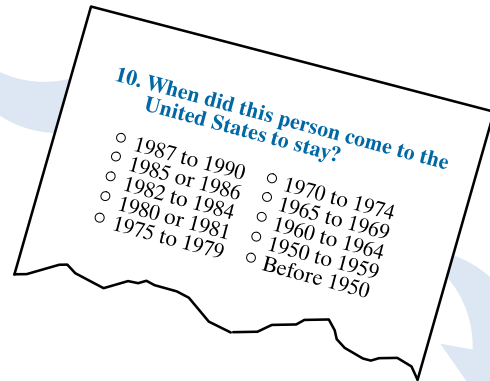


Note: Data for place of birth, citizenship, and year of entry are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.

### Year of Entry

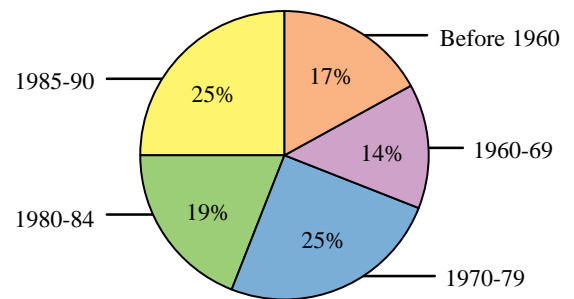
In question 10 on the 1990 census forms, we asked people born outside this country to mark the time interval in which they came to the United States to stay.

- You told us that one in four of the 19.8 million foreign-born residents entered this country between 1985 and 1990 (see pie chart). About 44 percent of the foreign born arrived between 1980 and 1990.
- The longer that foreign-born persons are in the United States, the more likely they are to become naturalized citizens. About 8 percent of the immigrants who entered this country between 1985 and 1990 had become citizens by 1990, compared with 23 percent of those entering between 1980 to 1984 and 61 percent of those entering before 1980.
- As the bottom chart illustrates, the heaviest influx for European immigrants generally came before 1960, while the peak arrival years for Latin American and Asian immigrants were recent—between 1980 and 1990.
- Over half of the immigrants from Germany, Italy, and Canada came to the United States before 1960. Three-fourths of the Salvadoran immigrants came to the United States between 1980 and 1990, as well as at least half of the immigrants from Vietnam, Korea, China, and Mexico.



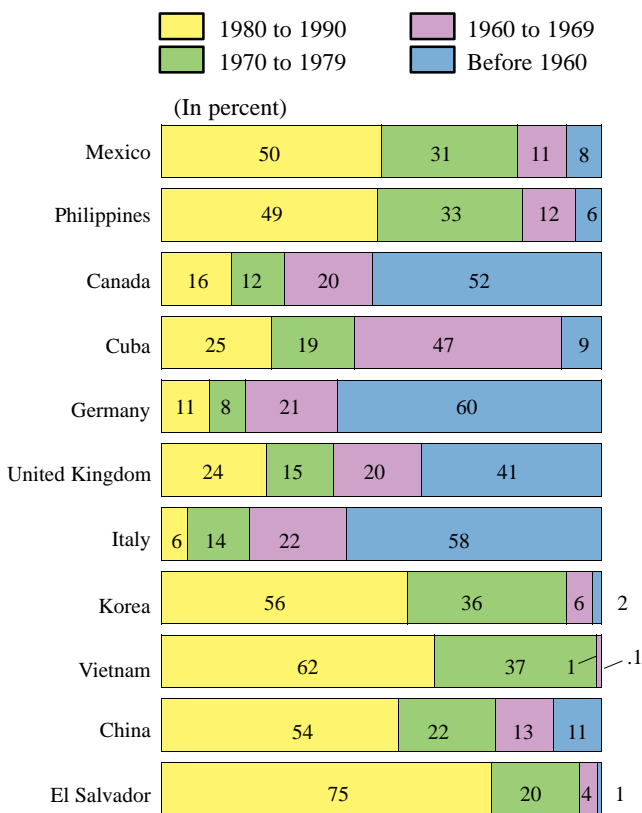
### One in Four Foreign-Born Persons Arrived Between 1985 and 1990

Percent of Foreign Born, by Year of Entry



### Foreign-Born Groups Arrived in Different Decades

Year of Entry for Selected Countries of Birth: 1990



### Who Uses This Information?

Just a few examples:

- Federal agencies to monitor compliance with the Voting Rights Act
- State and local governments and private social service agencies to assist in delivering health, social, and educational services
- Private community organizations to conduct voter registration drives and teach English

*Trivia Answer:* As you might guess, New York City had the largest foreign-born population (2.1 million) in 1990, and Hialeah, FL, had the highest percentage of foreign born (70 percent).

### Want to Know More?

Consult the series of 1990 census reports, CPH-5, *Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics*, and CP-2, *Social and Economic Characteristics*, at a large public or university library. Also for sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). Information is also available on CD-ROM and other media. Call:

- Customer Services at the Census Bureau, **301-763-4100**, for ordering information about the GPO reports listed above, CD-ROM, or for copies of CQC bulletins
- Karen Mills, **301-763-7200**, for general information on CQC bulletins
- Population Division, **301-763-7955**, for more information on the topics covered in this bulletin



Issued September 1994

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS