

Catalogue no. 89-657-X2023003
ISBN 978-0-660-46937-9

Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series

Key facts on the French language in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2021

by Nicolas Auclair, Catherine Frigon and Gabriel St-Amant

Release date: March 16, 2023



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Canada

How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website, www.statcan.gc.ca.

You can also contact us by

Email at infostats@statcan.gc.ca

Telephone, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| • Statistical Information Service | 1-800-263-1136 |
| • National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired | 1-800-363-7629 |
| • Fax line | 1-514-283-9350 |

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.gc.ca under “Contact us” > “Standards of service to the public”.

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada as represented by the Minister of Industry, 2023

All rights reserved. Use of this publication is governed by the Statistics Canada [Open Licence Agreement](#).

An [HTML version](#) is also available.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

Table of contents

Highlights	4
Ability to conduct a conversation in French	5
French as first official language spoken	7
French as a mother tongue	8
French spoken at home	9
French used at work	10
Instruction in French in primary and secondary schools	11
French among immigrants	11
Mobility and birthplace of the French-speaking population	12
Appendix	13

Key facts on the French language in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2021

by **Nicolas Auclair**, **Catherine Frigon** and **Gabriel St-Amant**

This fact sheet gives an overview of the situation of French in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2021. First, it provides information on the changes in the number and proportion of people in the population who can conduct a conversation in French, whose first official language spoken is French, whose mother tongue is French, who speak French at home or use French at work. Next, it presents information on French-language instruction in elementary and secondary schools, on French spoken among recent and established immigrants, as well as on the mobility and place of birth of individuals whose first official language spoken is French. Additional data on these topics can be found in the appendix.

The information presented in this fact sheet comes from the Census of Population. To learn more about census concepts and the historical comparability of data, please refer to the 2021 Census of Population *Languages Reference Guide* and the *Instruction in the Minority Official Language Reference Guide*.

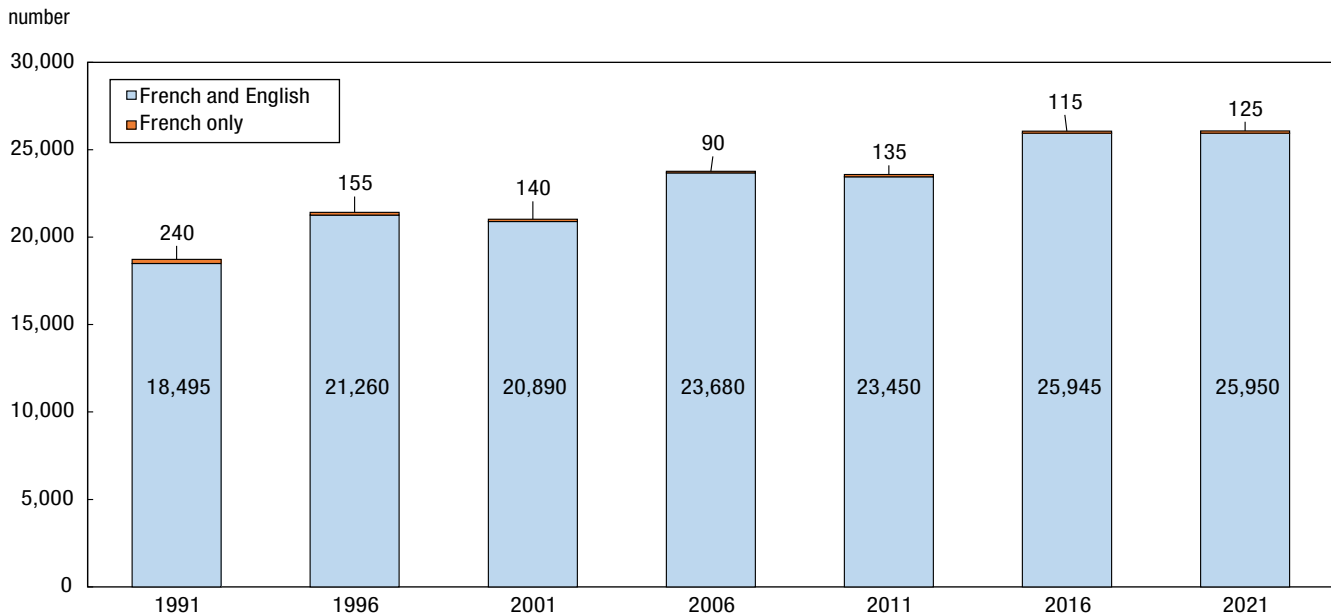
Highlights

- In 2021, 26,080 residents of Newfoundland and Labrador could conduct a conversation in French. This number has remained stable compared to 2016 (+15), but is higher than in 1991 (+7,335). The relative proportion of these residents also rose, from 3.3% in 1991 to 5.2% in 2021, reaching an all-time high.
- In 2021, 3,695 people (0.7% of the population) spoke French at least regularly at home. Among those with French as one of their mother tongues, just under half (45.9%) spoke French regularly at home.
- In 2021, 2,680 workers living in the province (1.3%) used French at least regularly at work. Most of them worked in educational services (39.2%) or public administration (17.5%).
- Almost 1 in 11 immigrants (8.8%) could have a conversation in French in 2021. This proportion was higher among immigrants admitted before 2016 (9.8%) than among those admitted between 2016 and 2021 (6.7%).
- In 2021, fewer than 1 in 5 (19.6%) Newfoundland and Labrador residents who had French as their only first official language spoken were born in that province.

Ability to conduct a conversation in French

Chart 1

Population who can have a conversation in French, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991 to 2021

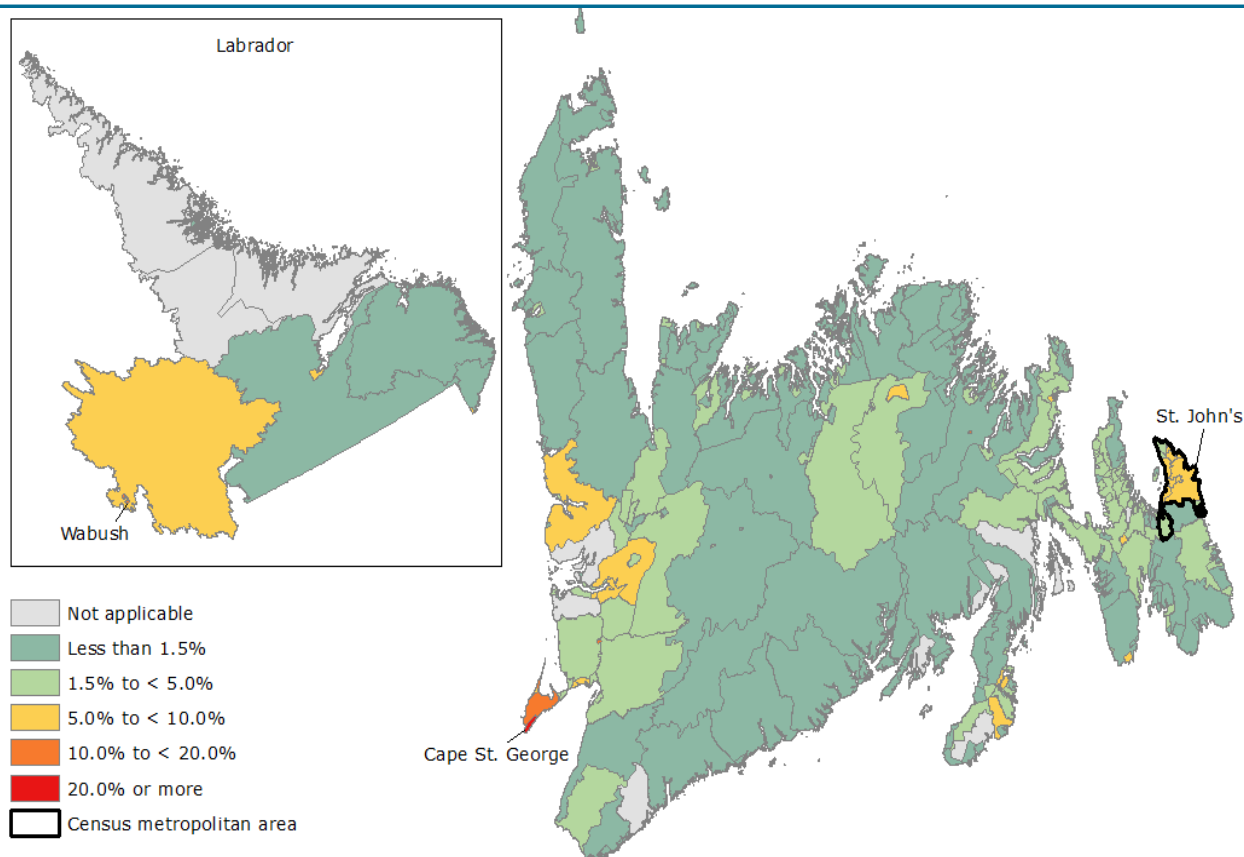


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 26,080 residents of Newfoundland and Labrador were able to conduct a conversation in French. Almost all (99.5%, or 25,950 people) could also have a conversation in English.
- The number of people in the province who can have a conversation in French has been rising since 1991 (+7,335). It remained stable from 2016 to 2021 (+15).
- The proportion of the population that can conduct a conversation in French has increased over the past 30 years, rising from 3.3% in 1991 to 5.2% in 2021, the highest ever recorded in a census.
 - This growth is mainly driven by the increase in bilingualism among those who learned English first in their childhood: while 15,610 people (2.8%) could have a conversation in French in 1991, that number rose to 22,455 (4.6%) in 2021.

Map 1

Proportion of Newfoundland and Labrador's population who could conduct a conversation in French, by census subdivision, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

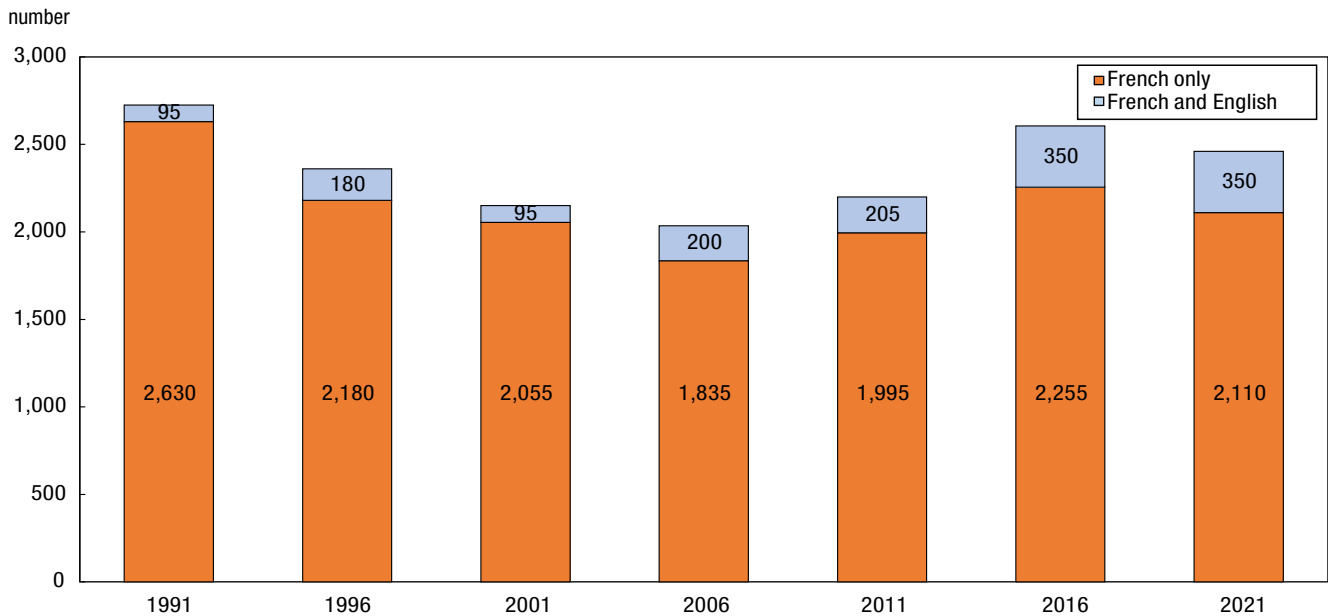
- In 2021, in 321 of Newfoundland and Labrador's 356 municipalities,¹ less than 5% of the population could conduct a conversation in French.
- The municipalities with a population of more than 500 that had the highest proportion of people who can conduct a conversation in French were Cape St. George (27.7%), Division No. 4, Subdivision E (14.6%)—which includes, for example, the communities of Piccadilly, Ship Cove, Abrahams Cove and Campbells Creek—as well as Wabush (13.0%) in Labrador.
- The municipalities with a population of more than 500 that had the highest number of people who spoke French were St. John's (9,960), Conception Bay South (1,840) and Paradise (1,815). These three municipalities are located in the St. John's census metropolitan area (CMA).

1. In this fact sheet, "municipality" refers to a census subdivision for which data are available.

French as first official language spoken

Chart 2

Population with French as their first official language spoken, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991 to 2021

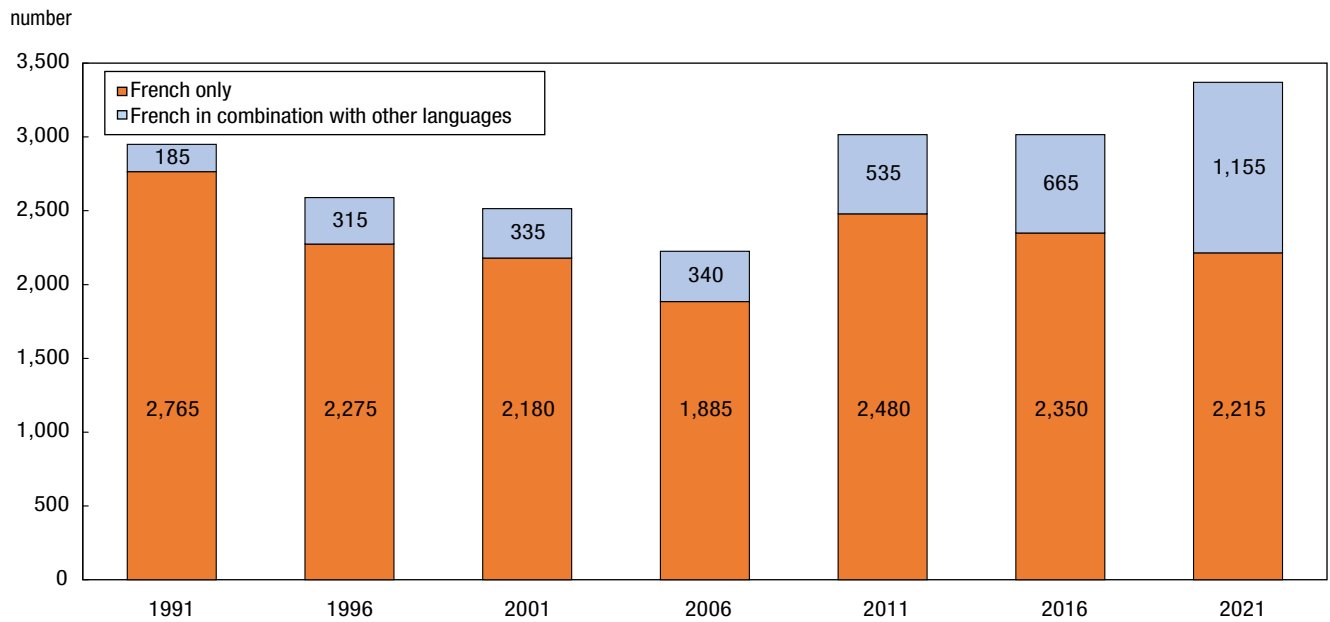


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 2,110 Newfoundland and Labrador residents (0.4% of the population) had French as their only first official language spoken and 350 residents (0.1% of the population) had both French and English as their first official languages spoken.
 - From 1991 to 2006, there was a decline in the number of persons with French as their only first official language spoken (-795) and a decrease in their relative proportion (from 0.5% to 0.3%).
 - This population then increased from 2006 to 2016 (+420) before falling from 2016 to 2021 (-145).
 - From 1991 to 2021, the number of people who had French and English as their first official languages spoken rose from 95 to 350, an increase of 255 people.

French as a mother tongue

Chart 3
Population with French as mother tongue, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991 to 2021

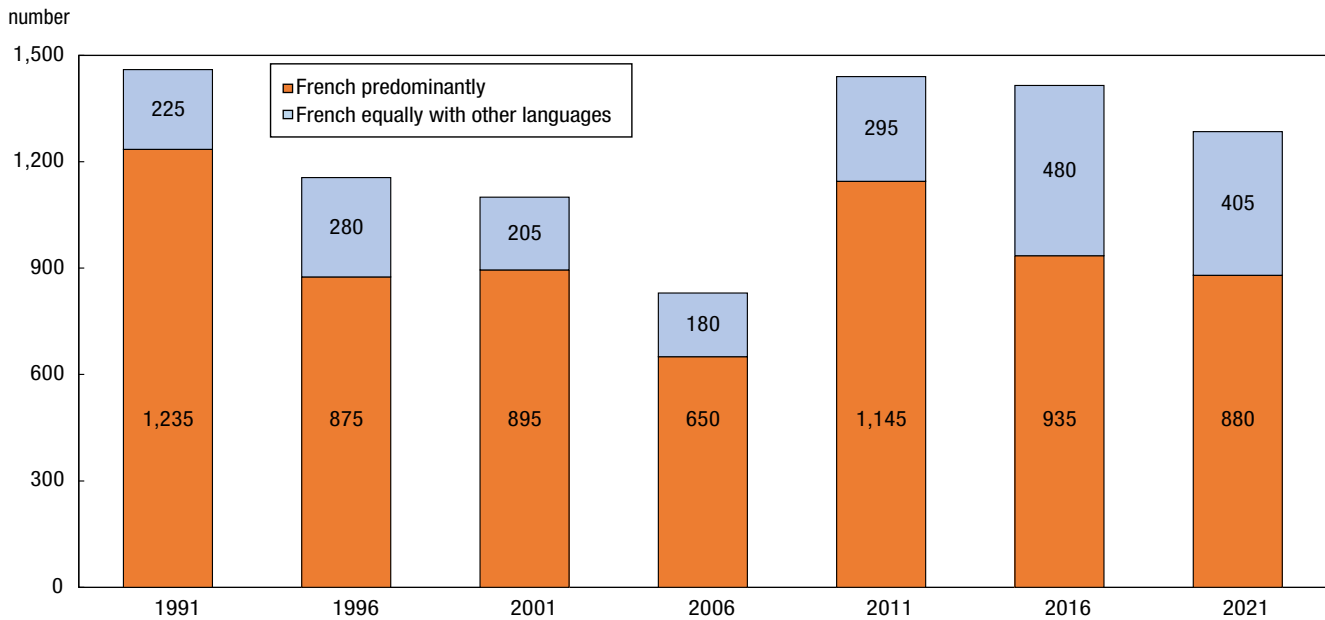


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 3,360 Newfoundland and Labrador residents (0.7% of the population) had French as one of their mother tongues, up 340 from 2016 and 395 from 1991.
 - In 2021, 65.8% of these residents (2,215 people) had French as their only mother tongue, while 34.2% (1,155 people) had French along with other languages (mainly English).
- Among people who were married or in a common-law relationship and had French as one of their mother tongues in 2021, fewer than one in five (18.5%) were in a relationship with another person whose mother tongue is French.

French spoken at home

Chart 4
Population speaking French most often at home, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991 to 2021



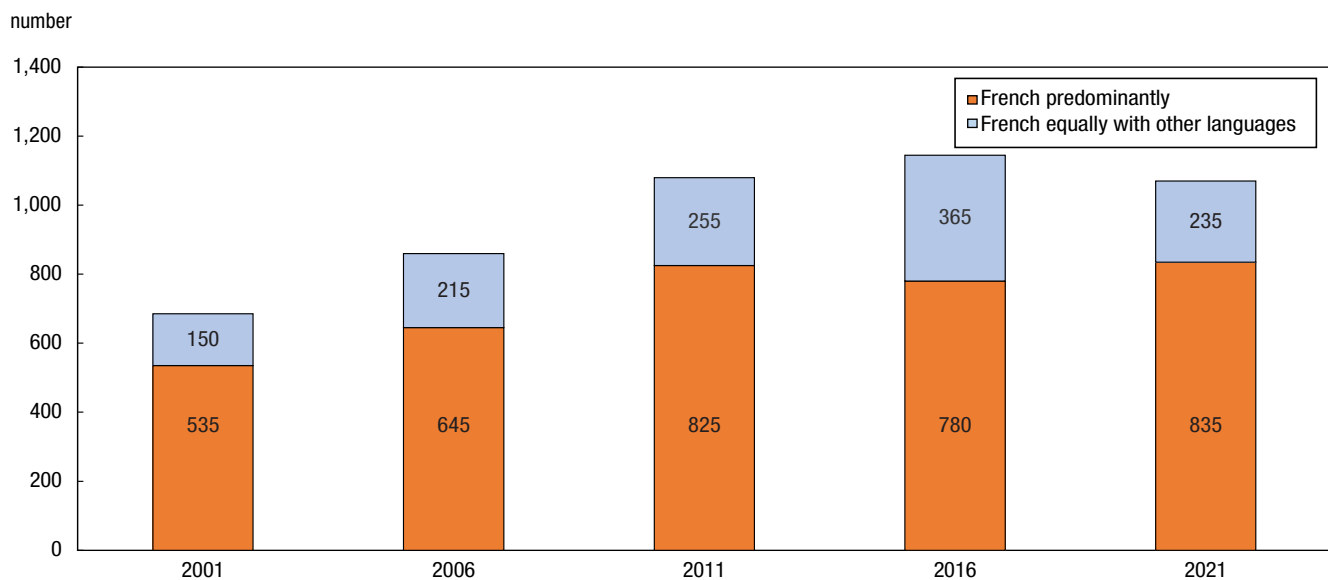
Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 3,695 Newfoundland and Labrador residents (0.7% of the population) spoke French at least regularly at home.
 - Of these, 1,285 people (34.8%) spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages, down from 2016 (-130).²
 - The majority of these people (2,410, or 65.2%) spoke French regularly at home, in addition to their main language (generally English).
- Among people with French as their mother tongue, alone or with other languages:
 - In total, 45.9% (1,545 people) spoke French at least regularly at home in 2021. However, this rate varied by age, ranging from 68.8% among those under age 15 to 35.9% among those aged 45 and older.
 - In total, 28.6% (960 people) spoke French most often at home, alone or equally with other languages, down from 1991 (1,295 people, or 43.5%).
- Among those whose mother tongue is not French, 2,150 (0.4%) spoke French on a regular basis at home.
 - Most of them (1,825 people, or 84.9%) spoke French at home as a secondary language and spoke another language more often (generally English).

2. The large census-to-census changes in the number of people speaking French most often at home in Newfoundland and Labrador can be explained by several factors, such as the high interprovincial and international mobility of the French-speaking population in the province.

French used at work

Chart 5
Population using French most often at work, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2001 to 2021



Notes: Among workers who were employed during the census reference week. In 2021, changes were made to the census questions regarding languages used at work. Comparisons with previous cycles must therefore be made with caution. For more information, consult the Languages Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population of 2001, 2006, 2016 and 2021, and the National Household Survey of 2011.

- In 2021, 2,680 Newfoundland and Labrador residents used French at least regularly at work. This represents 1.3% of the province's workers.³
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, 1,070 people used French most often at work, predominantly or equally with other languages, accounting for 0.5% of the province's workers.
 - The number of people who used French most often at work increased steadily from 685 in 2001 to 1,145 in 2016. However, it fell in the last intercensal period (-75).
- In 2021, among workers who used French at least regularly at work, most worked in educational services (1,050 people, or 39.2%), in public administration (470 people, or 17.5%), or in health care and social assistance (165 people, or 6.2%).⁴
- Among those who spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages, 46.5% also used French regularly at work.
- More than 6 in 10 workers (62.7%) who used French regularly at work lived in the St. John's CMA.

3. Persons employed during the Census of Population reference week.

4. Based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Instruction in French in primary and secondary schools

- In 2021, 2,955 (3.5%) of the 85,260 children under 18 living in the province were eligible⁵ for instruction in French.
 - About half (1,485 children) of them lived in the St. John's CMA.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, 5,660 people attended or had already attended a regular French program in a French-language school in Canada, representing 1.2% of the population aged 5 and older.
 - Of those who had never attended a French-language school, 30,520 (6.3%) had attended a French immersion program in an English-language school.
 - Among school-aged children⁶ who were eligible for instruction in French, 1,200 (54.2%) were attending or had already attended a French-language school.

French among immigrants

- In 2021, the proportions of recent⁷ immigrants and established⁸ immigrants living in Newfoundland and Labrador who could conduct a conversation in French (6.7% and 9.8%, respectively) were higher than the proportion among the non-immigrant population (5.1%).
 - The proportions of recent immigrants and established immigrants who spoke French at least regularly at home (3.4% and 3.3%, respectively) were also higher than for the non-immigrant population (0.7%).
 - The proportions of recent immigrants and established immigrants who had French as their only first official language spoken (2.7% and 2.3%, respectively) or French and English as their first official languages spoken (1.4% and 1.1%, respectively) were higher than for the non-immigrant population (0.3% and 0.1%).
- In 2021, nearly three-quarters (73.5%) of immigrants whose only first official language spoken was French were living in the St. John's CMA.

5. According to the criteria set out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, except for citizenship.

6. Children aged 5 to 17.

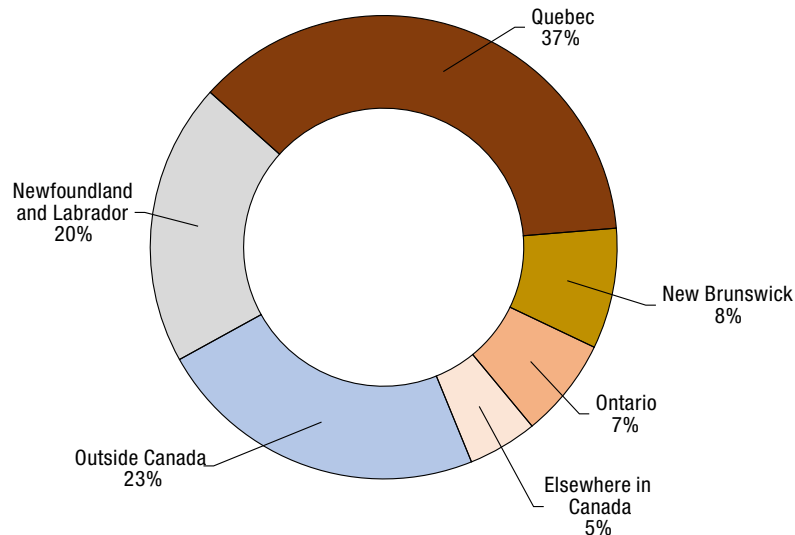
7. Immigrants admitted from 2016 to 2021.

8. Immigrants admitted before 2016.

Mobility and birthplace of the French-speaking population

Chart 6

Place of birth of the population whose only first official language spoken is French, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

- In 2021, among Newfoundland and Labrador residents whose only first official language spoken is French, fewer than 1 in 5 (19.6%, or 415 people) were born in the province.
 - More than half (57.4%, or 1,200 people) were born in another province or territory, with the majority coming from Quebec (36.8%, or 770 people), New Brunswick (8.4%, or 175 people) or Ontario (6.9%, or 145 people).
 - Just under a quarter (23.0%, or 480 people) were born abroad, specifically in metropolitan France (8.6%) or Africa (10.3%).
- From 2016 to 2021, the net interprovincial migration of the Newfoundland and Labrador population whose only first official language spoken is French was negative (-120).
 - While 375 people with French as their only first official language spoken settled in Newfoundland and Labrador from another province or territory from 2016 to 2021, 495 people left the province during the same period.

Appendix

Table 1
Comparisons of selected French-language indicators, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991 to 2021

Indicator	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
	percent						
French as first official language spoken ¹	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
French only	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
French and English	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Knowledge of French ²	3.3	3.9	4.1	4.7	4.6	5.1	5.2
French only	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
French and English	3.3	3.9	4.1	4.7	4.6	5.0	5.1
French as mother tongue	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.7
French only	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4
French in combination with other languages	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
French spoken most often at home	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
French predominantly	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
French equally with other languages	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
French used most often at work ³	..	..	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
French predominantly	..	..	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
French equally with other languages	..	..	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1

.. not available for a specific reference period

1. Corresponds to the sum of the “French” and “French and English” categories.

2. According to the knowledge of official languages.

3. Among workers who were employed during the census reference week. In 2021, changes were made to the census questions regarding languages used at work. Comparisons with previous cycles must therefore be made with caution. For more information, consult the Languages Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021, and the National Household Survey of 2011.

Table 2
Frequency of French use at work and frequency of French spoken at home, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021

Frequency	French used at work ¹		French spoken at home	
	number	percent	number	percent
Total population	206,280	100.0	504,805	100.0
Only	375	0.2	580	0.1
Mostly	460	0.2	295	0.1
Equally	235	0.1	405	0.1
Regularly	1,605	0.8	2,405	0.5
No mention	203,610	98.7	501,110	99.3

1. Among workers who were employed during the census reference week.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 3
Use of French at work,¹ by frequency and industry sectors, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021

Selection of industry sectors	Use of French at work			
	At least regularly ²		Most often	
	number	percent	number	percent
Total	2,680	100.0	1,070	100.0
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	55	2.1	25	2.3
Construction	25	0.9	0	0.0
Manufacturing	45	1.7	25	2.3
Retail trade	135	5.0	20	1.9
Transportation and warehousing	145	5.4	40	3.7
Professional, scientific and technical services	85	3.2	35	3.3
Educational services	1,050	39.2	650	60.7
Health care and social assistance	165	6.2	10	0.9
Accommodation and food services	55	2.1	0	0.0
Public administration	470	17.5	130	12.1
Other sectors	365	13.6	110	10.3

1. Among workers who were employed during the census reference week.

2. Workers using French at least regularly includes all those who reported using this language at work, whether it was most often or on a regular basis as a secondary language.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 4
French spoken at least regularly at home, by age and mother tongue, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021

Age group	Mother tongue					
	Total		French ¹		Other languages	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Total	3,695	0.7	1,545	45.9	2,150	0.4
0 to 14 years	965	1.4	330	68.8	630	0.9
15 to 44 years	1,710	1.0	680	48.9	1,030	0.6
45 years and older	1,020	0.4	535	35.9	485	0.2

1. Alone or in combination with other languages.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 5
Comparison of French-language indicators, by immigrant status and period of immigration, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021

Immigration status and period of immigration	Knowledge of French ¹		French spoken at home ¹		First official language spoken			
					French only		French and English	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Total	25,865	5.2	3,690	0.7	2,090	0.4	330	0.1
Non-immigrants	24,605	5.1	3,220	0.7	1,655	0.3	120	0.0
Immigrants	1,260	8.8	465	3.3	335	2.4	170	1.2
Recent immigrants ²	285	6.7	145	3.4	115	2.7	60	1.4
Established immigrants ³	975	9.8	325	3.3	225	2.3	110	1.1
2011 to 2015	240	10.4	125	5.4	60	2.6	70	3.0
2001 to 2010	205	8.4	65	2.7	55	2.3	20	0.8
1991 to 2000	85	8.3	40	3.9	25	2.5	15	1.5
1980 to 1990	85	9.6	20	2.2	20	2.2	0	0.0
Before 1980	365	10.9	70	2.1	60	1.8	0	0.0
Non-permanent residents	260	5.0	125	2.4	95	1.8	40	0.8

1. Includes all mentions of French.

2. Admitted to Canada between 2016 and 2021.

3. Admitted to Canada before 2016.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.