Our U.S. Constitution includes a rule that every 10 years, the people of the United States must be counted. We call this a decennial (deh-SEN-uhl) census.

With the results of the census, the government can decide how the 435 seats of the House of Representatives should be distributed. But we get a lot of other valuable data, or information, from census figures. For example, these numbers help officials:

• figure out where to build schools.
• plan for new fire departments.
• decide how much government money should go to certain areas or groups of people.

Census history

The first census took place in 1790 and counted 3.9 million people. Today, 230 years later, the United States is home to more than 329 million people.

On the form

Questions on this year’s census form ask about the people living in a household and how they’re related to each other. For example:

• How many people were living in your house, apartment or mobile home on April 1, 2020?
• How is Person 2 related to Person 1? Does Person 1 work outside the home?

Collecting the information

All census forms will be mailed to all U.S. households. In places where there is no standard address, such as on some country roads or on Indian reservations, census workers will deliver the forms by hand. People can respond to the census in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail.

From May to July, census-takers will visit homes that haven’t responded to collect the information. Census workers will also visit homeless shelters, soup kitchens and streets to collect information about homeless Americans.

Keeping information safe

The information collected will not be released to the public. For example, people who have come to the United States from other countries might not want the government to know they’re in the U.S. But census forms will not be shared with other parts of the government.

Each person who works for the U.S. Census Bureau must take an oath, or promise, never to share any information they learn about any individual.

Try ’n’ Find

Words that remind us of the U.S. Census are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are backward or diagonally written. Some letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

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Cook’s Corner

Sweet ’n’ Sour Turkey Meatballs

You’ll need:

• 1 pound ground turkey
• salt and ground black pepper
• 1 cup rice
• 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce

What to do:

1. In a large bowl, combine turkey, about 1/4 teaspoon salt and about 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Mix well and shape into 16 meatballs.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add meatballs and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, turning frequently, until brown on all sides.
3. In a small bowl, mix together tomato sauce, plum sauce, vinegar and chili powder. Add sauce mixture to pan and bring to a simmer for 5 minutes or until meatballs are cooked through.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

| 2020 U.S. census counted 309 million people. |

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