Counted in Indiana

How population counts shape representation and public services

IS.2.7 "Explain how census data affects the people of Indiana, legislative districts, and the allocation of federal dollars to state and local governments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Number one effect of census data on residents 1, one effect on legislative districts 2, and one effect on federal funding 3.

What a Count Can Change

1 Picture a crowded apartment building in an Indiana city. Two families share one unit, and a baby was born last month. The census aims to count everyone living there, including the baby, whether or not they can vote. Every ten years, the federal government counts people living in each state and community. If residents are missed, the official count may show fewer people than actually live nearby. That gap can hide demand for services such as buses or health clinics. A complete count gives officials a more accurate picture of the people their decisions affect.

2 Population counts also shape political representation. After each census, the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are divided among states according to population. If Indiana's share of the nation's population changes, its number of House seats may change. Indiana then redraws its U.S. House districts and state legislative districts using new population data. District lines must account for population shifts so representation is more nearly equal across districts. A growing neighborhood might be moved into a different district, changing which elected officials represent its residents. The count does not decide which candidate wins an election.

3 Census information also affects money sent from the federal government to Indiana and its local governments. Some federal programs use population counts or census-based estimates in formulas that help allocate funds for services such as health care, roads, or schools. The formulas differ, so one additional person does not guarantee a fixed number of dollars for a town. If a community is undercounted, a funding formula may reflect less need than residents actually have. Accurate counts help officials plan where services are needed, while lawmakers and agencies still make separate choices about how to spend many of the dollars they receive.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. If the baby in the apartment building is missed, how could that affect local planning?

2. How might a change in Indiana's share of the national population affect its representation in Congress?

3. How could a growing neighborhood's census count change who represents its residents in Indiana's legislature?

4. How could an undercount affect federal funding for an Indiana community, and why is the effect not a fixed dollar amount per missed person?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine that several new apartment buildings open in an Indiana neighborhood before the next census. In four or five sentences, explain how counting their residents could affect local needs, legislative districts, and federal funding, including one reason the outcome is not guaranteed.

ANSWER KEY

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Number one effect of census data on residents 1, one effect on legislative districts 2, and one effect on federal funding 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	If the baby in the apartment building is missed, how could that affect local planning?	**The count would show fewer residents than actually live there, which could hide demand for services.**
2	How might a change in Indiana's share of the national population affect its representation in Congress?	**Indiana's number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives may change because seats are divided among states according to population.**
3	How could a growing neighborhood's census count change who represents its residents in Indiana's legislature?	**New population data can lead Indiana to redraw state legislative districts. The neighborhood might move into a different district with a different elected representative.**
4	How could an undercount affect federal funding for an Indiana community, and why is the effect not a fixed dollar amount per missed person?	**A funding formula may reflect less need than the community has. Federal programs use different formulas, so each missed person does not equal a fixed dollar amount.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Counting the new residents would give local officials a clearer picture of demand for services near the apartments. The added population could affect where Indiana draws state legislative district lines. If the neighborhood moves into another district, different elected officials would represent its residents. The count could also affect federal funding formulas that use population data. It would not guarantee a set amount of new money because federal programs use different formulas.

Accept answers that accurately trace census data to community needs, district boundaries, or funding formulas. Students should describe possible effects without claiming that one added resident guarantees a district change or a fixed payment.