

## WHAT IS A CENSUS?

A CENSUS is a government count of the people in a region or country. Censuses are used to find out what kinds of people a country has, how they live, what they own, how their economy functions, and more. This information tells the government whether their laws and practices are helping the citizens, and the government can make changes to improve the country's way of life and provide them with services like public education and health care. The United States government performs a census every 10 years.

But in ancient Rome, the census and registration of citizens and their property (including animals) was done for the purpose of taxing the citizens. The money collected was used by the government to support the Roman army that kept order in all the places under Rome's control, including Palestine. The taxes were a hardship for farmers and poor people, who could barely afford the money but didn't want to be punished by the Roman Army if they didn't pay the tax.

