

Class Project – First Handout

Each student selects a neighborhood and writes a description of the neighborhood and its residents. At a minimum, the description must have these four elements:

1. A physical description of the neighborhood. What do the residential units look like? Are they detached single-family homes, attached townhouses, apartments or some combination? Is there lots of open space, or is the area densely developed? Are there major sources of employment in the neighborhood?
2. A description of the residents of the neighborhood. What are their incomes, their educations, their ethnicities, and races? To address these questions, your descriptions should compare the residents of your neighborhood with the residents of the urban area in which the neighborhood is located. Are the residents of the neighborhood you selected better educated than residents of the urban area as a whole? These are just examples of the questions you might want to answer. You'll surely find other questions you want to explore.
3. A description of the public schools serving the neighborhood. What is the socioeconomic background of the students in those schools, and how well do those students perform on statewide achievement tests?
4. Changes in the neighborhood between 1990 and 2000. Did the population grow during that ten-year period? Are the residents of neighborhood in 2000 better off economically than the residents of the neighborhood in 1990?

The second page of this handout describes how you can get 2000 Census data about your neighborhood and the urban area in which it is located. For that purpose, the definition of your neighborhood will be the census tract containing an address you specify. The definition of the urban area in which it is located will be its Metropolitan Statistical Area (Primary MSA if it is located in a Consolidated MSA. Subsequent handouts will explain how to get data on public schools and Census data for 1990.

Your own personal observations about the neighborhood should also be part of your description. The Census data is useful, but it will only take you so far. Make your own eyes and ears a significant source of the information for this paper. To bring in a different perspective, you may want to interview someone else who lives in your neighborhood (a parent, a neighbor, a childhood friend, etc.)

Your description should not exceed 15 pages, double-spaced. A hard copy of your paper is due in class on Friday, May 30. You must also email me an electronic version of the paper (Word or PDF format) by that date.

Before you begin to write your description, each of you must meet with me to tell me about your neighborhood. Please bring the following four items to that appointment.

1. A map of your census tract.
2. A map of the metropolitan statistical area containing your census tract with the location of your tract clearly identified. If your census tract is not in a metropolitan statistical area, bring a map of the county it is in.
3. A copy of Table DP-3 (Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000) for your census tract.
4. A copy of Table DP-3 (Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000) for your metropolitan area..

The next page describes how to get these tables and maps.

Finding Census Data for Your Neighborhood and City

Step 1: Go to the Census Bureau website at <http://www.census.gov/>

Step 2: From the list of links on the left of the page (in blue), select American FactFinder

Step 3: The FactFinder page will pop up. Now look at the list of links on the left of the page. The links have a blue background except one towards the bottom which has a white background and reads “Address Search...” Select this link.

Step 4: You’ll now see a dialogue box that asks for a street address. Type in your address and select Go.

Step 5: Just under the dialogue box in which you typed your address, another box will appear with the title of “Geographies containing” In the box are all the census geographical areas containing your address. One of those is the census tract. Select that item and then select “Map It.” This will produce a map of the census tract containing your address. Does that look right? Can you find your address on the map? If so, print off the map and bring it with you when you come to visit me.

Step 6: Close the map and go back to the page for entering your address. Now highlight the census tract in the box “Geographies containing.....” and select “OK.”

Step 7: You will now see a list of all the maps and data tables you can get for that census tract. A long list, right? To get started, scroll down to “Quick Tables and Demographic Profiles.” The third link from the top will be DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000. Select the link and print the page that pops up. Please bring this table with you when you visit me.

Step 8. Now using the back button on your browser, return to the page that had the address of your census tract and the list of geographies containing your address. Go down the list until you find the “Metropolitan Statistical Area” containing your address. Select that item and then select “Map It.” Print this map off. Also, repeat Step 7 to print Table DP-3 for the metropolitan area. If there is both a “Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area” and a “Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area” for your address, select the latter. If your census tract is not in a metropolitan statistical area, bring Table DP-3 for its county. When you visit me, please bring in the map and Table DP-3 for your metropolitan statistical area (or county).