

Attachment A – “Black (African American)”  
CENSUS FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR’S GUIDE

***Instructions to the moderator are in bold italics.***

***Background information on forms and purpose/intent of the question sections have a gray background.***

Thank you all for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am with JBS International. JBS is a research firm and this focus group is part of a project we are doing with the Census Bureau. Today, I’d like to talk with you about your thoughts on some of the forms that may be used to collect race and ethnicity data for the Census Bureau in the future.

As you know we are audio and video recording our discussion today. These recordings will help us make sure we get what you are saying right. These tapes will only be used by researchers working on this project. Observers are here this evening to see what the focus group is like and to provide feedback to us, as moderators, about what we can do to improve. Your information will be kept strictly confidential and you may choose not to answer a question if you don’t want to.

I will be asking you to look over and complete some questions from the Census forms and then ask you a few questions about the forms. There are no right or wrong answers – we want all of your opinions, ideas and suggestions. We want all of you to feel comfortable and to participate so we have a set of ground rules to help us:

- 1 – Turn your cell phones and pagers off or to vibrate
- 2 – Be courteous and respectful of the other participants’ opinions and ideas. Remember there are no right or wrong answers.
- 3 – Be honest and know that we really want to hear your opinions and ideas
- 4 – Speak clearly and one at a time. You don’t have to raise your hand to speak.
- 5 – Actively participate because we want to hear from ALL of you.

### **Introduction**

First, to introduce ourselves to one another, I’d like to go around the table and have everyone take a few seconds to briefly say their first name and share your favorite fun activity.

***(Moderator: this can be sharing of favorite food/or something non-threatening to break the ice).***

### **Snippet (X3)**

#### **Background of form for Moderator**

The 2010 Census form contains two separate questions for Hispanic origin and race, as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines Hispanic origin and race as two distinct concepts.

Form X3 contains a combined race and Hispanic origin question. This combined question includes examples and a dedicated write-in line for each category on the form (White, Black,

Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some other race or origin). The examples for the Black or African American category include African American, Haitian, and Nigerian.

Many African American respondents do not have problems completing the race question and identify with the OMB race category Black or African American. Therefore, we chose this form first to get participants' feedback on a combined race and origin question, to determine if participants would write in their specific race/origin, and to obtain feedback on the examples.

### Instructions to Participants

***(Moderator: Pass out first two snippets as participants are reviewing form; hold up and/or point to the form or snippet which must be reviewed and completed and ensure participants are understanding and following instructions).***

This evening I will be asking you to review a Census form (***hold up laminated form***) and complete small portions of the forms, which we are calling 'snippets' (***hold up snippets***). The form I'd like you to review, the X3, is in front of you. I would like each of you to read through this form.

Then, when you come to questions 8 and 9, please complete the snippets of questions 8 and 9 that I am passing out now. Please put your first name on the snippets. Then, on the first snippet please answer the questions for yourself.

For the other snippet, please answer the questions for one of your children. If you don't have any children, please complete the other snippet for any child living in your household. If there are no children living in your household please complete the other snippet for another adult living in your household. If you live alone, please complete only the first snippet.

For the other snippet, please write down the age and relationship of the person you are filling out the snippet for and then complete questions 5 and 6.

***(Moderator: Read through the instructions about filling out the second snippet again if necessary. You can shorten the instructions for the second snippet if you read it through a second time.)***

Imagine you are Person 1 and the other person is Person 2. Please complete the form to the best of your ability and let me know when you have finished.

Are there any questions about my instructions? If you have any questions about the snippet itself, please note them and we will have a chance to go over them in our discussion.

### THEME 1: RESPONSE TO HISPANIC/RACE QUESTION

#### Purpose and Guidance

The purpose of questions 1 through 3 in this theme is to have participants discuss how they

answered the race and Hispanic origin questions. The purpose of question 4 is to find out *why* participants answered the way they did.

If participants discuss what impacted the way they reported, then allow this conversation to occur. For example, some respondents may say that they did not identify with any of the categories in the race question so they did not answer the question. Others may say, "My father is White and my mother is African American, but I always report that I am African American because I was raised by my mother and grew up with other African Americans" or "People often think I am African American." Respondents may say that they did not check the "Black, African Am., or Negro" checkbox response category because they were confused by the examples. In all scenarios, encourage this natural discussion.

Many African Americans with a long American heritage do not know their specific roots. Therefore, many identify as simply Black or African American. The Census Bureau strives to collect detailed responses from respondents, but many respondents still report general terms like Black. Also, in the 2000 Census, more than 50,000 respondents wrote in the term "Negro" in response to the race question, even though the term was included in the checkbox category. The purpose of question 5 is to gain an understanding of why participants report terms such as African American, Black or Negro, and the significance they play in their racial identity.

### Questions

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of ALL participants unless otherwise noted. Ask all questions of first participant, then ask all questions of the second participant, etc.)***

Please turn over your second snippet and put them with the first ones. ***(Moderator passes out snippet X3)*** Now we are going to move to a different snippet labeled X3, please review and complete it. Complete it as though you are filling out your census form and it is the first form you have been given; in other words, don't reflect on the previous form.

Please tell me how you completed the snippet for this question?

1. Which box or boxes did you choose?
2. Did you write an answer on any of the lines?
3. What did you write? Under which checkbox did you write your answer? Why did you choose to write on that line?
4. How did you come up with your answer?
5. ***(Moderator: This question should be asked only of those participants who wrote in a term like African American, Black or Negro.)*** Tell me more about why you used the term ***(insert term here)*** to describe your race.

## THEME 2: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SNIPPET

### Purpose and Guidance

The Black or African American category on the X3 includes the term “Negro.” For question 1, we would like to obtain any feedback on instructions or wording of the form, including the use of the term “Negro.”

Cognitive testing has shown that some respondents do not see the instruction to “mark one or more boxes and write in the specific race(s) or origin(s)” on the combined question. The purposes of questions 2 and 3 are to determine if participants saw this instruction and whether they understood and followed this instruction.

Examples are used in the race and Hispanic origin questions to help clarify categories for respondents and to encourage respondents to report their detailed race and origin. The purpose of question 4 is to get feedback on the use of these examples.

The instruction to the X3 combined question reads “mark one or more boxes and write in the specific race(s) or origin(s).” This instruction combines both OMB concepts, race and origin. The purpose of question 5 is to see how participants interpret “race or origin.”

Cognitive testing revealed that some respondents interpret "origin" as place of birth or ancestry, therefore we want to understand how the focus group participants are defining race and origin on this form. If participants discuss their understanding of the term "origin" to mean place of birth or ancestry, encourage this conversation to develop.

### Questions

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)***

1. How did you feel about the instructions or wording on this form?

***\* If respondents say that instructions of wording were confusing or unclear, probe:***

***“Which words or instructions were confusing/unclear? How could it be improved?”***

2. How many races did you think you could mark on this snippet?
3. Did you see the instruction to “mark one or more boxes AND write in the specific race(s) or origin(s)? How do you feel about this instruction?
4. ***(Moderator should point out the examples if necessary.)*** Look at the examples used for this question. Do you think having these examples helped you in completing the form?

***\*If respondents say yes probe:*** Could you tell me more about that?

5. What does the term “race” mean in this question? What does the term “origin” mean to

you in this question? Do they mean the same thing or different things to you?

### THEME 3: RESPONSES FOR OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

#### Purpose and Guidance

For this theme, we are trying to obtain feedback about another person in the household.

#### Questions

1. How many of you completed the other snippet for a child? How did you answer the Hispanic and race questions for this child? Was this the same or different from what you did for yourself? Why?
2. How many of you completed the other snippet for another adult who lives in the household? How did you answer the Hispanic and race questions? Was this the same or different from what you did for yourself? Why?

#### Second Snippet (X9)

#### Background

The X9 contains separate Hispanic origin and race questions. On the X9, there is no write-in line for the Black or African American category. There are write-in lines for the “Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin,” “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Other Asian/Other Pacific Islander,” and “Some other race” categories only.

The X9 tests adding examples to the checkbox response categories White (German, Irish, Lebanese, Egyptian), Black or African American (African American, Haitian, Nigerian), and American Indian or Alaska Native (Navajo, Mayan, Tlingit). The X9 also tests modified examples for Other Hispanic (Dominican, Salvadoran, Colombian, Spaniard), Other Asian (Cambodian, Pakistani, Mongolian), and Other Pacific Islander (Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese).

This form was chosen to get participants’ feedback on whether they would write in their specific race/origin on one of the available write-in lines.

### THEME 1: RESPONSE TO HISPANIC/RACE QUESTIONS

#### Purpose and Guidance

The purpose of questions 1 through 3 in this theme is to have participants discuss how they answered the race and Hispanic origin questions. The purpose of question 4 is to find out *why* participants answered the way they did.

The purpose of question 5 (whether participants marked different checkboxes or wrote in a different response) is to help us understand why this did or did not occur.

***(Moderator: pass out X9 snippets)***

Please turn over your first snippet. Now I'd like you to look at our second snippet, labeled X9. Please review and complete it. Complete it as though you were filling out your census form and it was the first form you were given; in other words, you don't have to reflect on the previous form.

### Questions

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of ALL participants unless otherwise noted. Ask all questions of first participant, then ask all questions of the second participant, etc.)***

Please tell me how you completed the snippet for yourself for questions 8 and 9?

1. Which box or boxes did you choose?
2. Did you write an answer on any of the lines?
3. What did you write? Under which checkbox did you write your answer? Why did you choose to write on that line?
4. How did you come up with your answer?
5. Is this the same or different from what you marked and wrote on the X3? If different, why?

## THEME 2: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SNIPPET

### Purpose and Guidance

For question 1, we would like to obtain any feedback on instructions or wording on the form.

Cognitive testing has shown that some respondents do not see the instruction to “mark one or more boxes” on the race question. The purposes of questions 2 and 3 are to determine if participants saw the instruction to “mark one or more boxes” in the race question and whether they understood and followed this instruction.

### Questions

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)***

1. How did you feel about the instructions or wording on this snippet?

***\* If respondents say that the instructions or wording were confusing or unclear, probe:*** Which words or instructions were confusing/unclear? How could it be improved?

2. How many races did you think you could mark for question 9?
3. Did you see the instruction to mark one or more boxes for question 9? How do you feel about this instruction?

### **Third Snippet (XB)**

#### Background

Form XB uses the same race and Hispanic origin questions as the 2010 Census form. The XB contains no examples for the Black or African American category in the race question. We are interested in seeing how the absence of examples affects participants' reporting and if they would write their specific origin on another write-in line.

## THEME 2: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SNIPPET

#### Purpose and Guidance

For question 1, we would like to obtain any feedback on instructions or wording on the form.

Examples are used in the race and Hispanic origin questions to help clarify categories for respondents and to encourage respondents to report their detailed race and origin. The purpose of question 4 is to get feedback on the use of these examples.

#### Questions

***(Moderator: pass out XB snippets)***

Now I'd like you to look at our second snippet, labeled XB. Please place the X9 and XB snippet side by side. Please compare the two.

#### Questions

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)***

1. Did you see that the examples are different in question 9 on form X9 and XB. What do you think about the differences? Would you have answered question 9 the same or differently on the XB because of these examples?

## **General Questions**

### THEME 2: SNIPPET PREFERENCES

#### **Purpose and Guidance**

The purpose of this theme is to determine if participants prefer one snippet over the others and if so, why.

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of ALL participants.)***

1. Thinking back on all the snippets, which do you prefer and why?
  - \*Wording?
  - \*Instructions?
  - \*Boxes and write in space?
  - \*Examples?
  - \*Categories?
  - \*Layout?
2. Do you think any of the 3 snippets are better for reporting as Black or African American?

### THEME 2B: RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Purpose and Guidance**

The purpose of this theme is to obtain any recommendations that participants may have for improving the forms, especially with respect to helping Black or African American respondents to provide more accurate information.

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)***

1. Do you have any recommendations on the forms that you believe would help people provide more accurate information, especially African Americans provide more accurate information? Also, to make people feel more comfortable answering?

### THEME 4: SITUATIONAL IDENTITY

#### **Purpose and Guidance**

For some people, the context in which they are asked to identify their race can influence their answer. That is to say, they may answer the question differently in different situations and contexts, and depending on who is asking, and how they are asking. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to better understand how participants answer questions about their race in conversations and on forms.

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of MOST participants.)***



1. Have you been asked to identify your race or race(s) in conversations?

**If yes**, in what kinds of situations have you been asked? How do you answer?

2. When you are asked to identify your race on forms, do you answer the same or differently than when you are asked in person?

**\* If participants answer differently, probe:** Please explain why. What influences the way you answer these questions?

## THEME 5: AWARENESS AND FLUIDITY

### Purpose and Guidance

For some people, race and ethnicity are fluid concepts and their racial or ethnic self-identification may change over time. The purpose of questions 1 to 3 is to gain an understanding of when participants first became aware of their racial identity and how/why their racial identity has changed over time.

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of MOST participants.)***

1. As we have been discussing today, all of these forms are asking you to identify your race or races. I'd like you to think of some of the earliest instances in which you thought about your racial identity. Please describe one of these experiences and why/how this is an important memory for you.
2. Do you believe your racial identity has changed over time? How so? For example, early childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, now?
3. Do you feel that people may wonder "what" your race or races are? What race or races do people typically think you are? Why do you think that is?

## THEME 6: "RACE" & "ORIGIN" CONCEPTS

### Purpose and Guidance

As mentioned previously, the instruction to form X3 combines the concepts of race and origin. We want to better understand how people are interpreting the race and origin concepts and look at other possible terms to use on the forms. The purpose of questions 1 is to see how participants interpret the term ethnicity.

Cognitive testing has shown that some respondents interpret the term "origin" as place of birth. The purpose of question 2 is to see if participants interpret any of the questions as asking for place of birth and if so, why.

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)***

## Questions

During our discussion of the X3, we talked about the use of the terms “race” and “origin.” Now, I’m going to ask about a couple of other terms.

1. What does the term ‘ethnicity’ mean to you? Does it mean the same thing to you or something different than ‘race’? Does “ethnicity” mean the same thing or something different than “origin?”
2. Do you think that any of these questions on any of these forms is asking about where you were born? *If so*, Which ones and why?
3. What do you think about the terms “African American,” “Black,” and “Negro?” Do they all mean the same thing to you or do they mean different things?

**Additional comments? Questions? Ideas? Suggestions?**

***Moderator: Thank the participants for their time and provide instructions for collecting participation incentives.***

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## **MODERATOR INFORMATION**

Focus Group Moderator: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of FG \_\_\_\_\_