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The French Language in British Columbia, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures



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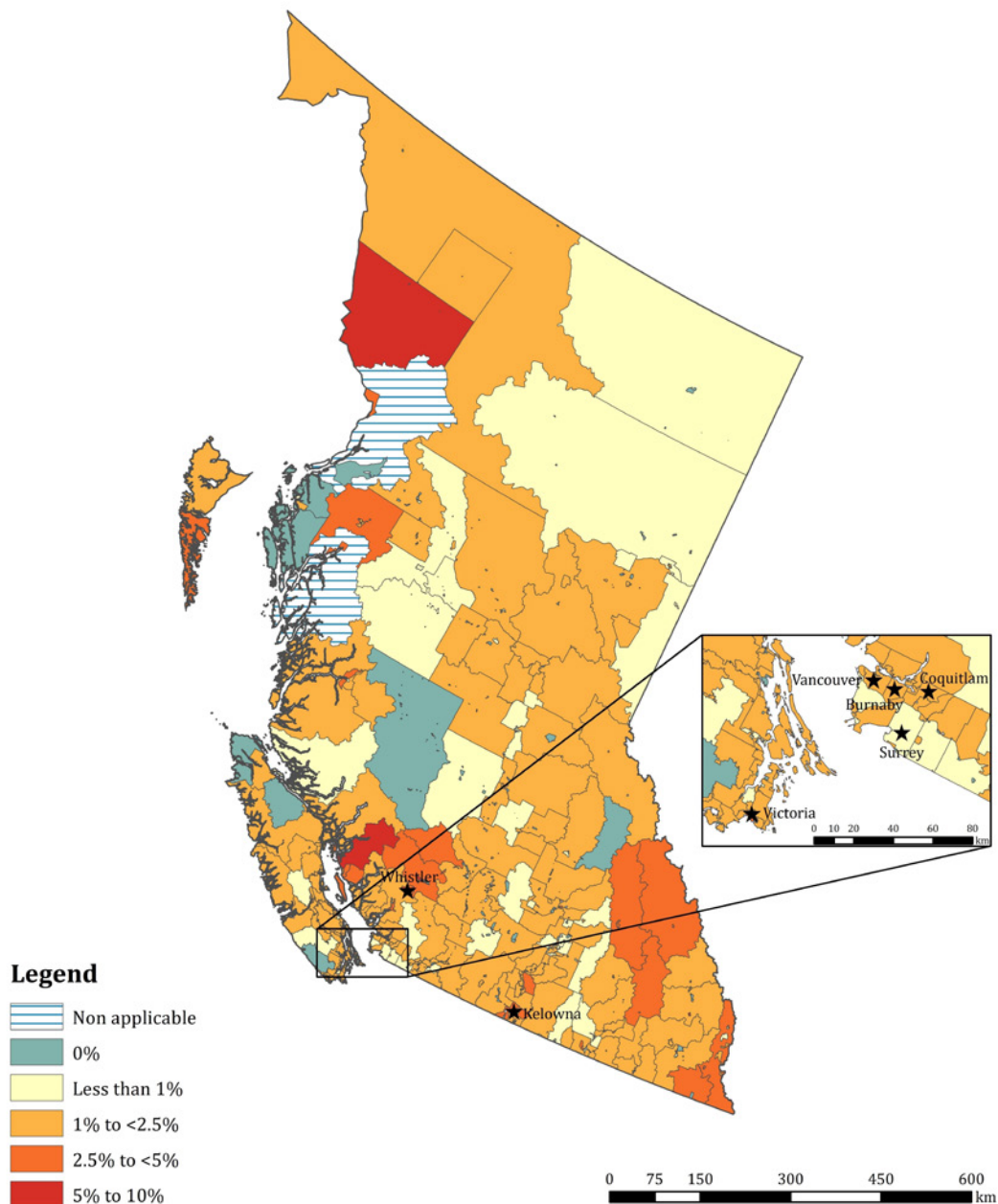
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The French Language in British Columbia, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures

The purpose of this document is to present an overview of the prevailing trends observed between 2001 and 2016¹ for the French language in British Columbia. To this end, the document provides census-based information on the population² who have French as their first official language spoken, mother tongue, language spoken at home or language used at work as well as on the population who reported speaking French well enough to conduct a conversation.

Map 1

Proportion of the population with French as a first official language spoken, census subdivisions, British Columbia, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

1. See the *Languages Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016* (Catalogue no. 98-500-X2016003) or the *Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data* (Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051) for notes on the comparability of the 2011 Census language data to that of prior census years.
2. Refers to all persons excluding institutional residents. Users should note that in the 2001 and 2006 censuses, institutional residents did not receive the long form questionnaire from which most language data were collected.

- In 2016, there were 64,320 persons who had French as a first official language spoken. They represented 1.4% of British Columbia's total population.
 - ▶ Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons who had French as a first official language spoken increased by 8.3%, that is, by 4,950 persons.

Table 1
Selected French language indicators, British Columbia, 2001 to 2016

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
Total population¹	3,868,870	100.0	4,074,380	100.0	4,356,205	100.0	4,598,415	100.0	18.9
French as first official language spoken ²	59,370	1.5	61,740	1.5	62,190	1.4	64,320	1.4	8.3
Knowledge of French ³	271,175	7.0	297,710	7.3	298,695	6.9	316,730	6.9	16.8
Knowledge of French only	1,810	0.0	2,070	0.1	2,050	0.0	1,805	0.0	-0.3
Knowledge of English and French	269,365	7.0	295,640	7.3	296,645	6.8	314,925	6.8	16.9
French as mother tongue ³	63,630	1.6	63,295	1.6	70,755	1.6	71,705	1.6	12.7
French spoken at home ⁴	53,615	1.4	57,100	1.4	69,530	1.6	72,750	1.6	35.7
French spoken most often at home ⁵	19,510	0.5	19,990	0.5	24,445	0.6	26,670	0.6	36.7
Only French spoken at home ⁶	6,120	0.2	6,825	0.2	7,135	0.2	6,455	0.1	5.5
Mostly French spoken at home ⁷	8,365	0.2	8,505	0.2	9,550	0.2	10,340	0.2	23.6
French spoken equally often with another language at home ⁸	5,025	0.1	4,660	0.1	7,760	0.2	9,875	0.2	96.5
French spoken regularly at home (in addition to the main language)	34,105	0.9	37,110	0.9	45,085	1.0	46,080	1.0	35.1

1. Refers to all persons excluding institutional residents.

2. Following method I in part IV of the *Official Languages Act*, the 'English-French' multiple response is equally redistributed among the 'English' and 'French' single responses.

3. Includes both single and multiple responses.

4. Includes both single and multiple responses to both part A and part B of the question.

5. Refers to French spoken most often at home with or without additional languages spoken regularly.

6. Includes persons who reported only French in Part A of the language spoken at home question (spoken most often) and did not report a language to Part B (spoken regularly).

7. Includes persons who reported French to Part A of the language spoken at home question (spoken most often) and reported at least one other language to Part B (spoken regularly).

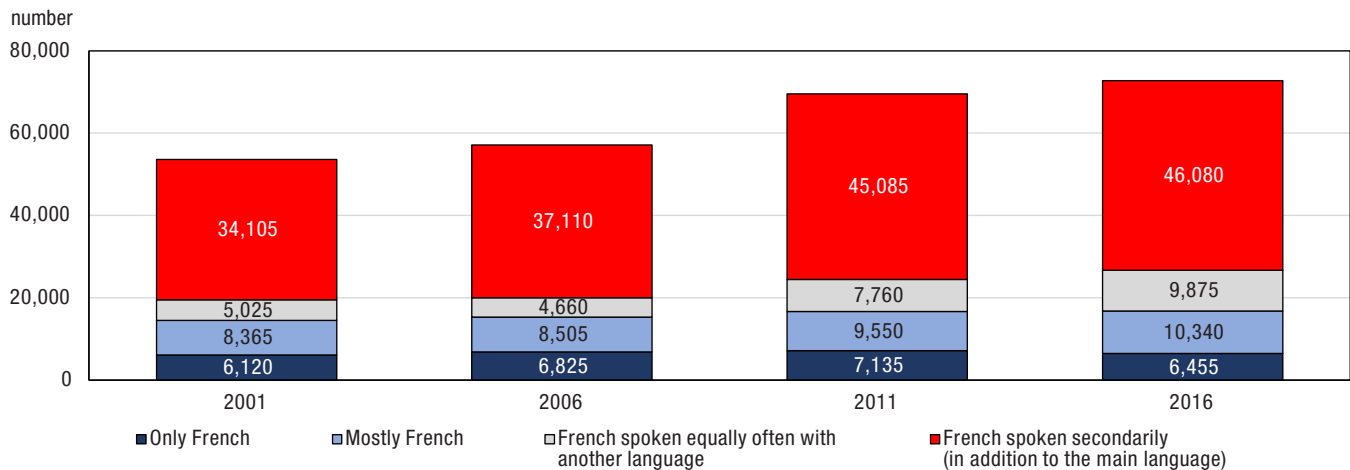
8. Includes persons who reported French and another language to Part A of the language spoken at home question (spoken most often).

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.

- As of 2016, the number of persons who reported being able to conduct a conversation in French, either exclusively or along with another language, stood at 316,730. Collectively, this population represented 6.9% of British Columbia's total population that year.
 - ▶ In the 15 years leading to 2016, those who reported being able to conduct a conversation in French have increased in number by 16.8%, that is, by an additional 45,555 persons.
- English-French bilingualism is on the rise in British Columbia. In fact, the number of persons who reported being able to conduct a conversation in both official languages increased from 269,365 in 2001 to 314,925 in 2016, a 16.9% increase.
 - ▶ However, as a proportion of British Columbia's total population there is a decrease in the relative weight of English-French bilinguals. Specifically, in 2001 those able to conduct a conversation in English and French represented 7.0% of British Columbia's population whereas in 2016 this proportion fell to 6.8%.
- In 2016, the number of persons who reported having French as their mother tongue³, whether exclusively or in combination with other languages, stood at 71,705 or 1.6% of the province's total population.
 - ▶ Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons who report having French as their mother tongue, either exclusively or along with other languages, increased by 12.7% (+8,075 persons).

3. In some cases, the number of respondents whose mother tongue is French is higher than the number given for the population with French as their first official language spoken. As part of the logic used to derive the population with French as their first official language spoken, those who have French as their mother tongue but can no longer speak it well enough to hold a conversation are not included. Similarly, those who can hold a conversation in both English and French and have these languages as their mother tongues but speak English most often at home are likewise excluded from the population with French as their first official language spoken.

Chart 1
French spoken at home, British Columbia, 2001 to 2016¹



1. See the document entitled *Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data Catalogue* no. 98-314-X2011051 for notes on the comparability of the 2011 Census language data to that of prior census years.

Sources : Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.

- In 2016, there were 72,750 persons who reported speaking French at home at least regularly. They represented 1.6% of British Columbia's population. From 2001 to 2016, the number of persons who reported speaking French at home at least regularly increased by 35.7%.
 - ▶ Among those who reported speaking French at least regularly at home in 2016, 26,670 persons reported speaking French most often⁴ whereas 46,080 reported speaking French as a secondary language in addition their main language. Respectively, they represented 0.6% and 1.0% of British Columbia's total population in 2016.
 - ▶ Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons who reported speaking French most often at home⁴ increased by 36.7%, that is, by an additional 7,160 persons. Similarly, those who reported speaking French as a secondary language at home increased by 35.1%, that is, by 11,975 persons.
 - ▶ In absolute terms, in the 15 years since 2001, 67.7% of the growth in the population who reports speaking French most often at home can be attributed to the increase in the number of persons who report speaking French and another language equally often.

4. Includes French spoken equally often with another language at home.

Table 2
French used at work, British Columbia, 2001 to 2016

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
Working population¹	2,209,795	100.0	2,419,210	100.0	2,529,750	100.0	2,670,700	100.0	20.9
French used at work ²	30,710	1.4	35,615	1.5	32,740	1.3	35,465	1.3	15.5
French used most often at work ³	7,340	0.3	8,990	0.4	8,875	0.4	10,865	0.4	48.0
Only French used at work ⁴	1,435	0.1	1,655	0.1	1,685	0.1	1,805	0.1	25.8
Mostly French used at work ⁵	3,150	0.1	3,875	0.2	3,715	0.1	4,330	0.2	37.5
French used equally often with another language at work ⁶	2,755	0.1	3,460	0.1	3,475	0.1	4,730	0.2	71.7
French used regularly at work (in addition to the main language)	23,370	1.1	26,625	1.1	23,865	0.9	24,600	0.9	5.3

1. Refers to persons aged 15 years and over who worked at least once in the reference period.

2. Includes both single and multiple responses to both part A and part B of the question.

3. Refers to French used most often at work with or without additional languages used regularly.

4. Includes persons who reported only French to Part A of the language used at work question (used most often) and did not report a language to Part B (used regularly).

5. Includes persons who reported French to Part A of the language used at work question (used most often) and reported at least one other language to Part B (used regularly).

6. Includes persons who reported French and another language to Part A of the language used at work question (used most often).

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006 and 2016; 2011 National Household Survey.

- In 2016, 35,465 workers reported using French at work at least regularly. Collectively, they represented 1.3% of British Columbia's working population.
 - ▶ In the 2001 to 2016 period, the number of workers who reported using French at work at least regularly increased by 15.5%, that is, by an additional 4,755 workers.
- As of 2016, the number of workers who reported using French most often at work⁵ reached 10,865, a figure which represents 0.4% of the province's working population. By contrast, there were more than twice that number of workers who reported using French at work as a secondary language (24,600 workers) and they represented 0.9% of the province's working population.
 - ▶ Between 2001 and 2016, the number of workers who reported using French most often at work⁵ increased by 48.0% (+3,525 workers) whereas for those who reported using French as their secondary language at work the increase was of 5.3% (+1,230 workers).
 - ▶ The increase among those who use French most often at work⁵ accounted for nearly three quarters (74.1%) of the total growth in the use of French at work.

5. Includes French used equally often with another language at work.