

Count the Big Idea

Identify main ideas and details in a civic information text.

4.21.B “incorporate main and supporting ideas in verbal and written communication;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the one sentence in each paragraph that states the main idea. Then number two supporting details in that paragraph that explain or prove the main idea.

Why the Census Matters

- ① Every ten years, the United States Census counts the people living in the country. The count happens on April 1 in years that end in zero. Census workers aim to count every resident, including children and people who are not citizens. People can answer online, by mail, or by phone. These responses help create a picture of the nation's population.
- ② Census results help communities plan important public services. Local leaders use population numbers when they plan for schools, roads, and emergency services. The data can show where the number of children or older adults has changed. Government agencies also use census information when they distribute some federal funds to states and communities. These uses connect the count to daily life.
- ③ The census also determines each state's share of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. After the count, states with more people may gain a seat, while states with fewer people may lose one. This process is called apportionment. Each state has two U.S. senators, so census results do not change the number of senators. Representation in the House is the census connection.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the main idea of paragraph 1? Write it in your own words.

2 List exactly two supporting details from paragraph 2 that explain how census results help communities.

3 What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

4 How does the detail that a state may gain a House seat after the count support the main idea of paragraph 3?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write three sentences about one way a public library helps a community. Your first sentence must state a main idea, and your next two sentences must give supporting details.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the one sentence in each paragraph that states the main idea. Then number two supporting details in that paragraph that explain or prove the main idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the main idea of paragraph 1? Write it in your own words.	The U.S. Census counts the people living in the United States every ten years.
2	List exactly two supporting details from paragraph 2 that explain how census results help communities.	Accept: Leaders use population numbers to plan schools, roads, and emergency services. The data can show where the number of children or older adults has changed.
3	What is the main idea of paragraph 3?	The census determines each state's share of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.
4	How does the detail that a state may gain a House seat after the count support the main idea of paragraph 3?	It shows that a state's population count can affect how many House seats the state receives.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Public libraries help communities by giving people access to information and learning. People can borrow books and use computers at many libraries. Libraries also offer programs where community members can learn new skills.

For Part 2, accept equivalent wording that correctly separates the central idea from details that explain it. For Your Turn, check that the first sentence is a clear main idea and that both remaining sentences are relevant supporting details.