

Detroit's Changing Numbers

Read census data to trace population change in one American city.

SS.8.G.4.1 "Interpret population growth and other demographic data for any given place in the United States throughout its history."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each population number or change in the passage and table, then circle words that explain why Detroit's population grew or declined.

Detroit Through Census Counts

- ① Detroit, Michigan, shows how a city's population can change sharply over time. Census counts record how many people lived within the city limits on a specific date. The data below compare four federal census years. A population total alone does not explain change, but comparing totals helps historians ask what drew people to Detroit or led them away.

DETROIT POPULATION, U.S. CENSUS COUNTS

Census Year	Population	Change Since Earlier Year Shown
1900	285,704	Not shown
1950	1,849,568	+1,563,864
2000	951,270	-898,298
2020	639,111	-312,159

- ② From 1900 to 1950, Detroit gained more than 1.5 million residents. Expanding automobile factories offered jobs, attracting workers from other parts of the United States and immigrants from abroad. During the Great Migration, many African American families moved from the South to northern industrial cities, including Detroit. These movements changed both the city's size and the backgrounds of its residents.
- ③ After 1950, Detroit's total fell in each later census shown. Many residents moved to nearby suburbs, while factory job losses and other economic changes reduced opportunities in the city. Demographic data can include age, race, birthplace, and household size, not just population. Historians should use several kinds of evidence before deciding why a population changed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 During which interval shown did Detroit have its largest population change? State whether it was growth or decline and give the number of people.

2 What population pattern do the 1950, 2000, and 2020 census counts show?

3 Use the passage to explain one reason Detroit's population grew before 1950.

4 Why is a population total not enough to explain a city's history? Name one other type of demographic data historians could study.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences that make a data-based claim about Detroit's population history. Include one period of growth and one period of decline with numbers from the table, explain one factor from the passage that could relate to either change, and name one additional demographic measure you would investigate.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each population number or change in the passage and table, then circle words that explain why Detroit's population grew or declined. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	During which interval shown did Detroit have its largest population change? State whether it was growth or decline and give the number of people.	From 1900 to 1950, Detroit grew by 1,563,864 people.
2	What population pattern do the 1950, 2000, and 2020 census counts show?	Detroit's population declined after 1950. It fell from 1,849,568 in 1950 to 951,270 in 2000 and 639,111 in 2020.
3	Use the passage to explain one reason Detroit's population grew before 1950.	Expanding automobile factories provided jobs and attracted workers. The Great Migration also brought many African American families from the South to Detroit.
4	Why is a population total not enough to explain a city's history? Name one other type of demographic data historians could study.	A population total shows how many people lived in a place but not why the population changed or who lived there. Historians could study age, race, birthplace, or household size.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Detroit grew from 285,704 people in 1900 to 1,849,568 in 1950, an increase of 1,563,864. It then declined from 1,849,568 in 1950 to 639,111 in 2020, and moves to suburbs could have contributed. To investigate the changes further, I would compare residents' ages in each census.

Accept equivalent calculations and claims that accurately use table evidence. For the open response, require exactly three sentences, accurate growth and decline data, one passage-based factor, and one valid demographic measure.