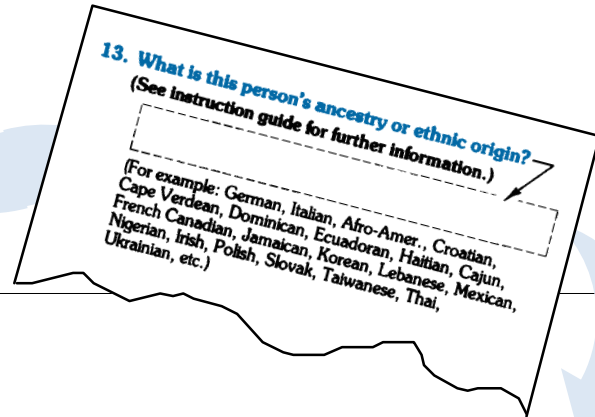


We asked... You told us

Ancestry



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.

In question 13 on the 1990 census forms, we asked people to write in their ancestry. Ancestry refers to a person's ethnic origin, heritage, or the place of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States.

Ancestry data from the 1990 census reflect the diverse ethnic groups that have come to the United States throughout its history.

From what you told us, we learned that:

- In 1990, the most frequently reported ancestry in the United States was German (see bar chart). Nearly one-fourth of the American people (58 million) considered themselves to be of German or part-German ancestry.
- The next largest ethnic groups in rank order were Irish, English, Afro-American, and Italian. In all, 33 different ancestry groups had at least 1 million people.
- About 5 percent of respondents reported the general category, "American."
- Most persons reported only one ancestry group; however, a substantial segment reported a mixed background. Nationally, about 60 percent of the population reported only one ancestry; another 30 percent also wrote in a second ancestry. About 10 percent did not report any ancestry.

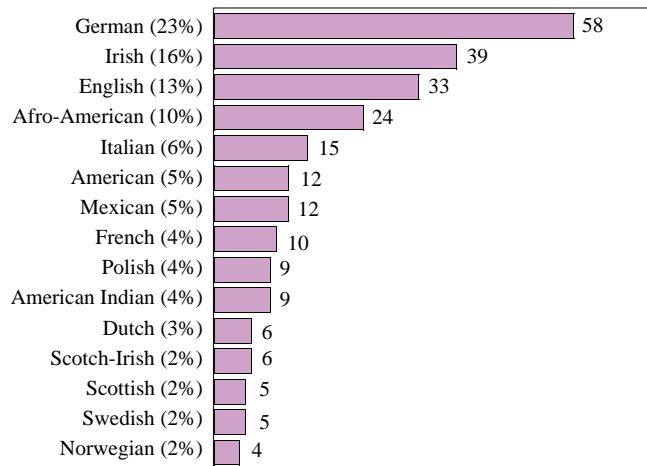
Nation's Largest Ancestry Group Was Also Tops in Most States

- In over half the States in 1990, more people reported German than any other ancestry (see map).
- Afro-American was the most frequently reported ancestry in the second highest number of States (7), all of which were in the South.
- Irish and English were the largest ancestry groups in five States each, located in the South and Northeast for Irish and Northeast and West for English.

Note: Data on ancestry are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.

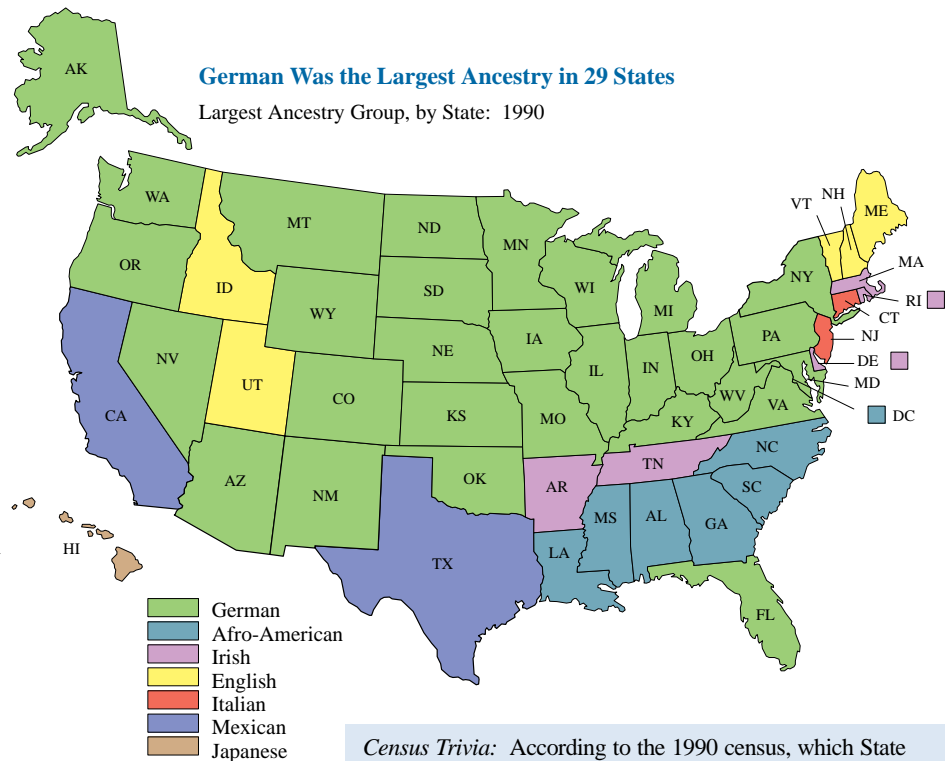
Top 15 Ancestry Groups: 1990

(In millions. Percent of total population in parentheses)



German Was the Largest Ancestry in 29 States

Largest Ancestry Group, by State: 1990



Census Trivia: According to the 1990 census, which State ranked first in population size for all but 4 of the 15 largest ancestry groups shown in the bar chart above? Try to guess which States ranked first for the other 4 ancestry groups. (Answer on reverse.)

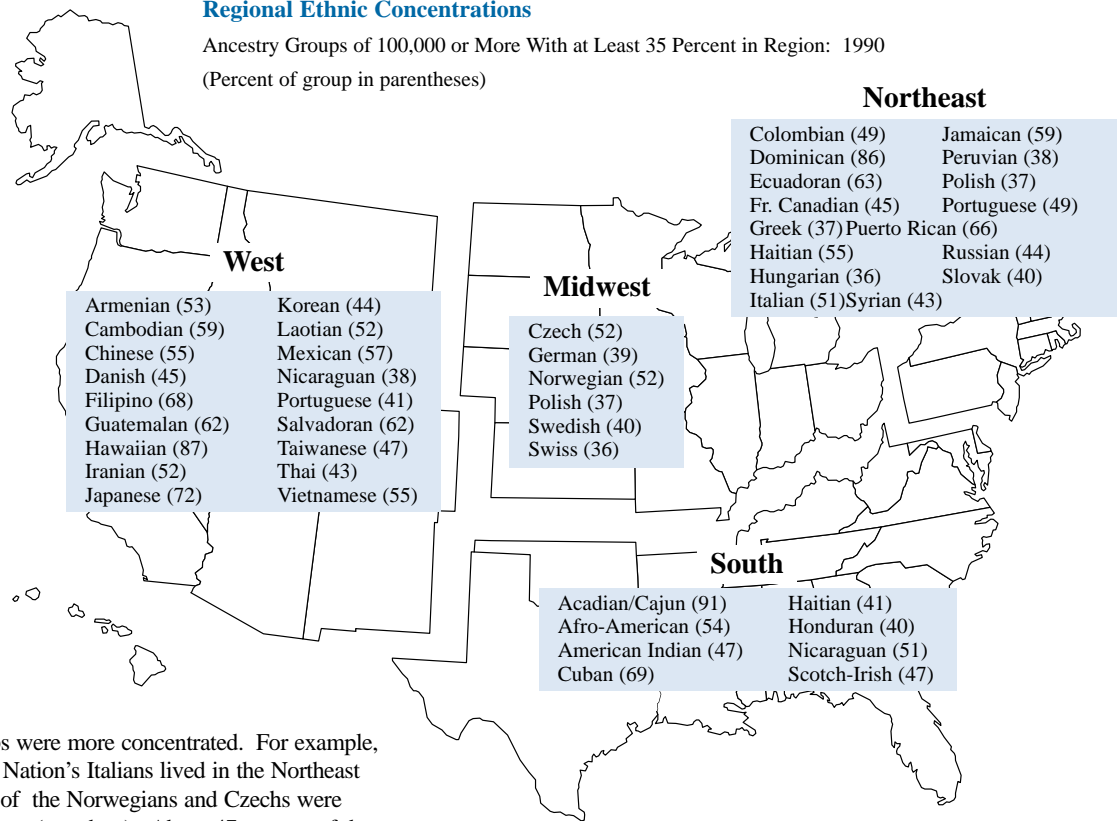
Regional Distribution Patterns Varied by Ancestry

- In 1990, individual ancestry groups showed striking variations in their patterns of regional distribution within the United States. These differences often reflected initial settlement patterns, especially for the newer immigrant groups.
- Of the largest European ancestries, French, Scottish, and Welsh were distributed fairly evenly among the four regions. Other large European groups were more concentrated. For example, more than half of the Nation's Italians lived in the Northeast region, and over half of the Norwegians and Czechs were clustered in the Midwest (see chart). About 47 percent of the Scotch-Irish were concentrated in the South, while 45 percent of the Danish lived in the West.
- The regional concentration of persons of Hispanic ancestry depended on their specific country of origin. For instance, the Northeast contained 86 percent of the country's Dominicans, 66 percent of Puerto Ricans, and 63 percent of Ecuadorans. The South was home to 69 percent of Cubans and 51 percent of Nicaraguans. About 62 percent of Salvadorans and Guatemalans and 57 percent of Mexicans lived in the West.
- Persons from the West Indies ancestry groups were concentrated in the Northeast: 59 percent of the Nation's Jamaicans and 55 percent of Haitians lived there.
- Among the larger Southwest Asian ancestry groups, over half of the Armenians and Iranians resided in the West, and 43 percent of the Syrians lived in the Northeast.
- Asian and Pacific Islander ancestry groups were found largely in the West. The West was home to 87 percent of the country's Hawaiians, 72 percent of Japanese, 59 percent of Cambodians, and 55 percent of Chinese and Vietnamese.

Trivia Answer: California—the perennial destination of many migrants—had the largest number of persons of German, Irish, English, Afro-American, Mexican, French, American Indian, Dutch, Scotch-Irish, Scottish, and Swedish ancestry of any State in 1990. New York—the traditional port of entry for large numbers of immigrants—had more Italians and Polish than any other State, and Minnesota ranked first for Norwegians. Texas had the largest number of persons who reported the general ancestry category, “American.”

Regional Ethnic Concentrations

Ancestry Groups of 100,000 or More With at Least 35 Percent in Region: 1990
(Percent of group in parentheses)



Who Uses This Information?

Just a few examples:

- Federal agencies to monitor compliance with the anti-discrimination requirements of the Civil Rights Act
- State and local governments and private social service agencies to assist in providing services to reflect cultural differences
- Business persons to pinpoint areas of a city for locating new restaurants specializing in particular types of ethnic food

Want to Know More?

Consult the 1990 census report, CP-S-1-2, *Detailed Ancestry Groups for States*, at a large public or university library. Also for sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). In addition, ancestry data can be found in the listing, CPH-L-136, *1990 Ethnic Profiles for States*, available for purchase by calling **301-457-2422**. Call:

- Customer Services at the Census Bureau, **301-457-4100**, for ordering information about the GPO reports listed above or to order copies of CQC bulletins or other Census Bureau products
- Karen Mills or Kim Giesbrecht, **301-457-4008**, for general information on CQC bulletins
- Population Division, **301-457-2403**, for more information on ancestry data



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