Ancestry

How does the U.S. Census Bureau define and collect data on ancestry?

Ancestry refers to one's ethnic origin or descent, "roots," or heritage, or the place of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. The intent of the ancestry question is not to measure the degree of attachment the respondent had to a particular ethnicity. For example, a response of "Irish" might reflect involvement in the community or a memory of ancestors several generations removed. A person's ancestry is not necessarily the same as his or her place of birth.

Ancestry was asked in the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses. Since then, ancestry has been collected on the American Community Survey (ACS). When someone reports more than two groups for their ancestry, only the first two are tabulated.

What ancestry groups does the Census Bureau provide data on?

People report hundreds of different ancestry groups. Given the space limitations of our tables, we cannot show all groups in every type of product. Some very small groups are not listed in any of our tables.

The Ancestry: 2000 brief listed all ancestries with100,000 or more people. The two graphics on the right are from that report. The full report can be found at www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/2000/briefs/c2kbr-35.pdf.

Some large groups are not shown in our ACS data products because the official data for those groups come from the Hispanic origin or race questions. The Hispanic origin question provides detailed data on the Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban populations, as well as other Hispanic groups. The race question provides data for the White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race populations. The race question also provides detailed data on Asian groups such as Chinese or Korean, American Indian tribes or Alaska Native groups such as Cherokee or Aleut, and Pacific Islander groups such as Samoan or Chamorro. The Census Bureau does not tabulate religious groups; they are tallied under "Other ancestries."

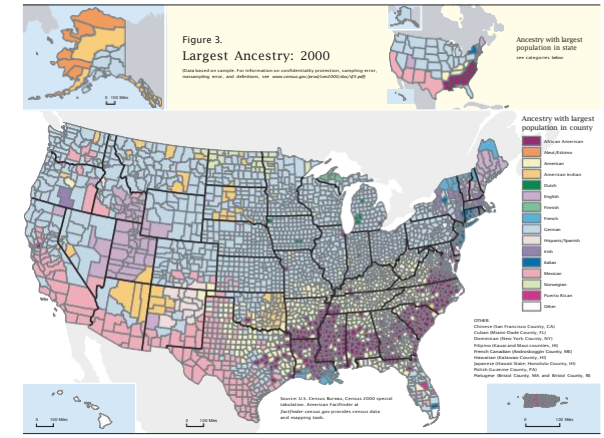
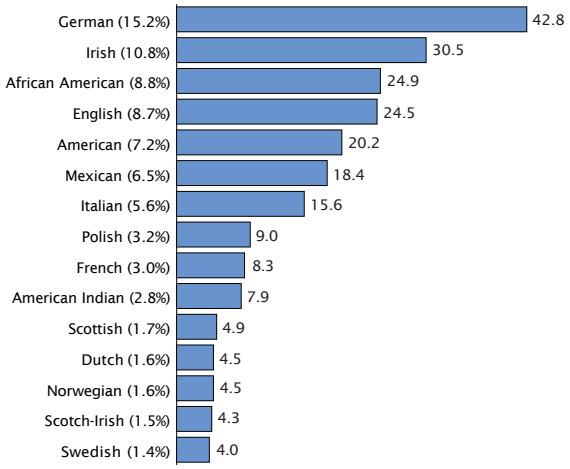


Figure 2.
Fifteen Largest Ancestries: 2000

(In millions. Percent of total population in parentheses. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

Which table will give me the data I am looking for?

This is a list of the ancestry tables available from the most current ACS. For information about older tables, please see the FAQ referenced at the end of this document.

Table DP02—estimates and percentages of the total popula-tion for 27 ancestry groups.

Table B04004—restricted to people who reported only a single ancestry, estimates for 107 ancestry groups.

Table B04005—restricted to people who reported multiple ancestries, estimates for 107 ancestry groups.

Table B04006—estimates for 107 ancestry groups, regard-less of whether the respondent reported a single ancestry or multiple ancestries.

Table C04004—restricted to people who reported only a single ancestry, estimates for 30 ancestry groups. This table is available for smaller geographic areas.

Table C04005—restricted to people who reported multiple ancestries, estimates for 30 ancestry groups. This table is available for smaller geographic areas.

Table C04006—estimates for 30 ancestry groups, regard-less of whether the respondent reported a single ancestry or multiple ancestries. This table is available for smaller geographic areas.

Table S0201—demographic, social, economic, and house-hold characteristics for 75 ancestry groups.

Selected Population Tables—more detailed demographic, social, economic, and household characteristics for 99 ancestry groups. This set of tables is released every 5 years.

How can I access the data?

The ACS data and Census 2000 data are available from the data.census.gov tool at https://data.census.gov/cedsci/.

What if I have more questions about the ancestry data?

More information is available from our Ancestry internet page, including a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document, and scanned data tables from 1980 and 1990; see Ancestry at https://www.census.gov/topics/population/ancestry.html.

Excerpt from Table B04006:

	United States	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	321,418,821	*****
Afghan	96,089	+/-8,875
Albanian	197,714	+/-13,541
Alsatian	12,279	+/-1,978
American	21,844,951	+/-114,000
Arab:	1,963,478	+/-37,039
Egyptian	251,507	+/-14,613
Iraqi	145,279	+/-13,366
Jordanian	89,157	+/-11,036
Lebanese	508,054	+/-17,600
Moroccan	113,544	+/-10,615
Palestinian	118,622	+/-12,002
Syrian	170,552	+/-12,019
Arab	303,300	+/-18,926
Other Arab	311,203	+/-18,097
Armenian	460,528	+/-15,063
Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac	108,424	+/-10,094
Australian	99,929	+/-6,945
Austrian	677,847	+/-14,279
Basque	56,860	+/-5,402
Belgian	350,123	+/-10,791
Brazilian	386,639	+/-18,294
British	1,397,632	+/-22,060
Bulgarian	96,790	+/-7,080
Cajun	106,105	+/-8,011
Canadian	673,137	+/-18,856
Carpatho Rusyn	7,958	+/-1,688
Celtic	55,600	+/-5,495
Croatian	409,949	+/-12,718
(Continued…)		

Source: 2015 American Community Survey