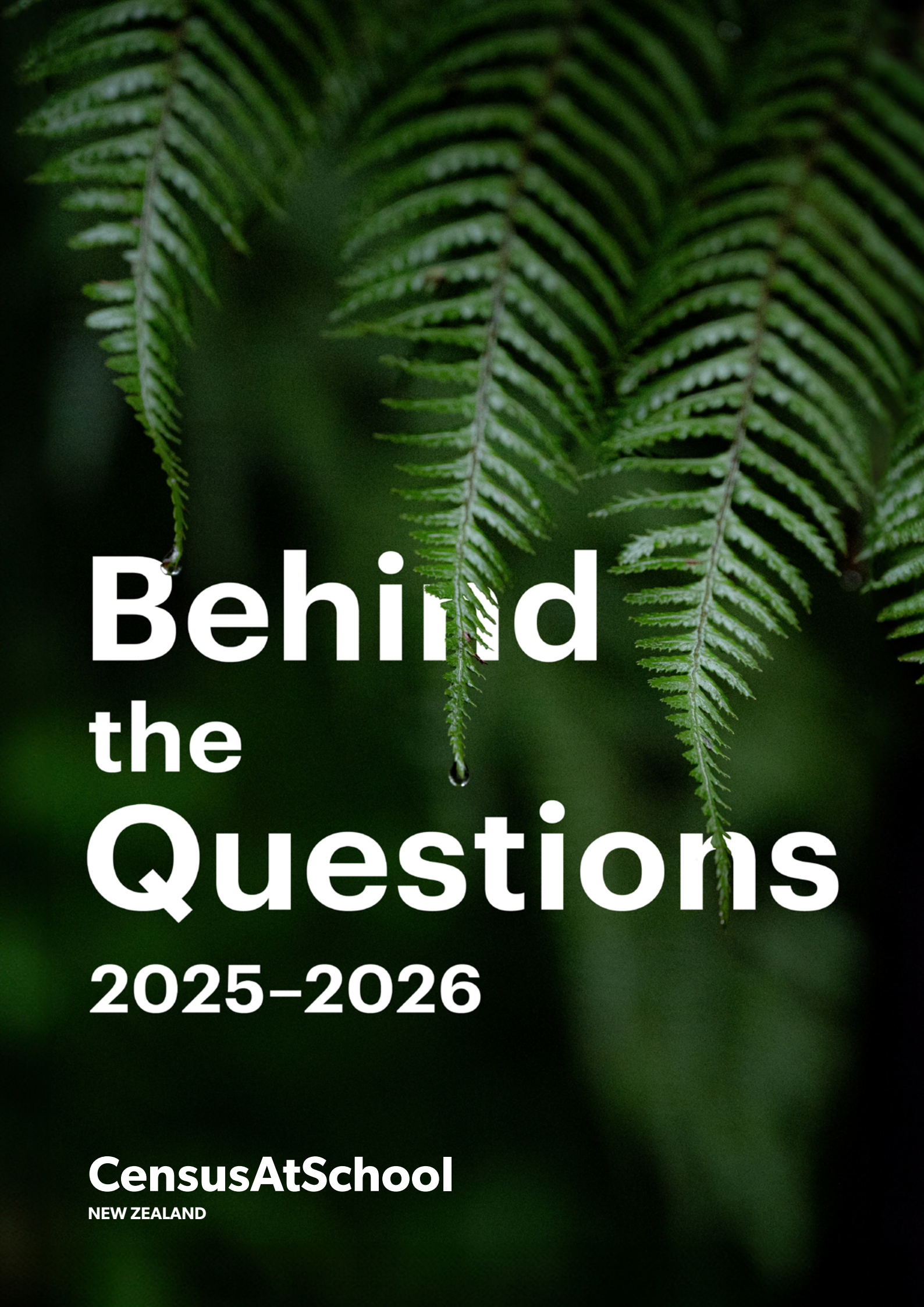


Behind the Questions

2025–2026

CensusAtSchool
NEW ZEALAND

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Overview

This guide helps you explore the questions in the 2025–2026 CensusAtSchool questionnaire and serves as a companion to the **Teacher's Guide**. It can be used as a resource to spark discussions with your students.

No survey question is perfect, so encourage students to discuss potential challenges, including ethical concerns, social issues, and differing interpretations. Highlight how these challenges may impact the quality of the collected data.

Question Criteria

To determine if a question is a good fit, we use the following criteria:

- Relevant and engaging for students.
- Covers a wide range of topics, including lifestyle, interests, wellbeing, and opinions.
- Easy to understand and answer.
- Generally positive and encouraging.
- Avoids questions about illegal or unsafe behaviour.
- Suitable for a variety of data analysis activities.
- Includes student-submitted questions from the previous survey.
- Retains questions from past surveys for time series analysis.
- Aligns with questions in New Zealand's official Census to raise awareness.
- Includes some international CensusAtSchool survey questions for comparison.

Questionnaire Process

The questionnaire undergoes a thorough process before its launch, including:

- Auditing the previous questionnaire to determine which questions to retain, update, or remove.
- Reviewing student-submitted questions from the last questionnaire.
- Proposing new questions, ensuring clarity, simplicity, and completeness within the CensusAtSchool team.

- Testing new questions in classrooms and incorporating feedback.
- External review by the Ministry of Education, Stats NZ, and Stats NZ's questionnaire design team.
- Checking the survey length to ensure it can be completed in one sitting (assuming measurements have been made beforehand).
- Final review by the CensusAtSchool team.
- Translation into Māori.
- Survey development, including error messaging.
- Testing of the coded survey.

Privacy and Security

CensusAtSchool New Zealand prioritises privacy and confidentiality. With no research agenda, data will not be released for commercial gain. The project's sole aim is to provide a rich educational resource to improve statistical literacy for teachers and students.

Individual anonymity is guaranteed because no names are attached to individual participants' submitted surveys. Also, since data is released in randomly selected samples, individuals will not be able to be identified.

Participation is completely voluntary. We encourage you to inform your Principal, students, and whānau fully about the project and remind you of your own responsibility regarding parental information and consent. More information is available on our website.

The survey design and questions are modelled on the partner projects overseas, which have already proven successful. Stats NZ are involved in checking the survey question design to ensure that the survey questions comply with their guidelines.

Data security is a high priority and considerable effort has been made to put security measures in place, using encryption and login systems on the website.

- Answers to questions marked **PRIVATE** go into the main CensusAtSchool database only. They are not provided in the class data.
- Answers to questions 6-21 will be provided as a set so that you can explore relationships between variables in class.
- The remaining questions will be provided independently and will not be matched to other answers that your class provides.

About You

Gender

1. What is your gender?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Another gender (please specify): _____
- ○ Skip question

UNCHANGED

This question is from the official New Zealand Census. We follow **Stats NZ**'s 'gender by default' approach and use their wording. Students can choose to 'Skip question' if they prefer not to share this information.

For privacy and identifiability, gender data will not be provided in the class data but will be included in the broader database for sampling and visualisation. Students are informed of this when completing the survey.

We encourage sensitivity when using gender identity information and suggest avoiding gender-based comparisons or competitions where possible.

Age

2. What is your age in years?

_____ years

UNCHANGED

This question is similar to one from the official New Zealand Census that asks for birth date. Age can be compared with other variables, like measurements, sleep time, technology usage, and more.

Country of Birth

3. Which country were you born in?

- ○ New Zealand
- ○ Overseas. Please enter the current name of the country (e.g. England, Cook Islands): _____

UPDATED

This question is from the official New Zealand Census, and the answer options have been updated to align with the new Census format.

Ethnicity

4. Which ethnic group do you belong to? Select all that apply to you.

- ☐ New Zealand European
- ☐ Māori
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Cook Islands Māori
- ☐ Tongan
- ☐ Niuean
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Other, e.g. Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan. Please enter the ethnicity: _____

UPDATED

This question is from the official New Zealand Census. The question and answer options have been updated to align with the new Census format.

Languages Spoken

5. In how many languages can you hold a conversation about a lot of everyday things?

_____ languages

UNCHANGED

This question is a simplified version of the official New Zealand Census question: “In which language(s) could you have a conversation about a lot of everyday things?” In the 2018 Census, the five **most common languages** were English, te reo Māori, Samoan, Northern Chinese (including Mandarin), and Hindi.

Handedness

6. Are you right-handed, left-handed or ambidextrous?

- ○ Right-handed
- ○ Left-handed
- ○ Ambidextrous

UNCHANGED

Handedness can be compared with various other factors, such as dominant foot size, musical instruments played, favourite sports, and more. According to a large-scale **study**, an estimated 10.6% of people are left handed. Approximately 1% of people are naturally **ambidextrous**.

Eye Colour

7. What is your eye colour?

- ○ Blue
- ○ Brown
- ○ Grey
- ○ Green
- ○ Hazel

UNCHANGED

This question is intended to encourage students to think about the definitions of each eye colour and make a decision about their own. Eye colour can be compared with natural hair colour.

It is **estimated** that 79% of the world's population have brown eyes, 10% have blue eyes, 5% have hazel eyes, 5% have green eyes, and less than 1% have grey eyes.

Natural Hair Colour

8. What is your natural hair colour?

- ○ Black
- ○ Blonde
- ○ Brown
- ○ Red
- ○ White

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to prompt students to consider the definitions of different hair colours and identify their own natural hair colour. Natural hair colour can be compared with eye colour.

Globally, it is **estimated** that 85% of the world's population has black hair, 11% has

brown hair, 2% has blonde hair, and 2% has naturally red or auburn hair. Albinism (resulting in white hair) occurs in approximately one in 17,000 people worldwide. However, there are **significant regional differences**: for example, about 80% of people in Finland are estimated to have blonde hair, while around 6% of people in Scotland have red hair.

Pets

9 a. Do you have any pets? Include any pets that belong to people you live with.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

NEW

This was one of the most commonly requested questions by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire. It is designed to spark fun classroom discussion about their pets, while also encouraging students to explore the distinction between pets and farm animals.

The next part of this question (see the following page) asks about how many different types of pets students have. Part b is designed to help find various pieces of information, including the total number of pets per student, how many of each type of pet each student has, and the number of different types of pets a student owns.

According to the **2020 Companion Animals in New Zealand report**, New Zealand is home to approximately 4.4 million pets, with 66% of households owning at least one pet—the second-highest proportion in the world after the United States (67%). In New Zealand, 41% of households have at least one cat, 34% have at least one dog, and 9% have fish, with an average of eight fish per household.

9 b. What types of pets do you have? Enter the number of each.

Dog	
Cat	
Fish	
Bird	
Rabbit	
Guinea pig	
Horse / Pony	
Rat	
Mouse	
Lizard	
Turtle	
Frog	
Axolotl / Salamander	
Hamster	
Gerbil	
Sheep	
Goat	
Pig	
Alpaca	
Llama	
Cow	
Chinchilla	
Other	

NEW

Broken Bones

10. Have you ever broken a bone?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

NEW

This was one of the questions requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire. Broken bones can be compared with age.

It is designed to encourage students to share their stories. Between **one third and one half** of all children will break at least one bone.

Measurements

Height

11. What is your height, without shoes on? Answer to the nearest centimetre.

_____ cm

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to give students practise in accurately measuring height. Height can be compared with age, feet size, wrist circumference, thumb circumference, and more. *See the measurement station for height on page 8 of the Teacher's Guide.*

Questions about the measuring process

- Why might it be better to use a textbook rather than a ruler on top of heads?
- Why might it be better having the tape measure attached to the wall?"

Things to think about

- Who might be interested in this data?
- What do you think the shortest and tallest heights would be for students of a certain age?
- What shape would a graph of heights for students of a specific age have?

Foot Lengths

12. What are the lengths of your feet, without shoes? Answer in centimetres to one decimal place.

a. Left foot _____ cm

b. Right foot _____ cm

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to get students to think about how to accurately measure feet and to allow comparison of foot lengths and their relationship to height, handedness, age, and more. *See the measurement station for foot lengths on page 9 of the Teacher's Guide.*

Questions about the measuring process

- Why might it be better to use a measurement card rather than a ruler?
- Would keeping shoes on affect all measurements in the same way?
- Why might it be better to measure against a wall?
- Why do we measure in centimetres to one decimal place?
- If the measurements were to the nearest centimetre instead, how would that impact on our ability to compare which foot was longer?
- The activity **Fabulous Feet** explores the validity and reliability of foot length data.

Things to think about

- Who might be interested in this data?
- What other body measurements could foot lengths be related to?
- Are foot lengths changing over time?
- What shape would a graph of foot lengths for students of a specific age have?
- Research shows that most people have different-sized feet, with measurements varying throughout the day. **SATRA** states 20% of UK people have a foot length difference over 0.4cm (about half a size). **Cincinatti Footcare** reports 80% of Americans have a longer left foot, usually by about 0.8cm.
- Shoe stores usually have the right shoe on display. How might this affect those who have a longer left foot than right foot?
- Are other parts of the body typically bigger on the left side? Why might that be?

Left Wrist Circumference

13. What is the circumference of your left wrist? Answer in centimetres to one decimal place.

_____ cm

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to help students practise accurate measuring. Wrist circumference can be compared with age, feet size, thumb circumference, height, and more. *See the measurement station for left wrist circumference on page 10 of the Teacher's Guide.*

Questions about the measuring process

- Why do the measurement instructions in the Teacher's Guide get students to find their "bumpy" bones?
- Would it matter if we measured the right wrist?
- Why do we measure in centimetres to one decimal place?

Things to think about

- Who might be interested in this data?
- What other body measurements might wrist circumference be related to?
- What do you think the smallest and biggest wrist circumferences would be for students of a certain age?

Left Thumb Circumference

14. What is the circumference of your left thumb? Answer in centimetres to one decimal place.

_____ cm

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to help students practise accurate measuring. Thumb circumference can be compared with age, feet size, wrist circumference, height, and

more. *See the measurement station for left thumb circumference on page 11 of the Teacher's Guide.*

Questions about the measuring process

- Why do the measurement instructions in the Teacher's Guide get students to use a piece of string rather than a measuring tape?
- Would it matter if we measured the right thumb?
- Why do we measure to one decimal place?
- Why do we need to stretch the string straight?

Things to think about

- Who might be interested in this data?
- What other body measurements might thumb circumference be related to?
- Could left thumb circumferences be related to handedness? Why?

School

Travel Method

15. What is the main way you usually get to school?

- ○ walk
- ○ car
- ○ bus
- ○ train
- ○ bike
- ○ boat
- ○ scooter
- ○ skateboard
- ○ other

UNCHANGED

This question is intended to encourage students to think carefully about the wording, particularly the terms ‘main’ and ‘usually’. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

Travel Time

16. How long does it usually take you to get to school? Answer to the nearest minute.

[ ] minutes

UNCHANGED

This question is intended to encourage students to think carefully about the wording, particularly the term ‘usually’. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

School Bag Weight

17. What is the weight of your school bag today, including everything inside? Answer in kilograms to one decimal place.

_____ kg

UPDATED

This question is designed to help students practise accurate using a scale. The wording has been updated to clarify that everything inside should be weighed. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

Things to think about

- How much does a student's bag weight change from day to day?
- How does doing the survey before or after lunch change the weight of bags?
- Who might be interested in this data?
- What shape would a graph of bag weights for students of a specific age have?
- How do you think bag weights have changed over the years?

Games

Matching Pairs

18. How quickly can you match all the pairs of pictures? Click on “Start” and then click on two squares to uncover their pictures. Matching squares will remain uncovered. Keep clicking until you have uncovered all the pairs.

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to be a fun, competitive experience for students. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

Reaction Time

19. How fast is your reaction time? Click on the green button. When it turns red, click it as fast as you can.

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to be a fun, competitive experience for students. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

Left-leg Stand

20. How long can you stand on your left leg with your eyes closed? Answer in seconds.

[ ] seconds

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to be a fun, competitive experience for students. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

Standing on one leg is a simple yet powerful measure of balance. **Studies** have shown that the ability to stand on one leg, particularly with eyes closed, declines with age, and it is used in clinical settings as a test for balance and aging. **Research** suggests that standing on one leg for more than 10 seconds is associated with a lower risk of early death.

Practicing standing on one leg can improve balance and may even contribute to a longer life, according to health experts like **Michael Mosley**. The **world record** for standing on one leg blindfolded is over two hours!

Standing Jump

21. a. What is your standing jump distance? Answer in centimetres.

[ ] cm

b. Did you use a target to aim towards?

○ Yes

○ No

UNCHANGED

This question is designed to be a fun, competitive experience for students and is our first CensusAtSchool experiment. It is designed to test the idea that having a target to aim towards increases the average distance jumped. The distribution of distance jumped differs based on factors such as gender and age.

Further reading

- **Wikipedia Standing Long Jump**
- **Long Jump Test Norms**

Activities

Musical Instrument

22 a. Do you know how to play any musical instrument?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

22 b. Which musical instruments can you play?

- ☐ Cello
- ☐ Clarinet
- ☐ Drums
- ☐ Flute
- ☐ Guitar
- ☐ Kōauau
- ☐ Piano / Keyboard
- ☐ Pūtātara
- ☐ Recorder
- ☐ Saxophone
- ☐ Trumpet
- ☐ Ukulele
- ☐ Violin
- ☐ Other. Please state: _____

NEW

This was one of the questions requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool

questionnaire. Recent specific statistics about the percentage of school-age children playing musical instruments in New Zealand are not readily available. However, research published in the **British Journal of Music Education** found that around 12-17% of children participate in musical instrument lessons.

Sleep and Wake Time

UNCHANGED

23 a. About what time did you go to sleep last night? Answer to the nearest half hour.

[ ] : [ ] [am]

23 b. About what time did you wake up this morning? Answer to the nearest half hour.

[ ] : [ ] [pm]

These questions are designed to spark classroom discussions about sleep habits. Trends over time can be explored, as it has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires. The total amount of sleep can be compared with factors such as whether students felt they got enough sleep, whether they used a device in bed, and their overall mood.

The Ministry of Health **recommends** 9 to 11 hours of sleep for children aged 5–13 years and 8 to 10 hours for teens. In 2020/21, 78% of children aged 0–14 years met the recommended sleep duration guidelines.

Questions about the measuring process

- The first dropdown box has the numbers 1 through 12, what do these represent?
- The second dropdown box has the numbers 00 and 30, what do these represent?
- The third dropdown box has am and pm but by default one is set to pm and one is set to am, why?
- If you went to bed at midnight, how would you represent that using the dropdown boxes?

Enough Sleep

23 c. Do you feel like you got enough sleep last night?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

NEW

This question is designed to spark interesting classroom discussions about sleep habits. Whether students felt like they got enough sleep or not can be compared with total sleep time, whether or not they used a device in bed, and overall mood.

Device in Bed

23 d. Did you use any device in bed last night? ‘Device’ includes TVs, phones, computers, tablets, consoles, etc.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

NEW

This question is designed to spark interesting classroom discussions about device usage. Device in bed usage can be compared with whether they felt they got enough sleep, sleep time, screen time, and overall mood.

According to a recent New Zealand **study on children’s sleep**, screen time in the two hours before bed has little impact, but using devices in bed leads to poorer sleep quality.

Screen Time

24. For your most recent whole school day, how much total screen time did you have after school before going to sleep? Answer to the nearest 15 minutes. Enter zero if you spent no time on screens.

☐ hours ☐ minutes

UNCHANGED

This question encourages meaningful classroom conversations about device usage. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires. Screen time can be compared with whether they felt they got enough sleep, total sleep time, whether or not they used a device in bed, and overall mood.

Tech Usage

25 a. Which of the following have you used **in the last week**? (You may tick more than one.)

- ☐ own cell phone
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ X (formerly Twitter)
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Threads
- ☐ WhatsApp
- ☐ Discord
- ☐ ChatGPT
- ☐ None of these

UPDATED

We've updated the options for this question by adding Threads and ChatGPT, and changing Twitter to X (formerly Twitter). We have also removed Twitch, BeReal, and Reddit. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

25 b. Which of the following did you use **four or more times yesterday**? (You may tick more than one.)

- ☐ own cell phone
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ X (formerly Twitter)
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Threads
- ☐ WhatsApp
- ☐ Discord
- ☐ ChatGPT
- ☐ None of these

UPDATED

We've updated the options for this question by adding Threads and ChatGPT, and changing Twitter to X (formerly Twitter). We have also removed Twitch, BeReal, and Reddit. Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

This question is designed to identify frequent technology use. According to **Pew Internet Research** in December 2023, 16% of Americans aged 13–17 reported being almost constantly on YouTube, 17% on TikTok, 14% on Snapchat, 8% on Instagram, and only 3% on Facebook.

Gaming Spend

26. Estimate how much money you have spent on gaming in the past month. ‘Gaming’ means video games on consoles, computers, phones, etc. Include any money your parents, caregivers, or others spent on your gaming.

$ [ ]

NEW

This was one of the questions requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire. Gaming spend can be compared with screen time and the other questions on gaming for high school students.

The CensusAtSchool team is collaborating with Tūturu—a modern approach to student wellbeing—to develop data-driven resources that help teens explore health and wellbeing topics.

Opinions

Gaming Reason, Effect and Problem Spending

Years 9–13 only

NEW

27 a. In five words or less, what do you think is the **main reason** why teens game?

I don't know

27 b. In five words or less, what do you think is the **main effect** on teens who game?

I don't know

27 c. Spending money on gaming can be a problem for some teens I know.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- I don't know

This question set is designed for students to explore how teens engage with gaming, including spending on games and in-game purchases or microtransactions.

It encourages critical thinking about the implication of “gacha” games, where players spend in-game currency or real money to obtain random virtual items through a virtual lottery. These randomised rewards, often called “loot boxes,” reflect a growing trend of games incorporating gambling-like features.

The first two questions aim to generate a rich qualitative dataset for analysis through word clouds and other text tools. Answers are limited to five words or fewer to keep responses concise and keyword-focused. You may need to assist students in summarising their ideas.

The CensusAtSchool team is collaborating with Tūturu—a modern approach to student wellbeing—to develop data-driven resources that help teens explore health and wellbeing topics.

Further reading

- **Research on Pasifika Youth: Is Gaming a Gateway to Problem Gambling?**
- **Digital Convergence of Gaming, Gambling and Cryptocurrency**

Supportive Adult

Years 9–13 only

28 Think about one adult who you look up to. Which one of the following best describes that adult?

- ○ Parent or caregiver
- ○ Older brother or sister
- ○ Grandparent
- ○ Aunt or uncle
- ○ Teacher or school staff member
- ○ Family friend
- ○ Coach
- ○ Religious leader
- ○ Other
- ○ I don't know

NEW

This question is designed for students to reflect on the adult they look up to. This question was asked in 2005, but with a different set of options that they could select from.

The CensusAtSchool team is collaborating with Tūturu—a modern approach to student wellbeing—to develop data-driven resources that help teens explore health and wellbeing topics.

Further reading

- **Adolescents Need Adults**

Favourite Colour

29. What is your favourite colour?

I don’t know / I don’t have one

NEW

This was one of the most popular questions requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire and will provide fun classroom discussions and interesting results!

Favourite Food

30. What is your favourite food?

I don’t know / I don’t have one

NEW

This was one of the most popular questions requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire and is sure to spark engaging classroom discussions and produce fascinating results!

Favourite Sport

31. What is your favourite sport to play/do?

○ I don’t know / I don’t have one

UPDATED

This question is designed to be fun and to encourage classroom discussions, originally based on student requests. We have updated it to make it easier for students to respond with options like ‘I don’t know’ or ‘I don’t have one.’

In 2023, **The New Zealand Secondary School Sports Council** conducted a census on sport participation. The top four sports were netball (26,950 participants), basketball (26,572 participants), volleyball (24,950 participants), and rugby union (24,930 participants).

Favourite Video Game

32. What is your favourite video game?

○ I don’t know / I don’t have one

NEW

This was a popular question requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire and will provide great classroom discussions.

Future Job

33. What job do you want after you finish studying?

I don't know

NEW

This was a popular question requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire and will provide great classroom discussions.

Feeling

34. How are you feeling overall today? Use one word.

I don't know

NEW

This was one of the most popular questions requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire and will provide good classroom discussions.

Trending Word

35. Which word do you think is trending the most right now?
('Trending' means a word that has recently become very popular.)

I don't know

NEW

This question is designed to capture students' interest.

Holiday Location

36. If you could take a holiday anywhere, where would you choose to go?

NEW

I don't know

This was one of the most popular questions requested by students in the last CensusAtSchool questionnaire and will provide good classroom discussions.

Climate Change

37. Which option best describes your opinion on climate change?

UNCHANGED

- It is an urgent problem that needs to be managed now.
- It is a problem that needs to be managed in the future.
- It is not a problem.
- I don't know.

Trends over time can be explored, as this question has been included in many previous CensusAtSchool questionnaires.

Future Question

38. If you could ask students throughout New Zealand one more question in this survey, what would it be?

_____

○ I don't know

UPDATED

These questions will be incorporated into the design process for the 2027–2028 CensusAtSchool questionnaire. We're excited for your students to directly share what they want to be asked in the future! Give your students time to think ahead and let them know that many of their questions have been included in this year's questionnaire.

Check

39. Please check your answers before you sign.

☐ I declare that the information I have given is true and complete as far as I know.

UNCHANGED

This declaration is a standard part of data collection, ensuring students take responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of their answers. Explain to students that this step helps maintain data integrity, as accurate responses are essential for meaningful analysis.