

history TECH

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Statistics as evidence: Using US Census data to support historical thinking

by glennw on September 12, 2016



It's becoming easier and easier to find primary source evidence online. And while many of you are stopping in at places like Google Public Data and GapMinder, it can still be difficult to find digital sources that specifically target the use of data and statistics. So most social studies teachers probably don't integrate as many of those types of evidence as they should.

So it was great hearing today about the newly updated [Statistics in Schools](#) program for K-12 teachers and students from the US Census Bureau. Using current and historical data, the Census Bureau provides teachers the tools to help students understand statistical concepts and

improve their data analysis skills. The program offers free online activities and other resources in [geography](#), [history](#), and [sociology](#).

Over the past two years, Census Bureau subject matter experts sought the expertise of teachers, education standards experts, and other professionals from across the country to help redesign the program to meet changing classroom needs. Launched initially for the 2000 Census in partnership with Scholastic, the program aimed to help students better understand the once-a-decade census and the importance of being counted. The updated program provides teachers with searchable activities by grade, school subject and topic, each aimed at helping to increase statistical literacy.



California Polytechnic State University Professor Roxy Peck served as a subject matter expert for the middle and high school math activities:

These activities provide teachers with opportunities to teach statistical concepts and data analysis skills to students in various subjects – not just math. The need for statistically literate citizens continues to grow as we become a more data-driven society.

The Census Bureau plans to add Statistics in Schools activities and resources throughout the school year, totaling more than 100. Some of the activities include “[The Progressives and the 1920 Census](#)” for high school history classes; “[An Analysis of the Millennial Generation](#)” for high school sociology classes; “[Two-Way Tables – Walking and Bicycling to Work](#)” for middle school math classes; and “[Changes in My State](#)” for elementary school math classes.

In addition to downloadable activities and games, teachers can access the following resources on the Statistics in Schools website:

- Videos
- Infographics and data visualizations
- Information to help teachers explain Census Bureau data to students
- Searchable data access tools

You can also find some useful teaching resources including historical documents, images, mobile apps, charts, diagrams, and infographics.



And once you’ve drained all of the goodness out of [Statistics in Schools](#), be sure to take advantage of some of the other teaching resources offered by the Census Bureau:

- [Main History Site](#)
- [Interactive Maps](#)
- [FactFinder](#)
- [QuickFacts](#)
- [American Community Survey](#)

