

Dialogue Practice: Talk to a Census Enumerator

The Ramirez family is at home. Martin is cooking dinner. Veronica is helping Carmen with homework.

Knock, Knock, Knock at the door

Carmen: I'll get it! *(She opens the door.)*

Dan Lee: Hello. My name is Dan Lee. I am a census worker. Here's my ID *(Dan shows his ID to Carmen. Her father, Martin, comes to the door and looks at Dan's ID).*

Martin: Hello, how can I help you?

Dan Lee: Good evening. My name is Dan Lee and I'm talking with people about the Census. Did you receive an email or a letter about the Census last month?

Martin: Yes, I did. I wasn't sure if I needed to fill it out. I'm not a citizen.

Dan Lee: Oh yes! That form goes to every residence in the United States. We want everyone to participate in the Census so that we can count how many people actually live here. It's OK that you aren't a citizen. It's still important to count you.

Martin: I see. But I don't have the letter or email anymore.

Dan Lee: No problem. I can ask you the questions right now and enter the information electronically.

Martin: Well, to be honest, I'm a little worried about giving you information about my family. We don't want any problems.

Dan Lee: I understand your concern. But you don't have to worry. Your information is protected by law. The Census Bureau cannot share your information with any other person or government agency.

Martin: Okay, but why do you need to know information about my family?

Dan Lee: Good question! The number of people in a city helps the government decide how to spend money. For example, we need to know how many schools are needed or if we need more buses or libraries. Asking questions about your family helps the government understand more about the people who live in this community, and how many there are.

Martin: OK. How long will this take?

Dan Lee: Only about 10-15 minutes. There are questions about each person in your house. Let's begin. How many people were living here on April 1, 2020?

Comprehension Questions: Answer the questions with your partner.

1. What is Dan's job?
2. Why didn't Martin fill out the census form before Dan came to the house?
3. Why is Martin worried?
4. What is the census important? What reasons does Dan give?
5. Does Martin and his family need to be counted in the census?
6. How does the Ramirez family do the census? Online? Paper form? In person? Over the phone?
7. Who will be "Person 1" on the census for the Ramirez family?

Continue reading their conversation: Read the conversation quietly then out loud with your partner.

Dan Lee: How many people were living or staying in this house on April 1, 2020?

Martin: Just 3 of us, me, my wife and my daughter.

Dan Lee: Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2020 that you didn't include in Question 1? Like babies or roommates?

Martin: No.

Dan Lee: Is this apartment owned by you with a mortgage, or loan, owned by you free and clear, rented or occupied without payment?

Martin: We rent this apartment.

Dan Lee: What is your ttttllllnnnnnnnn?

Martin: I didn't understand. Please repeat that.

Dan Lee: What is your telephone number?

Martin: 408 - 555 - 2567

Dan Lee: Please provide information for each person living here. If there is someone living here who pays the rent or owns this residence, start by listing him or her as Person 1. What is Person 1's first and last name?

Martin: My name is Martin Ramirez.

Dan Lee: What is Person 1's sex?

Martin: I am male.

Dan Lee: What is Person 1's age and date of birth?

Martin: I am 38 years old. My birthday is November 16, 1981.

Dan Lee: Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

Martin: Yes, my family is from Mexico.

Dan Lee: What is Person 1's race? White? Black or African American? Asian? Native Alaskan or some other race?

Martin: On forms I mark White as my race.

Dan Lee: Okay, thank you. Let's move on to Person 2.

Review: What Happened First?

Cut the following sentences into strips and ask students to put them in order, according to the dialogue. Or have students number them in order.

Martin checked Dan's ID badge.
Dan said that it's important for everyone to fill out the Census form.
Martin was worried about giving information to the government about his family.
Dan identified himself and explained that he was talking to people about the Census.
Martin thought he didn't need to participate in the Census because he isn't a citizen.
Dan explained that counting everyone in the Census helps the government decide how to spend money for things like schools and libraries.
Dan told Martin that it is illegal to share Census information with other agencies.
Martin doesn't understand what Dan said. Martin asks Dan to repeat his question.
Dan asks Martin the census questions.
Carmen opened the door. 1

Read the conversation with your partner.

- a. Read the entire conversation 2 times. Read Dan's part and Martin's part.
- b. Read the conversation with your partner again, but use your information. Don't use Martin Ramirez's answers, use *your* answers.