

Goal:

1. To evaluate the differences in poverty and income between two different places in Massachusetts.

Assignment:

Using the American FactFinder website, you are to collect income and poverty information from the city/town that you have been assigned, compared to another city/town in Massachusetts of your choice as well as Massachusetts and the United States as a whole. You are to compare at least three (3) different race/ethnic groups. You will write a brief essay (800 words maximum) that describes the patterns that you find across cities/towns and compare to the state and the nation. Your essay should reflect on the implications of the patterns (similarities or disparities) that you find. Your essay needs to include a table showing your data and the source of the data.

You are to write your summary in your blog.

Due date:

March 22, before midnight.

F.A.Q.

Do I have to include the city/town I was assigned? Can't I just choose what place I want to look at?

Yes, you must include your assigned city/town. You can choose any other city/town as you comparison. You must look at Massachusetts and the US as a whole

I am not very good with computers?

You are here to learn skills like these. If you have a difficult time with the census website, your first step is to watch the demonstration videos that I have linked to on the wiki. Your next step is to call the call center during business hours (800-923-8282) and ask to speak with technical support.

You may also send me questions via inbox or email. However, I will not be answering detailed questions about this assignment within 24 hours of the deadline via email.

I am interested in the income and poverty levels of single dads compared to single moms. Can I focus on that?

Yes, as long as you collect that data on at least three (3) race/ethnic groups from your required city/town, a comparison city/town, the state of Massachusetts, and the US as a whole. You can focus your analysis as narrowly as the data allows.

I don't know how to write something like this. What should it look like?

The summary should be clear, concise, and convincing. Do not try to sound smart. Just try to be clear.

If you are struggling with how to write this, you might want to try this structure:

- 1 paragraph summarizing what information you obtained and why you thought this was interesting. This should include the race/ethnic groups and the geographic areas.
- 2-3 paragraphs summarizing the patterns of you found. When I say patterns I mean, what were the important similarities and what were the important differences between them?
- 2-3 paragraphs reflecting on the patterns and what the implications of your findings are. Some ways you can reflect include: What do you think explains this? How can this be changed? What are other people/organizations doing to change this? (NOTE: you do not have to answer all of these).

Do I have to include a table? I don't know what a good table is supposed to look like.

Yes, you have to have a chart. A good chart looks like this.

	Monterey Park	Sacramento	California	United States
Latinos				
Median Household Income	41,005	33,605	36,532	33,676
% Poverty Rate	20.0	19.5	13.2	19.5
Asians				
Median Household Income	40,045	38,466	55,415	51,967
% Poverty Rate	12.7	19.2	9.7	9.6

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4): DP 3 – Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics

Please note that a good chart also include the source information, including the Census Table number.