The Census and Political Representation

Data from the census is used in different ways. In this section, we will look at how the census is used to determine the number of political representatives of different communities.

1) Consider the following situation.

   A school district is hiring 20 teachers to teach at three different schools. Each teacher can work at one school only.

   School A: 100 students

   School B: 250 students

   School C: 150 students

   How many teachers should go to each school? Explain your thinking below.

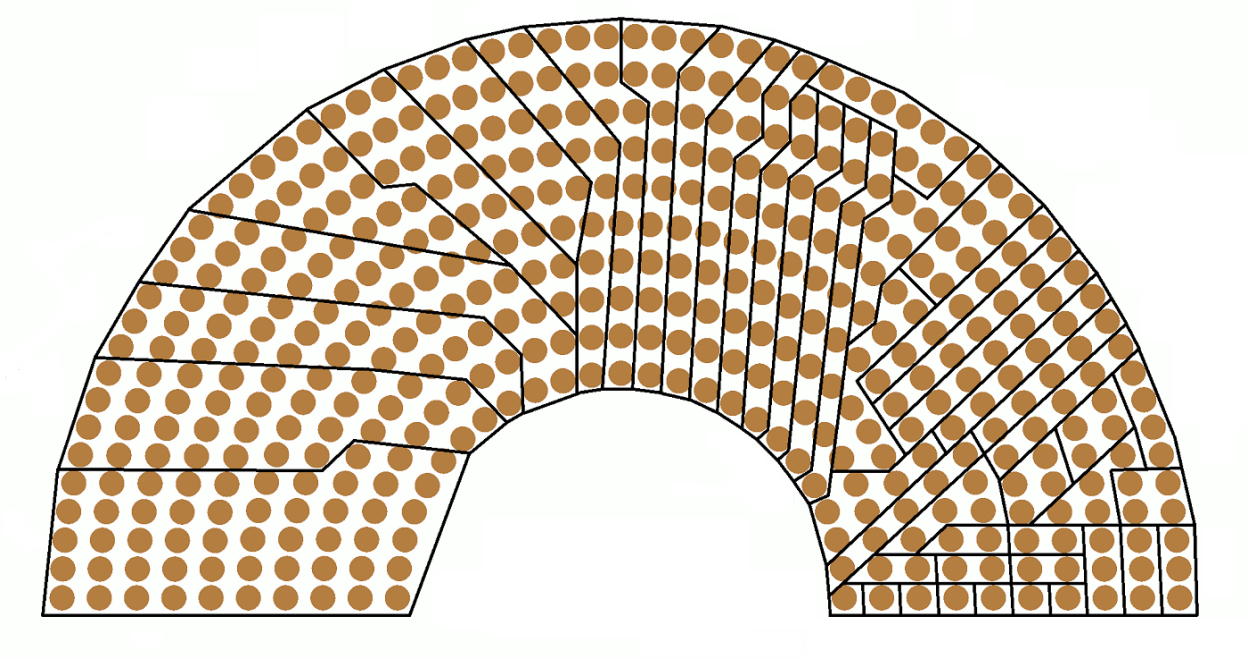
2) How many students will be with each teacher?

   A. 20

   B. 25

   C. 30

   D. 50



3) What do you notice?

The federal government is split into three branches: legislative, judicial, and executive. Congress represents the legislative branch, which has two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives. They write all federal laws, declare war, regulate business, and control taxes and the federal budget. Federal judges, federal courts, and the Supreme Court make up the judicial branch, whose responsibility is to interpret laws. The president, advisors, departments and agencies are part of the executive branch, which enforces federal laws.

There are 100 senators in the Senate. Each state has exactly two senators, no matter how many people live in the state. This means that Wyoming, a state with a low population, has the same number of senators as California, a state with a high population.

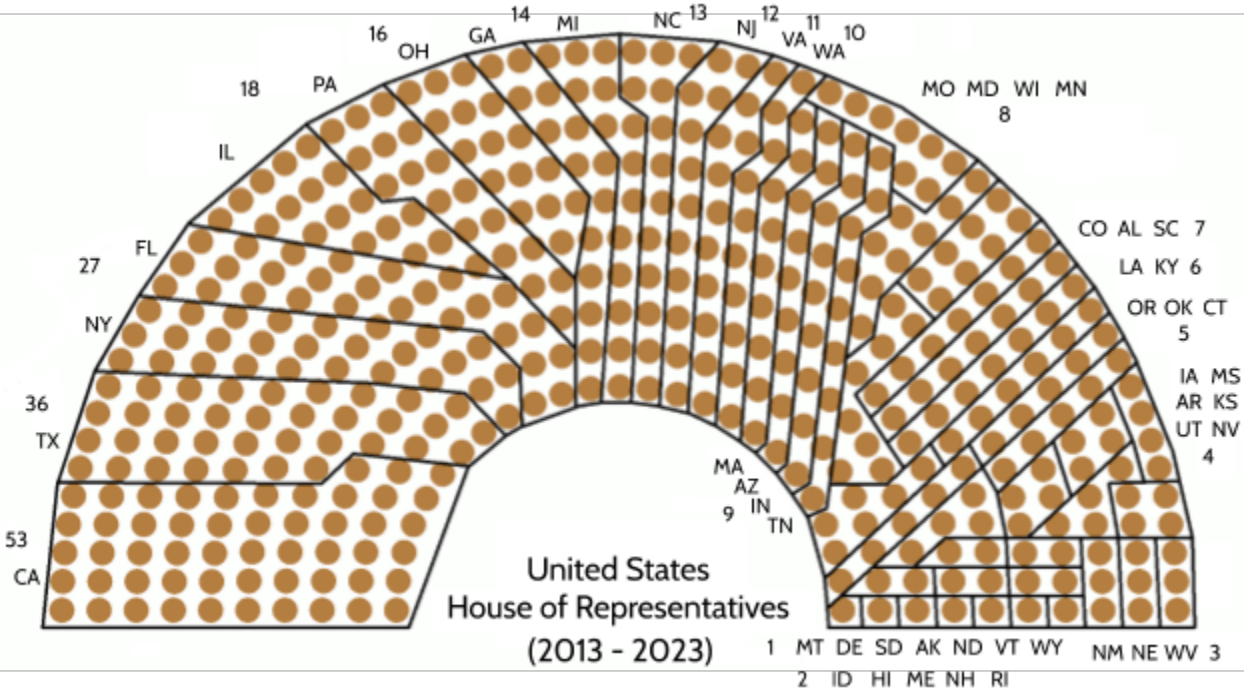
In the House of Representatives, the number of representatives for each state is based on its population, which is determined by the census. When the House of Representatives makes a decision about a law, a budget, taxes, or a war, all the representatives vote. States with more representatives have more power than states with fewer representatives.

The United States House of Representatives in 2003

4) Name 2 states that you think probably have a lot of representatives.

5) Name 2 states that you think probably don't have many representatives.

Look over the diagram and table on the next two pages.



State	Census 2000		Census 2010	
	Population	Number of Representatives	Population	Number of Representatives
Alabama	4,447,100	7	4,779,736	7
Alaska	626,932	1	710,231	1
Arizona	5,130,632	8	6,392,017	9
Arkansas	2,673,400	4	2,915,918	4
California	33,871,648	53	37,253,956	53
Colorado	4,301,261	7	5,029,196	7
Connecticut	3,405,565	5	3,574,097	5
Delaware	783,600	1	897,934	1
Florida	15,982,378	25	18,801,310	27
Georgia	8,186,453	13	9,687,653	14
Hawaii	1,211,537	2	1,360,301	2
Idaho	1,293,953	2	1,567,582	2
Illinois	12,419,293	19	12,830,632	18
Indiana	6,080,485	9	6,483,802	9
Iowa	2,926,324	5	3,046,355	4
Kansas	2,688,418	4	2,853,118	4
Kentucky	4,041,769	6	4,339,367	6
Louisiana	4,468,976	7	4,533,372	6

	Census 2000		Census 2010	
State	**Population**	**Number of Representatives**	**Population**	**Number of Representatives**
Maine	1,274,923	2	1,328,361	2
Maryland	5,296,486	8	5,773,552	8
Massachusetts	6,349,097	10	6,547,629	9
Michigan	9,938,444	15	9,883,640	14
Minnesota	4,919,479	8	5,303,925	8
Mississippi	2,844,658	4	2,967,297	4
Missouri	5,595,211	9	5,988,927	8
Montana	902,195	1	989,415	1
Nebraska	1,711,263	3	1,826,341	3
Nevada	1,998,257	3	2,700,551	4
New Hampshire	1,235,786	2	1,316,470	2
New Jersey	8,414,350	13	8,791,894	12
New Mexico	1,819,046	3	2,059,179	3
New York	18,976,457	29	19,378,102	27
North Carolina	8,049,313	13	9,535,483	13
North Dakota	642,200	1	672,591	1
Ohio	11,353,140	18	11,536,504	16
Oklahoma	3,450,654	5	3,751,351	5
Oregon	3,421,399	5	3,831,074	5
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	19	12,702,379	18
Rhode Island	1,048,319	2	1,052,567	2
South Carolina	4,012,012	6	4,625,364	7
South Dakota	754,844	1	814,180	1
Tennessee	5,689,283	9	6,346,105	9
Texas	20,851,820	32	25,145,561	36
Utah	2,233,169	3	2,763,885	4
Vermont	608,827	1	625,741	1
Virginia	7,078,515	11	8,001,024	11
Washington	5,894,121	9	6,724,540	10
West Virginia	1,808,344	3	1,852,994	3
Wisconsin	5,363,675	8	5,686,986	8
Wyoming	493,782	1	563,626	1
	280,849,847	**435**	**308,143,815**	**435**

6) Write a true statement based on evidence in the diagram and table above.

Answer the next two questions using the diagram and table on the previous page.

7) Which six states had the most representatives in 2000?

8) Which six states have the most representatives in 2010?

After each census, the total number of representatives are divided up between the states, based on their new populations. This process is called *apportionment*, because each state gets their *portion* of political representation. Apportionment is the process of sharing representation based on population, which means the more population you have, the more representation you have.

9) Using the map and the population and representation table above, describe three changes that happened as a result of the 2010 census.

Let's go back to the question of sharing 20 teachers with three schools. This is an *apportionment*—giving a portion of the total number of teachers to each school based on their student population. The table below is one way to solve the problem.

Since there are 20 teachers and 500 total students, we know there are 25 students per teacher ($500\ students \div 20\ teachers = 25\ students/teacher$). We can then see how many teachers should be at each school, so that there is one teacher for every 25 students.

Fill in the missing blanks.

	Number of Students	**Calculation**	**Number of Teachers**
School A	100	100 ÷ 25 = 4	4
School B	250		10
School C	150		
Total	**500**		**20**

Determining the number of political representatives for each state is based on each state's population, but there are some decisions you will have to make that are different from the example above.

10) A small country needs to apportion 37 representatives to three different states.

State	Population
D	150,000
E	100,000
F	10,000

How many representatives should each state have? Make sure all the representatives are apportioned (assigned to a state).

Explain your thinking below.