

Name _____ Date _____ Time taken _____

What this sheet trains

Divided attention - holding a second rule in mind while your main attention is busy elsewhere. This is the skill behind listening to a teacher while taking notes, or checking your working while solving the next step.

Strategy: anchor and sweep. Give the main task your focus and let the second task run as a quick, automatic check - do not swap your full attention back and forth.

1 Read and tally

Main task: read the passage once. Second task: the counting rule below.

Counting rule

Every time you read the word census, make one tally mark in the box at the foot of the page. Do not go back and re-read. One pass only.

Almost everything a government decides rests on a count of its people. Nigeria has not completed a census since 2006, and the figure from that exercise, about one hundred and forty million, is still the base for the projections used today. Seats in the National Assembly, transfers of oil revenue to the states, the number of vaccine doses ordered and the number of classrooms built all follow from that number. A census is not simply a statistic to be filed and forgotten; it is the instrument through which public money and political representation are shared out between regions.

Counting is harder than it sounds. Census enumerators must reach pastoralists who move with the seasons, households in informal settlements that appear on no map, and regions where insecurity makes a door-to-door visit dangerous. Each of those groups is systematically undercounted rather than randomly missed, which matters far more, because random error cancels while bias accumulates in the same direction. And when the result decides a state's share of federal revenue, every governor has an interest in a generous total, so a census becomes a contest as much as a measurement.

This is why calls to replace the census with mobile phone records and satellite imagery deserve care. Such methods are quick, cheap and genuinely good at showing where buildings and crowds are, but they cannot establish who is a citizen of which state, nor who is old enough to vote. More importantly, a disputed census settled by a method nobody outside a ministry can inspect will not be accepted by the people it disadvantages. Legitimacy, not precision, is the scarcer quantity, and a census that is merely accurate may still fail.

Tally here - one mark per census

Make the marks as you read, then write your total before turning the page.

Total

1 Questions - cover the passage first

Answer from memory. Do not look back at the passage.

My tally total

From page 1

Q1. Name two decisions in Nigeria that depend on the national population figure.

Q2. Why is a group being systematically missed worse than ordinary random error?

Q3. Why do satellite and phone data not settle the questions a population count must answer?

Q4. What does the writer mean by saying legitimacy is scarcer than precision?

2 Grid sweep with a running count

Main task: cross out targets. Second task: keep a count in your head.

Rules - read both before you start, then start the timer

Main: cross out every number that is a multiple of 8.

Second: count - silently, no marks - how many numbers end in 2. Write the total in the box only when you have finished the whole grid.

68	96	81	87	21	56	64	30	98	52	67	51	17	81	42	38
89	45	25	38	48	77	31	46	54	29	98	22	47	20	45	89
62	64	59	20	94	85	91	69	51	41	50	24	30	15	63	37
38	52	51	74	49	85	60	36	33	83	97	73	51	26	19	69
41	42	11	29	97	90	80	30	48	17	65	88	74	14	39	63
22	13	42	62	20	16	62	51	10	40	83	84	36	28	93	51
49	19	29	51	83	64	17	93	90	79	64	84	82	30	21	84
26	34	56	50	23	22	47	12	46	64	10	17	30	31	91	74

Stop the timer when the grid is finished, not when you write the total.

Numbers ending in 2

Write it once the grid is done

3 Copy and total

Main task: copy each row of digits. Second task: keep a running total.

Rules

Main: copy each four-digit group into the box beside it, in order.

Second: add the second digit of every row to a running total as you go.

Write the running total in the box at the end of each row - from memory, not by going back and adding up at the end.

	Copy here	Running total
5 5 6 8		
1 9 1 7		
5 4 7 1		
2 4 5 9		
6 6 2 7		
1 7 6 6		
4 2 5 6		
1 2 5 4		
8 1 9 7		
8 9 5 4		
8 2 7 8		
8 9 7 8		

4 Bridging - answer in a sentence each

Where this shows up outside the sheet.

Q1. Which of the two tasks gave way first here, and what does that suggest about how you divide attention?

Q2. Which part of your week leaves you least able to concentrate, and what crowds it out?

Q3. How do you decide when a task deserves your whole attention rather than half of it?

Answer key

Task 1 · tally
census

7

Task 2 · crossed out
multiples of 8

15

Task 2 · counted
ending in 2

13

Task 3 · final total
second digits

60

Task 1 - suggested answers

Q1. Any two of: seats in the National Assembly, oil revenue shared to states, vaccine orders, classrooms built.

Q2. Random mistakes cancel each other out, while a bias pushes the total the same way every time and accumulates.

Q3. They show buildings and crowds but not citizenship, state of origin or age, which decide representation and voting.

Q4. A count that people distrust will be rejected whatever its quality, so acceptance matters more than exactness.

Notes for the parent or teacher

- Mark the two tasks separately. A student who scores well on the main task and loses the count has not failed - that is the normal pattern, and it is the thing worth discussing.
- Do not prompt or remind during a task. The reminder is the skill.
- An untimed run is a valid run. Record the time only if the student wants to beat it next week.
- Repeat the sheet after a week rather than straight away. Spacing is what makes the gain stick.
- This is attention practice, not an assessment. It does not diagnose anything, and no sheet of this kind should be read as a measure of ability.