

# U.S. LATINOS AND THE CENSUS

*Results from a September 2024 poll conducted by  
the Digital Democracy Institute of the Americas (DDIA)  
and YouGov*

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## CONTEXT

As the 2030 U.S. Census draws closer, debates over who “deserves” to be counted are already underway. One major flashpoint is the Trump administration’s renewed push to include a citizenship question, an effort that many fear could lead to suppressed participation, especially among immigrant communities. Understanding how U.S. Latinos perceive the count and related issues, and how these perceptions might shape civic engagement, is crucial for engaging communities in education, awareness-raising, or persuasion communications around the Census.

In September 2024, the Digital Democracy Institute of the Americas (DDIA) conducted the second of two foundational polls of Latinos in the U.S. (the first having been conducted around Super Tuesday, in March). As part of exploring sentiments on immigration and border-related topics, DDIA included a series of questions that shed light on Census-related issues, including the following:

- **Who Latinos believe is counted in the Census in the U.S.**
- **Whether Latinos feel non-citizens should be counted**

The following analysis helps partners understand beliefs, knowledge gaps, and framing that may shape Latino participation in the Census and attitudes toward related public policies.

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## KEY OBSERVATIONS:

### Understanding of Who Gets Counted in the Census

- **Among many Latinos in the U.S., there is a notable lack of awareness and understanding about who is counted in the U.S. Census.**
  - When asked to select, from a list, all of the groups counted in the Census, only 68% of the 3,000 Latinos sampled correctly identified U.S. citizens (the most well known group) as being counted.
  - The percentage of Latinos who correctly selected other groups that do get counted, like legal residents, newborns, and undocumented immigrants, was



even lower.

- Many Latinos do not have their minds made up about Census-related policies or preferred immigration policies. Though uncertainty was observed across topics explored—including knowledge of who is counted, attitudes toward including non-citizens in the Census, and preferred immigration policies - **younger Latinos, non-college-educated respondents, non-registered voters, and Independents were especially likely to select “not sure” or “neither agree nor disagree” about the above topics.**

#### Views on Whether Non-Citizens Should Be Counted in the 2030 Census + Framing

- The statement ***“Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted as part of the 2030 Census”*** tended to be more “well received” than the statement ***“Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted as part of the 2030 Census.”***
- Older adults and Republicans express more opposition to counting ***“non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S.”*** and ***“non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants”*** in the Census. They are also more likely to hold intense opinions (strongly agree/disagree).

### IN-DEPTH BREAKDOWNS

The following sections break down responses to each of the Census questions asked in the survey.

## SECTION 1: Latinos’ Understanding of Who is Counted in the Census

To measure levels of understanding about the U.S. Census, Latino respondents were shown a list of population groups and asked to select all of the groups that are counted. The list featured groups that are indeed counted, and some that are not. See *full list in the table below*.

**Question asked in the survey: Which of the following groups are counted in the Census?**  
(Select all that apply)

**Key Finding 1:** Among many Latinos, there is lack of knowledge and room for further information-sharing/education about who is counted in the U.S. Census.





- When asked to select (from a list) which groups of people are counted in the Census, **68% of the 3,000 Latinos we sampled selected that “U.S. citizens living in the United States” are counted** in the Census.
- **53% were able to correctly identify that “legal permanent residents living in the U.S.” are counted.**
- Far fewer respondents recognize that “newborns” (36%), “people experiencing homelessness” (32%) and “incarcerated individuals” (35%) are counted.
- **Only 26% of Latinos sampled recognized undocumented immigrants** as being counted in the U.S. Census. Fewer recognized that **visa holders (25%)** are counted.
- **A significant portion of Latino respondents selected incorrect answers**, for example, 28% believe that U.S. citizens living abroad are counted in the Census, although they are not.
- Additionally, **24% of respondents indicated they were unsure** about who is actually counted in the U.S. Census.

The following table presents the group options provided to respondents, indicating which groups are officially counted in the Census and which are not, along with the percentage of respondents who selected each group.

**Table 1. Groups Counted in the Census and % of Latinos Who Identified Them**

Groups	Actually Counted?	% Who Believe Group Is Counted
U.S. citizens living in the United States	Yes	68%
Legal permanent residents (green card holders) living in the United States	Yes	53%
Temporary visa holders	Yes	25%
Undocumented immigrants	Yes	26%
Newborn babies born on or before Census Day	Yes	36%



People experiencing homelessness	Yes	32%
Prison inmates	Yes	35%
U.S. citizens living abroad	No	28%
Visitors from other countries who are temporarily in the U.S. on Census Day	No	8%
People who die on Census Day	No	10%
Not sure	-	24%

Note: The percentages reflect the share of respondents who selected each group as being counted in the Census.

## **Demographic Patterns: Latinos' Understanding of Who is Counted in the Census**

### **Age-Based Findings**

**Key Finding 2: Younger Latinos (those between 18–29) show much lower levels of awareness of who is counted in the Census when compared to Latinos of other age groups.**

- **52% of Latinos between the ages of 18 and 29 correctly selected U.S. citizens as being counted in the U.S. Census;**
  - as compared to
    - 69% of 30-44-year olds,
    - 74% of 45-54-year olds;
    - 80% of 55-64-year olds; and
    - 86% of those 65+.
- **43% of Latinos between the ages of 18 and 29 correctly selected legal permanent residents as being counted;**
  - as compared to
    - 53% of 30-44-year olds,
    - 54% of 45-54-year olds;
    - 58% of 55-64-year olds; and
    - 71% of those 65+.



- **Younger Latinos also appear to be more uncertain than other age groups.**  
Those between the ages of 18 and 29 were over three times more likely than Latinos above the age of 65 to say they're "not sure" about who is counted in the U.S. Census.
  - **35% selected they were "not sure,"** as compared to
    - 22% of 30-44-year olds,
    - 21% of 45-54-year olds;
    - 16% of 55-64-year olds; and
    - 11% of those 65+.
- Though older Latinos (65+) demonstrate greater general awareness about which groups are counted in the Census, **they also over-select groups that are not counted.**
  - Older Latinos (65+):
    - 42% believe U.S. citizens abroad are counted (vs. 24% among 18-29)
    - 15% selected people who die on Census Day (vs. 9% among 18-29)

## Differences by Education Level

**Key Finding 3:** College-educated Latinos tend to be more able to accurately identify the groups of people who are counted in the U.S. Census as compared to respondents with less than a college education. That said, the college-educated more often select incorrect answers as well.

- **76% of college-educated respondents selected *U.S. citizens*** as being counted, compared to 66% of those with less than a college education.
- **65% selected *legal permanent residents*** as being counted, versus 50% of those with less than a college education.

College-educated respondents, however, were also more likely to choose incorrect groups:

- **35% of college-educated respondents believed *U.S. citizens abroad are counted*** even though they are not (vs. 26% with less than a college education).
- **18% selected *people who die on Census Day are counted*** even though they are not (vs. 8% with less than a college education).



## Gender Patterns

**Key Finding 4:** Latino men tended to answer more assertively (both correctly and incorrectly selecting groups), while women answered they were “not sure” at higher rates.

- **72% of Latino male respondents selected “U.S. citizens living in the United States” as being counted**, compared to 64% of women.
- **56% of men selected “legal permanent residents (green card holders) living in the United States) as being counted**, versus 49% of women.

**But men were also more likely to answer incorrectly:** 33% selected “U.S. citizens living abroad” as being counted, although they are not, (vs. 22% of women).

- **28% of women selected “Not sure”** when asked who is counted in the Census, compared to 19% of men, suggesting higher levels of hesitation or uncertainty among women.

## Trends by Political Affiliation

**Key Finding 5:** Latinos who identify as Independents demonstrate lower awareness and higher uncertainty about who is counted in the Census than those who identify as Democrats or Republicans.

- **Independents identified correct groups as being included in the Census at lower rates** when compared to Latinos who identify as Democrats and Republicans. For example:
  - Only **54% of Independents correctly selected “U.S. citizens living in the U.S.”** compared to 72% of Democrats and 73% of Republicans.
  - **39% of Independents selected “legal permanent residents,”** compared to 58% of Democrats and 57% of Republicans.
  - **Newborns: 27% of Independents** vs. 39% of Democrats and 40% of Republicans.
  - **People experiencing homelessness: 22% of Independents** vs. 36% of Democrats and 34% of Republicans.
  - **Prison inmates: 25% of Independents** vs. 38% of Democrats and 39% of Republicans.



- **Uncertainty**, measured by the share of respondents who selected “Not sure,” is highest among Independents at **38%**.
  - This is nearly double the rate of Democrats (20%) and Republicans (18%).
  - It suggests that Independents are not only less likely to select correct answers but are also **more likely to express hesitation or lack of knowledge altogether**.

**Key Finding 6:** Latino Democrats and Republicans show similar levels of knowledge about who is counted in the Census.

- Democrats and Republicans show nearly identical likelihoods of identifying who is counted in the Census. For each category, the percentage of Democrats and Republicans that correctly identified that the following groups were counted are as follows:
  - Legal permanent residents: Democrats 58%, Republicans 57%
  - Undocumented immigrants: Democrats 27%, Republicans 29%
  - Newborns: Democrats 39%, Republicans 40%
  - People experiencing homelessness: Democrats 36%, Republicans 34%
  - Prison inmates: Democrats 38%, Republicans 39%
- These similarities suggest that factual understanding of Census inclusion is not necessarily correlated to political partisan identities.

**Table 2. Percentage of People Who Selected Each Group as Being Counted in the Census, by Party Affiliation**

Group	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
U.S. citizens living in the United States	72%	54%	73%
Legal permanent residents (green card holders) living in the United States	58%	39%	57%
Temporary visa holders living in the U.S.	26%	19%	27%
Undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.	27%	19%	29%
U.S. citizens living abroad	30%	22%	30%
Visitors from other countries who are temporarily in the U.S. on Census Day	7%	7%	11%



Newborn babies born on or before Census Day	39%	27%	40%
People who die on Census Day	12%	7%	12%
People experiencing homelessness	36%	22%	34%
Prison inmates	38%	25%	39%
Not sure	20%	38%	18%

## **SECTION 2: Views of Whether Non-Citizens Should Be Counted in the 2030 Census**

This section explores Latino respondents' views on whether non-citizens should be included in the U.S. Census count. The question was assessed using a split-sample experiment.

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of two versions of a Statement. Each framing asked whether non-citizens should be counted in the 2030 Census:

- **Statement 1** *"Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted as part of the 2030 Census."*
- **Statement 2** *"Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted as part of the 2030 Census."*

The total sample of Latino respondents (N = 3,000) was divided, with approximately 1,500 respondents per group. Each person saw only one of the statements.

### **Attitudes Toward Who Deserves to Be Counted in the 2030 Census (Split Sample)**

**Key Finding 1:** While overall agreement is nearly evenly split between the two phrasings tested, the use of *"Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted as part of the 2030 Census"* led to a measurable increase in support and decrease in opposition.

- **For Statement 1** (*"Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted as part of the 2030 Census"*), a total of
  - **45%** of respondents expressed some level of agreement,
  - **32%** expressed disagreement.
  - The remaining **23%** selected "Neither agree nor disagree."





- **For Statement 2** (“Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted as part of the 2030 Census”),
  - agreement rose to **52%**,
  - disagreement dropped to **22%**.
  - Neutral responses were slightly higher as well, with **26%** selecting “Neither agree nor disagree.”
- **Looking more closely at the intensity of opinion,**
  - **Statement 2** “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S.” prompted **slightly higher strong agreement** (18% compared to 16% for Statement 1 “Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants”), and
  - **notably lower strong disagreement** (11% for “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S.” compared to 17% for Statement 1 “Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants”).

## **Demographic Patterns: Attitudes Toward Who Deserves to Be Counted in the 2030 Census (Split Sample)**

### **Age and Intensity of Opinion**

This section explores how **age shapes both the intensity and direction of opinion** toward including non-citizens in the 2030 Census.

Statement 1: “*Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.*”

**Key Finding 2:** Older adults (age 65 and above) are nearly three times as likely as younger adults (ages 18–29) to “strongly disagree,” and nearly twice as likely to disagree in any form, with the statement “*Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants should be counted in the Census.*” At the same time, they are also slightly more likely to “strongly agree,” and show similar levels of overall agreement compared to younger adults.

- **Strong Agreement** with the statement “non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants should be counted in the Census”:
  - **15%** of adults aged 65+ vs 9% of adults aged 18–29
- **Total Agreement** (Strongly + Somewhat + Agree):



- **44%** of adults aged 65+ vs 44% of adults aged 18–29
- **Strong Disagreement** with the statement “non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants should be counted in the Census”:
  - **26%** of adults aged 65+ vs 9% of adults aged 18–29
- **Total Disagreement** (Strongly + Somewhat + Disagree):
  - **43%** of adults aged 65+ vs 26% of adults aged 18–29

Statement 2: “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”

**Key Finding 3: Older adults (age 65 and above) are over seven times more likely than younger adults (ages 18–29) to strongly disagree** with the statement that “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.” At the same time, they are also slightly more likely to strongly agree.

- **Strong Agreement** with the statement that “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”:
  - **20%** of adults aged 65+ vs 17% of adults aged 18–29
- **Total Agreement** (Strongly + Somewhat + Agree):
  - **51%** of adults aged 65+ vs 53% of adults aged 18–29:
- **Strong Disagreement** with the statement that “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”:
  - **22%** of adults aged 65+ vs 3% of adults aged 18–29
- **Total Disagreement** (Strongly + Somewhat + Agree):
  - **30%** of adults aged 65+ vs 14% of adults aged 18–29

### **Summary: Age and Intensity of Opinion**

Across both statements, older adults (65+) consistently show stronger views, with higher levels of both strong agreement and strong disagreement compared to younger adults (18–29). This intensity of opinion is particularly evident in the higher rates of strong disagreement among older respondents. However, when the language shifts from “non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants” to “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S.,” we see a notable trend: levels of agreement increase and disagreement decreases across both age groups.



## Views Along Socioeconomic Lines

This section explores how education and voter registration shapes the intensity of support or opposition toward counting non-citizens in the 2030 Census. While trends vary by dimension, clear patterns emerge.

### **Key Finding 4: Education Strongly Correlates with Support for Counting Non-Citizens.**

Across both statements tested, individuals with a college degree consistently express greater support for including non-citizens, whether unauthorized immigrants or non-U.S. citizens, in the 2030 Census.

Statement 1: *“Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”*

- **Breakdown by Education Level**
  - **Total agreement** (*Strongly + Agree + Somewhat*):
    - 53% (college) vs. 42% (less than college)
  - **Total disagreement** (*Strongly + Disagree + Somewhat*):
    - 30% (college) vs. 33% (less than college)

Statement 2: *“Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”*

- **Breakdown by Education Level**
  - **Total agreement** (*Strongly + Agree + Somewhat*):
    - 60% (college) vs. 50% (less than college)
  - **Total disagreement** (*Strongly + Disagree + Somewhat*):
    - 22% (college) vs. 22% (less than college)

**Key Finding 5: Registered Voters Show Higher Opposition.** While overall agreement does not differ significantly between registered and non-registered, **registered voters are more likely to express disagreement**, with counting non-citizens in the Census than not registered or unsure if registered individuals.



Statement 1: “Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”

- **Breakdown by Voter Registration Status:**
  - **Total agreement** (Strongly + Agree + Somewhat):
    - 45% (registered) vs. 43% (not registered)
  - **Total disagreement** (Strongly + Disagree + Somewhat):
    - 38% (registered) vs. 24% (not registered)

Statement 2: “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”

- **Breakdown by Voter Registration Status:**
  - **Total agreement** (Strongly + Agree + Somewhat):
    - 52% (registered voters) vs. 53% (non registered to vote)
  - **Total disagreement** (Strongly + Disagree + Somewhat):
    - 29% (registered voters) vs. 13% (non registered to vote)

## Summary: Views Along Socioeconomic Lines

Across both statements:

- **College-educated individuals consistently show the strongest support** for counting non-citizens in the 2030 Census.
- **Opposition is more concentrated among registered voters**, particularly in terms of strong disagreement.

These findings suggest that education and voter registration status are key socioeconomic factors shaping public opinion on who deserves to be counted in the 2030 Census.

**Importantly, these categories are not mutually exclusive**, some individuals may belong to both groups, so the results reflect independent trends within each characteristic.

## Demographic Patterns of Uncertainty

This section explores which demographic groups expressed the most uncertainty toward the inclusion of non-citizens in the 2030 Census. Responses coded as "uncertain" are those selecting “**Neither agree nor disagree**” to each statement.



Statement 1: “Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”

**Key Finding 6:** Uncertainty was **concentrated among younger adults, women, lower-income individuals, those without a college degree, and those not registered to vote.** Independents also showed greater uncertainty compared to partisans.

### Highlights of Uncertainty by Demographic Group

(Statement 2: “Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”)

- **Age:**
  - Ages 18–29: **31%** uncertain
  - Ages 65+: **14%** uncertain
- **Education:**
  - No college degree: **25%** uncertain
  - College degree or higher: **19%** uncertain
- **Gender:**
  - Women: **27%** uncertain
  - Men: **19%** uncertain
- **Income:**
  - Under \$50,000: **26%** uncertain
  - \$100,000 or more: **16%** uncertain
- **Voter Registration:**
  - Not registered/unsure: **33%** uncertain
  - Registered: **17%** uncertain
- **Partisanship:**
  - Independents: **34%** uncertain
  - Democrats: **23%** uncertain
  - Republicans: **15%** uncertain



Statement 2: “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”

**Key Finding 7:** Uncertainty was **widespread but most prevalent among younger adults, individuals with less education, lower-income groups, and non-registered voters.** Independent voters again reported the highest uncertainty.

### Highlights of Uncertainty by Demographic Group

(Statement 2: “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”):

- **Age:**
  - Ages 18–29: **33%** uncertain
  - Ages 65+: **18%** uncertain
- **Education:**
  - No college degree: **28%** uncertain
  - College degree or higher: **18%** uncertain
- **Income:**
  - Under \$50,000: **28%** uncertain
  - \$100,000 or more: **18%** uncertain
- **Voter Registration:**
  - Not registered/unsure: **33%** uncertain
  - Registered: **20%** uncertain
- **Partisanship:**
  - Independents: **42%** uncertain
  - Democrats: **20%** uncertain
  - Republicans: **19%** uncertain

### Summary: Demographic Patterns of Uncertainty

- Across both statements, **uncertainty is most strongly correlated with younger age, lower education and income, lack of voter registration, and Independents** (political affiliation).
- The **overall level and distribution of uncertainty remained consistent, with no significant increase or decrease, across demographic groups for both statements.**





This stability suggests that the source of uncertainty could be more structural, rooted in broader demographic rather than specific statement wording.

## Trends by Political Affiliation

This section analyzes partisan differences in agreement, opposition, and uncertainty toward including non-citizens in the 2030 Census. Responses to two distinct but related statements are broken down across Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.

Statement 1: “*Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.*”

**Key Finding 8: Partisan divide in support, opposition, and uncertainty on “*Non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census*”. Democrats led in agreement, Republicans in opposition.**

- **Democrats were more likely to overall agree** with the statement “*non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants*” than Republicans or Independents.
  - **Total Agreement (Strongly Agree + Agree + Somewhat Agree)**
    - Democrats: **56%**
    - Independents: **37%**
    - Republicans: **34%**
- **Democrats were significantly more likely to strongly agree** with the statement than either Independents or Republicans, four times more likely than Republicans, and nearly twice as likely as Independents.
  - **Strongly Agree:**
    - Democrats: **24%**
    - Independents: **13%**
    - Republicans: **6%**
- **Republicans showed the highest overall opposition** to the statement “*non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census*”, with **more than two times** the rate of disagreement seen among Democrats.
  - **Total Disagreement (Strongly Disagree + Disagree + Somewhat Disagree):**
    - Republicans: **52%**
    - Independents: **29%**



- Democrats: **21%**
- **Republicans were more than seven times as likely as Democrats to strongly disagree** with the statement “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”.
  - **Strongly Disagree:**
    - Republicans: **36%**
    - Independents: **16%**
    - Democrats: **5%**

Statement 2: “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census.”

**Key Finding 9:** Partisan divides remained, but agreement levels shifted slightly upward for all groups, especially among Democrats, and Republicans remained the most opposed.

- **Democrats were about 1.7 times more likely to agree** with the statement “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census” than Republicans or Independents.
  - **Total Agreement**
    - Democrats: 67%
    - Republicans: 40%
    - Independents: 38%
- **Democrats were more than twice as likely as the other two groups to express strong support** to the statement “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”.
  - **Strongly Agree (Strongly Agree + Agree + Somewhat Agree)**
    - Democrats: 26%
    - Republicans: 10%
    - Independents: 11%
- **Republicans showed the highest overall opposition** to the statement “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”, with **more than three times** the rate of disagreement seen among Democrats.
  - **Total Disagreement**
    - Republicans: 40%
    - Independents: 21%



- Democrats: 12%
- **Republicans were more than six times as likely as Democrats to strongly disagree** with the statement “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census”.
  - **Strongly Disagree**
    - Republicans: 26%
    - Independents: 10%
    - Democrats: 4%

## Summary: Trends by Political Affiliation

- Across both statements, **core partisan divides persisted**, with **Democrats most supportive, Republicans most opposed**, and **Independents consistently uncertain**.
  - The wording of the statement “Non-U.S. citizens living in the U.S. deserve to be counted in the 2030 Census” **appeared to modestly increase support and reduce strong opposition**, especially among Democrats and Republicans.
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## **POLL METHODOLOGY:**

The September survey comprised a sample of 3,000 Latino adults across the United States.

- The poll was conducted between September 6 and September 30, 2024.
- 90% of respondents completed the survey in English, and 10% in Spanish.
- All 50 states and Washington, D.C. were represented; Texas, California, Florida, and New York accounted for 59% of the total sample.
- The political breakdown was as follows: 47% Democrat, 24% Independent, 29% Republican, with a small group answering "unsure."

To read the full report, see: [On Disinformation, Distrust and Democracy 2.0 - Findings from DDIA's Second Poll of U.S. Latinos in 2024](#)



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