

"We can't move forward until you mail it back" is the saying on the recent campaign to get everyone to fill in their census form. As required by the constitution, a census has to be conducted every ten years. We have all received the forms in the mail, and now it is up to us to fill them in and send them back. The data collected by the census will help determine which towns need roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. Schools, hospitals, and senior citizens' homes will also be funded as part of the 400 billion dollars of federal money given for the needs of the country. It's tax money, of course, so it makes sense that we fill in the forms and get our communities what we need. If people fail to mail the census form back, a census taker will actually come to that house up to three times to get the paperwork filled out. It is that important. Another thing that is important about the census is that it will determine how many seats a state will have in the House of Representatives. The way that works is as follows: each state has at least one representative in the House of Representatives, or 'the house' as it is commonly known. The more populated the state, the more representatives it can have. The number of representatives allowed is fixed by law at 435, the highest number coming from California. All of these members can vote on issues like revenue bills, or to impeach an official. You might already know that the house is part of Congress, its position being under the Senate. So, I will fill in my census form, to let the government know that I am here, where I am from, what I do, and about my family. I certainly want us to have proper representation in the house, so the basic needs of our community can be met. Just think, the oldest recorded census was taken over 4000 years ago in China, during the Xia Dynasty. It has been a practical tool for governments ever since.

### **Grammar notes.**

Related vocabulary: representative, state, member, to vote.

1. That woman over there is one of our state representatives; she visits Washington DC regularly.
2. Washington State is called the evergreen state because of all its forests.
3. We were members of the YMCA, but we gave up our membership last year.
4. It is very important to vote, to have a say in the country's future.