

# What Census Calls Us

## A Historical Timeline

This graphic displays the different race, ethnicity and origin categories used in the U.S. decennial census, from the first one in 1790 to the latest count in 2010. The category names often changed from one decade to the next, in a reflection of current politics, science and public attitudes. For example, “colored” became “black,” with “Negro” and “African American” added later. The term “Negro” will be dropped for the 2020 census. Through 1950, census-takers commonly determined the race of the people they counted. From 1960 on, Americans could choose their own race. Starting in 2000, Americans could include themselves in more than one racial category. Before that, many multiracial people were counted in only one racial category.

