

The Words We Use

GRADES:

4th through 12th (refer to suggested modifications in the Outline)

DURATION:

It will vary depending on the age group, and the number of activities you decide to do.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Children will reflect on how identity is important for social groups and individuals;
- Children will learn that identity terminology is fluid and changes over time;
- Children will recognize, identify and empathize with the feelings and perspective of others;
- Children will understand how the population of the United States has changed over time, becoming more diverse (e.g., racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious).

MATERIALS:

Adult:

- Access to internet
- Access to the following pages: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2015/11/measuring-race-and-ethnicity-across-the-decades-1790-2010.html> and https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/race/MREAD_1790_2010.html. Please read the information on the former and familiarize yourself if the latter before the class.
- Access to short videos at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/your-stories/conversations-on-race>. Please take some time to watch the videos. You can choose what to use, or you can let your students explore them, but we highly recommend the following: "A conversation about growing up black"; "A conversation with White People on Race"; "A conversation with Asian-Americans on Race"; "A conversation with Latinos on Race"; and "A conversation with Native Americans on Race".

Child:

- Access to internet
- Access to the Census pages (links above)
- Access to videos selected by the adult
- Worksheet, parts 1 and 2. There's a version for grades 4th through 6th and another for grades 8th through 12th.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Census Bureau's mission is to serve as the nation's leading provider of quality data about its people and economy, and the Census Bureau operates under [Title 13 and Title 26](#) of the U.S. Code. The Bureau's goal is to provide the best mix of timeliness, relevancy, quality and cost for the data we collect and services we provide. The collect information with American Community Survey (ACS), Census of Government, Decennial Census of Population and Housing, Economic Census and other surveys and programs.



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Their data is used to:

- Determine the distribution of Congressional seats to states and to define legislature districts, school district assignment areas and other important functional areas of government.
- Make planning decisions about community services such as where to provide services for the elderly, where to build new roads and schools, where to locate job training centers, etc.
- Distribute more than \$675 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year
- Inform how states and communities allocate funding for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, transportation and more.
- Provide Age Search information on qualifying for Social Security and other retirement benefits, passport applications, relationship in settling estates, [family history](#) or a [historical topic](#).

ACTIVITY OUTLINE:

Step 1 – Introduce the activity by providing a brief explanation about the census (refer to Background Information section) or let the children read the information by themselves. Now distribute the grade-appropriate student worksheet. Show them the Census interactive infographic. Provide them with background information you gathered from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2015/11/measuring-race-and-ethnicity-across-the-decades-1790-2010.html>. Either lead a discussion on the essential questions in the worksheet's first page, or let the children complete it by themselves. If you chose the latter, discuss their findings once they are done.

Step 2 – Now ask them about why do they think that these labels and terminology matter? Why do people care about them? Let them watch the videos on race, and let them complete the second part of the worksheet. Talk to them about it, and encourage them to share their thoughts. To finalize the activity, let the children write an essay or create a video recording their thoughts on why the words we use to identify ourselves and others matter.

Note: For grades 7th through 12th, children are encouraged to research historical events that might be associated to the changes they observed in the Census' interactive infographic. Depending on the grade, they might have already explored major conflicts and political events, and civil right movements. Some children grade 7th through 10th will need a little more guidance for their research, and might need more time as well. You can also extend the activity by having them complete the second page of the worksheet for all races and ethnicities shown in the infographic.

ONE MORE THING:

Let us know how it went! Tag us on social media or email us at education@ohiohistory.org.



THE WORDS WE USE MATTER
STUDENT WORKSHEET – PART 1

Your name: _____

General Info

1.) What does this infographic show?

2.) Give a few examples of changes that the infographic show.

3.) For the examples you chose and according to the infographic, what are the reasons for the change?

Your Impressions

Overall, why do you think the Census has changed the words they use to refer to different people?



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Changes and History

Now choose a race or ethnicity displayed in the infographic and list all the changes in the table below (see example on the bottom of the page). Then look for more information in the infographic and research possible historical events that could be the cause for the change:

Chosen Race or Ethnicity:		Date when it first appears in the Census:
Date of first change:	Name after change:	Historical Reason for the change:
Date of second change:	Name after change:	Historical Reason for the change:
Date of third change:	Name after change:	Historical Reason for the change:
Date of fourth change:	Name after change:	Historical Reason for the change:
Date of fifth change:	Name after change:	Historical Reason for the change:
Date of sixth change:	Name after change:	Historical Reason for the change:
Chosen Race or Ethnicity: <u>Free White Females and Males</u>		Date when it first appears in the Census: <u>1790</u>
Date of first change:	Name after change:	Historical Reason for the change:
<u>1850</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>The abolitionist movement influences the removal of terms such as “free” or “slave”</u>



THE WORDS WE USE MATTER

WORKSHEET – PART 2

Your name: _____

Watch the provided videos, reflect and complete the table below:

<p>What is identity?</p>	<p>Is identity connected to race or ethnicity? Why?</p>
<p>How do you identify yourself? Who/What are you?</p>	<p>Do you think that the way we refer to ourselves or others matters? Why?</p>

