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Narrative and Histories

## The 1921 Census: A Key Stage 2 Resource Pack for Schools

### Introduction

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This pack provides free resources for Key Stage 2 teachers in primary schools to explore the 1921 Census (through The National Archives), alongside the idea of what a census is with your pupils.

This resource uses activities centred around six learning objectives which link with the National Curriculum.

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#### The 1921 Census: the largest census release ever in England and Wales

On 19 June 1921, close to 38 million individuals in England and Wales completed a census return. From 6 January 2022 the details of those households will be available to search and view online for the first time.

This unique snapshot lets us step back 100 years and witness up close a key moment in the lives of those who had survived the First World War, and who were embarking on a new decade.

Discover the next chapter in the stories of those you're interested in - whether they are your ancestors, the people who used to live in your house or community, or individuals relevant to your research.

# 1921

Exploring the census with Key Stage 2 aged children provides a range of interesting and cross-curricular learning opportunities.

This pack includes selected resources linking to the national census, but teachers may wish to use it in conjunction with local census records including those at [The Keep](#) archive and [West Sussex Record Office](#) which can bring an extra level of engagement for classes.

Census records can be accessed and downloaded for a small cost at [Find My Past](#), where you can also find guidance on how to search the census. These will be free to access from 2023. They are free to view through [The National Archives](#) when visiting in person.

This pack is produced as part of the *1921 Census Project* from Strike a Light – Arts & Heritage and the University of Brighton to encourage research and widening participation. You can find out more about the project [here](#).

Primary schools in England and Wales can also register here for the Office for National Statistics' [Let's Count!](#) 2022 free new census education resources too. There are both primary and secondary school age activities available.



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We hope you find this resource useful. Please also complete the accompanying short evaluation to enable us to plan for future educational activities.

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## Objective #1: What is the census?

### Key learning points and questions

What is the Census? Why is it so important?

*The census is a count of all the people in England and Wales. It asks many questions, such as where people live, what jobs they do, which languages they speak, how many cars they own. The census asks all these questions so that we know how many people there are in England and Wales. This helps the government make sure there are enough things that matter to us, like schools and hospitals, where people will need them. That's why it's so important for all adults to fill in the census questionnaire.*

## What Is the Census?

The census is a count of the all the households and all the people living in England and Wales.

It is carried out every 10 years by the Office for National Statistics.


Forms are sent out to each household and must be completed to record who is present in a house on one specific night of the year. This ensures that nobody is counted twice.

Population counts have been happening for thousands of years but the first census in England and Wales was taken in 1841.

People worried about sharing their information so it was agreed that census records would be kept confidential for 100 years.

We can see information in the census records from 1841 to 1921. The 1921 Census was released this year which is what we're discussing!

You can look at these census records by visiting [The National Archives](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) website.



**Action:** What kinds of questions would you ask in a children's census?



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- ❖ See Resource 1 on Pages 13-15 to try your own with The Great Toy Census!

### Page | 3 **Creative Learning activities**

**Data** is a collection of information gathered by observation, questioning or measurement. Data is often organised in graphs or charts for analysis and may include facts, numbers or measurements.

How can we explore an easy way of finding out interesting information about our school year group? Think about diagrams, pie charts, pictograms etc.

**Action:** Gather questions on the white board, each child can come to the front of the class and ask their questions. These could include things like:

- ❖ What is your favourite TV programme?
- ❖ If I were to ask you about TV programmes for a census question, do you think your answers would change from 5 years ago to now?
- ❖ What is your favourite food now – what was it when you were younger?
- ❖ How about your favourite toys?

This is why we ask the questions every ten years with the census; things change with time!

Children can then create their own tally chart and pictogram to show the information gathered.

- ❖ [You can use a create your own survey template here.](#)
- ❖ [You can make your own pictogram template here](#)

As teacher, you can compare how we might answer the questions differently from each other. You could email your partner class and compare how we might answer the questions differently.

You may wish to first collate the responses of the answers to question 2 of the Toy Census questionnaire (page 14-15) to help you.

### **Key vocabulary:**

- |                |                 |         |
|----------------|-----------------|---------|
| ❖ Census       | ❖ Least popular | ❖ Chart |
| ❖ Most popular | ❖ Total         | ❖ Count |



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*Opening of the Picture Playhouse Cinema on Western Road Bexhill Sussex 8.7.1921. Courtesy of Bexhill Museum*

## **Objective #2: Why do we have a census? How can asking the same question to a lot of people give us interesting facts to learn?**

### **Key learning points and questions**

Why do we have the census? How can information in it be used?

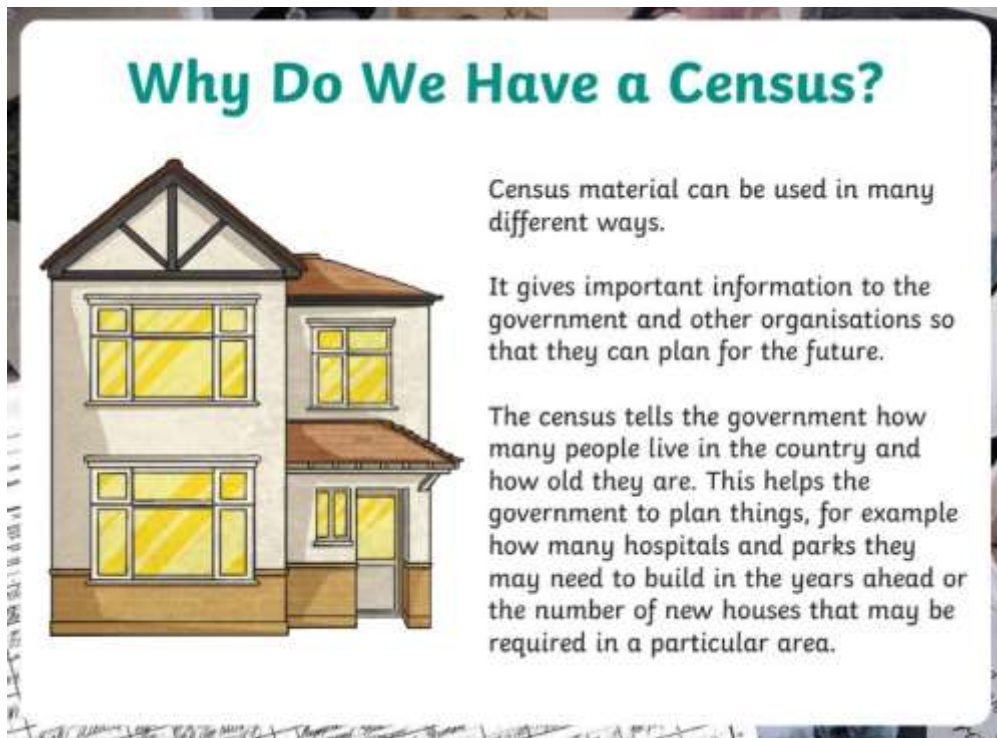
A school census! Asking questions to our school! Will different groups of children answer the same questions differently? Can we learn about other classes from asking them questions? How can we show this data? What can we learn from it?

### **Creative Learning activities**

Children to think of a few questions such as 'What is our favourite animal?' 'What is our favourite sport at our school?'

**Action:** Teacher to email the other year group classes with these questions previous to the session. This current session will be creating bar charts from looking at data. Review the data from other classes all together – are you surprised at their answers? Can you give reasons for why the answers might be different to ours?

Children can present their bar chart to the class: Can we say a sentence about what we've learned about our school community with these questions? We have made a real historical document, a snapshot of our school on this day! Just like the real census!



### Key vocabulary:

- ❖ Census
- ❖ Facts
- ❖ Favourite
- ❖ Data
- ❖ Most popular



**Nov.22.1921 Opening of the Nurses R.S.C. Hospital Brighton by H.R.H. Princess Mary.**  
*Courtesy of Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, Brighton & Hove*



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## Objective #3: How we can use the census. What can we learn about families then and now from looking at census data?

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**How Can We Use the Census Records?**

The census counts the number of people in a household but also records a whole range of information about them, including their ages, occupations and relationships. This makes census records a fascinating tool for historians, who can use them to find out about the past.

We can use census records to:

- trace individual people and find out more about their lives;
- compare and contrast different places in England and Wales at various times in history;
- learn more about how communities and societies change over time.

### Key learning points and questions

Look at the two examples of census data from 100 years ago (See Resource 2 [Sources 1 and 2] on Pages 16-17). What can we learn about our local area from looking at census data like this?

**Action:** Use the information to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the head of this family?
2. What was their occupation?
3. How many children did they have?
4. How many people lived in the house altogether?

Now compare the two families. How are the two families the same? How are they different? Was one family richer than the other? How can you tell?



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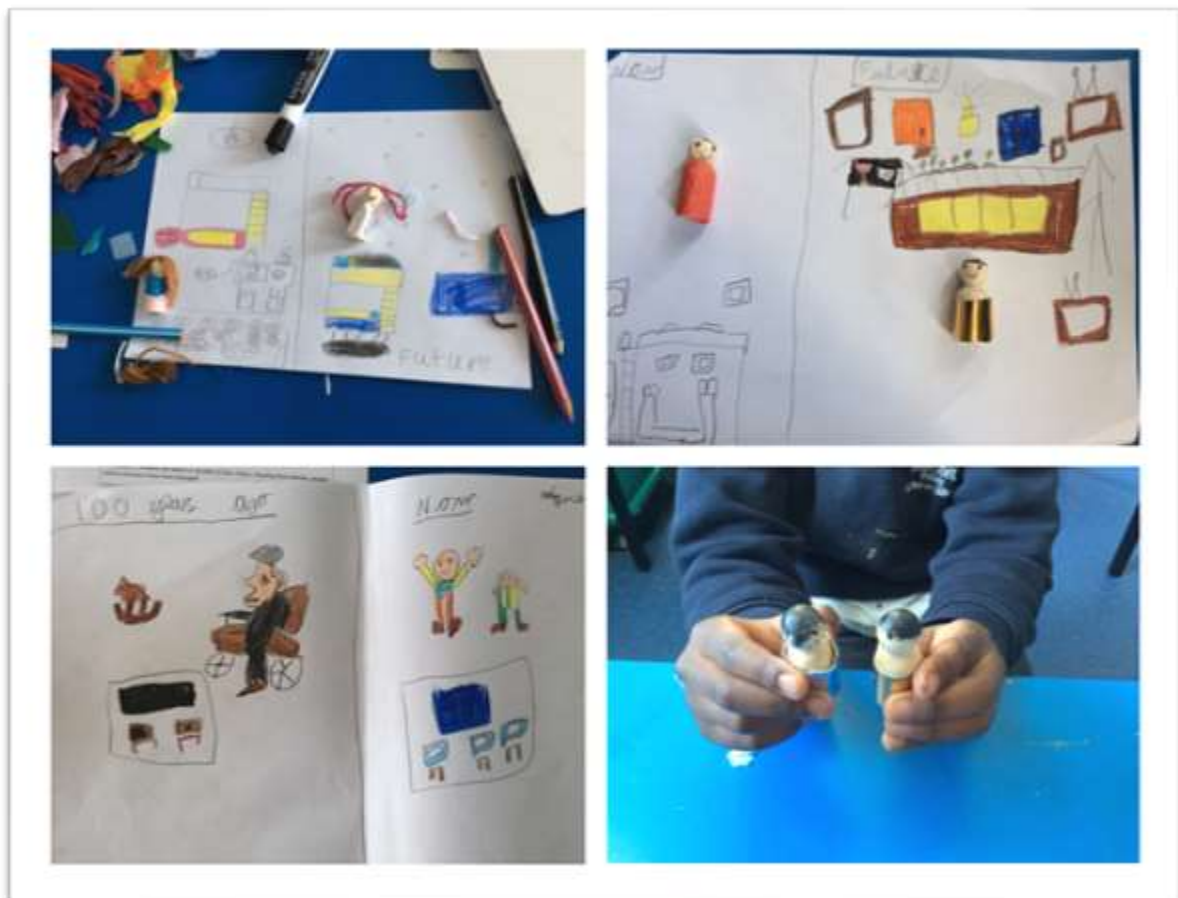
### Creative learning activities

- ❖ Make a chart labelled 100 years ago and 'Now'. See below for an example with a Year Two class.
- ❖ Talk about it! Children can sketch or doodle on their charts, showing how vehicles, people, clothes and pastimes have changed.
- ❖ Listen to music from 100 years ago and music now while painting and drawing. You could show pupils this [film](#) about the 1920s from the National Archives too.
- ❖ Give out pictures to look at that reflect life in the 1920s. Encourage children to choose a 'Then' picture and make their own version using paints, felt tips or colouring pencils. You can find some relevant photographs here from the [National Archives](#).

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### Key vocabulary:

- |                 |              |           |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------|
| ❖ Questionnaire | ❖ Occupation | ❖ Compare |
| ❖ Chart         | ❖ Data       | ❖ Census  |



*Photo courtesy of Strike a Light – Arts & Heritage*



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## Objective #4: Return to the purpose of the census. Consider why certain questions are asked. Why do they matter to us?

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### Key learning points and questions

Discuss what the information gathered in the census is used for. (For the purpose of this session the census is used by central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations to target resources more effectively).

### Creative learning activities

Working in role! We are in the census office today! You've got a very important job to do!

**Action:** Working in teams, encourage the children to discuss the questions they would put in their own census. How many questions might they ask?

Encourage pupils to discuss why they chose these questions and what they would do with the answers. How should the government spend money in your town or city? Schools, hospitals, play parks, public transport? You decide!!

In teams: Prepare for and pitch pupils' groups' ideas to their class. They can dress up as office workers for fun and use a clipboard for that 'official' look! Ask why is it important that everyone answers the questions?

Create a poster advert to encourage everyone in your town or city to complete the census (template in Resource 3, Page 18).

### **Key vocabulary:**

- ❖ Poster
- ❖ Official

- ❖ Government
- ❖ Public Transport

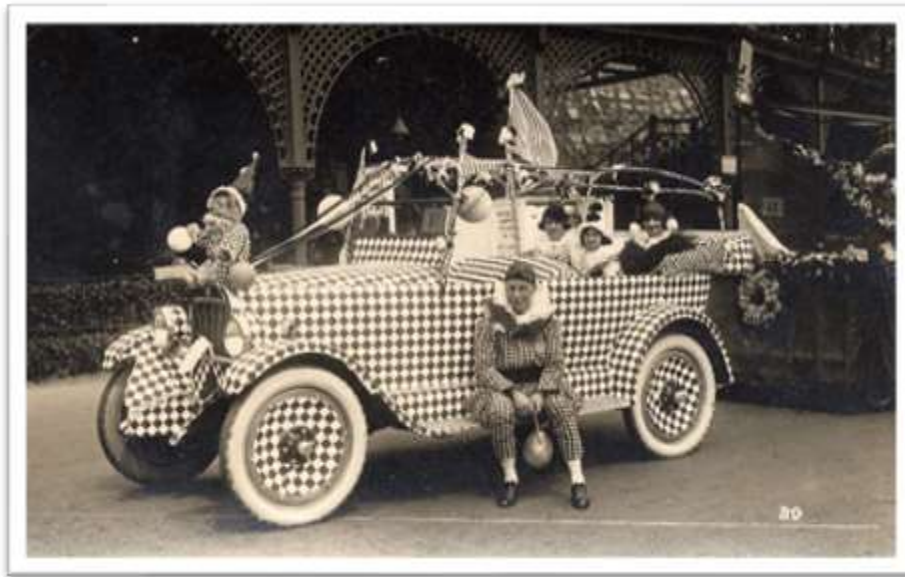
- ❖ Census



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*Madeira  
Esplanade,  
Brighton on 6<sup>th</sup>  
Sep 1921.  
Courtesy of  
Royal Pavilion  
and Museums  
Trust, Brighton  
& Hove*

**Objective #5: Life before children had to go to school. Planning for the future – what would you like to be when you grow up? Would this have been possible 100 years ago?**

**What is interesting about the 1921 Census?**

The 1921 Census: the largest census release ever in England and Wales

On 19 June 2021, close to 38 million individuals in England and Wales completed a census return. From 6 January 2022 the details of those households will be available to search and view online for the first time.

This unique snapshot lets us step back 100 years and witness up close a key moment in the lives of those who had survived the First World War, and who were embarking on a new decade.

**1921**

The 1921 Census provides greater detail than any of the previous censuses, asking additional questions about marital status, employment and education including:

**Children:** Unlike earlier censuses, the 1921 Census asked for the exact age of children (in both years and months). And following the introduction of the 1918 Education Act, it also asked for the educational status of children aged 15 and younger for the first time.

### Key learning points and questions

- ❖ Children did not all go to school. Some had to go to work!
- ❖ What might that have been like? Discussion!
- ❖ Life choices were very different in the 1920s.



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- ❖ Careers and jobs were different in the 1920s - Think about jobs which don't now exist.

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### **Creative learning activities**

Look again at the census data for our two local children (Resource 2 [Sources 1 and 2] on Pages 16-17). We can see what jobs their fathers had at the time. They had a lot of brothers and sisters too!

**Action:** Look at the photos in Resource 4 (pages 19-21) showing jobs and industries at the time. What might that have been like? If you had to choose one of these lives, which would you choose? What would you like to do when you grow up?

Shocking news: Some children did not go to school – they had to have a job too! Also, if you were a girl or a woman, you weren't allowed to do the same thing as the men. What do we think about this? Can you discuss what that might have been like?

Explore types of food eaten at the time. Think about meals including breakfast and lunch.

Let's choose one of the children on the census data in Resource 2 (Sources 1 and 2, Pages 16-17) (how about Cecilia?) You can make up a life for them, draw a picture of them going to school or work and label this. Now on the other half of your page, draw yourself in the future!

Think about jobs which don't exist anymore – can you look at Resource 5 on Page 22, and research jobs on the list? Do you recognise any of them? Why don't you look up what these were?

### **Key vocabulary:**

- ❖ Poster
- ❖ Official
- ❖ Government
- ❖ Public Transport
- ❖ Census



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*Image courtesy of Strike a Light – Arts & Heritage*

## Objective #6: Can I make a time capsule?

### Key learning points and questions

Ask the children if they have heard of a time capsule before. What is it? What is its purpose? Have they ever seen or discovered one?

**Action:** Ask the children to think back to one of the years you looked at when studying the census. What might have been in a time capsule from that year? How would it be different to a time capsule from today?

Ask the children to discuss what they might put in a time capsule for today. What represents their lives? What matters most to them? What if they could only choose five items? What would they want a child in the future to discover about this time in history and their lives?

What might the children you discovered in the census data (Resource 2 [Sources 1 and 2], Pages 16-17) have put in a time capsule? Why? Sketch a picture of this!

### Creative learning activities

Children to have a look at some pictures of some objects from 1920s. What can we tell about life at the time when these were found?



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If you could choose five things to put in your time capsule, what would they be? List them!

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Using clay, paper or craft items create five things to put in your own time capsule to take home and hide somewhere! Label with one of these [downloadable labels](#) to be opened in 2121!

Fill out the time capsule template (Resource 6, Page 23) and save it somewhere for posterity!

### **Vocabulary:**

- |                |              |            |
|----------------|--------------|------------|
| ❖ Time capsule | ❖ Survey     | ❖ Question |
| ❖ Compare      | ❖ Population | ❖ Data     |

**For further related activities and Key stage 1-3 FREE resources, you can also join in with the 'Let's Count' activity from ONS which is timed to engage with the results of the 2021 census this summer 2022.**

**[Register here](#)**

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## Resources:

### Page | 13 Resource 1

The Great Toy Census teaches children about the census and data collection through a fun activity which guides them through a process of conducting their own census of their favourite toys. The full pack includes information and worksheets about data collection, statistics and presentation of data, covering tally charts, frequency tables, surveys, pictograms, bar charts and averages.

The pack includes a comprehensive questionnaire form for children to answer questions about their toys, encouraging them to use their imagination to come up with background stories for their toys to complete the census.

Instead of soft toys, you can complete the activities using other objects like toy dinosaurs, dolls, brick building people or block adventurer minifigures you would like to include instead.



[Download the full pack here.](https://strikealight.org/)



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# The Great Toy Census Questionnaire

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## Population Study

The first step is to find out how many toys occupy each location in the house. This could be the different rooms. Alternatively, if all your toys are in the same room, what location within the room are they in: bed, cupboard, shelf, box?

List the locations, and make a tally as you count each toy in that place.

Location	Tally	Total

## About Your Household

**Guidance:** The Office for National Statistics questionnaire asks the householder to answer questions about the individual members of their household (all the people living in the same house).

For our census, we define a household as all the toys residing together in the same location.

**H1**

How many toys are in your household?

**H2**

List the names of the toys in your household.



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## The Great Toy Census Questionnaire

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Toy 1:	
Toy 2:	
Toy 3:	
Toy 4:	
Toy 5:	
Toy 6:	
Toy 7:	
Toy 8:	
Toy 9:	
Toy 10:	

**H3**

Are the members of this household related to each other? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, use the box below to draw or write a family tree for the household.

You may wish to use some of the key words below to help describe the relationships between the toys.

	mother
	father
	son
	daughter
	partner
	spouse
	grandparent
	grandchild
	stepchild
	stepparent
aunt	
uncle	



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## Resource 2

Look at these two following examples of census data from 100 years ago.  
What can we learn about our local area from looking at census data like this?

**Action:** Use the information to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the head of the family in *Source 1* family? (Robert Tripp – Line 1)
2. What was their occupation? (Carter)
3. How many children did they have? (10)
4. How many people lived in the house altogether? (12)

### Source 1 (1851)

Township of: Manchester  
City of: Manchester

Parliamentary Borough of: Manchester  
Ecclesiastical District or Parish of: St. Andrews

Name of Street, Place or Road and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
				Male	Female		
9 Forest Road	Robert Tripp	Head	Married	41		Carter	Bournemouth
	Molly Tripp	Wife	Married		37	Wife of carter	Salford
	James Tripp	Son	Unmarried	19		Carter	Salford
	Annie Tripp	Daughter	Unmarried		18	Machinist	Salford
	Florence Tripp	Daughter	Unmarried		18	Cotton Spinner	Salford
	William Tripp	Son	Unmarried	16		Labourer	Manchester
	Matthew Tripp	Son	Unmarried	15		Labourer	Manchester
	Edna Tripp	Daughter	Unmarried		11	Female Servant	Manchester
	Mary Tripp	Daughter	Unmarried		10	Cotton Carder	Manchester
	John Tripp	Son	Unmarried	7		Errand Boy	Manchester
	Robert Tripp	Son	Unmarried	5		-	Manchester
	Thomas Tripp	Son	Single	4		-	Manchester



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**Action:** Use the information to answer the following questions:

1. Who is married to the head of the family in *Source 2*? (Mary Taylor)
2. How old is she? (40)
3. How many children did they have? (5)
4. How many people lived in the house altogether? (10)

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### Source 2 (1851)

Township of: Manchester

Parliamentary Borough of: Manchester

City of: Manchester

Ecclesiastical District or Parish of: St. Andrews

Name of Street, Place or Road and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
				Male	Female		
Forest View	William Taylor	Head	Married	41		Navy	Liverpool
	Mary Taylor	Wife	Married		40	-	Sheffield
	Violet Taylor	Daughter	Unmarried		21	Governess	Sheffield
	Andrew Taylor	Son	Unmarried	19		Navy	Manchester
	Robert Taylor	Son	Unmarried	17		Scholar	Manchester
	Samuel Taylor	Son	Unmarried	15		Scholar	Manchester
	Ruth Taylor	Daughter	Unmarried		14	Scholar	Manchester
	Edith Harris		Widow		55	Cook	Sheffield
	Anne Lea		Unmarried		19	Servant	Manchester
	William Smith		Unmarried	29		Servant	Manchester



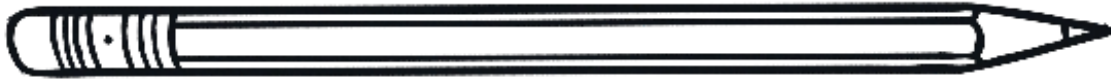
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### Resource 3

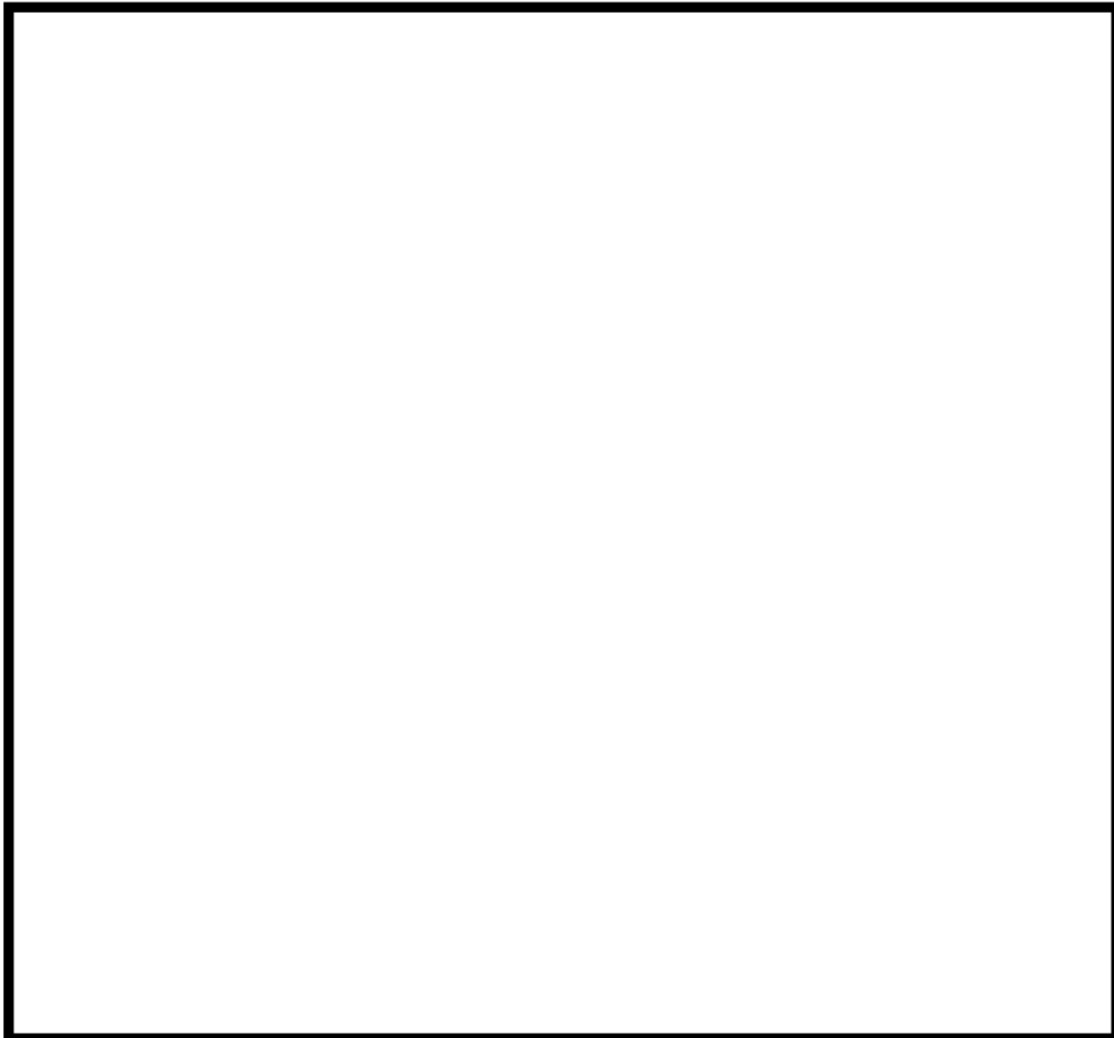
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## Design Your Own Census 2021 Poster



What is the census?

The census is a special survey that takes place every ten years. It gives us lots of information about all of the households in England and Wales. This information helps to plan local services like schools, public transport and hospitals. The 2021 census is significant because it will be the first one in history to be primarily done digitally. Encourage people to take part by designing an exciting poster. Don't forget to use illustrations, colour and interesting language to make your poster stand out!



visit [twinkl.com](https://www.twinkl.com)





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### Resource 4: Jobs in 1921

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***Dancer - This is Gwendoline Wild in the 1920's. Courtesy of June Rayner***



***Shopworkers: From the Local History collection c.1921. Courtesy Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, Brighton & Hove***



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***Nurses - Courtesy Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, Brighton & Hove***



***Soldier - Courtesy Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, Brighton & Hove***



***Mayoress - Alice Southall,  
Mayoress of Brighton, 1920-1921.  
Courtesy Royal Pavilion &  
Museums Trust, Brighton & Hove***



***Fire Brigade - Courtesy of Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove***



***Train workers - A black and white photographic print of the representative staff at Brighton station in 1928. Courtesy of Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton***



***Sailors in Burma - James Henry Green Charitable Trust***



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## Resource 5: Job Titles – Can you recognise them?

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In the 1841 census, many people recorded their profession as mining. There were a variety of mining jobs carried out during this period and many of these were completed by children.

Choose one of these job titles to research. Record what the role involved, the typical age of children that did this job and anything else interesting that you have found out about the job.



hurrier

thruster

haulier

trapper

getter

breaker



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## Resource 6: Time Capsule

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# My Time Capsule Activity

Fill in the information below then put this page in a safe place at home. At a special time in the future, open it, read and reflect on all your special things from today.

My name is : _____ My age is: _____ Today's date is: _____	Stick a picture of yourself here
--	----------------------------------

My favourite subject:	
My favourite book:	
My favourite movie:	
My favourite television programme:	
My favourite food:	
My favourite drink:	
My favourite sport:	
My favourite singer/band:	
My favourite song:	
My favourite colour:	
My favourite time of the year:	
What I want to be when I grow up:	