

In these and other special cases, the "do-it-yourself" feature of the 1971 census was set aside in favour of the traditional system of enumeration.

The Census Goes to School

A voluntary student-classroom project was introduced in 1971 to support the population census. Students in Grades 6 to 13 in 21 cities were asked to fill out a questionnaire relating to student interests and activities. To insure anonymity, no student's name or other identifying information appeared anywhere on the questionnaire.

The purpose of the project was to acquaint students with the importance of the census and its procedures. At the same time, it resulted in some statistics about students and their interests.

The questionnaire asked a few questions about time spent watching television, number of books read, newspaper reading, part-time jobs and students' views about why they should attend school.

Having used the self-census methods in this project, a student could give assistance at home if it was needed in completing the general population census. And when he faces the 1981 or 1991 census as a householder, he will at least know what this national quiz game is all about. As a future educator, businessman, politician or whatever, he will also know how the census can aid his plans and goals.

Why Self-Census?

Some years ago the search began for more efficient ways of collecting information.

Traditional door-to-door canvassing in 1971 would have involved calling on some six million households, staying at each long enough to record the answers to all the questions.

To complicate matters, both husbands and wives in hundreds of thousands of households are absent from home during the day because of the large increase in the number of working women. The number of "call-backs" to households that would have been necessary under the old method threatened to prolong the information-gathering process by many weeks, or even months.

The self-census technique not only helped meet this problem but produced other distinct advantages.

Under the old system, questions were sometimes misunderstood by the householder and answers misinterpreted by the enumerator. The result, in both cases: incorrect information.