



## Bias or No Bias?

This activity allows students to consider the types of biases present in surveys and their effects on survey outcomes.

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines *bias* as “systematic error introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others.”

Consider the [Census at School survey](#) that you completed. In your group, examine each question on the *Census at School* survey to determine if you perceive any biases. Describe any biases that you perceive.

Discuss if, in your opinion, these biases would affect the survey outcome. If so, how would they affect the results?

More questions for consideration:

1. Cultural and gender biases are two types of biases that are commonly present in surveys. What other possible areas of bias can you think of?
2. Consider the type of information collected by the national census. How would you ensure that there is no bias?
3. Discuss how the national census results are used by society. For example, what types of decisions are based on census results?

Note: For information on Canada’s national census, go to [www.censusatschool.ca](http://www.censusatschool.ca) and click on Census of Canada.

Alternative:

Instead of asking students to examine all the survey questions for biases, the teacher could shorten the activity by choosing specific questions.

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