



Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers:

Ask any child under the age of 11 how old they are and you're likely to get a very precise answer — six and three quarters, nine and a half, etc. From the moment our mothers carefully count our fingers and toes as babies, numbers play a vital part in describing who and what we are.

In the excellent series "[The Story of 1](#)" produced for public television, it is proposed that the history of the number 'one' is the story of Western civilization. It reveals how the number one, which has been around for 20,000 years but really took off about 6,000 years ago, changed the development of great civilizations, how it progressed from 1-9 and how the invention of zero created infinite possibilities and helped to replace Roman numerals with the Arabic numbers we use today. Conversely, it contrasts the numbering system used in the West with the one developed by the aboriginal people, [Wiradjuri](#), of New South Wales, Australia who are renowned for their superior counting skills using only the numbers 1, 2 and 3.

Numbering systems, originally created to keep track of growing days, livestock, wealth, and later, tax collection, eventually formed the basis for mathematics, science, geometry, astronomy, engineering and physics, and arguably made organized "city life" possible.



May 16 is Census Day in Canada. The findings of this quinquennial —once every five year — ritual will tell us what and who we are as a country and will help shape policy affecting virtually every area of our lives.

This week's issue of *Chalk Talk* provides information on an annual educational outreach program, **Census at School**, run by Statistics Canada for grades 4-12 that combines fun with learning, to help students to understand why Canada conducts a census and how census results benefit society. The findings of the 2005 survey, [see sample provincial highlights below] are truly fascinating.



Making the Numbers Count—Census 2006



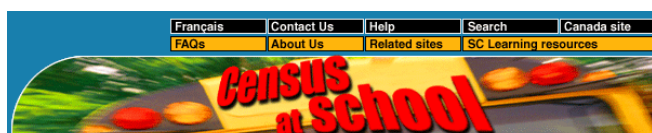
Tuesday, May 16, 2006 is [Census Day](#). Approximately 31 million people in Canada in 12.7 million households and all agricultural operations will count themselves in by completing and returning their census questionnaires on-line or by mail. This year's census is Canada's first "e-census" and features the new "[92 Year Question](#)", which asks Canadians whether they agree to have their personal census information made publicly available to their descendants in the distant future.

For the classroom, Statistics Canada offers the [2006 Census Teacher's Kit](#) to help educators to communicate the importance of the census to students, to nurture a sense of civic responsibility and to give students an understanding of how an accurate census helps schools and communities get the funding they need.

As part of its Education Outreach program, Statistics Canada runs the Canadian component of the international [Census at School](#) project, which began in the United Kingdom in 2000 and now also includes participation from schools in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. This curriculum-based project promotes the development of statistical literacy skills in grades 4-12 by involving students directly in collecting and analyzing data about themselves. Students in each participating country anonymously fill in an online survey in class, answering non-confidential questions about topics such as time spent watching TV, reading or playing video games, their favourite subject at school, how much time they spend on their homework, and who they look up to.



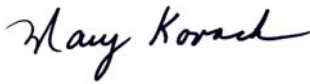
The answers become part of a national database and are later added to an international database that is maintained in the U.K. Teachers can access results of their own class' survey in the form of a spreadsheet to use in teaching and in comparing their class data to summary tables of Canadian results.



For more information on the **Census at School** pro-

survey, [see sample provincial highlights below] are truly fascinating.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at 4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.



Mary Kovack

Is your class participating in the Census at School project? If so, why not write to us about your in-class experience at maryk@coedcomm.com, and we may feature your class in an upcoming issue of *Chalk Talk*.

For more information on the **Census at School** project, **please click on the website banner above**.

[Source: Statistics Canada—Census 2006 & Census at School]

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Census at School gave the students the opportunity to 'connect' with the outside world. In our social studies curriculum, we discuss the importance of our roles in society. The survey reinforced our uniqueness and our sameness at the same time!"

— Brenda Hillaby,
Grade 5 teacher, Aurora,
Ontario

[Source: Census at School—StatCan online]



2005 Census at School project — Highlights by province

- **Ontario (10,383):** Students were more likely to report spending time on paid jobs and on homework than those in other provinces. One-third of Ontario respondents spent more than seven hours working for pay per week, double the national proportion. 26% of Ontario students spent seven or more hours on homework, compared to the national average of 18%
- **New Brunswick (636):** Respondents reported a much higher proportion of traveling by bus to get to school — 66% vs. 40% nationally. When asked who they admired, students in New Brunswick tended to follow the national trend — relatives and friends topped the list (55%) followed by sports figures, musicians and actors (27%).
- **Nova Scotia (1,631):** Pets seem to be more popular with Nova Scotia's elementary students with a hefty 88% of student respondents owning a pet compared with the national proportion of 79%. Elementary students reported the highest physical activity, with cycling and baseball showing the biggest percentage point differences.
- **Prince Edward Island (264):** Responding students reported playing more hockey than those in other provinces, 35% vs. 27% nationally. Elementary students reported drinking more milk (15% vs. 10% nationally) with chocolate milk being a particular favourite — 18% vs. 8% across Canada.
- **British Columbia (2,097):** Though 89% of students reported being active in sports, B.C. elementary students seemed less inclined to watch sports on TV than students in other provinces — 35% vs. 48% nationally. 10—12% more elementary students in B.C. participated in running and swimming than the national rate.
- **Alberta (1,191):** Alberta's secondary students indicated a higher interest in playing video games than those in other provinces — 71% vs. 65% across Canada, and 47% indicated a higher interest in playing board games than the national average of 37%.
- **Saskatchewan (1,154):** A smaller proportion of Saskatchewan students reported owning electronic gadgets than in other provinces. Just over two-thirds (68%) said they had Internet access at home, but this was well below the national average of 84%.
- **Manitoba (624):** Elementary school students seemed to spend more time reading in Manitoba than in other provinces, particularly girls. About 83% of girls reported spending time reading in the week prior to the survey compared to 77% nationally. Participating high school boys appear to be avid fans of video games, reporting that 85% of them had played video games versus 78% across Canada.

[Source: Statistics Canada—Census at School 2005 Highlights]

Facts & Figures — Census at School — Snapshot



- As of May 1, 2006, 2,276 classes representing 853 schools across Canada had registered to participate in this year's 'Census at School'; 19,661 primary, 5,340 secondary students had filled out this year's 'Census at School' questionnaire.
- Unlike Statistic Canada's official census, classroom participation in the **Census at School** survey is voluntary and used only for educational purposes.
- Some of the questions on the Canadian survey are common to all participating countries; others were developed in Canada. None of the survey questions asks for confidential or identifiable personal information. Responses remain anonymous as no names or identification numbers are attached to them.
- Statistics Canada's mandate is to produce information to help Canadians better understand their country — its population, economy, culture, and society. It conducts the national census and hundreds of surveys on virtually every aspect of Canadian life, under the authority of the *Statistics Act*.

[Source: Statistics Canada, Census at School]

[Time to stand up and be counted](#) — Andy Riga, The Gazette, May 8, 2006

“The year was 1666 and Jean Talon, New France's first intendant, had to know the lay of the land before he could figure out how to make the fledgling colony prosper. So he conducted North America's first census - the hard way.”

[92 years of foresight](#) — The Toronto Star, May 8, 2006

“It's time to stand up and be counted — both now and in the future. By law, all Canadian households must fill out a census form by May 16. The data help governments deliver crucial programs such as health care and education, and provide a valuable snapshot of our country. But this year, there is a new question. In response to privacy concerns, the form asks for permission to publicly release personal census data 92 years from now.”

[Canada by the numbers](#) — Angela Johnston, Canadian Geographic, May/June 2006, Volume 126, No. 3

“Why did Chinese immigrants choose to settle in particular regions of the country? How have immigration patterns changed over the past 100 years? The Royal Canadian Geographical Society has partnered with Statistics Canada to produce 39 lesson plans (available by September) that will enable students across the country to answer these and other human-migration questions.”

[Student bills seek to improve recycling, cafe food](#) — CBC News Online, May 9, 2006

“Three private member's bills introduced by several high school students in Ontario's provincial legislature Wednesday moved one step closer to becoming law when they passed second reading. The bills are aimed at improving recycling at schools, getting more nutritious food choices into cafeterias, and improving labour rights for young people. All the bills got approval in principle and have been sent to committee to be examined. It's the first time MPPs have voted on bills introduced by young people. The three bills were developed as part of the *CBC News at Six* series, "Making the Grade". It's part of a program to boost the interest of young people about the political process.”

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