

Ancestry: 2000

Census 2000 Brief

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Ancestry is a broad concept that can mean different things to different people; it can be described alternately as where their ancestors are from, where they or their parents originated, or simply how they see themselves ethnically. Some people may have one distinct ancestry, while others are descendants of several ancestry groups, and still others may know only that their ancestors were from a particular region of the world or may not know their ethnic origins at all. The Census Bureau defines ancestry as a person's ethnic origin, heritage, descent, or "roots," which may reflect their place of birth, place of birth of parents or ancestors, and ethnic identities that have evolved within the United States.

This report is part of a series that presents population and housing data collected by Census 2000, where 80 percent of respondents to the long form specified at least one ancestry. (About one-sixth of households received the long form.) It presents data on the most frequently reported ancestries and describes population distributions for the United States, including regions, states, counties, and selected cities.¹ The listed ancestries were reported by at least 100,000 people, and the numbers cited in this report represent the number of people who reported each ancestry either as their first or second response.

The question on ancestry first appeared on the census questionnaire in 1980, replacing a question on where a person's parents were born. The question on parental birthplace provided foreign-origin data only for people with one or both parents born outside the United States. The current ancestry question allows everyone to give one or two attributions of their "ancestry or ethnic origin" (Figure 1), and in doing so, enables people to identify an ethnic background, such as German, Lebanese, Nigerian, or Portuguese, which was not otherwise identified in the race or Hispanic-origin questions.

The ancestries in this report also include the groups covered in the questions on race and Hispanic origin, such as African American, Mexican, American Indian, and Chinese. For these groups, the results from the ancestry question and the race and Hispanic-origin questions differ, but the latter are the official sources of data for race and Hispanic groups. In some cases, the totals reported on the ancestry question are lower than the numbers from the race or Hispanic-origin question. For instance,

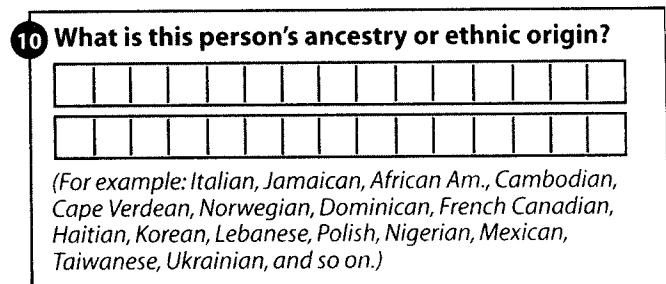


Figure 1 Reproduction of the Question on Ancestry from Census 2000
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

nearly 12 million fewer people specified "African American" as their ancestry than gave that response to the race question. One reason for this large difference is that some people who reported Black or African American on the race question reported their ancestry more specifically, such as Jamaican, Haitian, or Nigerian, and thus were not counted in the African American ancestry category. Similarly, more than 2 million fewer people reported Mexican ancestry than gave that answer to the Hispanic-origin question.² In other cases, the ancestry question produced higher numbers, such as for Dominicans, whose estimated totals from the ancestry question were over 100,000 higher than from the Hispanic-origin question, where many Dominicans may have reported a general term (like Hispanic) or checked "other" without writing in a detailed response.³

More than four out of five people specified at least one ancestry.

In 2000, 58 percent of the population specified only one ancestry, 22 percent provided two ancestries, and 1 percent reported an unclassifiable ancestry such as "mixture" or "adopted." Another 19 percent did not report any ancestry at all, a substantial increase from 1990, when 10 percent of the population left the ancestry question blank (Table 1).

Table 1 Ancestry Reporting: 1990 and 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Ancestry	1990 ¹		2000		Change, 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Numerical	Percent
Total population	248,709,873	100.0	281,421,906	100.0	32,712,033	13.2
Ancestry specified	222,608,257	89.5	225,310,411	80.1	2,702,154	1.2
Single ancestry	148,836,950	59.8	163,315,936	58.0	14,478,986	9.7
Multiple ancestry	73,771,307	29.7	61,994,475	22.0	-11,776,832	-16.0
Ancestry not specified	26,101,616	10.5	56,111,495	19.9	30,009,879	115.0
Unclassified	2,180,245	0.9	2,437,929	0.9	257,684	11.8
Not reported	23,921,371	9.6	53,673,566	19.1	29,752,195	124.4

¹1990 estimates in this table differ slightly from 1990 Summary Tape File 3 in order to make them fully consistent with data from Census 2000. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and 1990 special tabulation.

Nearly one of six people reported their ancestry as German.

In 2000, 42.8 million people (15 percent of the population) considered themselves to be of German (or part-German) ancestry, the most frequent response to the census question (Figure 2).⁴ Other ancestries with over 15 million people in 2000 included Irish (30.5 million, or 11 percent), African American (24.9 million, or 9 percent), English (24.5 million, or 9 percent), American (20.2 million, or 7 percent), Mexican (18.4 million, or 7 percent), and Italian (15.6 million, or 6 percent).

Other ancestries with 4 million or more people included Polish, French, American Indian, Scottish, Dutch, Norwegian, Scotch-Irish, and Swedish.

In total, 7 ancestries were reported by more than 15 million people in 2000, 37 ancestries were reported by more than 1 million people, and 92 ancestries were reported by more than 100,000 people (Table 2).

The largest European ancestries have decreased in population, while African American, Hispanic, and Asian ancestries have increased.

The highest growth rates between 1990 and 2000 occurred in groups identified by a general heritage rather than a particular country of ancestry. For example, the number of people who

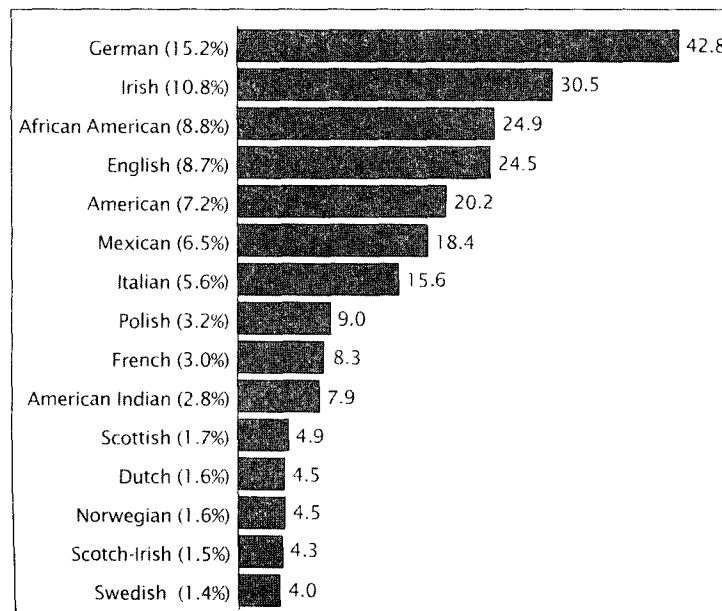


Figure 2 Fifteen Largest Ancestries: 2000. (In millions. Percent of total population in parentheses. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf) Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

Table 2 Ancestries with 100,000 or More People in 2000: 1990 and 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Ancestry	1990		2000		Change, 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent of total population	Number	Percent of total population	Numerical	Percent
Total population	248,709,873	100.0	281,421,906	100.0	32,712,033	13.2
African*	245,845	0.1	1,183,316	0.4	937,471	381.3
African American* ^{1,2}	23,750,256	9.5	24,903,412	8.8	1,153,156	4.9
Albanian	47,710	—	113,661	—	65,951	138.2
American*	12,395,999	5.0	20,188,305	7.2	7,792,306	62.9
American Indian*	8,689,344	3.5	7,876,568	2.8	-812,776	-9.4
Arab*	127,364	0.1	205,822	0.1	78,458	61.6
Armenian.....	308,096	0.1	385,488	0.1	77,392	25.1
Asian*	107,172	—	238,960	0.1	131,788	123.0
Asian Indian	569,338	0.2	1,546,703	0.5	977,365	171.7
Austrian	864,783	0.3	730,336	0.3	-134,447	-15.5
Belgian.....	380,403	0.2	348,531	0.1	-31,872	-28.4
Brazilian.....	65,875	—	181,076	0.1	115,201	174.9
British.....	1,119,140	0.4	1,085,718	0.4	-33,422	-3.0
Cambodian ²	134,955	0.1	197,093	0.1	62,138	46.0
Canadian.....	549,990	0.2	638,548	0.2	88,558	16.1
Chinese	1,505,229	0.6	2,271,562	0.8	766,333	50.9
Colombian.....	351,717	0.1	583,986	0.2	232,269	66.0
Croatian ¹	544,270	0.2	374,241	0.1	-170,029	-31.2
Cuban	859,739	0.3	1,097,594	0.4	237,855	27.7
Czech.....	1,296,369	0.5	1,258,452	0.4	-37,917	-22.9
Czechoslovakian	315,285	0.1	441,403	0.2	126,118	40.0
Danish	1,634,648	0.7	1,430,897	0.5	-203,751	-12.5
Dominican ^{1,2}	505,690	0.2	908,531	0.3	402,841	79.7
Dutch	6,226,339	2.5	4,541,770	1.6	-1,684,569	-27.1
Ecuadorian ¹	197,374	0.1	322,965	0.1	125,591	63.6
Egyptian	78,574	—	142,832	0.1	64,258	81.8
English.....	32,651,788	13.1	24,509,692	8.7	-8,142,096	-24.9
European*	466,718	0.2	1,968,696	0.7	1,501,978	321.8
Filipino	1,450,512	0.6	2,116,478	0.8	665,966	45.9
Finnish	658,854	0.3	623,559	0.2	-35,295	-5.4
French	10,320,656	4.1	8,309,666	3.0	-2,010,990	-19.5
French Canadian ^{1,2}	2,167,127	0.9	2,349,684	0.8	182,557	8.4
German ¹	57,947,171	23.3	42,841,569	15.2	-15,105,602	-26.1
Greek.....	1,110,292	0.4	1,153,295	0.4	43,003	3.9
Guatemalan	241,559	0.1	463,502	0.2	221,943	91.9
Guyanese	81,665	—	162,425	0.1	80,760	98.9
Haitian ^{1,2}	289,521	0.1	548,199	0.2	258,678	89.3
Hawaiian	256,081	0.1	334,858	0.1	78,777	30.8
Hispanic*	1,113,259	0.4	2,451,109	0.9	1,337,850	120.2
Hmong.....	84,823	—	140,528	—	55,705	65.7
Honduran	116,635	—	266,848	0.1	150,213	128.8
Hungarian	1,582,302	0.6	1,398,702	0.5	-183,600	-11.6
Iranian	235,521	0.1	338,266	0.1	102,745	43.6
Irish ¹	38,735,539	15.6	30,524,799	10.8	-8,210,740	-21.2
Israeli	81,677	—	106,839	—	25,162	30.8
Italian ^{1,2}	14,664,189	5.9	15,638,348	5.6	974,159	6.6
Jamaican ^{1,2}	435,024	0.2	736,513	0.3	301,489	69.3
Japanese.....	1,004,622	0.4	1,103,325	0.4	98,703	9.8
Korean ^{1,2}	836,987	0.3	1,190,353	0.4	353,366	42.2
Laotian.....	146,947	0.1	179,866	0.1	32,919	22.4

(See footnotes on next page)

(continued)

Table 2 Ancestries with 100,000 or More People in 2000: 1990 and 2000—Continued

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Ancestry	1990		2000		Change, 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent of total population	Number	Percent of total population	Numerical	Percent
Latin American*	43,521	—	250,052	0.1	206,531	474.6
Lebanese ^{1,2}	394,180	0.2	440,279	0.2	46,099	11.7
Lithuanian	811,865	0.3	659,992	0.2	-151,873	-18.7
Mexican ^{1,2}	11,580,038	4.7	18,382,291	6.5	6,802,253	58.7
Nicaraguan	177,077	0.1	230,358	0.1	53,281	30.1
Nigerian ^{1,2}	91,499	—	164,691	0.1	73,192	80.0
Northern European*	65,993	—	163,657	0.1	97,664	148.0
Norwegian ²	3,869,395	1.6	4,477,725	1.6	608,330	15.7
Pakistani	99,974	—	253,193	0.1	153,219	153.3
Panamanian	88,649	—	119,497	—	30,848	34.8
Pennsylvania German	305,841	0.1	255,807	0.1	-50,034	-16.4
Peruvian	161,866	0.1	292,991	0.1	131,125	81.0
Polish ^{1,2}	9,366,051	3.8	8,977,235	3.2	-388,816	-4.2
Portuguese	1,148,857	0.5	1,173,691	0.4	24,834	2.2
Puerto Rican	1,955,323	0.8	2,652,598	0.9	697,275	35.7
Romanian	365,531	0.1	367,278	0.1	1,747	(NS)
Russian	2,951,373	1.2	2,652,214	0.9	-299,159	-10.1
Salvadoran	499,153	0.2	802,743	0.3	303,590	60.8
Scandinavian	678,880	0.3	425,099	0.2	-253,781	-37.4
Scotch-Irish	5,617,773	2.3	4,319,232	1.5	-1,298,541	-23.1
Scottish	5,393,581	2.2	4,890,581	1.7	-503,000	-9.3
Serbian	116,795	—	140,337	—	23,542	0.2
Slavic	76,923	—	127,136	—	50,213	65.3
Slovak ¹	1,882,897	0.8	797,764	0.3	-1,085,133	-57.6
Slovene	124,437	0.1	176,691	0.1	52,254	42.0
Spaniard	360,858	0.1	299,948	0.1	-60,910	-16.9
Spanish	2,024,004	0.8	2,187,144	0.8	163,140	8.1
Swedish	4,680,863	1.9	3,998,310	1.4	-682,553	-14.6
Swiss	1,045,492	0.4	911,502	0.3	-133,990	-12.8
Syrian	129,606	0.1	142,897	0.1	13,291	10.3
Taiwanese ^{1,2}	192,973	0.1	293,568	0.1	100,595	52.1
Thai ¹	112,11	—	146,577	0.1	34,460	30.7
Trinidadian and Tobagonian	76,270	—	164,738	0.1	88,468	116.0
Turkish	83,850	—	117,575	—	33,725	40.2
Ukrainian ^{1,2}	740,723	0.3	892,922	0.3	152,199	20.5
United States*	643,561	0.3	404,328	0.1	-239,233	-37.2
Vietnamese	535,825	0.2	1,029,420	0.4	493,595	92.1
Welsh	2,033,893	0.8	1,753,794	0.6	-280,099	-13.8
West Indian*	159,167	0.1	147,222	0.1	-11,945	-7.5
Western European*	42,409	—	125,300	—	82,891	195.5
White*	1,799,711	0.7	3,834,122	1.4	2,034,411	113.0
Yugoslavian	257,986	0.1	328,547	0.1	70,561	27.4
Other ancestries	3,989,728	1.6	4,380,380	1.6	390,652	9.8

-Rounds to 0.0.

* General response which may encompass several ancestries not listed separately (i.e., African American includes Black and Negro). NS Not statistically different from zero at the 90-percent confidence level.

¹Included in the list of examples on the census questionnaire in 1990.

²Included in the list of examples on the census questionnaire in 2000.

Notes: Because of sampling error, the estimates in this table may not be significantly different from one another or from other ancestries not listed in this table. People who reported two ancestries were included once in each category. The estimates in this table differ slightly in some cases from the estimates in other data products due to the collapsing schemes used. For example, here German does not include Bavarian. Some groups correspond to groups identified separately in the race and Hispanic-origin questions. The race item provides the primary source of data for White, Black, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian groups, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander groups. The Hispanic-origin question is the primary identifier for Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Hispanic groups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census and Census 2000 special tabulations.

ANNUAL EDITIONS

reported Latin American, African, or European all more than quadrupled (Latin American increased from 44,000 in 1990 to 250,000 in 2000, African grew from 246,000 to 1.2 million, and European rose from 467,000 to 2.0 million). Other general heritage groups that at least doubled in size included Western European, Northern European, Asian, Hispanic, and White.

The three largest ancestries in 1990 were German, Irish, and English. In 2000, these groups were still the largest European ancestries, but each had decreased in size by at least 8 million and by more than 20 percent (Table 2). As a proportion of the population, German decreased from 23 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2000, while Irish and English decreased from 16 percent to 11 percent, and from 13 percent to 9 percent, respectively. Several other large European ancestries also decreased over the decade, including Polish, French, Scottish, Dutch, and Swedish.

The number of people who reported African American ancestry increased by nearly 1.2 million, or 4.9 percent, between 1990 and 2000, making this group the third largest ancestry. However, the proportion of African Americans decreased slightly over the decade, from 9.5 percent to 8.8 percent.

The population of many ancestries, such as Mexican, Chinese, Filipino, and Asian Indian, increased during the decade, reflecting sizable immigration, especially from Latin America and Asia. Several small ancestry populations, including Brazilian, Pakistani, Albanian, Honduran, and Trinidadian and Tobagonian, at least doubled.

Seven percent of the U.S. population reported their ancestry as American.

The number who reported American and no other ancestry increased from 12.4 million in 1990 to 20.2 million in 2000, the largest numerical growth of any group during the 1990s.⁵ This figure represents an increase of 63 percent, as the proportion rose from 5.0 percent to 7.2 percent of the population.

The Geographic Distribution of Ancestries

In each of the four regions, a different ancestry was reported as the largest.

Among the four regions, the largest ancestries in 2000 were Irish in the Northeast (16 percent), African American in the South (14 percent), German in the Midwest (27 percent), and Mexican in the West (16 percent, see Table 3).⁶

At the state level, 8 different ancestries were each the largest reported in 1 or more states. German led in 23 states, including every state in the Midwest, the majority of states in the

West, and 1 state in the South. In 3 of those states, German was reported by more than 40 percent of the population: North Dakota (44 percent), Wisconsin (43 percent), and South Dakota (41 percent).

The other leading ancestries at the state level were African American in 7 contiguous states from Louisiana to Maryland and in the District of Columbia (also notably high at 43 percent); American in Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia; Italian in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island; Mexican in 4 states from California to Texas; English in Maine, Utah and Vermont; Irish in Delaware, Massachusetts and New Hampshire; and Japanese in Hawaii.

Many other ancestries were not the largest ancestry in any state but represented more than 10 percent of a state's population, including American Indian in Oklahoma (12 percent) and Alaska (11 percent); Filipino (18 percent) and Hawaiian (16 percent) in Hawaii; French in Maine (14 percent), Vermont (15 percent), and Rhode Island (11 percent); French Canadian in New Hampshire (10 percent); and Norwegian in North Dakota (30 percent), Minnesota (17 percent), South Dakota (15 percent), and Montana (11 percent, see Table 3).

Other ancestries not noted above were among the 5 largest in a state but represented less than 10 percent of the state's population. Examples include Chinese in Hawaii (8.3 percent), Czech in Nebraska (4.9 percent), Danish in Utah (6.5 percent), Eskimo in Alaska (6.1 percent), Polish in Michigan (8.6 percent), Portuguese in Rhode Island (8.7 percent), Spanish in New Mexico (9.3 percent), and Swedish in Minnesota (9.9 percent).

Twenty-four different ancestries were the largest in at least one county in the United States.

German was the leading ancestry reported in many counties across the northern half of the United States, from Pennsylvania to Washington, as well as some counties in the southern half. Mexican was the leading ancestry along the southwestern border of the United States, and American and African American were the most commonly reported ancestries in many southern counties, from Virginia to eastern Texas.

Several ancestries that did not predominate in any state were the most common within one or more counties. Examples include Aleut and Eskimo in some counties of Alaska; American Indian in counties in Alaska, Arizona, California, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin; Finnish in several counties in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan; French in counties in Connecticut, New York, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Louisiana; French Canadian in counties in Maine; Dutch in several counties in Michigan and Iowa; Norwegian in counties in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin; Polish in one county in Pennsylvania; and Portuguese in one county each in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

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Table 3 Largest Ancestries for the United States, Regions, States, and for Puerto Rico: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

Ancestry	Total population	Ancestry	Per- cent	Ancestry	Per- cent	Ancestry	Per- cent	Ancestry	Per- cent	Ancestry	Per- cent
United States	281,421,906	German	15.2	Irish	10.8	African Am.	8.8	English	8.7	American	7.2
Region											
Northeast	53,594,378	Irish	15.8	Italian	14.1	German	13.6	English	8.3	African Am.	6.5
Midwest	64,392,776	German	26.6	Irish	11.8	English	8.4	African Am.	7.8	American	6.5
South	100,236,820	African Am.	14.0	American	11.2	German	10.0	Irish	8.8	English	8.4
West	63,197,932	Mexican	16.0	German	13.3	English	9.9	Irish	9.0	American	4.1
State											
Alabama	4,447,100	African Am.	19.9	American	16.8	English	7.8	Irish	7.7	German	5.7
Alaska	626,932	German	16.6	Irish	10.8	Am. Indian	10.5	English	9.6	Eskimo	6.1
Arizona	5,130,632	Mexican	18.0	German	15.6	English	10.4	Irish	10.2	Am. Indian	6.1
Arkansas	2,673,400	American	15.7	African Am.	11.9	Irish	9.5	German	9.3	English	7.9
California	33,871,648	Mexican	22.2	German	9.8	Irish	7.7	English	7.4	African Am.	5.1
Colorado	4,301,261	German	22.0	Irish	12.2	English	12.0	Mexican	9.0	American	5.0
Connecticut	3,405,565	Italian	18.6	Irish	16.6	English	10.3	German	9.8	Polish	8.3
Delaware	783,600	Irish	16.6	German	14.3	African Am.	14.0	English	12.1	Italian	9.3
District of Columbia	572,059	African Am.	43.4	Irish	4.9	German	4.8	English	4.4	Salvadoran	2.3
Florida	15,982,378	German	11.8	Irish	10.3	English	9.2	African Am.	8.6	American	7.8
Georgia	8,186,453	African Am.	21.6	American	13.3	English	8.1	Irish	7.8	German	7.0
Hawaii	1,211,537	Japanese	20.7	Filipino	17.7	Hawaiian	16.3	Chinese	8.3	German	5.8
Idaho	1,293,953	German	18.8	English	18.1	Irish	10.0	American	8.1	Mexican	5.5
Illinois	12,419,293	German	19.6	Irish	12.2	African Am.	11.5	Mexican	8.2	Polish	7.5
Indiana	6,080,485	German	22.6	American	11.8	Irish	10.8	English	8.9	African Am.	6.5
Iowa	2,926,324	German	35.7	Irish	13.5	English	9.5	American	6.6	Norwegian	5.7
Kansas	2,688,418	German	25.8	Irish	11.5	English	10.8	American	8.7	Mexican	4.7
Kentucky	4,041,769	American	20.7	German	12.7	Irish	10.5	English	9.7	African Am.	5.7
Louisiana	4,468,976	African Am.	25.5	French	12.2	American	10.0	German	7.0	Irish	7.0
Maine	1,274,923	English	21.5	Irish	15.1	French	14.2	American	9.3	Fr. Canadian	8.6
Maryland	5,296,486	African Am.	20.5	German	15.7	Irish	11.7	English	9.0	American	5.6
Massachusetts	6,349,097	Irish	22.5	Italian	13.5	English	11.4	French	8.0	German	5.9
Michigan	9,938,444	German	20.4	African Am.	11.0	Irish	10.7	English	9.9	Polish	8.6
Minnesota	4,919,479	German	36.7	Norwegian	17.3	Irish	11.2	Swedish	9.9	English	6.3
Mississippi	2,844,658	African Am.	28.3	American	14.0	Irish	6.9	English	6.1	German	4.5
Missouri	5,595,211	German	23.5	Irish	12.7	American	10.4	English	9.5	African Am.	8.8
Montana	902,195	German	27.0	Irish	14.8	English	12.6	Norwegian	10.6	Am. Indian	7.4
Nebraska	1,711,263	German	38.6	Irish	13.4	English	9.6	Swedish	4.9	Czech	4.9
Nevada	1,998,257	German	14.1	Mexican	12.7	Irish	11.0	English	10.1	Italian	6.6
New Hampshire	1,235,786	Irish	19.4	English	18.0	French	14.6	Fr. Canadian	10.3	German	8.6
New Jersey	8,414,350	Italian	17.8	Irish	15.9	German	12.6	African Am.	8.8	Polish	6.9
New Mexico	1,819,046	Mexican	16.3	Am. Indian	10.3	German	9.8	Hispanic	9.4	Spanish	9.3
New York	18,976,457	Italian	14.4	Irish	12.9	German	11.2	African Am.	7.7	English	6.0
North Carolina	8,049,313	African Am.	16.6	American	13.7	English	9.5	German	9.5	Irish	7.4
North Dakota	642,200	German	43.9	Norwegian	30.1	Irish	7.7	Am. Indian	5.1	Swedish	5.0
Ohio	11,353,140	German	25.2	Irish	12.7	English	9.2	African Am.	9.1	American	8.5
Oklahoma	3,450,654	German	12.6	Am. Indian	12.1	American	11.2	Irish	10.3	English	8.4
Oregon	3,421,399	German	20.5	English	13.2	Irish	11.9	American	6.2	Mexican	5.5
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	German	25.4	Irish	16.1	Italian	11.5	English	7.9	African Am.	7.4
Rhode Island	1,048,319	Italian	19.0	Irish	18.4	English	12.0	French	10.9	Portuguese	8.7
South Carolina	4,012,012	African Am.	22.8	American	13.7	German	8.4	English	8.2	Irish	7.9
South Dakota	754,844	German	40.7	Norwegian	15.3	Irish	10.4	Am. Indian	8.2	English	7.1
Tennessee	5,689,283	American	17.3	African Am.	13.0	Irish	9.3	English	9.1	German	8.3
Texas	20,851,820	Mexican	22.6	German	9.9	African Am.	8.7	Irish	7.2	American	7.2
Utah	2,233,169	English	29.0	German	11.5	American	6.6	Danish	6.5	Irish	5.9
Vermont	608,827	English	18.4	Irish	16.4	French	14.5	German	9.1	Fr. Canadian	8.8
Virginia	7,078,515	African Am.	14.9	German	11.7	American	11.2	English	11.1	Irish	9.8
Washington	5,894,121	German	18.7	English	12.0	Irish	11.4	Norwegian	6.2	American	5.2
West Virginia	1,808,344	American	18.7	German	14.0	Irish	11.0	English	9.7	Am. Indian	4.4
Wisconsin	5,363,675	German	42.6	Irish	10.9	Polish	9.3	Norwegian	8.5	English	6.5
Wyoming	493,782	German	25.9	English	15.9	Irish	13.3	American	6.4	Am. Indian	4.7
Puerto Rico	3,808,610	Puerto Rican	69.0	American	2.5	Spaniard	2.1	Dominican	1.7	Hispanic	0.8

Notes: Because of sampling error, the estimates in this table may not be significantly different from one another or from other ancestries not listed in this table.

People who reported two ancestries were included once in each category. Some groups correspond to groups identified separately in the race and Hispanic-origin questions. The race item provides the primary source of data for White, Black, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian groups, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander groups. The Hispanic-origin question is the primary identifier for Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Hispanic groups.

African American and Mexican were the most commonly reported ancestries in the ten largest cities in the United States.

In 2000, African American was the most frequently reported ancestry in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit (Table 4).⁷ Mexican was the leading ancestry in Los Angeles, Houston, Phoenix, San Diego, Dallas, and San Antonio.

Additional Findings

What Combinations were the Most Common Among Respondents Who Reported Two Ancestries?

The most common ancestry combinations in 2000 were German and Irish (2.7 percent of the population), German and English (1.7 percent), and Irish and English (1.4 percent).

What Other Ancestries were Reported?

Overall, about 500 different ancestries were reported during Census 2000. The category "Other ancestries" in Table 2 consists of all ancestries with fewer than 100,000 people (such as Venezuelan, Samoan, or Latvian) as well as all religious identifications (which are not tabulated).⁸

Table 4 Largest Ancestry for the Ten Cities with the Highest Population: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf)

City	Total population	Largest ancestry			90-percent confidence interval
		Ancestry	Number of people	Percent of population	
New York, NY	8,008,278	African American	922,116	11.5	11.4–11.6
Los Angeles, CA	3,694,834	Mexican	983,157	26.6	26.5–26.8
Chicago, IL	2,895,964	African American	804,053	27.8	27.6–27.9
Houston, TX	1,954,848	Mexican	467,213	23.9	23.7–24.1
Philadelphia, PA	1,517,550	African American	493,177	32.5	32.3–32.8
Phoenix, AZ	1,320,994	Mexican	320,092	24.2	24.0–24.5
San Diego, CA	1,223,341	Mexican	237,867	19.9	19.2–19.7
Dallas, TX	1,188,204	Mexican	306,072	25.8	25.5–26.0
San Antonio, TX	1,144,554	Mexican	472,324	41.3	41.0–41.6
Detroit, MI	951,270	African American	599,667	63.0	62.7–63.4

Notes: Because of sampling error, the estimates in this table may not be significantly different from one another or from other ancestries not listed in this table. People who reported two ancestries were included once in each category. Some groups correspond to groups identified separately in the race and Hispanic-origin questions. The race item provides the primary source of data for White, Black, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian groups, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander groups. The Hispanic-origin question is the primary identifier for Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Hispanic groups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

About Census 2000

Why Census 2000 Asked about Ancestry

Information about ancestry is required to enforce provisions under the Civil Rights Act that prohibit discrimination based upon race, sex, religion, and national origin. More generally, these data are needed to measure the social and economic characteristics of ethnic groups and to tailor services to accommodate cultural differences.

Data about ancestry assist states and local agencies on aging to develop health care and other services tailored to address the language and cultural diversity of various groups.

Under the Public Health Service Act, ancestry is one of the factors used to identify segments of the population who may not be receiving medical services.

Accuracy of the Estimates

The data contained in this report are based on the sample of households who responded to the Census 2000 long form. Nationally, approximately 1 out of every 6 housing units was included in this sample. As a result, the sample estimates may differ somewhat from the 100-percent figures that would have been obtained if all housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in group quarters had been enumerated using the same questionnaires, instructions, enumerators, and so forth. The sample estimates also differ from the values that would have been obtained from different samples of housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in

group quarters. The deviation of a sample estimate from the average of all possible samples is called the sampling error.

In addition to the variability that arises from the sampling procedures, both sample data and 100-percent data are subject to nonsampling error. Nonsampling error may be introduced during any of the various complex operations used to collect and process data. Such errors may include: not enumerating every household or every person in the population, failing to obtain all required information from the respondents, obtaining incorrect or inconsistent information, and recording information incorrectly.

In addition, errors can occur during the field review of the enumerators' work, during clerical handling of the census questionnaires, or during the electronic processing of the questionnaires.

Nonsampling error may affect the data in two ways: (1) errors that are introduced randomly will increase the variability of the data and, therefore, should be reflected in the standard errors; and (2) errors that tend to be consistent in one direction will bias both sample and 100-percent data in that direction. For example, if respondents consistently tend to underreport their incomes, then the resulting estimates of households or families by income category will tend to be understated for the higher income categories and overstated for the lower income categories. Such biases are not reflected in the standard errors.

While it is impossible to completely eliminate error from an operation as large and complex as the decennial census, the Census Bureau attempts to control the sources of such error during the data collection and processing operations. The primary sources of error and the programs instituted to control error in Census 2000 are described in detail in *Summary File 3 Technical Documentation* under Chapter 8, "Accuracy of the Data," located at www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf.

All statements in this Census 2000 Brief have undergone statistical testing and all comparisons are significant at the 90-percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. The estimates in tables, maps, and other figures may vary from actual values due to sampling and nonsampling errors. As a result, estimates in one category may not be significantly different from estimates assigned to a different category. Further information on the accuracy of the data is located at www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf. For further information on the computation and use of standard errors, contact the Decennial Statistical Studies Division at 301-763-4242.

For More Information

The Census 2000 Summary File 3 data are available from the American Factfinder on the Internet (factfinder.census.gov). They were released on a state-by-state basis during 2002. For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, sampling error, and definitions, also see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf or contact the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636).

Information on population and housing topics is presented in the Census 2000 Brief series, located on the Census Bureau's Web site at www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html. This series presents information on race, Hispanic origin, age, sex, household type, housing tenure, and social, economic, and housing characteristics, such as ancestry, income, and housing costs.

For additional information on ancestry, including reports and survey data, visit the Census Bureau's Web site on at www.census.gov/population/www/ancestry.html. To find information about the availability of data products, including reports, CD-ROMs, and DVDs, call the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636), or e-mail webmaster@census.gov.

Notes

1. The text of this report discusses data for the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are shown in Table 3.
2. The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values because of sampling variation or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.
3. For more information about race and Hispanic groups, see Census 2000 Briefs on Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races populations, available on the Census Bureau Web site at www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/index.html.
4. The estimates in Figure 2 and Table 2 in some cases differ slightly from the estimates in other data products due to the collapsing schemes used. For example, here German does not include Bavarian.
5. American was considered a valid ancestry response when it was the only ancestry provided by a respondent.
6. The Northeast region includes the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Midwest region includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The South region includes the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, a state equivalent. The West region includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
7. Census 2000 showed 245 places in the United States with 100,000 or more population. They included 238 incorporated places (including 4 city-county consolidations) and 7 census designated places that were not legally incorporated. For a list of places by state, see www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t6.html.
8. Smaller groups are listed at www.census.gov/population/www/ancestry.html.