



# POPULATION PROFILE OF OUR NEW NATION: A COMPARISON OF THE 1790 AND 1800 CENSUSES

## TEACHER VERSION

**Subject Level:**

Middle School History

**Grade Level:**

7-8

**Approx. Time Required:**

60-75 minutes

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to read and interpret data sets and formulate conclusions.
- Students will be able to compare the populations of states to make determinations about climate, soil, and geographic size.

## Activity Description

In this activity, students will refer to the 1790 and 1800 Censuses to compare the total population with the population of enslaved people, drawing conclusions from the data.

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**Topics:**

- Early Republic
- Slavery

**Skills Taught:**

- Analyzing historical records
  - Comparing and contrasting
  - Making inferences
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## Materials Required:

- The student version of this activity, 7 pages
- Colored pencils

## Activity Items

The following items are a 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: Summative Data From 1790 Census
- Item 2: Summative Data From 1800 Census
- Item 3: Blank Map, 1790

For more information to help you introduce your students to the 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 about the standards, 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
<b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1</b> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.	<b>RH 6-8 – History/Social Studies</b>	Key Ideas and Details
<b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2</b> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.	<b>RH 6-8 – History/Social Studies</b>	Key Ideas and Details
<b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7</b> Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.	<b>RH 6-8 – History/Social Studies</b>	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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

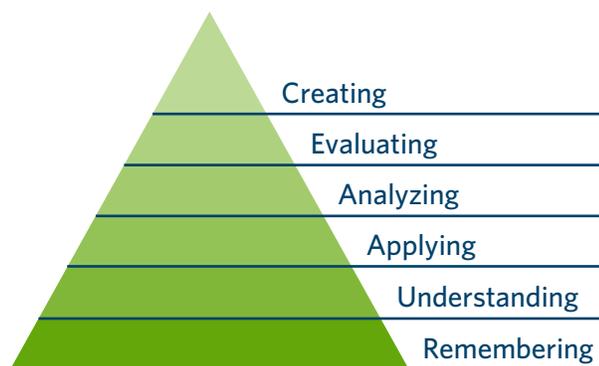
Era	Standard
3 - Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)	<b>Standard 2C:</b> The student understands the Revolution's effects on different social groups.

## UCLA National Standards for History: Historical Thinking Standards

Standard	Description
1 - Chronological Thinking	<b>Distinguish between past, present, and future time.</b> Students will evaluate changes in population from the 1790 to the 1800 Census.
2 - Historical Comprehension	<b>Draw upon data in historical maps.</b> Students will create and use a historical map to make comparisons and draw conclusions about population.  <b>Utilize visual and mathematical data.</b> Students will use data tables to calculate population data, from which they will illustrate comparisons and draw conclusions.
4 - Historical Research Capabilities	<b>Employ quantitative analysis.</b> Students will examine where free and enslaved people resided in 1790 and 1800.

## Bloom's Taxonomy

Students will **analyze** data from the 1790 and 1800 Censuses and, using those data, evaluate population patterns, trends, and density in a young United States.



## Teacher Notes

### Before the Activity

Students should have a basic understanding of the following ideas and concepts:

- Climate differences — specifically that southern plantation owners believed that enslaving people was necessary for their primarily agricultural economy
- Locations of states east of the Mississippi River
- Locations of the first 13 states

Teachers should remind students that Vermont and Kentucky were not established as states in 1790. For purposes of counting state populations in **Item 1: Summative Data From 1790 Census**, however, students should group Kentucky's numbers with Virginia's as the census indicates. Also, explain to students that Maine was part of Massachusetts in 1790 and 1800.

Teachers should also explain to students that both the 1790 and 1800 Censuses counted enslaved people in every state. However, teachers should emphasize in the discussion that geographic and climate differences between the northern and southern states led to slavery becoming a primarily southern institution.

In addition, teachers should explain that, in this activity, the following states qualify as:

- Northern
  - Connecticut
  - Delaware
  - Massachusetts/Maine
  - New Hampshire
  - New Jersey
  - New York
  - Pennsylvania
  - Rhode Island
  - Vermont (in 1800)
- Southern
  - Georgia
  - Kentucky (in 1800)
  - Maryland
  - North Carolina
  - South Carolina
  - Virginia

## During the Activity

Teachers should prompt students to start by examining **Item 1: Summative Data From 1790 Census**. They should clarify for students that the second column header says, “Free white Males of fifteen years and upwards, including heads of families.” Teachers should consider allowing students to work in pairs, as data will need to be examined carefully.

## After the Activity

Teachers should lead a whole-class discussion on findings drawn from the data. This instructor-led discussion may aid students’ understanding.

Class discussions and/or grading of the activity should address the outcomes of the activity — in this case, understanding the data.

## Extension Idea

Teachers could use other Statistics in Schools activities about similar topics to build on this activity.

## Student Activity

Printable student versions are available [here](#).

## Student Learning Objectives

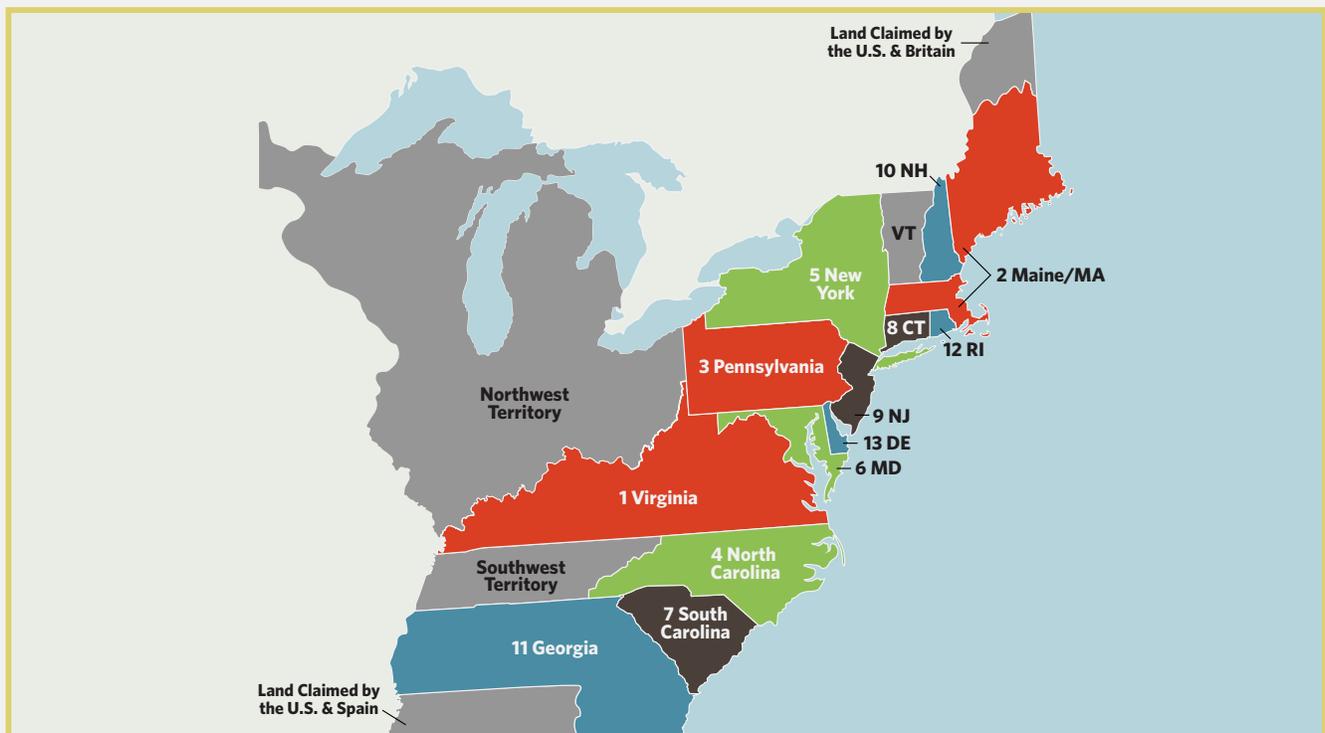
- I will be able to read and interpret data sets and formulate conclusions.
- I will be able to compare the populations of states to make determinations about climate, soil, and geographic size.

1. Using colored pencils and the provided documents — **Item 1: Summative Data From 1790 Census** and **Item 3: Blank Map, 1790** — color the original 13 states on your blank map. Remember: Kentucky and Vermont were not established as states in 1790, and Maine was part of Massachusetts. Follow these instructions:

- In **red**, color the states with the first, second, and third highest populations.
- In **green**, color the states with the fourth, fifth, and sixth highest populations.
- In **brown**, color the states with the seventh, eighth, and ninth highest populations.
- In **blue**, color the states with the four lowest population totals.

When you're done, use a regular pencil to write a number — from 1 to 13, with 1 being the largest population and 13 being the smallest — on each state to indicate that state's population rank.

**Final assignments should look similar to the map below:**



2. Summarize your findings about the populations of the original 13 states in 1790.
  - **Other than Georgia, the states that were smallest in size had the smallest populations.**
  - **Though small in size, Massachusetts (including Maine), New Jersey, and Connecticut had relatively large populations; therefore, they were densely populated and rooted in trade — not farming.**
  - **The national population was somewhat balanced between northern and southern states; however, the southern states had the largest populations.**
3. What conclusions can you draw about how slavery affected the populations of southern and northern states?
  - **Virginia had the largest number of enslaved people as well as the largest population.**
  - **Only one state, Massachusetts (including Maine), had no enslaved people, yet it had the second-highest population.**
  - **Few enslaved people contributed to the total population in the North.**
  - **The population of enslaved people significantly increased the total population in the South. For example, nearly half of South Carolina's population was enslaved.**
4. Why might the southern states have had larger populations of enslaved people than the northern states?

**Student answers will vary. Sample answers include:**

  - **Better climate for farming and a longer growing season**
  - **Better soil**
  - **Larger land area, which means larger farms and the need for more workers**
5. Examine **Item 2: Summative Data From 1800 Census**. Which three states, including their districts and returns, had the largest populations? (Remember: Kentucky and Vermont are now recognized as states, so take their numbers into account.) List these states in order of population, from largest to smallest. Did these states also have the largest populations in 1790?
  - **Virginia (886,149, when you combine its three districts)**
  - **Pennsylvania (602,545, when you combine its two districts)**
  - **New York (586,050, when you add in its supplemental return)**

**Virginia had the largest population in both 1790 and 1800, according to census data. In 1800, Pennsylvania had the second-largest population, and New York had the third-largest. Massachusetts moved out of the top three by 1800.**
6. How many states saw their populations increase from 1790 to 1800? Which state's population grew the least?

**All states saw population increases between 1790 and 1800. The population that grew the least, by only 297 people, was that of Rhode Island.**
7. Of the southern states, which saw the largest increase of enslaved people from 1790 to 1800?

**Virginia saw the largest increase of enslaved people between 1790 and 1800 — 54,341.**

8. Of the southern states, which one saw its population of enslaved people stay roughly the same from 1790 to 1800? Did this state's total population increase?

**From 1790 to 1800, Maryland's enslaved population changed very little. In 1790, its enslaved population was 103,036; in 1800, it was 103,312. Maryland's total population increased only slightly from 1790 to 1800.**

9. According to the 1790 Census, Massachusetts (including Maine) was the only state without an enslaved population. Which other state did not have an enslaved population in 1800?

**Massachusetts (including Maine) did not have an enslaved population in either census year. According to census data, Vermont did not have an enslaved population in 1800.**

10. Examine the categories in **Item 1: Summative Data From 1790 Census** and **Item 2: Summative Data From 1800 Census**. What do these categories communicate about American society in the late 18th and early 19th centuries?

**The 1790 Census had more categories for men than for women. The 1800 Census had the same categories for both genders. This information can be used as a springboard to discuss how men and women were counted — and treated — differently in 1790 and 1800.**

Item 1: Summative Data From 1790 Census

FIRST CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.

Population of the United States as returned at the First Census, by states: 1790.

DISTRICT.	Free white males of 16 years and upward, including heads of families.	Free white males under 16 years.	Free white females, including heads of families.	All other free persons.	Slaves.	Total.
Vermont.....	22,435	22,328	40,505	255	116	86,539
New Hampshire.....	36,086	34,861	70,150	630	158	141,595
Maine.....	24,384	24,748	46,870	538	None.	96,540
Massachusetts.....	95,453	87,288	190,582	5,463	None.	378,787
Rhode Island.....	16,019	15,789	32,632	3,407	948	68,235
Connecticut.....	60,523	54,403	117,448	2,808	2,764	237,946
New York.....	87,700	78,122	182,320	4,654	21,324	340,120
New Jersey.....	45,251	41,416	83,257	2,762	11,323	184,139
Pennsylvania.....	117,783	109,748	235,293	6,557	8,587	459,973
Delaware.....	11,783	10,748	20,591	3,649	8,587	45,937
Maryland.....	55,915	51,339	101,395	3,649	103,682	319,798
Virginia.....	109,936	116,135	215,046	12,866	292,627	747,610
Kentucky.....	15,154	17,037	28,923	12,114	13,430	73,677
North Carolina.....	69,988	77,506	140,710	4,875	100,572	393,751
South Carolina.....	35,576	37,722	66,880	1,801	107,094	249,073
Georgia.....	13,103	14,044	25,739	1,398	28,264	67,594
Total number of inhabitants of the United States exclusive of S. Western and N. territory.....	807,064	791,850	1,541,263	59,150	694,280	3,893,635
S. W. territory.....	6,271	10,277	15,365	361	3,417	35,691
N. ".....						

1 The census of 1790, published in 1791, reports 16 slaves in Vermont. Subsequently, and up to 1860, the number is given as 17. An examination of the original manuscript returns shows that there never were any slaves in Vermont. The original error occurred in preparing the results for publication, when 16 persons, returned as "Free colored," were classified as "Slave."  
 2 Corrected figures are 85,429, or 114 less than figures published in 1790, due to an error of addition in the returns for each of the towns of Fairfield, Milton, Shelburne, and Vergennes, in the county of Chittenden; Brookfield, Newbury, Randolph, and Stratford, in the county of Orange; Casseton, Charendon, Hubbardton, Poultney, Rutland, and Westford, in the county of Rutland; Dummerston, Guilford, Halifax, and Westminister, in the county of Windham; and Woodstock, in the county of Windsor.

[www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1790/heads\\_of\\_families/connecticut/1790b-02.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1790/heads_of_families/connecticut/1790b-02.pdf)

To view the PDF electronically, click on the link above and go to Page 8.

Item 2: Summative Data From 1800 Census

ENUMERATION of Persons in the several DISTRICTS of the UNITED STATES.

Names of Districts.	FREE WHITE MALES.					FREE WHITE FEMALES.					all other free persons except Indians not taxed.	SLAVES.	TOTAL.
	Under 10 years of age.	Of 10 and under 16.	Of 16 and under 20, including heads of families.	Of 20 and under 45, including heads of families.	Of 45 and upwards, including heads of families.	Under 10 years of age.	Of 10 and under 16.	Of 16 and under 20, including heads of families.	Of 20 and under 45, including heads of families.	Of 45 and upwards, including heads of families.			
New-Hampshire	30,694	14,881	16,379	17,589	11,715	29,871	14,193	17,153	18,381	12,142	852	8	183,858
Massachusetts	63,646	32,507	37,905	39,729	31,348	60,920	30,674	40,491	43,833	35,340	6,452	—	422,845
Maine	27,970	12,305	12,900	15,318	8,339	26,899	11,338	13,295	14,496	8,041	818	—	151,719
Connecticut	37,946	19,408	21,683	23,180	18,976	35,736	18,218	23,561	25,186	20,827	5,330	951	251,002
Vermont	29,420	12,046	13,242	16,544	8,076	28,272	11,366	12,606	15,287	7,049	557	—	154,465
Rhode-Island	9,945	5,352	5,889	5,785	4,887	9,524	5,026	6,463	6,919	5,648	3,304	380	69,122
New-York	83,161	36,953	40,045	52,454	25,497	79,154	32,822	39,086	47,710	23,161	8,573	15,602	484,065
Supplemental return for New-York state	16,936	7,320	9,230	9,140	6,358	16,319	6,649	9,030	8,701	5,490	1,801	5,011	101,985
New-Jersey	33,900	15,859	16,301	19,956	12,629	32,622	14,827	17,018	19,533	11,600	4,402	12,422	211,149
Eastern district of Pennsylvania	52,767	24,438	29,393	33,864	20,824	51,176	23,427	29,879	30,892	19,329	11,253	557	327,979
Western district of Pennsylvania	50,459	21,623	24,369	25,469	17,761	43,448	20,362	24,095	22,954	14,066	3,311	1,149	274,566
Delaware	8,250	4,437	5,121	5,012	2,213	7,628	4,277	5,543	4,981	2,390	8,268	6,153	64,273
Maryland, inclusive of Washington county, in Columbia	33,520	16,581	20,560	22,169	12,617	22,463	15,718	21,506	20,363	11,240	18,646	102,465	317,348
Additional return for Baltimore county	567	226	318	343	249	571	222	375	318	199	41	847	4,276
Eastern district of Virginia	57,837	25,998	32,444	34,588	19,087	54,597	25,469	34,807	32,641	18,821	18,194	322,199	676,682
District of Columbia, in Virginia	889	320	483	557	221	670	315	479	473	189	385	1,172	5,949
Western District of Virginia	34,601	14,502	16,264	15,674	11,134	32,726	13,366	15,923	8,632	15,169	1,930	23,597	203,518
North-Carolina	63,118	27,073	31,560	31,209	18,688	59,074	25,874	32,989	30,665	17,514	7,043	133,296	478,103
South-Carolina	37,411	16,156	17,761	19,344	10,244	34,664	15,857	18,145	17,236	9,437	3,185	146,151	345,591
Georgia	19,841	8,469	9,787	10,914	4,957	18,407	7,914	9,243	8,835	3,894	1,919	59,699	162,686
Kentucky	37,274	14,045	15,705	17,699	9,238	34,949	13,433	15,524	14,934	7,075	741	40,343	220,959
Territory N. W. river Ohio	9,362	3,647	4,656	4,833	1,955	8,644	3,353	3,861	3,342	1,395	337	—	45,365
Indiana territory	854	347	466	645	262	791	280	424	393	115	163	135	*5,641
Mississippi territory	999	356	482	780	290	953	376	352	426	165	182	3,489	8,850
† Tennessee	19,227	7,194	8,282	8,352	4,125	18,450	7,042	8,554	6,992	3,491	309	875,626	5,172,312
† Maryland, corrected	36,751	17,743	21,929	23,553	13,712	34,705	16,787	22,915	21,725	12,180	19,987	107,707	349,692

\* Persons 766 added to the particular items of this return.  
 † This return has been received since the communication of the above Aggregate to Congress.  
 ‡ This return has also been since received, and is stated by the Marshal to be a more correct return than the first, (above.)

[www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1800/1800-returns.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1800/1800-returns.pdf)

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Item 3: Blank Map, 1790

