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# Census Topics

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## Census topics 1801 - 2001

Apart from 1941, a census has been taken in Britain every ten years since 1801. By comparing one set of census results with another significant long-term changes in our national life can be monitored. To do this effectively the census itself must constantly adapt. Each decade, questions on topics of new significance are added; others no longer essential are omitted. In this way the burden of form filling is kept to a minimum and the task of processing and publishing results reduced to the essentials.

This leaflet illustrates the development of census questions over the last 200 years. The style and wording of questions has changed considerably over the years, and the leaflet uses the most recent titles.



# Census topics 1801- 2001

UK = GB + Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>    GB = Great Britain = England, Wales and Scotland    E = England    W = Wales    S = Scotland    NI = Northern Ireland

Subject	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
<b>Names</b>										
<b>Sex</b>	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Age</b>	-	-	GB	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Date of birth day, month and year</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Marital status</b>	-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Position in household relationship to others in household</b>	-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Whereabouts on census night</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Usual address</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Migration</b>										
address one year ago	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
address five years ago	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Country of birth/birthplace</b>	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Year of entry to UK</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Parents' countries of birth</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Nationality<sup>2</sup></b>	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Ethnic group</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Religion<sup>3</sup></b>	-	-	-	-	GB	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Education</b>										
whether scholar or student	-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	S
age at which full-time education ceased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
school level qualifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
scientific and technical qualifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
higher qualifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
professional qualifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
transport to place of study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Employment</b>										
Activity: whether in work, unemployed, retired, etc	-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
Students of working age	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Working full-time or part-time</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Weekly hours worked</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Employment status</b> whether employee, self-employed etc	-	-	-	-	-	GB <sup>4</sup>	GB <sup>4</sup>	GB <sup>4</sup>	GB <sup>4</sup>	GB
Apprentice or trainee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Name and nature of business of employer (industry)</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Address of business</b>										
<b>Occupation</b>	GB <sup>5</sup>	-	-	GB <sup>5</sup>	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Family occupation<sup>6</sup></b>	-	GB	GB	GB	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Occupation one year ago</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Workplace</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transport to work	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Time since last worked</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Marriage and fertility</b>										
year and month of birth of children born alive in marriage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
number of children born alive in marriage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
whether live born child in last 12 months	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
year and month of first marriage and of end, if ended	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
year and month of present marriage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
duration of marriage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Social conditions</b>										
dependency: number and ages of children under 16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
orphanhood: father, mother or both parents dead	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
infirmary: deaf, dumb, blind etc	-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
eligibility to medical benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
limiting long term illness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
general health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
provision of care	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Language spoken</b>										
Welsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	W
Gaelic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	S	S
Irish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Absent persons</b> whole or part returns	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Households</b>										
number of rooms <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	E,W
number of rooms with one or more windows	-	-	-	-	-	-	S	S	S	S
sharing accommodation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
tenure of accommodation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
furnished/unfurnished	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
lowest floor level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
accommodation on more than one floor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
landlord	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Amenities</b> whether exclusive use, shared use, or lacking										
cooking stove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
kitchen sink	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
piped water supply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
hot water supply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
fixed bath or shower	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
inside WC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
outside WC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
central heating	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Cars or vans</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Principal returns made by enumerators</b>										
<b>Number of houses</b>	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Families per house</b>	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Vacant houses or household spaces</b>	}GB }	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
use or household spaces otherwise unoccupied		GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB
<b>Shared access to accommodation</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Non-permanent structures</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>1</sup> 1841: only for persons born in Scotland or Ireland, 1851-91 whether British subject or not.

<sup>2</sup> also whether full-time or part-time.

<sup>3</sup> asked of part-time workers only.

<sup>4</sup> asked of farmers and tradesmen only.

<sup>5</sup> only distinguishing (a) agriculture, (b) trade, manufacture, or handicraft, (c) others.

<sup>6</sup> 1811-31: only distinguishing (a) agriculture, (b) trade, manufacture, or handicraft, (c) others.

<sup>7</sup> 1901-1911: restricted to whether those carrying on trade or industry worked at home.

# Census topics 1801- 2001

 UK = GB + Northern Ireland<sup>11</sup>

GB = Great Britain = England, Wales and Scotland

E = England

W = Wales

S = Scotland

NI = Northern Ireland

1801	1811	1821	1831	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	2001 <sup>12</sup>	Subject
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Names</b>
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Sex</b>
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Age</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Date of birth</b> day, month and year
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Marital status</b>
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Position in household</b> relationship to others in household
-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Whereabouts on census night</b>
-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Usual address</b>
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Migration</b>
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	address one year ago
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	address five years ago
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Country of birth</b> /birthplace
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Year of entry to UK</b>
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Parents' countries of birth</b>
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Nationality</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	UK	<b>Ethnic group</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	<b>Religion</b> <sup>13</sup>
S	GB <sup>14</sup>	GB <sup>14</sup>	-	GB <sup>14</sup>	-	-	-	-	UK	<b>Education</b>
-	-	-	-	GB	-	-	-	-	UK	whether scholar or student
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	age at which full-time education ceased
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	school level qualifications
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	scientific and technical qualifications
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	UK	higher qualifications
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	UK	professional qualifications
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	S	UK	transport to place of study
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Employment</b>
-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Activity:</b> whether in work, unemployed, retired, etc
-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	Students of working age
-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Working full-time or part-time</b>
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Weekly hours worked</b>
-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Employment status</b> whether employee, self-employed etc
-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	Apprentice or trainee
-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Name and nature of business of employer</b> (industry)
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Address of business</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	<b>Occupation</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	<b>Family occupation</b> <sup>15</sup>
GB <sup>14</sup>	GB <sup>14</sup>	E,W	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Occupation one year ago</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	<b>Workplace</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	<b>Transport to work</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	<b>Time since last worked</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	-	-	-	<b>Marriage and fertility</b>
-	GB <sup>14</sup>	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	year and month of birth of children born alive in marriage
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	number of children born alive in marriage
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	whether live born child in last 12 months
-	-	-	-	GB <sup>14</sup>	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	year and month of first marriage and of end, if ended
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	year and month of present marriage
-	GB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	duration of marriage
-	-	GB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>Social conditions</b>
-	GB	GB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	dependency, number and ages of children under 16
GB	GB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	orphanhood, father, mother or both parents dead
-	-	S	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	infirmary, deaf, dumb, blind etc
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	eligibility to medical benefit
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	UK	long term illness
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	general health
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	provision of care
W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	<b>Language spoken</b>
S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	Welsh
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Gaelic
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Irish
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	<b>Absent persons</b> whole or part returns
E,W	E,W	E,W	E,W	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Households</b>
S	S	S	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	number of rooms <sup>16</sup>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	number of rooms with one or more windows
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	sharing accommodation
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	tenure of accommodation
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	S	furnished/unfurnished
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	lowest floor level
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UK	accommodation on more than one floor
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NI	landlord
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	<b>Amenities</b> whether exclusive use, shared use, or lacking
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	cooking stove
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	kitchen sink
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	piped water supply
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	hot water supply
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	fixed bath or shower
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	inside WC
-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	outside WC
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	UK	central heating
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Cars or vans</b>
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	-	-	-	<b>Principal returns made by enumerators</b>
-	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	-	-	-	-	<b>Number of houses</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>Families per house</b>
GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Vacant houses</b> or household spaces
GB	GB	GB	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	UK	House or household spaces otherwise unoccupied
-	-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Shared access</b> to accommodation
-	-	-	-	-	GB	GB	GB	GB	UK	<b>Non-permanent</b> structures

<sup>8</sup> also number living and number dead.

<sup>9</sup> date first marriage ended not asked.

<sup>11</sup> 1851-1901: only required if under 5 rooms; 1921-1961: returned by the enumerator.

<sup>12</sup> 2001: information on Northern Ireland has been included for the 2001 census but not for previous censuses. 2001 will be the first census on a UK basis.

<sup>13</sup> religion a separate enquiry in 1851. In 2001, the question will be voluntary.