

GC.11: The Census, Redistricting, Reapportionment, and Gerrymandering

Part 1: Understanding the Census

1. What is the Census?

- The U.S. Census is conducted every 10 years to count the population.
- The data determines funding, representation, and resource distribution.

Question:

- How does the Census impact communities and states?

2. Census Data in Action:

- Census data is used for reapportionment (redistributing House seats).
- Discuss challenges in ensuring an accurate count (e.g., undercounting certain populations).

Activity:

- Analyze a map showing population changes by state after the last Census. Predict which states might gain or lose Congressional seats.
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Part 2: Reapportionment and Redistricting

1. What is Reapportionment?

- Reapportionment adjusts the number of House seats each state receives based on population shifts.

Question:

- Why does reapportionment ensure fairness in representation?

2. What is Redistricting?

- Redistricting redraws district boundaries to reflect population changes.
- State legislatures or independent commissions typically handle this process.

Activity:

- Compare maps of Congressional districts before and after redistricting. Discuss how district boundaries can influence election outcomes.
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Part 3: Gerrymandering

1. What is Gerrymandering?

- Gerrymandering occurs when district lines are drawn to favor a political party, group, or individual.
- Types of gerrymandering:
 - **Partisan gerrymandering:** Favoring one political party.
 - **Racial gerrymandering:** Manipulating lines to dilute or concentrate the voting power of racial groups.

Question:

- Why is gerrymandering controversial? How does it affect democracy?

2. Spotting Gerrymandering:

- Look at examples of district maps with unusual shapes.
- Discuss why compact and contiguous districts are preferable.

Activity:

- Design your own fair district map for a hypothetical state with five districts.
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Part 4: The Role of *Baker v. Carr*

1. Background and Case Details

- *Baker v. Carr* (1962) addressed unequal representation in state legislative districts.
- The case argued that malapportioned districts violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

2. Supreme Court Decision

- The Court ruled that federal courts could review redistricting cases.
- Introduced the principle of "one person, one vote," ensuring districts are roughly equal in population.

Question:

- How did *Baker v. Carr* limit the impact of gerrymandering?

Activity:

- Write a paragraph explaining why "one person, one vote" is essential for fair representation.

Reflection Questions - Class Discussion after we finish

1. How does the Census ensure equal representation for states?
2. What challenges arise in redistricting to avoid gerrymandering?
3. How did *Baker v. Carr* empower the judiciary to address issues in redistricting?