

Where People Live, Why It Matters

Grade: 8th Grade U.S. History / Civics or Georgia Studies

Standards: SS8H4, SS8G1, SSCG15

Time: 2–3 class periods

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how and why Georgia's population has shifted over time
2. Use maps and data to see how that affects political representation
3. Begin to explore fairness in drawing voting districts

Materials:

- Printed population lists (1850, 1920, 2010, 2020)
- Floor or printed Georgia maps
- Markers, cones, or cutouts
- Printed Georgia district maps
- Internet access (optional) for Representable.org

Procedures:

- **Intro Discussion:** Where do most people in Georgia live today? Why? What was different in the past?
- **Giant Map or Grid Map Activity** (from *Georgians on the Move*):
 - Place markers for the 15 largest cities in 1850, then repeat for 1920, 2010, and 2020
 - Ask students to interpret changes in migration, jobs, or transportation
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What patterns do you notice?
 - Why do cities grow or shrink over time?

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- How might this affect who gets represented?
- **Civic Reflection:** Show a simple current district map (printed or projected) and ask:
 - Do these districts seem fair? Why or why not?
 - What questions do you have about how this is decided?

Step-by-Step Teacher Guide:

Day 1: Introduction to Population and Settlement Patterns

1. Begin with a class brainstorm: Where do most people live in Georgia, and why?
2. Introduce census data from 1850, 1920, 2010, and 2020.
3. Complete the Giant Map Activity using [Georgians on the Move](#). Use cones or paper to represent major cities by population.
4. Discuss patterns in population growth.

Day 2: Linking Population to Representation

1. Hand out printed Georgia voting district maps.
2. Guide discussion: Are these district lines fair? How might they impact voting?
3. Watch part of a community mapping video or explore [Representable.org](#).
4. Civic Reflection: What would you change and why?

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Assessment Rubric (8th Grade)

Criteria	4 - Exceeds	3 - Meets	2 - Approaches	1 - Beginning
Map Accuracy	Correctly places all cities; interprets trends clearly	Places most cities accurately; shows trends	Few cities are accurate; some interpretation	Minimal accuracy or engagement
Discussion Participation	Insightful questions and observations	Contributes appropriately	Occasionally contributes	Rarely participates
Civic Reflection	Shows thoughtful reasoning on fairness	States an opinion with some reasoning	Limited explanation	No clear opinion shared

(Optional Add-Ons/Extensions!)

- **Representable Activity Extension:** Students submit a proposed community map and explain why it should remain whole in district design.
- **Math Integration:** Calculate population ratios, analyze proportionality and compactness measures.
- **Art/Civics Integration:** Create PSAs or infographics explaining redistricting to the public.