

In 2006, 18.1 million Canadians, or 58% of the population, reported English as their mother tongue, a drop from 61% in 1981. Another 6.9 million, or 22% of Canadians, reported French as the language they first learned and still understand, a fall from 26% in 1981.

Allophones—those whose mother tongue is neither English nor French—numbered 6.3 million in 2006. Partly as a result of sustained immigration from around the world, the proportion of allophones increased substantially to 20% of Canadians from 13% in 1981. Of the 1.1 million immigrants who settled in Canada from 2001 to 2006, more than 80%—901,300 people—were allophones.

The linguistic portrait has also shifted because francophones are having fewer children than in the past and some francophones outside Quebec have transferred to English and are less likely to pass on the French language to their

children. However, in 2006 for the first time, the majority of Quebec allophones adopted French as their main home language when using an official language most often at home.

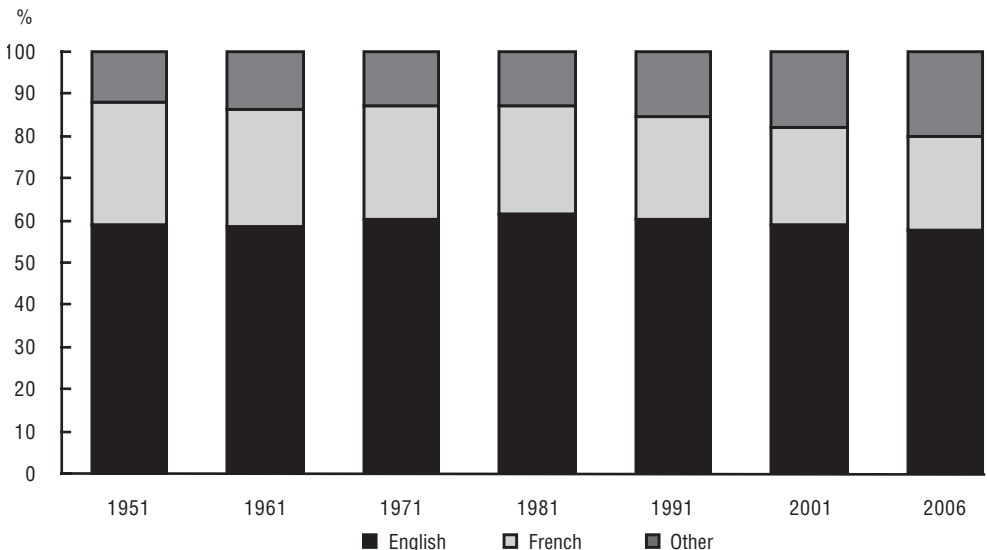
Over 200 languages reported

Canadians reported more than 200 languages as mother tongues in the 2006 Census. These include languages associated with traditional immigration, such as German, Italian, Ukrainian and Dutch, and languages that characterize more recent immigration, particularly those spoken in Asia and Latin America, which showed the largest gains.

Chinese languages are the third largest mother-tongue group: 3% of the population reported a Chinese language as the first language learned and still understood in 2006.

Among the three largest census metropolitan areas (CMAs), Toronto has

Chart 22.1
Population by mother tongue



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 91-003-X.

the highest proportion of allophones. More than 4 residents in 10 have a mother tongue other than English or French. Chinese makes up the largest portion, followed by Italian and Punjabi.

Similarly, 4 out of 10 residents of Vancouver are also allophones. Chinese is the most frequent followed by Punjabi and Tagalog.

The Montréal CMA has proportionally fewer allophones at 22%. Italian heads the list followed by Arabic and Spanish.

The 2006 Census found that 98% of the population can speak one or both official languages and that English or French is spoken 'at least regularly' at home by 94% of Canadians. As well, English or French is spoken 'most often' at home by 89% of the population, sometimes in combination with a non-official language.

About one out of every two allophones (46%) speaks English or French most often at home. The proportion rises to 68% when including allophones who speak a language other than English or French most often at home but use English or

Table 22.a
Most common non-official mother tongues

	1971	2006
	number	
All Chinese languages	95,915	1,034,090
Italian	538,765	476,905
German	558,965	466,650
Punjabi	..	382,585
Spanish	23,950	362,120
Arabic	28,520	286,785
Tagalog	..	266,440
Portuguese	85,845	229,280

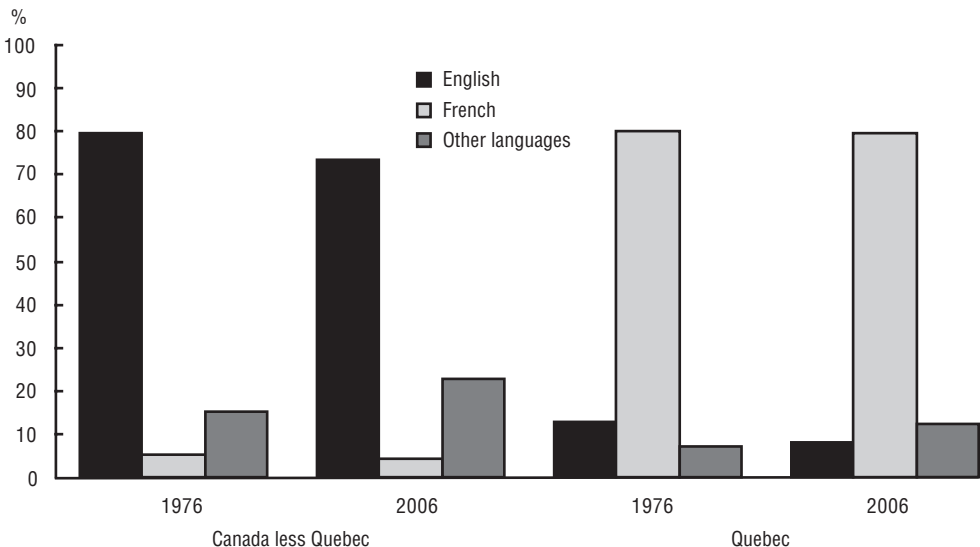
Source: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1971 and 2006.

French on a regular basis as well. Two out of five allophones speak English or French exclusively at home.

The longer allophone immigrants have resided in the country, the more they are exposed to the predominant language of the host society. This tends to affect the language spoken most often at home.

The proportion of allophone immigrants speaking an official language at home was 34% for those who arrived in the 1980s and 46% for those who arrived from 1961 to 1970.

Chart 22.2
Mother tongue, Canada less Quebec and Quebec, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1976 and 2006.

Languages at work

While most immigrants use either English or French at work, some immigrant workers use one or more of the 200 non-official languages found in Canada.

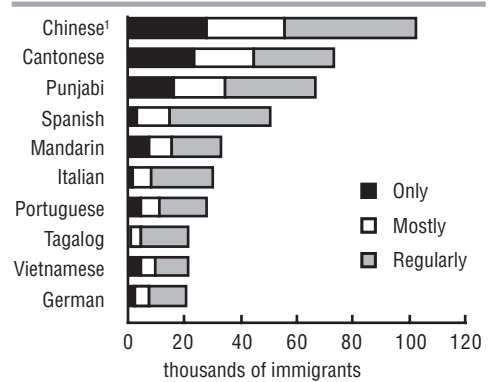
In 2006, about 3.8 million immigrants worked or had recently worked in Canada. Of these, 16%—or 611,400 workers—used a non-official language at work.

Among those immigrants who use non-official languages at work, about one in six make no regular use of either official language. The other five use English or French along with a non-official language.

The use of non-official languages at work has been associated with a lack of official language skills, low levels of education, lower skilled jobs and lower earnings for immigrants.

The use of non-official languages at work is more common among immigrants

Chart 22.3
Top 10 non-official languages used at work by immigrants, 2006



1. Unspecified Chinese languages.

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 11-008-X.

who had arrived recently and among immigrants who had arrived at an older age.

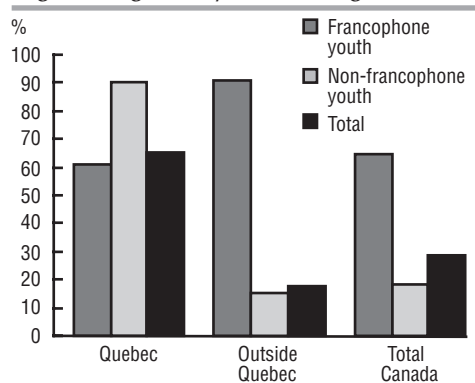
Bilingualism among youth

By age 21, about one-third (29%) of Canadians can carry on a conversation in both French and English. Bilingualism rates, however, differ considerably by mother tongue: 65% of francophone youth said that they were bilingual in 2006 compared with 18% of non-francophones.

One reason for this is that francophones have more opportunity to use English outside of studies (at work for example) than non-francophones. The bilingualism rate among francophones living in Quebec reaches a maximum when young adults enter the workforce. Among anglophones, the rate reaches a maximum towards the end of high school.

Outside Quebec, the bilingualism rate is higher for francophones. A total of 91% of francophone youth reported being bilingual in 2006 compared with 15% of non-francophones.

Chart 22.4
Youth able to converse in both French and English at age 21, by mother tongue, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 81-004-X.

In Quebec, rates of bilingualism were higher for non-francophones. While 61% of francophone youth in Quebec reported that they could carry on a conversation in both languages, 90% of non-francophones said they could do the same.

Table 22.1 Mother tongue, by province and territory, 2006

	Canada	Newfoundland and Labrador	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick
	number				
Population	31,241,030	500,610	134,205	903,090	719,650
Mother tongue, single response ¹	30,848,270	499,830	133,570	899,270	714,490
English	17,882,775	488,405	125,260	832,105	463,190
French	6,817,655	1,885	5,345	32,540	232,975
Non-official languages	6,147,840	9,540	2,960	34,620	18,320
Chinese	1,012,065	1,080	190	3,370	2,160
Cantonese	361,450	185	15	505	295
Mandarin	170,950	120	45	595	505
Hakka	4,415	0	0	0	10
Chinese not otherwise specified	456,705	760	115	2,240	1,270
Italian	455,040	195	55	905	590
German	450,570	655	275	4,045	1,935
Polish	211,175	115	70	1,570	220
Spanish	345,345	670	220	1,305	1,040
Portuguese	219,275	150	10	560	210
Punjabi	367,505	120	0	420	55
Ukrainian	134,500	60	20	440	140
Arabic	261,640	540	150	4,425	970
Dutch	128,900	300	865	2,440	1,290
Tagalog (Pilipino)	235,615	180	15	415	330
Greek	117,285	70	30	1,035	275
Vietnamese	141,630	15	10	500	205
Cree	78,855	20	0	15	0
Inuktitut (Inuit)	32,380	595	15	15	0
Other non-official languages	1,956,060	4,775	1,035	13,160	8,900
Mother tongue, multiple responses ²	392,760	780	635	3,820	5,160
English and French	98,625	295	495	2,100	4,450
English and non-official language	240,005	435	105	1,440	560
French and non-official language	43,335	30	25	140	120
English, French and non-official language	10,790	10	10	145	30

1. The respondent reported only one language as a mother tongue.

2. The respondent reported more than one language as a mother tongue.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Nunavut
number								
7,435,905	12,028,895	1,133,510	953,850	3,256,355	4,074,385	30,195	41,055	29,325
7,339,495	11,853,565	1,118,690	946,250	3,221,420	4,022,045	29,940	40,680	29,025
575,555	8,230,705	838,415	811,725	2,576,670	2,875,770	25,655	31,545	7,765
5,877,660	488,815	43,955	16,060	61,225	54,745	1,105	975	370
886,280	3,134,045	236,320	118,465	583,530	1,091,530	3,180	8,165	20,885
63,415	482,570	11,045	7,475	97,275	342,920	260	260	40
9,850	181,820	3,105	1,720	32,485	131,245	85	120	10
7,770	75,335	1,470	715	12,135	72,155	70	15	10
85	2,805	10	15	425	1,075	0	0	0
44,740	215,345	6,345	4,970	51,145	129,560	90	110	20
124,820	282,750	4,775	735	13,095	27,020	25	55	10
17,855	158,000	67,030	28,555	84,505	86,690	775	190	40
17,305	140,890	8,870	2,510	21,990	17,565	20	30	15
108,790	160,275	6,850	2,735	29,125	34,075	130	90	30
34,710	155,310	6,295	380	7,205	14,385	15	25	10
11,905	152,645	6,340	850	36,320	158,750	80	10	10
5,395	48,310	21,950	16,350	29,455	12,285	40	40	10
108,105	114,730	2,125	1,525	20,495	8,440	15	105	10
3,620	68,180	3,835	1,785	19,980	26,355	140	95	15
11,785	117,365	22,490	2,170	29,740	50,425	145	505	45
41,845	61,330	1,635	1,060	3,305	6,670	10	0	0
25,370	67,150	2,740	1,305	19,350	24,560	105	305	0
13,340	3,495	19,105	24,255	17,215	1,145	50	190	20
9,615	390	140	35	155	110	60	750	20,480
288,405	1,120,655	51,095	26,740	154,320	280,135	1,310	5,515	150
96,405	175,330	14,825	7,600	34,930	52,335	250	380	305
43,335	32,690	2,630	1,130	5,405	5,920	110	45	20
16,200	131,290	11,675	6,080	27,725	43,785	130	320	260
31,350	7,790	435	245	1,325	1,840	10	15	20
5,520	3,565	85	140	480	790	0	0	0

Table 22.2 Mother tongue, by census metropolitan area, 2006

	Total population	Single responses			
		Total	English	French	Non-official languages
		number			
St. John's	179,270	178,880	174,480	535	3,860
Halifax	369,455	367,520	337,715	10,085	19,725
Moncton	124,055	122,830	77,345	42,925	2,555
Saint John	120,875	120,300	111,215	5,510	3,570
Saguenay	149,600	149,230	1,100	146,435	1,700
Québec	704,185	700,810	10,250	671,140	19,410
Sherbrooke	183,635	182,345	8,850	165,115	8,385
Trois-Rivières	138,560	138,055	1,300	134,255	2,495
Montréal	3,588,520	3,514,485	425,635	2,328,400	760,445
Ottawa–Gatineau	1,117,120	1,096,315	550,260	360,175	185,875
Kingston	148,475	147,440	129,770	4,305	13,360
Peterborough	115,140	114,630	106,510	1,295	6,825
Oshawa	328,070	325,510	283,475	6,820	35,215
Toronto	5,072,075	4,965,405	2,746,480	58,590	2,160,335
Hamilton	683,450	675,780	516,360	9,725	149,695
St. Catharines–Niagara	385,035	381,310	307,350	13,490	60,475
Kitchener	446,495	441,780	334,620	5,975	101,180
Brantford	122,825	122,115	107,720	1,310	13,085
Guelph	126,080	124,875	100,365	1,755	22,755
London	452,580	448,750	363,885	6,055	78,805
Windsor	320,730	315,780	230,920	11,105	73,755
Barrie	175,335	174,055	154,535	3,720	15,800
Greater Sudbury/Grand Sudbury	156,395	154,170	99,445	42,950	11,775
Thunder Bay	121,050	120,185	101,305	3,100	15,780
Winnipeg	686,040	676,315	507,530	29,020	139,765
Regina	192,440	190,890	169,720	2,675	18,495
Saskatoon	230,850	228,865	197,260	3,490	28,120
Calgary	1,070,295	1,056,760	797,555	16,310	242,895
Edmonton	1,024,820	1,011,725	785,755	21,980	203,990
Kelowna	160,560	159,490	136,025	2,530	20,935
Abbotsford–Mission	156,640	154,770	110,265	1,625	42,885
Vancouver	2,097,960	2,060,350	1,190,560	24,130	845,660
Victoria	325,065	322,655	274,950	5,580	42,120

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Multiple responses

Total	English and French	English and non-official language	French and non-official language	English, French and non-official language
		number		
390	110	235	30	15
1,935	1,015	710	85	125
1,225	1,085	70	60	15
575	495	80	0	0
365	270	0	80	0
3,375	2,120	85	1,015	155
1,295	830	25	400	40
505	320	25	120	30
74,035	26,855	15,225	27,005	4,950
20,810	10,495	6,785	2,890	635
1,035	365	630	20	15
505	220	265	15	0
2,555	540	1,875	100	45
106,670	7,955	92,670	3,865	2,180
7,670	1,135	6,020	380	140
3,725	1,020	2,505	155	45
4,715	695	3,690	255	75
710	105	570	20	15
1,205	180	975	40	15
3,830	730	2,860	170	65
4,955	1,115	3,420	330	80
1,280	415	815	10	35
2,225	1,675	490	40	15
870	190	590	70	15
9,720	1,830	7,525	310	50
1,545	225	1,220	70	30
1,990	265	1,630	50	45
13,535	1,845	10,920	600	165
13,100	1,830	10,600	485	185
1,075	175	805	90	0
1,870	135	1,680	40	10
37,615	2,855	32,880	1,285	595
37,615	700	1,530	115	60

Table 22.3 Knowledge of an official language, by province and territory, 2006

	Total	English only	French only	Both English and French	Neither English nor French
	number				
Canada	31,241,030	21,129,945	4,141,850	5,448,850	520,380
Newfoundland and Labrador	500,610	475,985	90	23,675	850
Prince Edward Island	134,205	116,990	60	17,100	55
Nova Scotia	903,090	805,690	1,000	95,010	1,385
New Brunswick	719,650	405,045	73,750	240,085	765
Quebec	7,435,905	336,785	4,010,880	3,017,860	70,375
Ontario	12,028,895	10,335,705	49,210	1,377,325	266,660
Manitoba	1,133,510	1,017,560	1,930	103,520	10,500
Saskatchewan	953,850	902,655	485	47,450	3,260
Alberta	3,256,355	2,990,805	2,200	222,885	40,470
British Columbia	4,074,385	3,653,365	2,070	295,645	123,305
Yukon	30,195	26,515	105	3,440	130
Northwest Territories	41,055	37,010	50	3,665	325
Nunavut	29,325	25,830	20	1,170	2,305

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 22.4 Workers who use an official language most often or regularly at work, by province and territory, 2006

	English			French		
	Total	Most often	Regularly	Total	Most often	Regularly
	%					
Canada	85.0	78.3	6.7	25.7	21.7	4.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	99.8	99.5	0.3	1.5	0.4	1.0
Prince Edward Island	99.6	98.7	0.9	5.5	1.8	3.7
Nova Scotia	99.5	98.4	1.2	4.6	1.8	2.8
New Brunswick	88.1	76.0	12.1	37.5	26.8	10.7
Quebec	40.4	17.1	23.2	94.3	86.7	7.6
Ontario	98.6	97.0	1.6	5.8	2.0	3.8
Manitoba	98.8	97.2	1.7	3.6	1.4	2.3
Saskatchewan	99.4	98.6	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.8
Alberta	99.3	98.6	0.7	1.5	0.4	1.1
British Columbia	98.0	96.5	1.5	1.5	0.4	1.1
Yukon	99.3	98.5	0.8	4.0	1.1	2.9
Northwest Territories	99.2	97.5	1.8	2.7	0.8	1.8
Nunavut	91.2	70.7	20.5	2.4	0.6	1.9
Canada except Quebec	98.4	96.7	1.7	5.0	2.1	2.9

Notes: All mother tongues (multiple responses included).

Population 15 years and older who had worked between January 1, 2005 and May 16, 2006, regardless of whether or not they were in the labour force in the reference week of May 16, 2006.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.