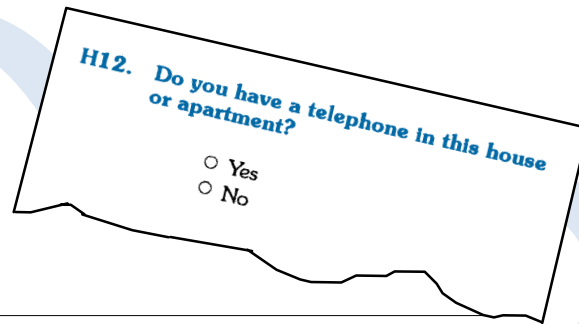


We asked... You told us

Telephone and Vehicle Availability



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.

Telephone Availability

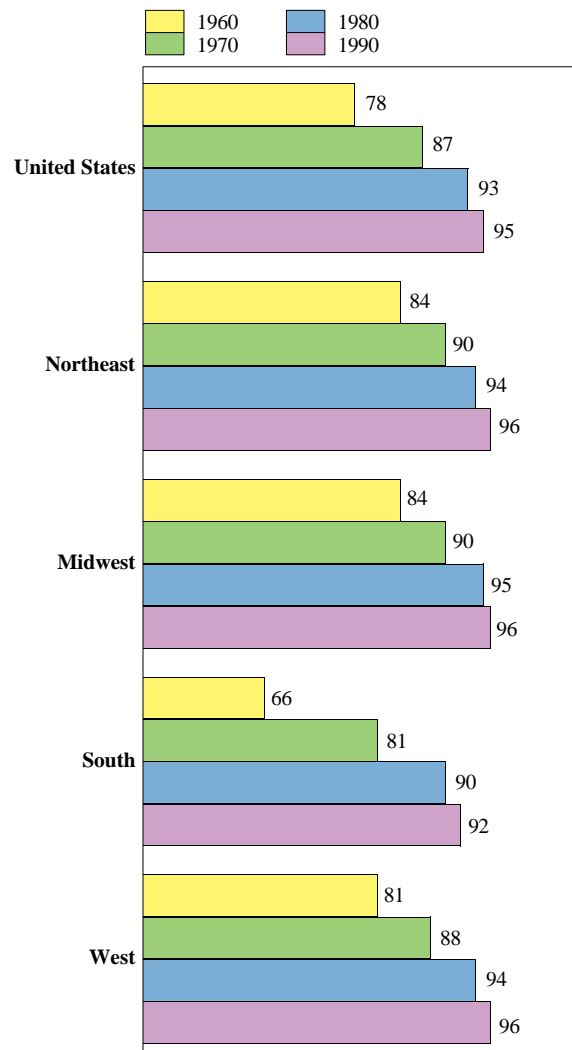
In question **H12** on the 1990 census forms, **we asked** people to tell us if they had a telephone in the house or apartment where they lived.

From what **you told us**, we learned that:

- In 1990, 95 percent of all households in the United States had a telephone (see chart). Thirty years earlier, only 78 percent of households reported having a telephone. By 1970, the proportion had increased to 87 percent, and by 1980, this figure was 93 percent.
- Among the regions in 1990, the South had the lowest percentage of households equipped with a telephone (92 percent). By contrast, the Northeast, Midwest, and West each had 96 percent. The lower percentage in the South continued a 30-year trend.
- At the State level, the percentage of households with a telephone varied from a high of 98 percent in Massachusetts and Minnesota to a low of 87 percent in Mississippi. Only four other States had percentages at or below 90 percent: New Mexico (88 percent), Arkansas (89 percent), and Kentucky and West Virginia (each with 90 percent).
- Owners were much more likely than renters to have a telephone available for their use. Nationally, 98 percent of owners had a telephone in 1990, compared with 89 percent of renters.

Telephones Have Become Increasingly Prevalent

Percent of Households With a Telephone, by Region: 1960 to 1990



Who Uses This Information? Just a few examples:

Telephone Availability:

- Government agencies to determine whether elderly, handicapped, and low-income persons have access to communication in case they need emergency medical services
- Telephone companies to locate potential areas for expanding their services

Vehicle Availability:

- State and local government agencies to assess the need for highway development projects and for expanding public transit systems
- Environmental protection agencies to analyze energy consumption and forecast energy needs

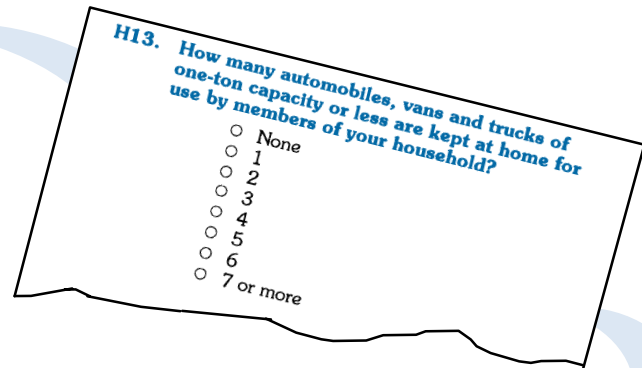
Note: The data on telephone and vehicle availability are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.

Census Trivia: According to the 1990 census, which State had the highest percentage of households with three or more vehicles? (Answer on reverse.)

Vehicle Availability

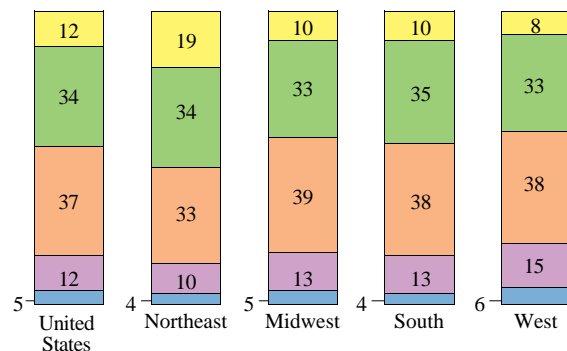
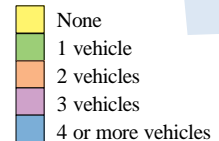
In question **H13**, we asked people to tell us how many automobiles, vans, and trucks of one-ton capacity or less they kept at home for use by members of their household. Company vehicles (including police cars and taxicabs) were included if they were regularly kept at home and used for non-business purposes. Cars and trucks permanently out of working order were excluded.

- In 1990, nearly 9 of every 10 households in the Nation (88 percent) had at least one automobile, van, or light truck to use for transportation. About 34 percent of all households had only one motor vehicle available for their use, while over half (55 percent) had two or more.
- Over the past 30 years, more and more households have gained access to motor vehicles. In 1960, 78 percent of households had access to at least one vehicle. This proportion increased to 83 percent in 1970 and to 87 percent in 1980.



Households in Northeast Were Most Likely To Be Without a Vehicle

Percent of Households, by Number of Vehicles Available and Region: 1990

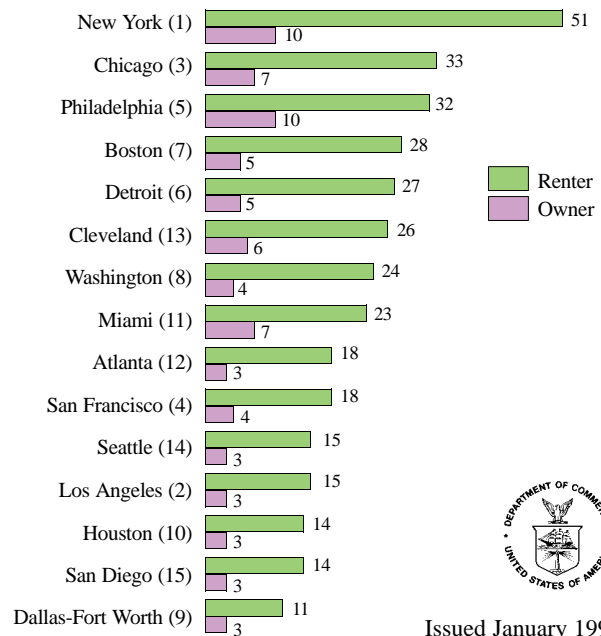


Who Didn't Have Access to a Motor Vehicle in 1990?

- As shown in the bar chart to the right, the Northeast had the highest percentage of households with no vehicle available (19 percent) and the West had the lowest (8 percent). The South and Midwest each had 10 percent.
- Of all the households in the Northeast with no vehicle available, 55 percent were located in New York. New York led the States with the highest percentage of households with no motor vehicle available (30 percent). Pennsylvania followed distantly with only half this figure (15 percent).
- In general, renters were less likely than homeowners to have a motor vehicle. Nationally, 23 percent of renters and only 5 percent of owners did not have a vehicle.
- Among the 15 largest metropolitan areas¹ in 1990, the percentage of renter households with no vehicle available varied substantially as shown in the chart at the bottom of the page. The New York metropolitan area had the highest percentage of renters with no vehicle available (51 percent), while Dallas-Fort Worth had the lowest (11 percent).

Renters in Large Northeastern and Midwestern Metro Areas Were More Apt to Be Without a Vehicle

Percent of Households in 15 Largest Metro Areas Without Access to a Motor Vehicle, by Owner-Renter Status: 1990
(1990 population rank in parentheses)



Issued January 1994

Trivia Answer: About 27 percent of the households in Wyoming had three or more vehicles, the highest of any State. As you might guess, New York had the lowest percentage (11 percent).

Want to Know More?

Consult the series of 1990 census reports, CH-2, *Detailed Housing Characteristics*, at a large public or university library. Also for sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO).

Call:

- Customer Services at the Census Bureau, **301-763-4100**, for ordering information about the GPO reports listed above OR for copies of CQC bulletins
- Kim Giesbrecht or Karen Mills, **301-763-4263**, for general information on CQC bulletins
- Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, **301-763-8553**, for more information on housing data

¹ Generally, a **metropolitan area** consists of a sizable central city (or cities) and the surrounding suburbs, with a total population of at least 100,000. Metropolitan areas are defined in terms of counties (cities and towns in New England).