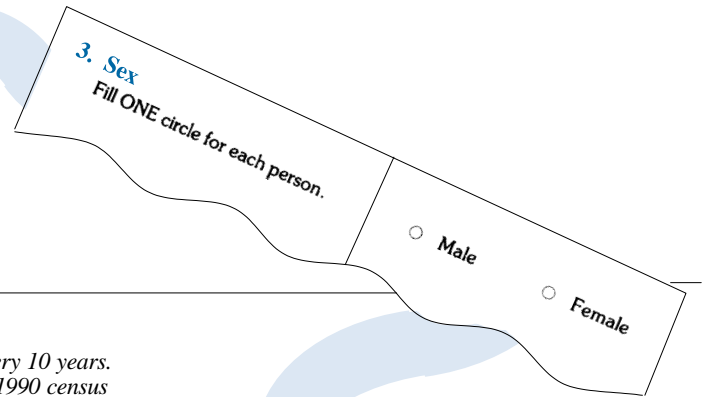


# We asked... You told us

## Gender



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.

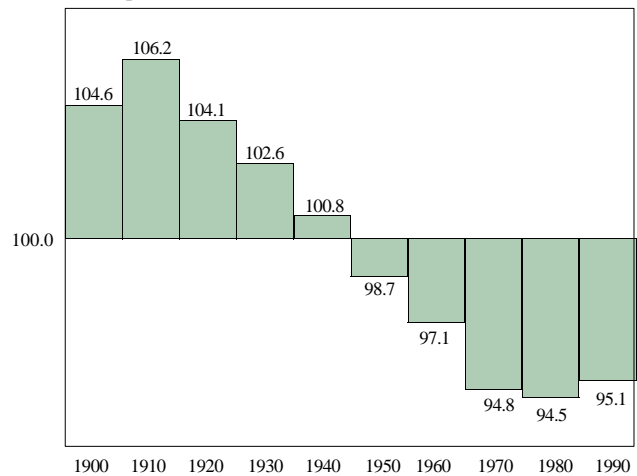
In question 3 on the 1990 census forms, we asked people to tell us whether they were male or female. You told us there were 127,470,000 females and 121,239,000 males in the United States in 1990. Females made up 51.3 percent of the U.S. population.

### Ratio of Males to Females Has Fluctuated Over Time

- Males outnumbered females from the Nation's earliest colonial times until the 1950 census, when females outnumbered males by about 1 million. Consequently, as the bar chart shows, the sex ratio<sup>1</sup> dropped below 100 for the first time in 1950 to 98.7 males for every 100 females.
- Over the next three decades, the difference in the number of males and females continued to grow, as reflected in the declining sex ratios. By 1980, there were 6.4 million more females than males, or 94.5 males for every 100 females.
- Between 1980 and 1990, however, this trend reversed, and for the first time since the 1910 decade, the male population grew slightly faster than the female population. As a result, the excess of females over males dropped to 6.2 million in 1990, and the sex ratio, after seven decades of decline, rose slightly to 95.1.
- Several factors have contributed to the fluctuations in the ratio of males to females since 1900. Males outnumbered females in the early part of this century because more males than females were immigrating to the United States. The decline in the sex ratio to 1980 resulted mainly from the relatively greater reduction in female mortality rates. The sex ratio reversed its downward trend between 1980 and 1990 as death rates declined more for males than for females and as immigration again brought in more males.

### After Seven Decades of Decline, Ratio of Males to Females Increased Slightly in 1980's

Males per 100 Females: 1900 to 1990

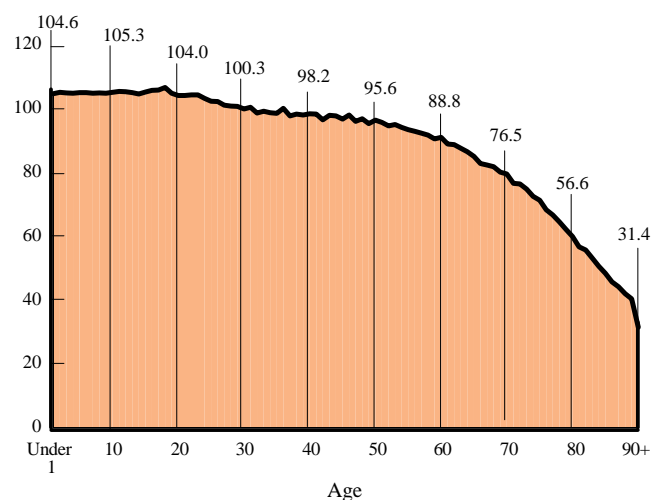


### Balance of the Sexes Differs by Age

- Using 1990 census data, the line graph illustrates how the sex composition of Americans changes with age.<sup>2</sup> At the younger ages, the sex ratios were above 100, reflecting the fact that more boys than girls are born every year and that boys continue to outnumber girls through childhood and young adulthood.
- At age 30, the number of males and females was about equal, and the sex ratio approached 100. Beyond this age, as a result of higher male mortality, sex ratios fell below 100 and began to decline, gradually at first and then more rapidly. At age 50, there were 95.6 males per 100 females; by age 70, 76.5 males per 100 females. The excess of females over males increased with age, owing to the cumulative effect of the higher death rates of males over their lifetime.

### Number of Males and Females About Equal at Age 30

Males per 100 Females by Age: 1990



<sup>1</sup>The sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females. A sex ratio of 100 means an equal number of males and females; a sex ratio above 100 indicates more males than females; and a sex ratio below 100 indicates more females than males.

<sup>2</sup>Information on age is collected from question 5. (See CQC-5, Age.)

**Census Trivia:** According to the 1990 census, at what age were there twice as many women as men? (Answer on reverse.)

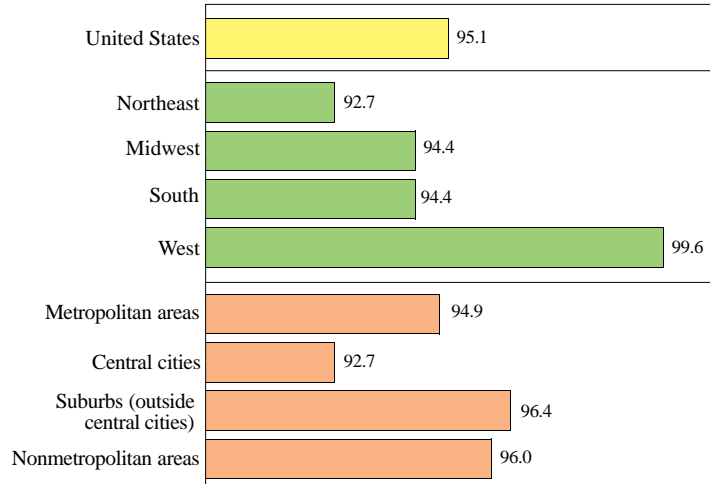
### Number of Males and Females Varies by Geographic Area

- Among *regions* in 1990, the Northeast had the lowest sex ratio, with 92.7 males for every 100 females (see chart). The West had the highest sex ratio (99.6), approaching parity between the sexes. The Midwest and South each had 94.4 males per 100 females.
- At the *State* level in 1990, females were more numerous than males in all but five States (see map). Alaska led the States with the highest ratio of males to females (111.4 males per 100 females), followed by Nevada (103.7) and Hawaii (103.6). Wyoming and California (each with 100.2) had nearly equal numbers of males and females. In contrast, the lowest sex ratios were recorded in Mississippi (91.7) and in Alabama and Pennsylvania (each 92.0).
- Sex ratios in *metropolitan areas* (94.9)<sup>3</sup> were slightly lower than in nonmetropolitan areas (96.0). Within metropolitan areas, sex ratios were substantially lower in the central cities as a group (92.7) than in the suburbs (96.4).

<sup>3</sup>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).

### West Had the Highest Sex Ratios in 1990

Males per 100 Females, by Region and Metropolitan Residence



### A Look to the Future

Projections made by the Census Bureau show there will be more females than males in the U.S. population at least through the year 2050.

### Who Uses This Information?

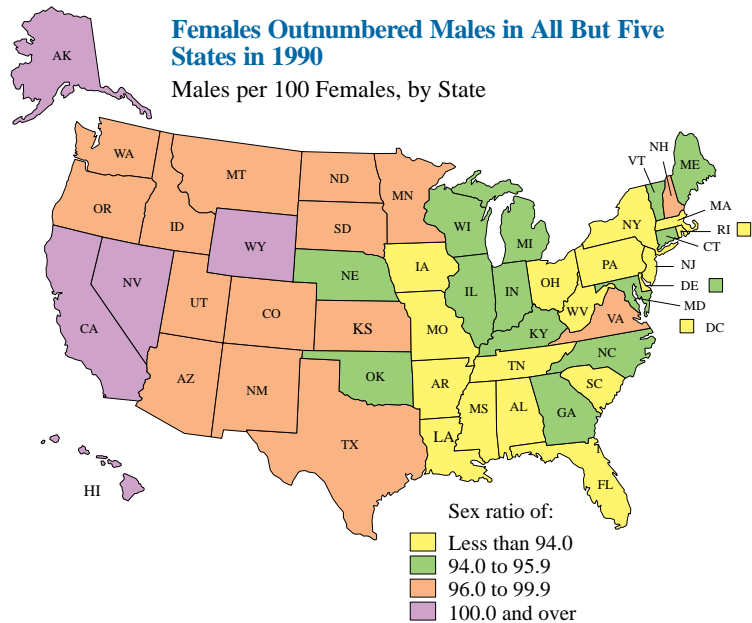
Just a few examples:

- Retail clothing store planners to determine the type of clothing outlets needed
- Government agencies and private sector companies to set up and monitor affirmative action and antidiscrimination plans
- Sociologists, economists, political scientists, and other researchers to analyze social and economic trends

*Trivia Answer:* At age 83, there were about twice as many women as men in 1990 (467,000 versus 236,000).

### Females Outnumbered Males in All But Five States in 1990

Males per 100 Females, by State



### Want to Know More?

Consult the series of 1990 census reports, CPH-1, *Summary Population and Housing Characteristics*; and CP-1, *General Population Characteristics*, at a large public or university library. Also for sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO).

If you want to know more, call:

- Customer Services at the Census Bureau, **301-763-4100**, for ordering information from GPO for the reports listed above OR for copies of CQC bulletins
- Karen Mills, **301-763-4263**, for general information on CQC bulletins
- Population Division, **301-763-7883**, for more information on gender



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