**GEOG 245: Geodemographics**
Autumn 2016

Using American FactFinder

American FactFinder is the easiest and most commonly used way of retrieving census data online. The website is run by the Census Bureau and includes all of the publicly available data that the Census Bureau produces. In order to complete Assignment 1, you will need to be able to find census data on the American FactFinder website.

1. Go to factfinder.census.gov.

2. Click "Guided Search" which can either be found in the tool bar at the top of the page, or as the second drop down option on the left hand side of the main page. Note: if it does not automatically take you to the guided search menu, you may have to click the "Get Me Started" button that appears.

3. The first page of the guided search is about what type of information you are looking for. You have the option of people, housing, or business (or you may request a specific dataset or table if you know what it is called). For this class, we will be focusing on people, so make sure that the button next to "I'm looking for information about people" is selected and click "Next."
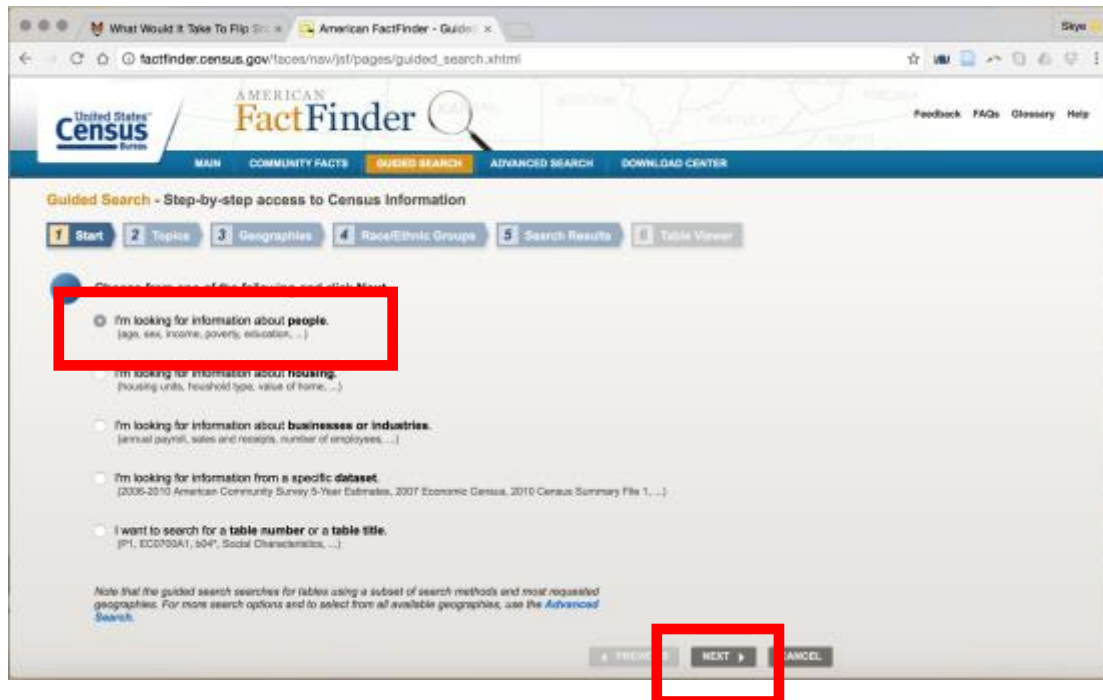
4. The second page of the guided search is about what topics you are interested in. You can add each topic you are interested in to "Your Selections" to help narrow down the data you are looking for. If I was interested in how many people speak languages other than English at home, I would click on the "Language" drop down menu and select "Languages Spoken at Home" which should add that to the "Your Selections" box on the right hand side. If you want to, you can select more than one topic. When you have selected the topics you are interested in, click "Next."
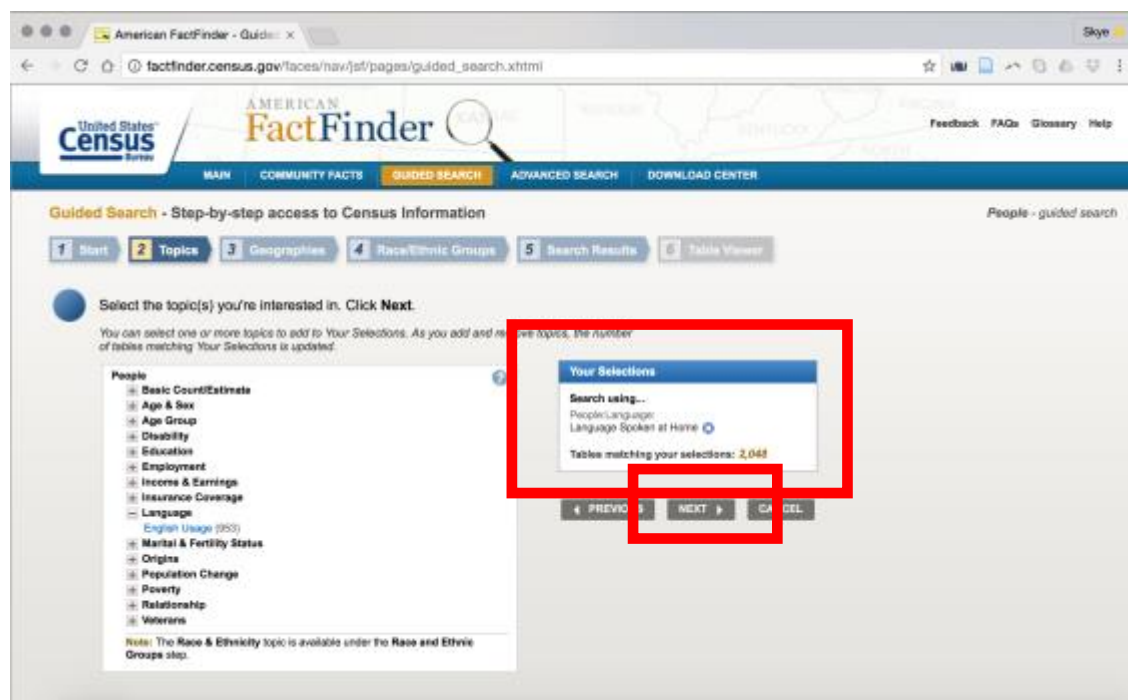
5. The third page of the guided search is about selecting the geography you are interested in. I recommend skipping the first option of entering the name of a town or zip code, and instead selecting your geographic information in the box below. The first option ("Select a Geographic type") will allow you to select an enumeration unit. This is the unit in which the data will be measured. So, if I am interested in data at the county level within Washington State, I would select "County" as my enumeration unit and as the response to the "Select a geographic type" question. From there, more options should appear. I only want data for Washington State, so under "Select a State," I am going to select "Washington." This will automatically populate the bottom box with a list of Washington counties. If I was only interested in a single county, I could select it here, but since I want to know about all the counties in Washington, I am going to select "All Counties within Washington" and then click the "Add to Your Selections" button. Once it appears in the "Your Selections" box, click "Next."

6. The fourth page of the guided search is about race and ethnicity. For whatever reason the census has separated this variable from other variables. If you want data about race, you can use either the "Select from Basic Groups" or "Select from Detailed Groups" to narrow your search to a particular racial group or just include race as a variable by selecting "Race/Ethnicity of Individual" in the drop down menu that appears once you click "Select from Basic Groups." If you aren't interested in race, just select "Skip this Step" or "Next."
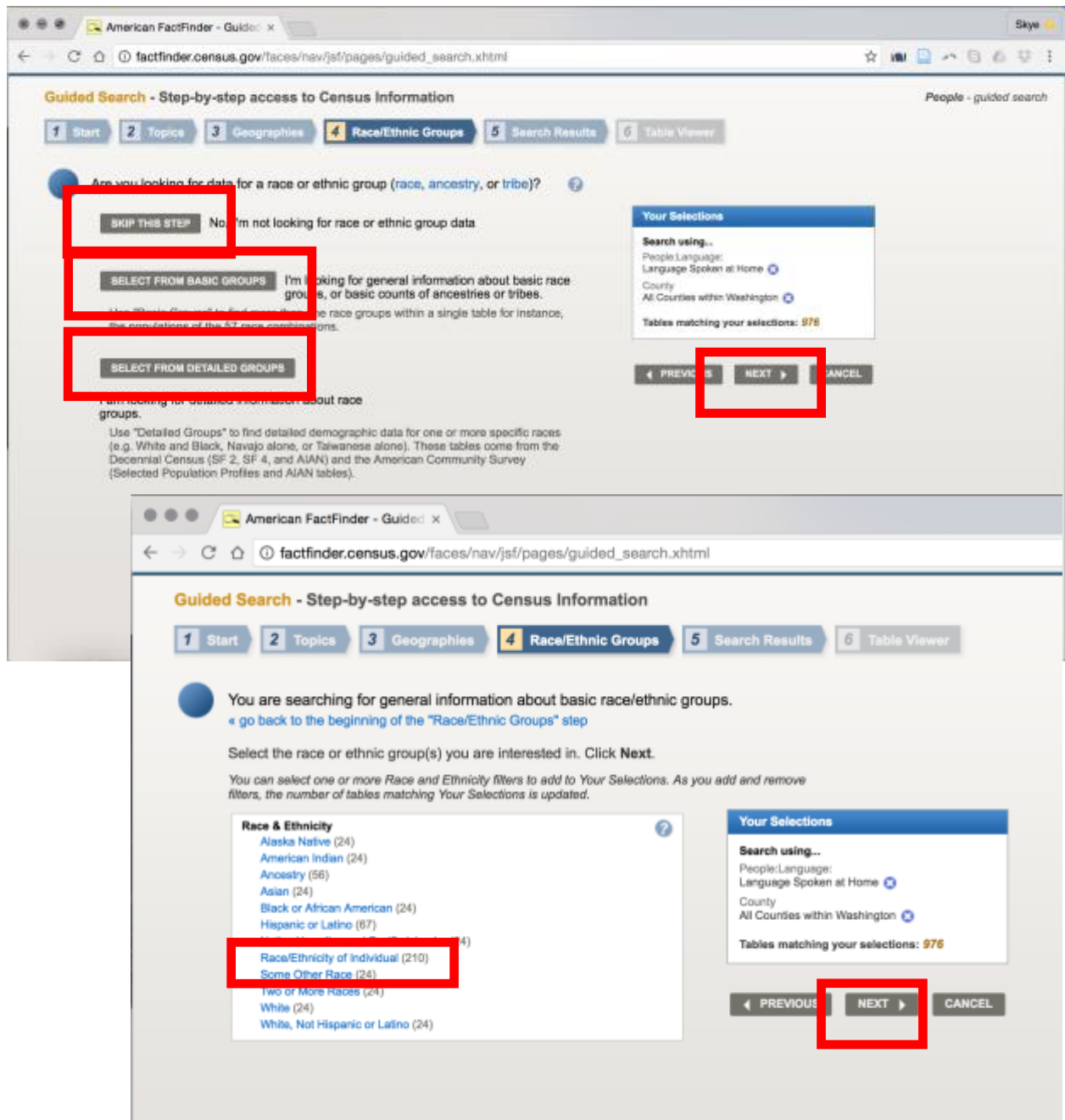
7. This should take you to a list of tables that include the information you are interested in. You may have to poke through a couple tables to find the data organized in the way you want it, but once you have found an appropriate table, you can download the dataset using the "Download" button on the table page. You can also create a basic map of the data by clicking on the "Create a Map" button.

*NOTE: If you have only a single location selected (for example, if you are looking at data for a single county), you will not be able to create a map. In order to create a map, you will need a geographic local that is larger than the enumeration unit (aka, containing multiple enumeration units) so that there is something to compare geographically on the map.

Census Geographies

Helpful tip: Remember the organization of census geographies. This will help you find data at the appropriate enumeration unit. Remember that in some places (particularly rural places) the smaller enumeration units may not be available.