

Ethnic minorities in the US

Task 1

Have a look at the chart on the right depicting the U.S. population by race and ethnicity from 1900 to 2050 (predicted). Analyse and interpret the chart with your partner.

Task 2

Read the text assigned to you and summarize it in an appealing way. Be prepared to present your summary to the course (Note: if you finish early, work on the text *African Americans*). Take notes while the other students are presenting their summaries.

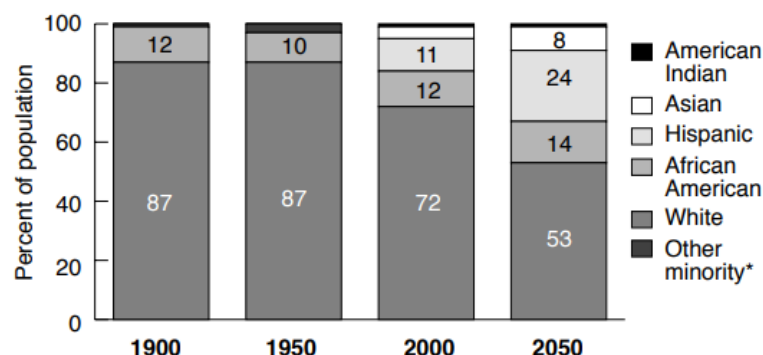
African Americans

Most African Americans are descendants of families that have been in the United States for many generations. Increasing numbers of blacks also share ties with immigrant groups from Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere that have differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Immigration is likely to increase the diversity within the African American population. In 1980, about 3 percent of blacks were foreign-born. Many African-origin immigrant groups swelled in size over the past two decades and by 1998, 5 percent of blacks were foreign-born. The Caribbean is the source of most U.S. immigrants of African descent. In 1998, nearly 3 million Americans were born in the Caribbean, and almost one-half of these immigrants were black. The Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica are among the leading sources of black Caribbean immigrants, including Hispanic blacks. Immigration from this region continued at a high level throughout the 1990s. Severe political and economic problems in Haiti brought 163,000 Haitian immigrants to the United States between 1990 and 1998. Jamaica sent 168,000 immigrants over the period; about 60,000 entered from Trinidad and Tobago. And, many black Hispanics were among the nearly 350,000 immigrants from the Dominican Republic who arrived between 1990 and 1998. Caribbean immigrants helped the number of black Hispanics to grow from 1.2 million to 1.7 million over the period. Africa was the source of less than 4 percent of U.S. immigrants between 1981 and 1998, but new migration streams are being formed that suggest the flow from Africa may expand in the future. In 1998, about 560,000 Americans were born in Africa, up from 360,000 in 1990, and from just 60,000 in 1970. Some African immigrants identify as white, in particular those from North Africa, but an increasing share are blacks from sub-Saharan countries. In 1990, 55,000 foreign-born Americans were from Nigeria and 35,000 were from Ethiopia. Ghana, Kenya, and Morocco were other major source countries for African immigrants.

Hispanics

The nation's Hispanic population primarily includes people who can trace their ancestry to Spanish-speaking countries throughout Latin America. The Census Bureau publishes data for at least four Hispanic groups: Cubans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and an "other Hispanics" category. In 1997, there were 18.7 million Mexican Americans, 3.1 million Puerto Ricans (living on the U.S. mainland), 1.3 million Cubans, and 6.4 million Hispanics from other areas. Salvadorans, Colombians, and Dominicans led the "other Hispanics" group in the 1990 census, the most recent source of counts for these groups. The "other Hispanics" category has seen remarkable growth in the last two decades – the number more than doubled between 1980 and 1997. Central Americans and South Americans are becoming a larger share of the

U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1900 to 2050



*American Indians, Asians, and Hispanics combined. These three groups combined made up less than 3 percent of the population in 1900 and 1950.
Note: Hispanics are excluded from American Indian, Asian, African American, and white categories. Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: Jeffrey S. Passel and Barry Edmonston, "Immigration and Recent Trends in Immigration to the United States" (1992): Table 3; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports P25-1130* (1996): Tables I and J.

U.S. Hispanic population as immigrant streams from Latin America expand and diversify. Central and South Americans accounted for 14 percent of all U.S. Hispanics in 1997, up from 11 percent in 1990. The Mexican-origin population remains the largest group and continues to expand. The Mexican share of U.S. Latinos rose from 59 percent to 64 percent between 1980 and 1997.

Asian and Pacific Islanders

Asians and Pacific Islanders are the most diverse U.S. minority group. Publications from the 1990 census included population characteristics for 13 Asian ethnic groups and six Pacific Islander groups, but many smaller groups were listed in census questionnaires. Among the 10 million Asian Americans (including about 600,000 Hispanic Asians) estimated in 1997, six groups numbered 900,000 or more: Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Korean, and Japanese. These six groups made up 84 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders. Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders accounted for just 5 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population. Primarily because of immigration, the number of Asian Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, and Vietnamese more than doubled over the past two decades. In comparison, the number of Japanese Americans (who had low immigration levels) and Hawaiians (a native American group) grew relatively slowly over the period.

American Indians and Alaska Natives

The American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut minority population also combines people with different pasts and presents. They are linked because their civilizations were thriving in North America before Europeans and Africans began to settle the continent. The Census Bureau estimated there were 2.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in 1998, including 347,000 Hispanic Indians. The 1990 census provides the most recent estimates of the Eskimo and Aleut populations. The 2 million American Indians counted in the 1990 census included 57,000 Eskimos and 24,000 Aleuts. There are more than 500 recognized American Indian tribes, but one-half of all American Indians identify with one of the eight largest tribes. The Cherokee, Navajo, Chippewa, and Sioux tribes have the most members and account for four of 10 American Indians. The largest of the other tribes are Choctaw, Pueblo, Apache, and Iroquois. Higher birth rates among American Indians than among most other racial and ethnic groups, better census reporting, and a resurgence of ethnic pride helped increase the American Indian population by 28 percent between the 1980 and 1990 censuses. The Apache, Chippewa, Choctaw, and Navajo tribes grew by 38 percent to 64 percent over the decade, for example, and the number of Aleuts increased by 68 percent, far more than could be accounted for by natural increase.

Task 3

Read the fact file and do the task.

FACT FILE

Ethnic neighbourhoods

Because of its history, the USA is a racially and ethnically diverse nation. With immigrants pouring in from all over the world, it was only natural that newcomers to America's shores flocked to neighbourhoods where they could speak their own language and live their culture. They often had networks of friends and relatives from the Old World who helped them find work and a place to live. By 1900, Polish, Irish, Italian, German, Jewish and Asian quarters had arisen in virtually every city in the US.

Although **ghetto** is technically just another word for 'ethnic neighbourhood', in the USA it is used mainly for the – usually undesirable – quarters of a city in

which African Americans formerly were forced to live. Black families wishing to move to a better part of town found that no landlord would rent them an apartment and no bank would give them credit to buy a house. White homeowners feared that the appearance of black faces in their street would send property values into a downward spiral. It was only after the Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibited discrimination in housing that the situation of African American families slowly began to improve.

List the 'push and pull factors' that lead to the creation of ethnic neighbourhoods. Do they exist in Germany too?

Task 4

Read the fact file and do the task.

FACT FILE

Still struggling for justice and equality – African Americans today

On 9 August 2014, a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, fatally shot Michael Brown, an 18-year-old African American suspected of robbery. The following days saw displays of mourning turn into protests, civil unrest, 5 rioting and looting of local shops. The police in turn fired tear-gas and rubber bullets at protesters and reporters.

The conflict continued when, on 24 November the same year, a grand jury decided not to indict the police officer who had shot Brown. A number of further incidents made the debate concerning excessive use of police violence against African Americans more urgent. 10 On 19 April, 2015, Freddie Gray, another African American, died in police custody in Baltimore, Maryland. Protests broke out, the National Guard was deployed and a state of emergency declared. 15

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s successfully fought against *de jure* racial segregation and discrimination of African Americans. Half a century

later, the situation of African Americans, notably their social and economic status, has certainly greatly improved. There is a solid black middle class, and African Americans are well represented at the political level. 20

At the same time, however, African Americans are still at a disadvantage. As a social group, they suffer disproportionately from poverty. They are still discriminated against in housing, education, criminal justice and employment and have inadequate access to health care. 25

'The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.' When civil rights leader Martin Luther King said these words in his famous 'I have a dream' speech in 1963, he envisaged a long struggle ahead. He was right. This struggle is still evident today. 30 35

Do some further research about the economic, educational and social situation of African Americans today.

Task 5

Read the text and summarize Clinton's position on diversity in no more than four sentences.

B2 The changing face of America William J. Clinton

*Looking back on history of the USA at the end of the 20th century, Clinton, President of the United States from 1993 to 2001, points out how the lessons of the past can help the United States cope with the challenges of the future. His message still sounds true in the second decade of the 21st century. Clinton made the *speech from which this excerpt is taken to graduating students at Portland State University.*

Today I want to talk to you about what may be the most important subject of all, how we can strengthen the bonds of our national community as we grow more racially and ethnically diverse. [...]

The driving force behind our increasing diversity is a new, large wave of immigration. It is changing the face of America. And while most of the changes are good, they do present challenges which demand more, both from new immigrants and from our citizens. Citizens share a responsibility to welcome new immigrants, to ensure that they strengthen our Nation, to give them their chance at the brass ring. In turn, new immigrants have a responsibility to learn, to work, to contribute to America. If both citizens and immigrants do their part, we will grow ever stronger in the new global information economy. 5 10

More than any other nation on Earth, America has constantly drawn strength and spirit from wave after wave of immigrants. In each generation, they have proved to be the most restless, the most adventurous, the most innovative, the most industrious of people. Bearing different memories, honoring different heritages, they have strengthened our economy, enriched our culture, renewed our promise of freedom and opportunity for all. [...] 15

But now we are being tested again by a new wave of immigration larger than any in a century, far more diverse than any in our history. Each year, nearly a million people come legally to America. Today, nearly one in ten people in America was born in another country; one in five schoolchildren are from immigrant families. Today, largely because of immigration, there is no majority race in Hawaii or Houston or New York City. Within five years, there will be no majority race in our largest State, California. In a little more than 50 years, there will be no majority race in the United 20

States. No other nation in history has gone through demographic change of this magnitude in so short a time. 25

What do the changes mean? They can either strengthen and unite us, or they can weaken and divide us. We must decide.

Let me state my view unequivocally. I believe new immigrants are good for America. They are revitalizing our cities. They are building our new economy. 30 They are strengthening our ties to the global economy, just as earlier waves of immigrants settled the new frontier and powered the Industrial Revolution. They are energizing our culture and broadening our vision of the world. They are renewing our most basic values and reminding us all of what it truly means to be an American. [...] 35

My fellow Americans, we descendants of those who passed through the portals of Ellis Island must not lock the door behind us. Americans whose parents were denied the rights of citizenship simply because of the color of their skin must not deny those rights to others because of the country of their birth or the nature of their faith. 40

We should treat new immigrants as we would have wanted our own grandparents to be treated. We should share our country with them, not shun them or shut them out. But mark my words, unless we handle this well, immigration of this sweep and scope could threaten the bonds of our Union.

45 Around the world, we see what can happen when people who live on the same land put race and ethnicity before country and humanity. If America is to remain the world's most diverse democracy, if immigration is to strengthen America as it has throughout our history, then we must say to one another: Whether your ancestors came here in slave ships or on the Mayflower, whether they landed on Ellis Island or 50 at Los Angeles International Airport, or have been here for thousands of years, if you believe in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, if you accept the responsibilities as well as the rights embedded in them, then you are an American. Only that belief can keep us one America in the 21st century.

From: 'Commencement Address at Portland State University', 13 June 1998