

Attachment K – “White (Middle Eastern/N. African/Iranian)”  
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 (XB)**

### Background of form for Moderator

Form XB uses the same race and Hispanic origin questions as the 2010 Census form. This form has 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.

The OMB race categories are White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. OMB defines the category White as "A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa." However, respondents of Middle Eastern and North African descent do not necessarily self-identify their race as White.

Therefore, we would like to first obtain feedback on a form that we know many participants of Middle Eastern and North African descent will have difficulty with and obtain their feedback about why they responded the way they did.

At any time during the focus group, if participants say that they would like to have a separate checkbox response category, encourage this discussion. Ask why they would like to have a separate checkbox response category and what the category would look like. Also encourage discussion among the group regarding the pros and cons of having a checkbox response category.

### 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 XB, 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 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.

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 Iranian, but I

always report that I am Iranian because I was raised by my mother and grew up with other Iranians." In both scenarios, encourage this natural discussion.

The Census Bureau strives to collect detailed responses such as Lebanese or Chinese from respondents, but many respondents still report general terms like Middle Eastern or Asian. The purpose of question 5 is to gain a better understanding of why participants report a general term such as Middle Eastern or Asian, rather than reporting their specific race or origin, 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 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. ***(Moderator: This question should be asked only of those participants who reported a general term like Middle Eastern, North African, or Arab.)*** Tell me more about why you used a general term (like Middle Eastern) rather than a specific term (like Egyptian or Lebanese).

## 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 3 and 4 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.

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 and how they impacted one’s response.

## 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?
4. ***(Moderator should point out the examples if necessary. Examples are used with Other Hispanic, Other Asian, and Other Pacific Islander categories.)*** Look at the examples used for both questions. Do you think having these examples helped you in completing the form?

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

## 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. This could be particularly interesting when participants report for children.

Cognitive testing shows that some foreign-born respondents like to indicate that their children were born in the United States by reporting that their children are

"American." For example, a respondent of Arab descent may report their child as Arab-American to show that their child was born in the United States.

### 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)

## THEME 2: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SNIPPET

### Purpose and Guidance

Form X9 also contains separate Hispanic origin and race questions.

The purpose of question 1 is to obtain feedback on the difference in the race examples between the XB and X9. The XB has examples for the Other Asian (Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian) and Other Pacific Islander (Fijian, Tongan). 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 Asian (Cambodian, Pakistani, Mongolian) and Other Pacific Islander (Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese).

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

Now I'd like you to look at our second snippet, labeled X9. Please place the XB and X9 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 XB and X9. What do you think about the differences?
2. Which of these two forms do you prefer? Why do you prefer one instead of the other?

### Third Snippet (X3)

#### Background

Form X3 is a combined race and Hispanic origin question.

The examples for the White category include German, Irish, Lebanese, and Egyptian.

This form was chosen to obtain feedback from participants on a combined race and origin question, to determine if participants would write in their specific race/origin with a broad lead category (White), and to obtain feedback on the White examples.

### 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.

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.

#### 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. Is this the same or different from what you marked and wrote on the XB? 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 of the form.

The purpose of question 2 and 3 are to determine if participants saw the instruction to “mark one or more boxes” in the combined question and whether they understood and followed this instruction.

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 4 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. 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?

## **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 Middle Easterners and North Africans / Iranians?

## 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 people of Middle Eastern, North African, or Iranian descent 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 people of Middle Eastern or North African / Iranian descent? 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.

If participants discuss what impacted the change in their racial identity, then allow this conversation to occur. Some respondents may bring up how family, friends, the neighborhood that they grew up in, or who they dated affected their racial identity. Please encourage this discussion.

We expect the topics of religion and 9/11 and how they impacted participants' racial identity to come up naturally in the discussion. If so, please encourage this discussion. If these topics do not come up, please ask questions 4 and 5.

Question 6 has a similar intent. Many people that immigrate to the United States are not familiar with the racial categories used in the United States, therefore they may have thought of themselves as one race in the country that they were born in and then may change their identification based on their experiences in the United States. In many countries race is more fluid and is described in terms of many gradations along the color spectrum compared to the United States, where conceptions of race are largely influenced by our long history of race relations between Whites and Blacks.

Some peoples' self-identification may be influenced by how they are viewed and treated in society. For example, if a person identifies as Middle Eastern and White, but faced some form of discrimination after 9/11, then the person may begin to identify themselves as Middle Eastern only.

***(Moderator: These questions will be asked of MOST participants. Only ask questions 4 and 5 if the topics of religion and 9/11 haven't come up naturally in the discussion.)***

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. Have any other of your life experiences had an important impact on your racial identity? How so?
4. How do you see your religion affecting your racial or ethnic identity?
5. Has your racial identity changed since 2001? If so, how?
6. How many of you have lived in another country, for example, if you were born or lived in some place other than the U.S.? Did you identify your race differently there than you do here? If so, how did it differ? When you came here, did you identify your race differently?
7. 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 to 3 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 4 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?

2. Does it mean the same thing to you or something different than ‘race’?
3. Does “ethnicity” mean the same thing or something different than “origin?”
4. 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?*

**Wrap up by JBS - i.e., 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 \_\_\_\_\_