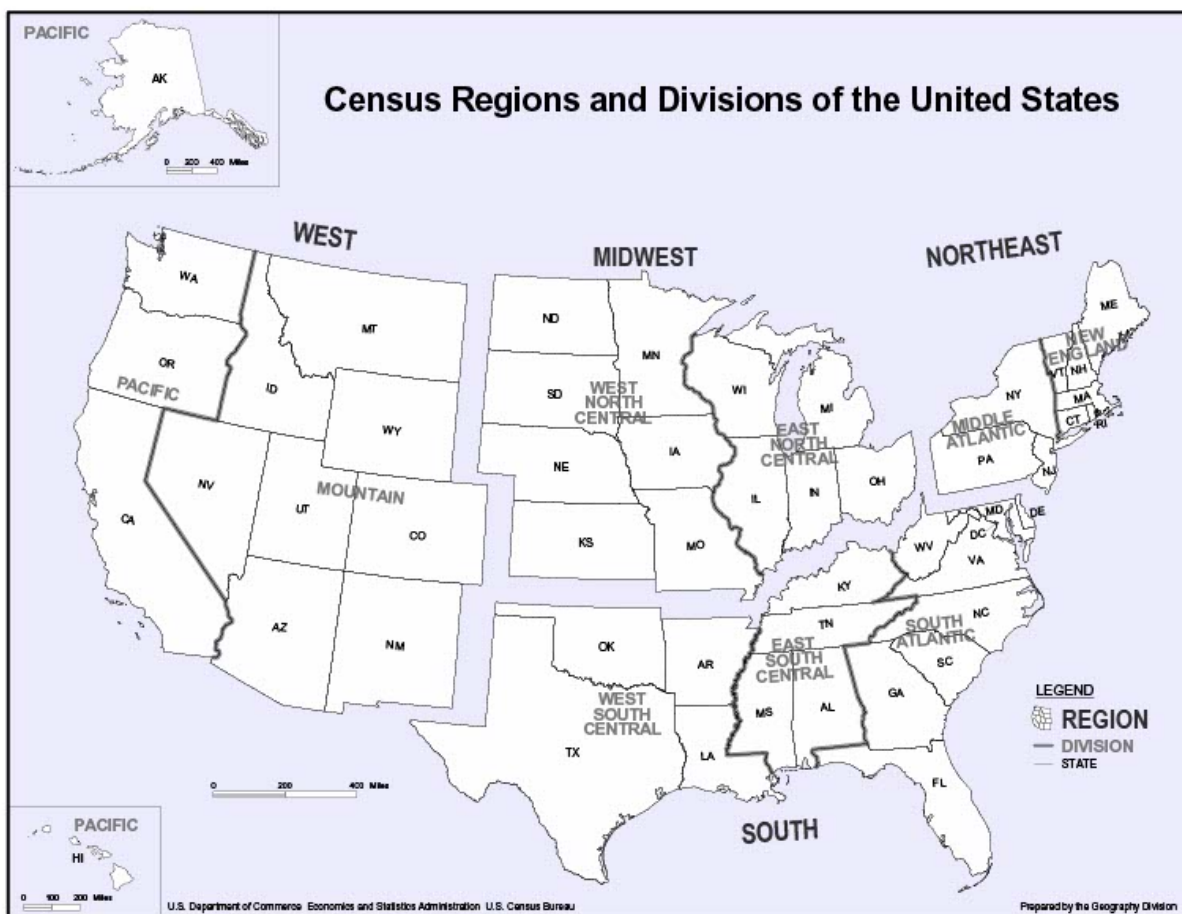


Appendix 1: AP Human Geography Topic I.E. Census Data

Geographers around the world routinely take advantage of government-collected census data. In the United States, a census of population and housing is collected every ten years in the zero year. The last population census was collected in 2010 and the next will be in 2020. Useful for geographers is the fact that the data collected by the U.S. Census is provided free to the public at many different geographic scales. The smallest spatial unit used in the United States is called a *census block*, which may have zero to thousands of people depending on whether it is in rural or urban area. In some cities, a census block is literally a city block. Census blocks are grouped into *block groups*, which are furthered grouped together to make *census tracts*. The Census Bureau in the United States also provides data for towns and cities, counties, states, divisions, and regions.



Credit: U.S. Census Bureau

There are nine Census Divisions in the United States and four Census Regions. The Census Bureau also summarizes data by Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA), which are government-defined regions that represent large urban areas in the United States that may cross traditional county or state boundaries. For example, the MSA for New York City is called the “New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metropolitan Statistical Area” and includes counties in New York

State, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. MSAs can even be grouped together to create larger regions called Combined Statistical Areas (CSA).

The U.S. Decennial Census of Population and Housing is available online at <http://www.census.gov> and many other countries have their own population census websites. While the word “census” typically refers to a population census, it is not correct to do so. For example, the United States Government also conducts the Economic Census in years ending with a “2” or a “7”. This census asks businesses to report information such as their number of employees, months of operation, and revenue. Using codes for every type of business (North American Industrial Classification Codes, or NAICS codes), the Economic Census allows geographers to look at industries across every state and county at five-year intervals. For economic geographers, this is a valuable tool for charting the rise and fall of industries. Economic Census data can be accessed at <http://www.census.gov/econ/census/>.