



# AMERICA THEN AND NOW – INTERPRETING CHANGES IN DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

## TEACHER VERSION

**Subject Level:**

High School History

**Grade Level:**

11-12

**Approx. Time Required:**

45-60 minutes

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to analyze infographics to describe details of American life in 1940 and 2010.
- Students will be able to identify changes in American life between 1940 and 2010 and make inferences about what caused them.
- Students will be able to identify how U.S. Census Bureau methodologies have changed over time and explain why.

## Activity Description

Students will review a series of infographics to learn how America's demographics have changed between 1940 and 2010.

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**Suggested Grade Level:**

11-12

**Approximate Time Required:**

45-60 minutes

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**Topics:**

- The Great Depression
- Pre-World War II era
- Societal changes

**Skills Taught:**

- Analyzing visual data
  - Making inferences
  - Synthesizing data
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## Materials Required

- The student version of this activity, 14 pages

A teacher computer with Internet access and a projector to display web sites is optional.

## Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity. Items, their sources, and any relevant instructions for viewing them online appear at the end of this teacher version.

- Item 1: Five Most Populated States Infographic
- Item 2: Racial and Ethnic Diversity Infographic
- Item 3: Education Infographic
- Item 4: Earnings Infographic
- Item 5: Top Industries Infographic
- Item 6: Housing Infographic
- Item 7: Marital Status Infographic
- Item 8: Additional Infographic Information

## Student Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to analyze infographics to describe details of American life in 1940 and 2010.
- Students will be able to identify changes in American life between 1940 and 2010 and make inferences about what caused them.
- Students will be able to identify how U.S. Census Bureau methodologies have changed over time and explain why.

For more information to help you introduce your students to the U.S. Census Bureau read "[Census Bureau 101 for Students](#)." This information sheet can be printed and passed out to your students as well.

## Standards Addressed

See charts below. For more information, read

*"Overview of Education Standards and Guidelines Addressed in Statistics in Schools Activities."*

### Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Standard	Strand	Cluster
<p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7</b></p> <p>Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p>	<p>RH 11-12 - History/Social Studies</p>	<p>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</p>

### UCLA National Standards for History: U.S. History Content Standards

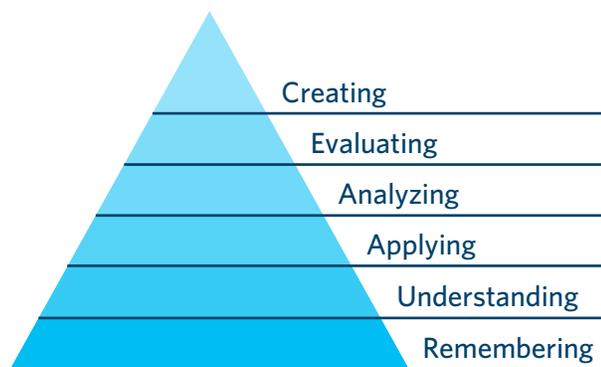
Era	Standard
<p>8 - The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)</p>	<p><b>Standard 3:</b> The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs.</p>
<p>10 - Contemporary United States (1968 to the Present)</p>	<p><b>Standard 2:</b> Economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States.</p>

## UCLA National Standards for History: Historical Thinking Standards

Standard	Description
Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation	<b>Analyze cause-and-effect relationships.</b> Students will analyze how different socioeconomic factors affected the population distribution in the United States between 1940 and 2010.
Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities	<b>Employ quantitative analysis.</b> Students will analyze demographic data from 1940 and 2010 to understand changes in American society.

## Bloom's Taxonomy

Students will **create** questions and support their inferences with census data.



## Teacher Notes

### Before the Activity

Students must understand the following ideas and concepts:

- The Great Depression
- World War II, especially its effect on U.S. industries and the economy

### During the Activity

Teachers should monitor students as they work, especially in part 2 when students work in pairs.

### After the Activity

Teachers could address students' questions from question 2 of part 1 as part of a class discussion. Teachers could also give students an opportunity to share what they learned in the activity during that discussion and/or in an exit slip (a written student response demonstrating understanding of content) using one of the following prompts:

- What did you observe that confirmed what you already knew about changes in the United States in the 20th century?
- What did you observe that surprised you?
- What questions do you still have about this topic?

### Extension Ideas

- Teachers could have students interview members of the baby boomer generation to learn about specific changes that took place during their lifetimes and how those changes affected them.
- Teachers could have students select topics that were not covered in the infographics (e.g., sports, entertainment, fashion), find information about those topics in 1940 and 2010, and present their research to the class by making an infographic on a poster or in a PowerPoint.

## Student Activity

Click [here](#) to download a printable version for students.

### Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity and appear at the end of this student version.

- Item 1: Five Most Populated States Infographic
- Item 2: Racial and Ethnic Diversity Infographic
- Item 3: Education Infographic
- Item 4: Earnings Infographic
- Item 5: Top Industries Infographic
- Item 6: Housing Infographic
- Item 7: Marital Status Infographic
- Item 8: Additional Infographic Information

### Student Learning Objectives

- I will be able to analyze infographics to describe details of American life in 1940 and 2010.
- I will be able to identify changes in American life between 1940 and 2010 and make inferences about what caused them.
- I will be able to identify how U.S. Census Bureau methodologies have changed over time and explain why.

## Part 1 - Analyze Infographics

1. Imagine you were a high school student in 1940. Predict ways that your life would be different from the one you lead today.

**Student answers will vary.**

2. Review the infographics in **Items 1-7** and then write at least five observations and/or questions about any of the data.

**Student observations and questions will vary but should refer to the data.**

3. Use **Item 1** to rank the states based on their populations.

- a. List the states that were most populous, from largest to smallest, in 1940.

1. **New York**
2. **Pennsylvania**
3. **Illinois**
4. **California**
5. **Ohio**

**(Teachers should be aware that California and Ohio had the same population in 1940, so students' answers for numbers 4 and 5 are interchangeable.)**

- b. List the states that were most populous, from largest to smallest, in 2010.

1. **California**
2. **Texas**
3. **New York**
4. **Florida**
5. **Illinois**

4. Still looking at the data in Item 1, toward which regions did the population shift from 1940 to 2010? What social, economic, or political factors could explain this shift?

**Student answers will vary but could include: The population shifted to the South and to the West. The oil industry in Texas grew, so people may have moved there for employment.**

5. To answer the following questions, imagine you were a leader in one of the most populous states in 2010.

- a. What are some of the *benefits* of being one of the most populous states? Consider social, economic, and political benefits as you explain your answer.

**Student answers will vary but could include: The most populous states could benefit from more tax revenue as well as a larger, more diverse workforce.**

- b. What are some of the *challenges* of being one of the most populous states? Consider social, economic, and political challenges as you explain your answer.

**Student answers will vary but could include: Those states could struggle to support their population in terms of money and resources.**

6. In December 1941, the United States entered World War II. How did the nation's entrance into the war affect U.S. industries and the economy? Support your answer with evidence from your background knowledge.

**Student answers will vary but could include: The U.S. entrance into the war was immediately followed by a mass mobilization across military and civilian industries. Factories were restructured to support the Allied war efforts and industrial and agricultural production increased to support soldiers overseas. The mass mobilization, which sparked the creation of jobs, helped bring the United States out of the Great Depression.**

7. How do you think the United States' entrance into World War II affected household income? Explain your answer.

**Student answers will vary but could include: Per capita income did not change dramatically during the war years, but more Americans did join the workforce. Consumer goods were limited at that time, because resources were dedicated to the war efforts. The end of the war, however, led to increased earnings and a boom in consumerism.**

8. Refer to **Item 8** to answer the following questions.

- a. How did the Census Bureau's questions about race and ethnicity change between 1940 and 2010?

**Student answers will vary but could include: In 1940, the three main racial/ethnic categories were black, white, and other; by 2010, the categories had expanded to include Hispanic or Latino origin and the option to self-identify as more than one race/ethnicity.**

- b. How did the Census Bureau's questions about marital status change between 1940 and 2010?

**Student answers will vary but could include: In 1940, the options were single, married, widowed, and divorced; by 2010, the options were now married, widowed, divorced, separated, and never married.**

9. Why do you think the Census Bureau's questions about race and ethnicity and marital status changed from 1940 to 2010?

**Student answers will vary but should mention how aspects of American life changed significantly during that time frame and so the census changed to keep up.**

## Part 2 - Write Your Own Questions About the Infographics

1. Choose a partner. Write your partner's full name here: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Each select a different infographic from **Items 2-7** and write four questions about yours that require critical analysis of the data. On another sheet of paper, write the answers to those questions.

**Student questions and answers will vary depending on the infographic chosen.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

3. Copy your partner's questions below and then answer them.

**Student responses will vary.**

1.

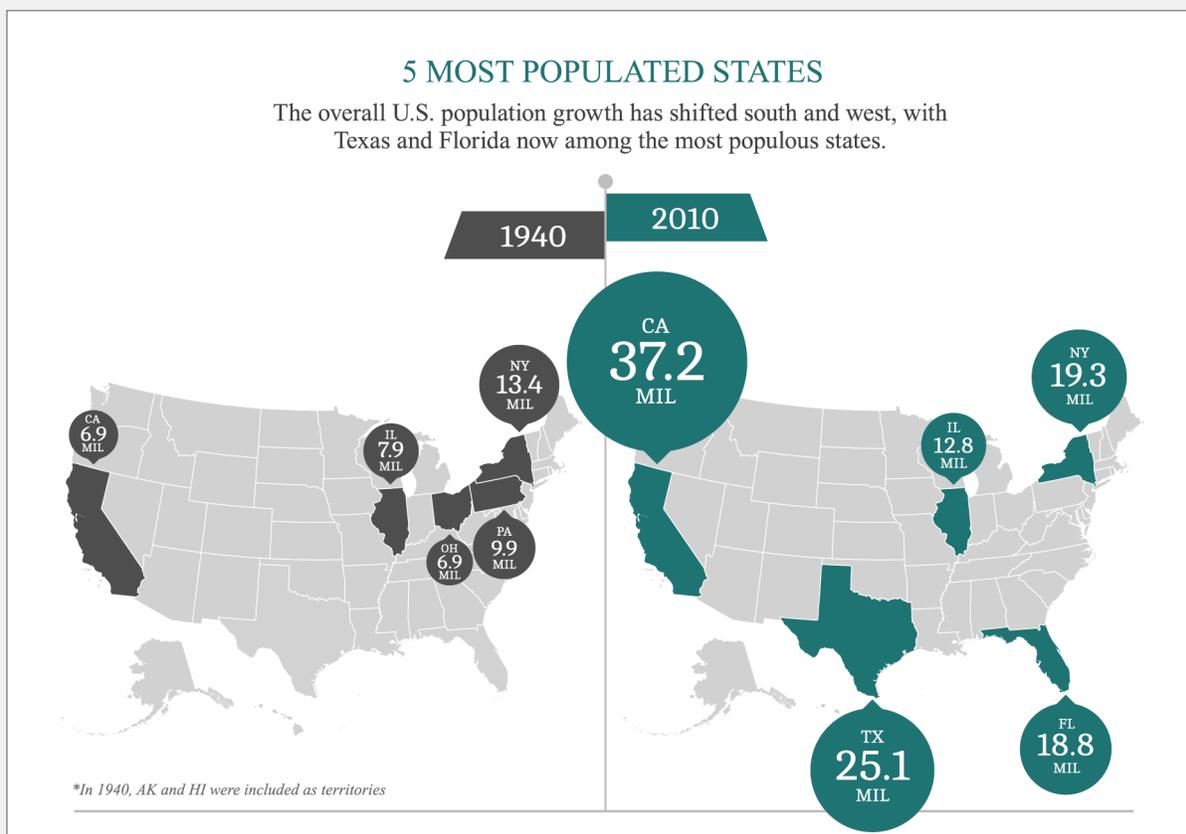
2.

3.

4.

4. Share and discuss the answers with your partner.

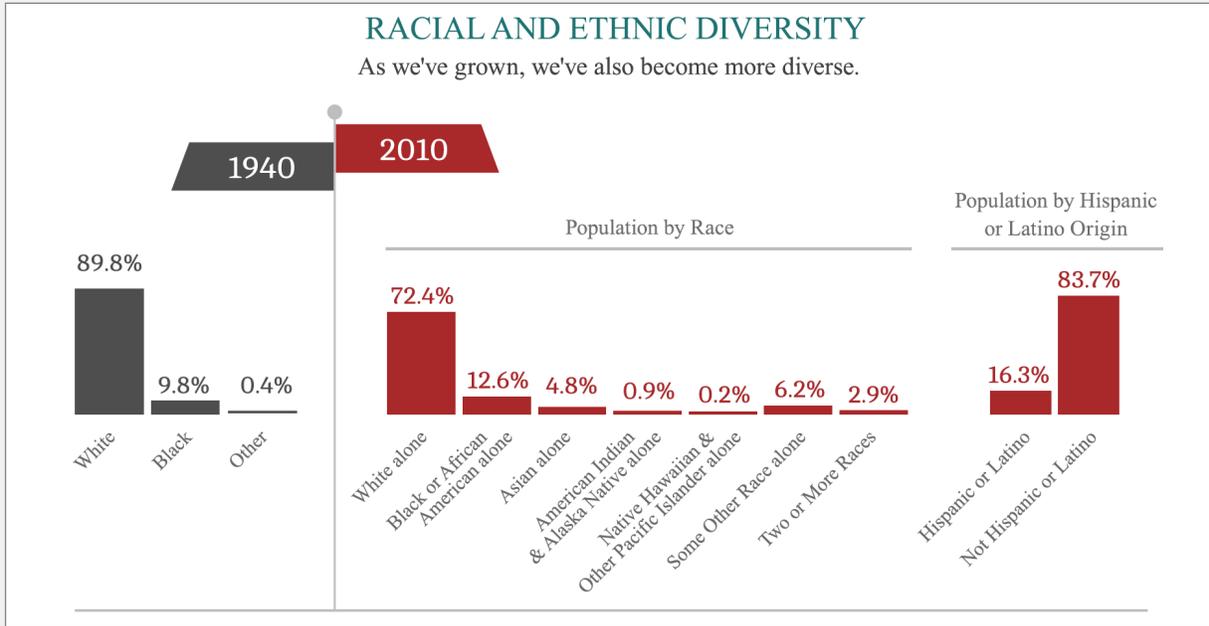
### Item 1: Five Most Populated States Infographic



[www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf](http://www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf)

Click on the link above and navigate to Page 2.

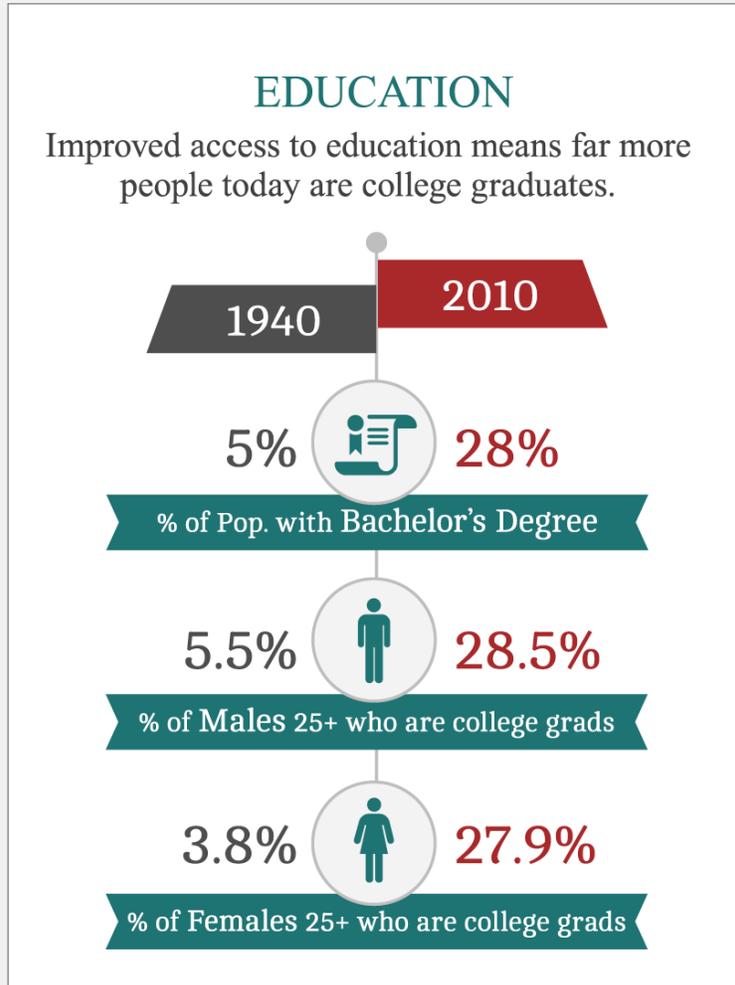
Item 2: Racial and Ethnic Diversity Infographic



[www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf](http://www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf)

Click on the link above and navigate to Page 2.

Item 3: Education Infographic



[www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf](http://www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf)

Click on the link above and navigate to Page 3.

Item 4: Earnings Infographic

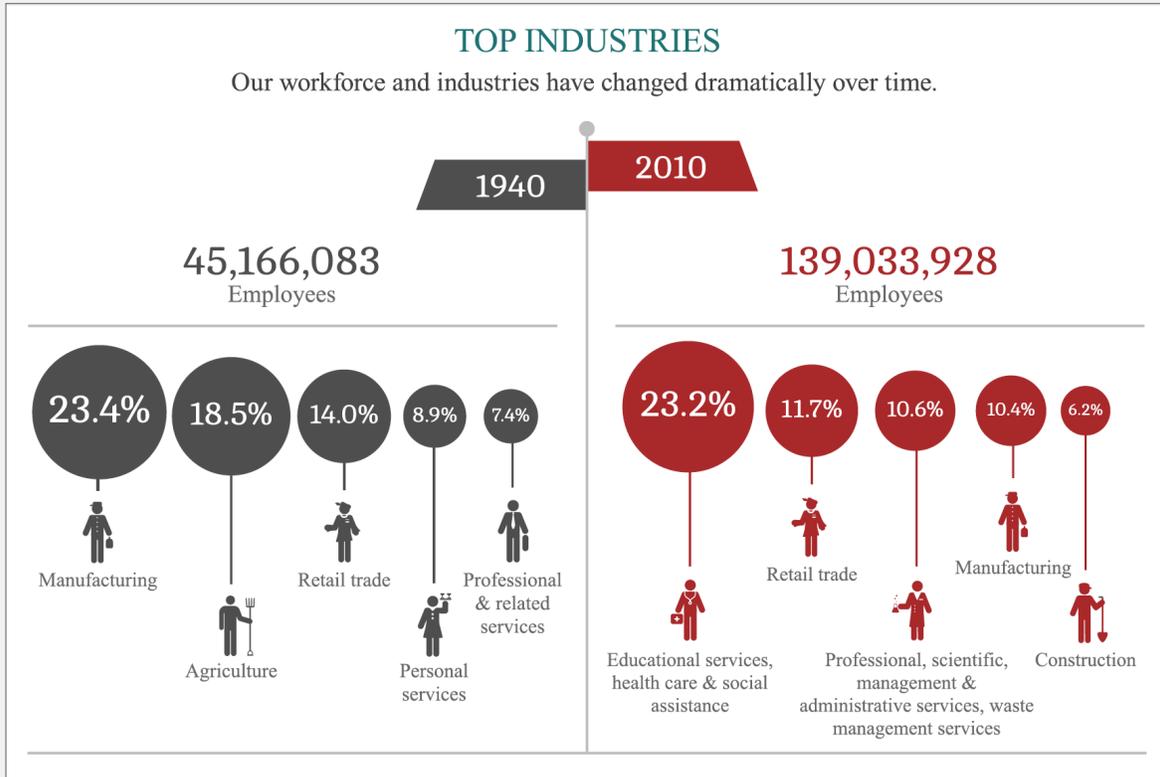


Note: This item compares all jobs, not like jobs. Since women dominated lower paying fields, such as nursing, retail, and education, the overall wages of women were lower than those of men.

[www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf](http://www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf)

Click on the link above and navigate to Page 3.

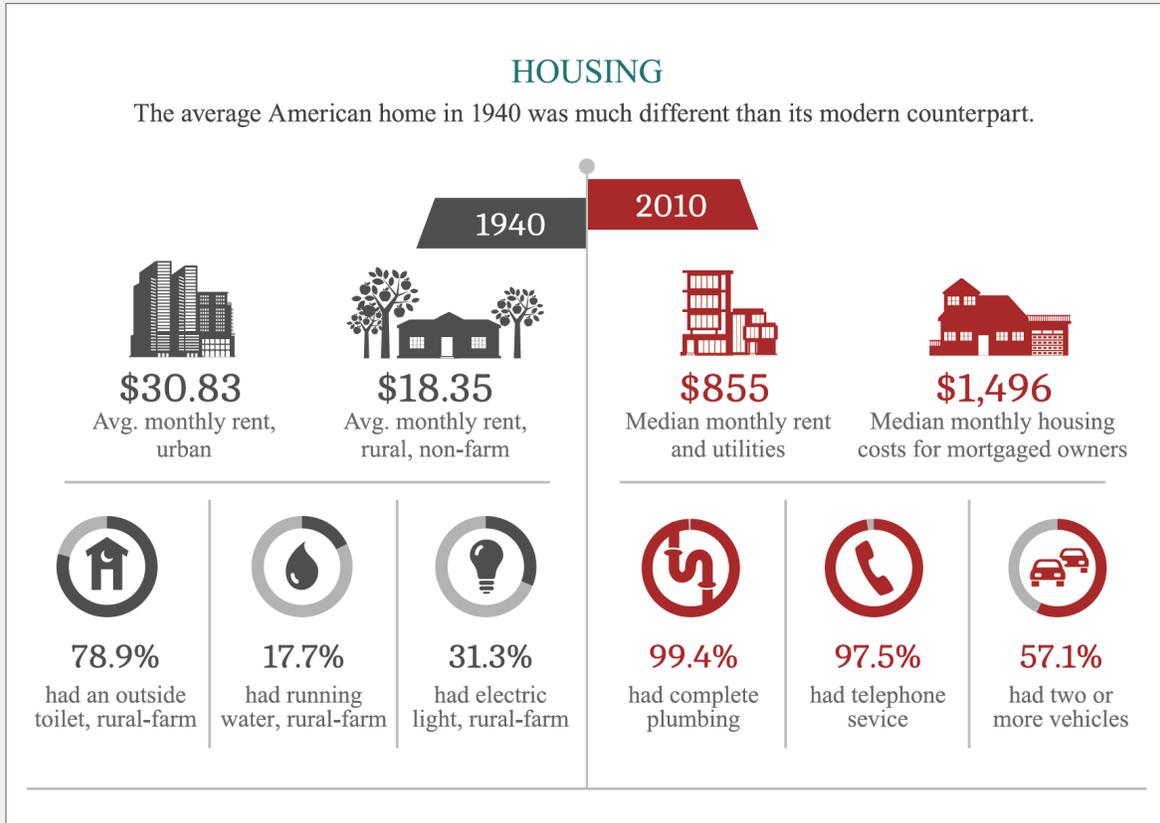
Item 5: Top Industries Infographic



[www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf](http://www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf)

Click on the link above and navigate to Page 3.

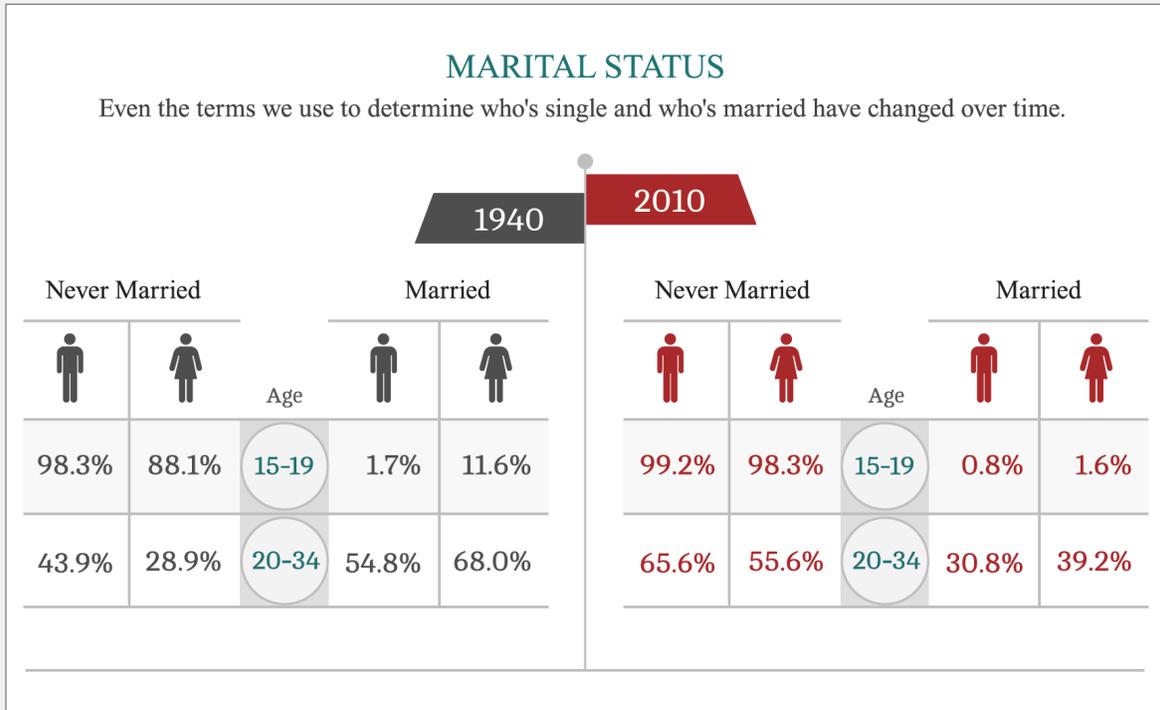
Item 6: Housing Infographic



[www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf](http://www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf)

Click on the link above and navigate to Page 4.

Item 7: Marital Status Infographic



[www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf](http://www.census.gov/1940census/pdf/then-and-now-8.5x11.pdf)

Click on the link above and navigate to Page 4.

## Item 8: Additional Infographic Information

Infographic 1 – 1940 – 2010 How Has America Changed?

### Total Population and Most Populated States:

The 1940 United States total population of 132.2 million includes Hawaii and Alaska, which were considered territories in 1940.

Source: 1940 Census and 2010 Census

### Racial and Ethnic Diversity:

In 1940, three population groups were generally tabulated in Census products that provided data on race -- White, Black (“Negro”), and Other. In some instances, data was further delineated and tabulated for population groups within the “Other” category (Indian, Chinese, and Japanese). There was no question on whether or not the person (s) was of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin.

Federal statistical standards for collecting and tabulating the types of data we understand today on race and ethnicity first came into existence in 1977 with the issuance of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) Directive No.15, which guided the 1980 Census and 1990 Census data collections. Revised standards issued in 1997 guided the Census 2000 and 2010 Census data collections on race and ethnicity. For more information on the OMB Race and Ethnic Standards, see [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg\\_1997standards](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards).

- In 2010, following the aforementioned 1997 OMB standards, the following questions were asked about ethnicity and race:

Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

The 2010 Census question on Hispanic origin included five separate response categories and one area where respondents could write-in a specific Hispanic origin group. (“Not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin”; “Mexican, Mexican Am., or Chicano”; “Puerto Rican”; “Cuban”; and “Another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin”).

- What is this person’s race? Mark  one or more boxes.

For the first time in Census 2000, individuals were presented with the option to self-identify with more than one race and this continued with the 2010 Census, as prescribed by OMB. The 2010 Census question on race included 15 separate response categories and three areas where respondents could write-in detailed information about their race. The response categories and write-in answers can be combined to create the five minimum OMB race categories (White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander) plus Some Other Race.

For more information on the 2010 Census data on race and ethnicity, see the 2010 Census Brief, “Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin” [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf).

Source: 1940 Census and 2010 Census

## Item 8: Additional Infographic Information (Continued)

### Education:

In 1940, persons were asked if they attended school any time since March 1940 and how many years of school have they completed.

Also in 1940, the percentage used for *percentage of population males and females 25 and older who are college graduates*, was persons who completed four or more years of college. There was no distinction if they received a degree. In 2010, percent of males, females, and population with a bachelor degree or college graduates were those who had received a bachelor's degree or higher.

Source: 1940 Census and 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

### Earnings:

In 1940, the median represents the amount of wage or salary income received in calendar year 1939 for people age 14 and older with a dollar or more of income and are in 1939 dollars.

In 2010, median earnings are defined as the algebraic sum of wage or salary income and net income from farm and nonfarm self-employment and are in 2010 dollars. Earnings represent the amount of income received regularly before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, bond purchases, union dues, Medicare deductions, etc for people age 16 and older.

The ratio shown is for all employees and not year-round, full-time employees.

Source: 1940 Census and 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

### Top Industries:

In 1940, total number of employees is the number of employed persons 14 years and over (excluding those on emergency work) and experienced workers seeking work.

The percentage shown for industries is the percentage of employed persons reporting that industry as their industry of work.

In 2010, the employed includes all civilians 16 years old and over who were either (1) "at work" -- those who did any work at all during the reference week as paid employees, worked in their own business or profession, worked on their own farm, or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers on a family farm or in a family business; or (2) were "with a job but not at work" -- those who did not work during the reference week but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to illness, bad weather, industrial dispute, vacation, or other

## Item 8: Additional Infographic Information (Continued)

personal reasons. Excluded from the employed are people whose only activity consisted of work around the house or unpaid volunteer work for religious, charitable, and similar organizations; also excluded are all institutionalized and people on active duty in the United States Armed Forces. The reference week is the calendar week preceding the date on which the respondents completed their questionnaires or were interviewed. This week may not be the same for all respondents.

In 2010, U.S. industries are classified using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2007.

Source: 1940 Census and 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

### Housing:

In 1940, average monthly rent, urban and rural, non-farm is the average rent paid (dollars) for a dwelling in urban areas and rural non-farm areas. There were three classifications in 1940: Urban, rural non-farm, and rural farm.

In 1940, the percentages shown for having an outside toilet, running water, and electric light was the national average for rural-farm locations.

In 2010, median monthly rent is the median selected cash rent paid for renter-occupied housing units including utilities.

In 2010, Median monthly housing costs for mortgaged owners is the median selected monthly owner's costs for occupied housing units with a mortgage.

Percentages listed was the percentage of total occupied housing units that had complete plumbing, had telephone service, and had two or more vehicles .

Source: 1940 Census and 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

### Marital Status:

In 1940, the categories for marital status were single, married, widowed, and divorced. The percentages listed are the percent of the total population ages 15-19 and 20-34 who have never married and are currently married by sex.

In 2010, the categories for marital status were Now Married (excluding separated), Widowed, Divorced, Separated, and Never Married. The percentages shown for married include the now married and separated population for ages 15 – 19 and 20-34 in order to be comparable to the 1940 numbers.

Source: 1940 Census and 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.