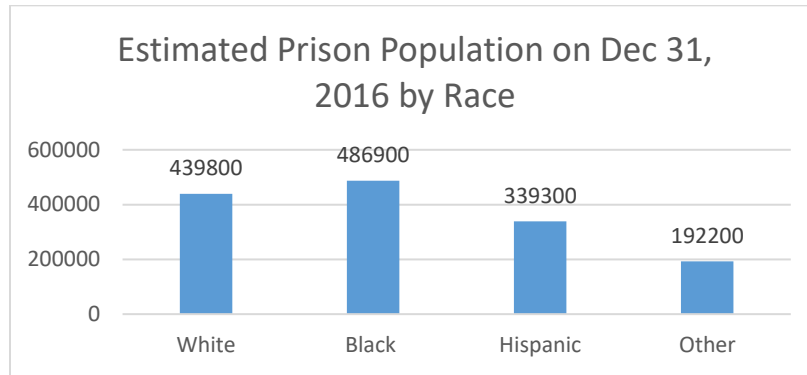


Name: _____

Racial Disparities in the Prison System

Let's take a closer look at who those prisoners are in American federal and state prisons.



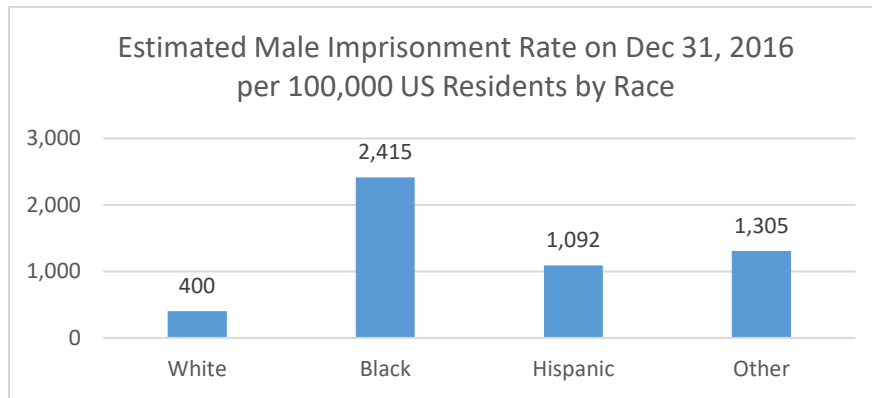
Bureau of Justice Statistics

About what percent of the prison population is white? Black? Hispanic? Other?

Based on this graph, what conclusions do you draw about the racial make-up of the prison population? Is this what you would expect? Why or why not?

What other information would you want in order to understand more about the racial make-up of the prison population?

Let's look at that breakdown in a slightly different way.



Bureau of Justice Statistics

Now what conclusions do you draw about the racial make-up of the prison population?

How could someone use these two sets of data to argue about the equality or inequality of the racial make-up of prisoners?

“Statistical descriptions don’t simply or neutrally record what’s out there. There are political struggles/choices involved in which data are collected, which numbers represent the most accurate data, which definitions should guide how the data are counted, which methods should guide how the data are collected, which was the data should be disaggregated, and which are the most truthful ways to describe the data to the public.”

-Marilyn Frankenstein, “Reading the World with Math.”

Do you agree or disagree? Why? How does it apply to the numbers about imprisonment rates above?