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Key facts on the French language in Prince Edward Island in 2021

by Nicolas Auclair, Catherine Frigon and Gabriel St-Amant

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Key facts on the French language in Prince Edward Island in 2021

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

This fact sheet gives an overview of the situation of French in Prince Edward Island 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, and 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.

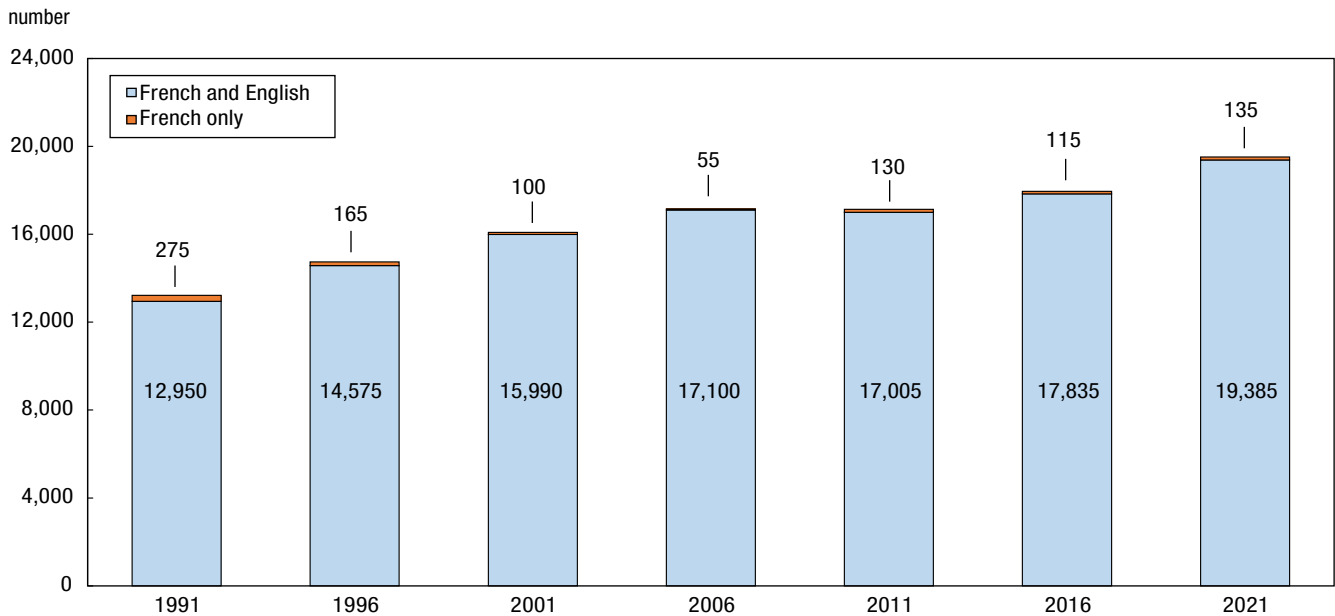
The information presented in this fact sheet comes from the Census of Population. To learn more about census concepts and the historical comparability of data, please refer to the 2021 Census of Population *Languages Reference Guide* and the *Instruction in the Minority Official Language Reference Guide*.

Highlights

- In 2021, 19,520 Prince Edward Islanders could have a conversation in French. This number was up from 2016 (+1,570) and 1991 (+6,300). The relative proportion of these residents also rose from 10.3% in 1991 to 12.8% in 2021.
- In 2021, 4,610 people spoke French at least regularly at home (3.0% of the population). Among those with French as one of their mother tongues, over half (54,3%) spoke French regularly at home.
- In 2021, 2,715 workers living in the province (3.6%) used French at least regularly at work. The majority worked in public administration (30.2%) or educational services (25.4%).
- Almost 1 in 12 immigrants (8.1%) could conduct a conversation in French. This proportion was higher among immigrants admitted before 2016 (10.1%) than among those admitted between 2016 and 2021 (5.1%).
- More than half (56.6%) of Prince Edward Islanders who had French as their only first official language spoken in 2021 were born in that province.

Ability to conduct a conversation in French

Chart 1
Population who can have a conversation in French, Prince Edward Island, 1991 to 2021

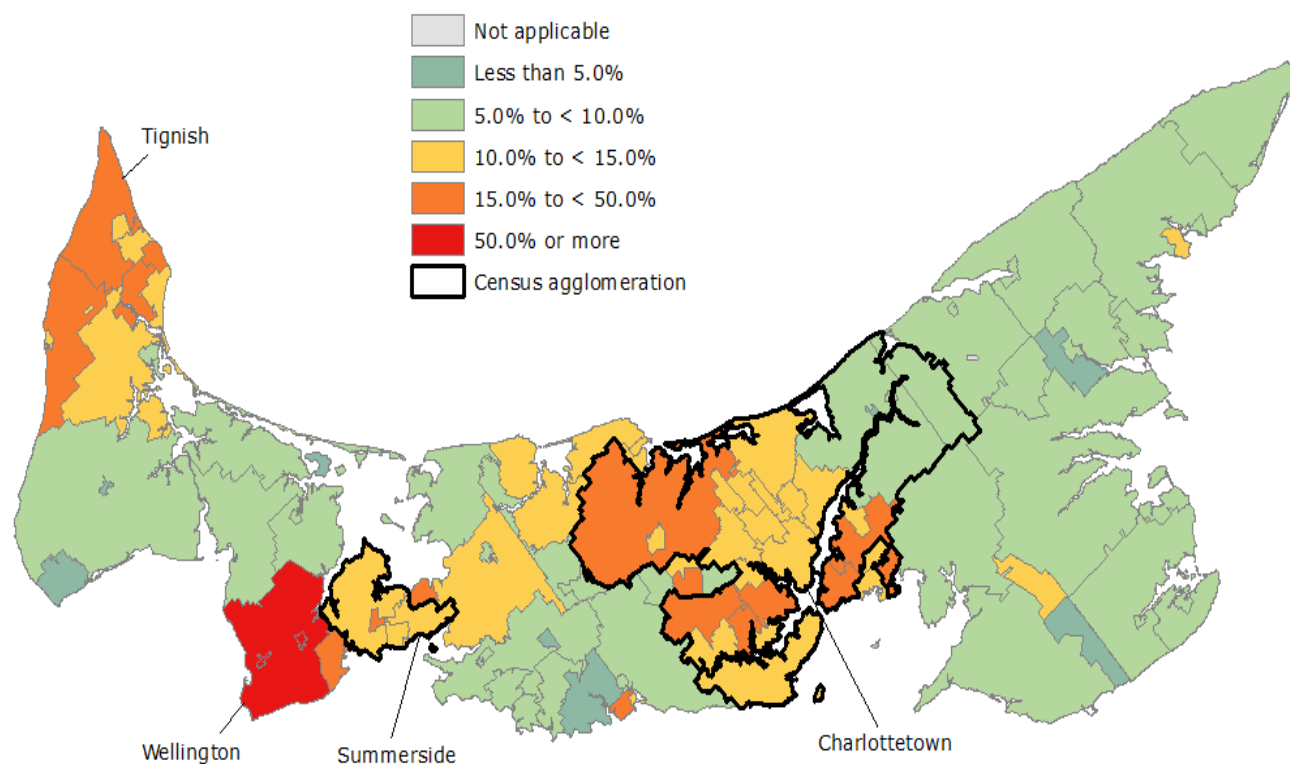


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 19,520 Prince Edward Islanders (12.8%) could conduct a conversation in French. Almost all (99.3%, or 19,385 people) could also have a conversation in English.
- The number of people who could have a conversation in French rose from 1991 to 2016 (+4,730), and continued its rise between 2016 and 2021 (+1,570).
- The proportion of the population who can conduct a conversation in French rose from 10.3% in 1991 to 12.8% in 2021. However, it has remained stable over the past 15 years (12.8% in 2006).
 - This upward trend since 1991 is mainly due to the increase in bilingualism among those who learned English first in their childhood: among them, while 7,725 people (6.4%) could have a conversation in French in 1991, 13,720 (10.4%) could do so in 2021.

Map 1

Proportion of Prince Edward Island's population who could conduct a conversation in French, by census subdivision, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

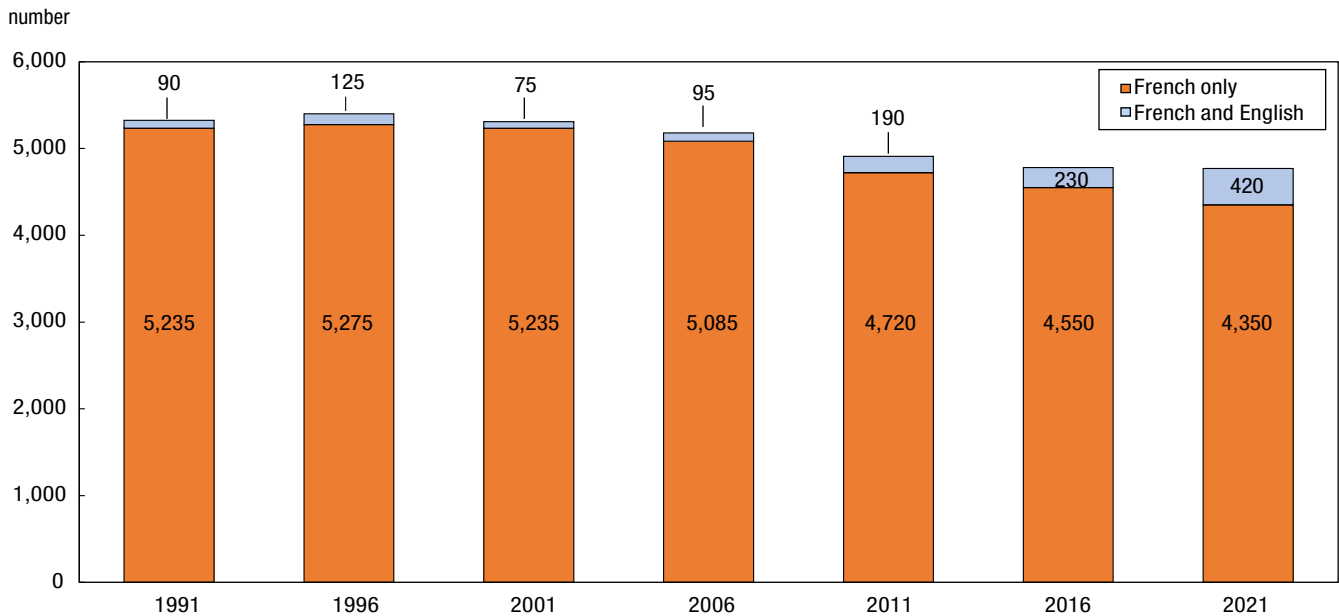
- In 2021, in 8 of Prince Edward Island's 97 municipalities,¹ less than 5% of its population could have a conversation in French. In addition, in 18 of the 97 municipalities, more than 15% of the population could conduct a conversation in French.
- The municipalities with a population of more than 500 that had the highest proportion of people who could speak French were Wellington (Fire District) (55.2%), Miscouche (20.7%)—in the Summerside census agglomeration (CA)—and Tignish (18.3%).
- The municipalities with a population of more than 500 that had the highest number of people who spoke French were the capital, Charlottetown (4,970), Summerside (2,045) and Stratford (1,770). Stratford is part of the Charlottetown CA.

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, Prince Edward Island, 1991 to 2021

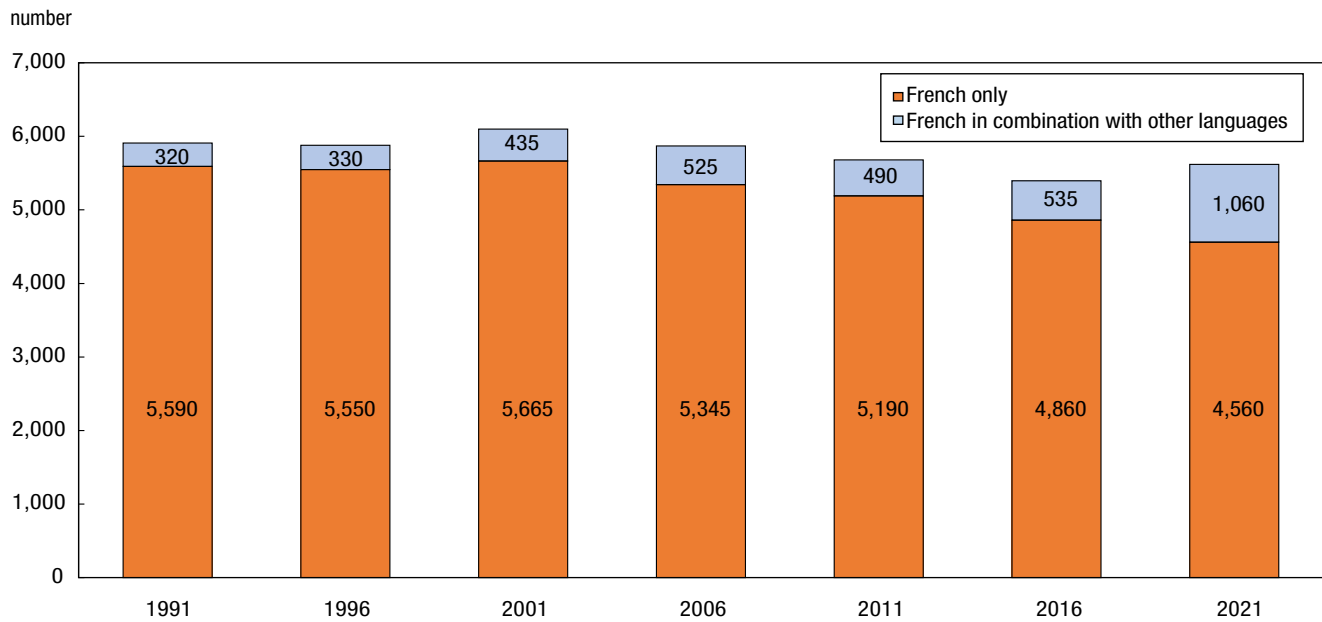


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 4,350 Prince Edward Islanders had French as their only first official language spoken (2.9% of the population) and 420 residents had both French and English as their first official languages spoken (0.3%).
 - From 1991 to 2001, the number of people with French as their only first official language spoken remained stable (5,235 people). Since then, there was a decline in the number of people with French as their only first official language spoken (-885). Moreover, the relative proportion of these people has decreased from 1991 to 2021 (from 4.1% to 2.9%).
 - The number of people with French and English as their first official languages spoken remained stable from 1991 to 2001 (from 90 to 75 people), but has risen over the past 20 years (from 75 to 420 people).

French as a mother tongue

Chart 3
Population with French as mother tongue, Prince Edward Island, 1991 to 2021

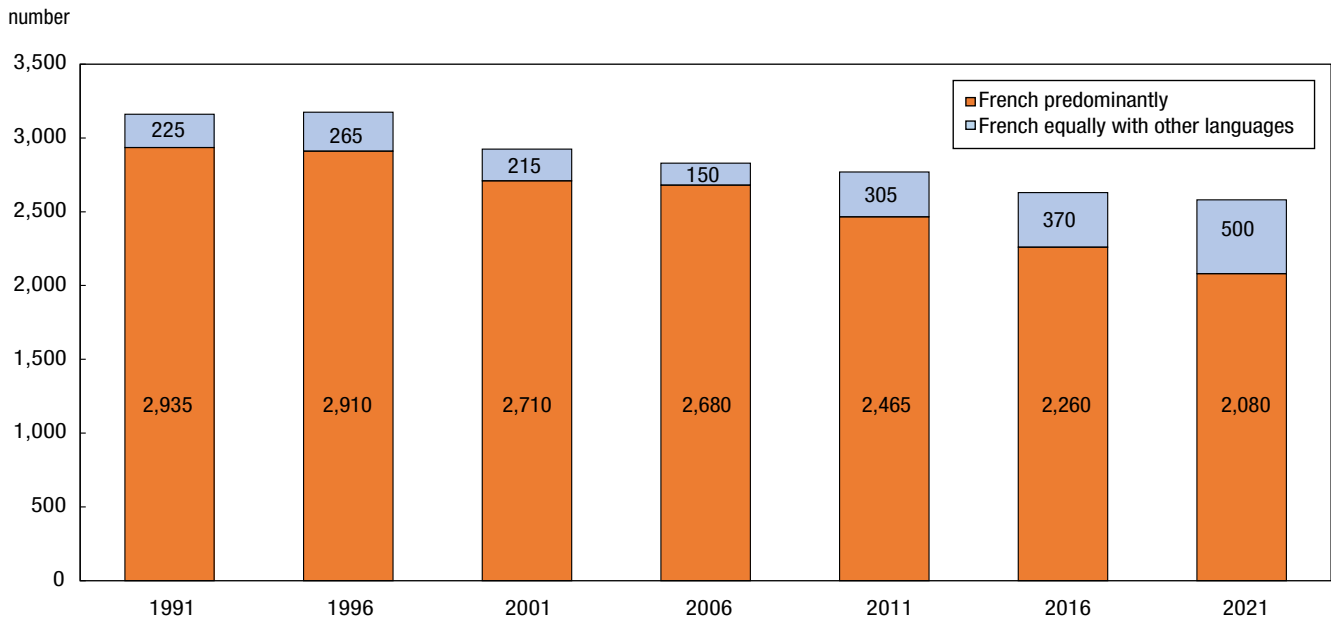


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 5,620 Prince Edward Islanders had French as one of their mother tongues (3.7% of the population), up from 2016 (+220). However, this is lower than in 1991 (-290).
 - In 2021, 81.1% of these residents (4,560 people) had French as their only mother tongue, while 18.9% (1,060 people) had it 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, more than a third (35.0%) 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, Prince Edward Island, 1991 to 2021

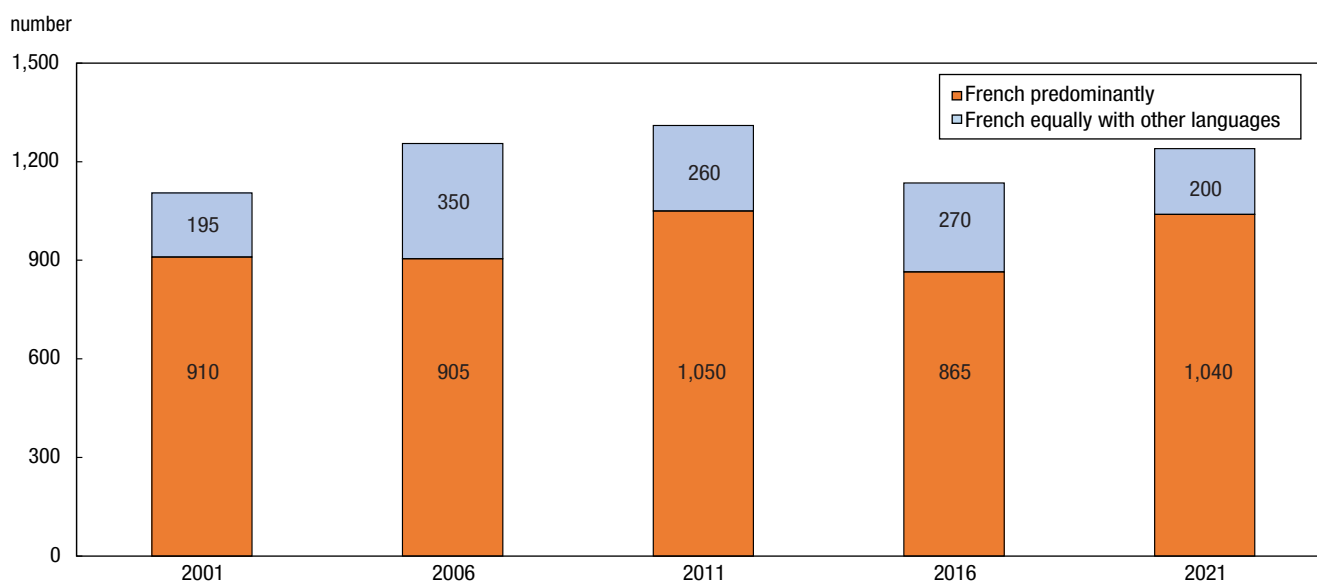


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 4,610 Prince Edward Islanders spoke French at least regularly at home (3.0% of the population).
 - Of these, the majority (2,585 people, or 56.1%) spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages. This number is down from 2016 (-45).
 - In addition, 2,025 people (43.9%) spoke French regularly at home, in addition to their main language (usually English).
- Among people with French as their mother tongue, alone or with other languages:
 - 54.3% spoke it at least regularly at home in 2021 (3,050 people). However, this rate varied by age, ranging from 78.5% among those under age 15 to 46.5% among those aged 45 and over.
 - 41.0% spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages (2,305 people), down from 1991 (3,060 people, or 51.8%).
- Among those whose mother tongue is not French, 1,555 (1.1%) spoke French regularly at home.
 - The vast majority (1,280 people, or 82.3%) spoke French at home as a secondary language and spoke another language more often (usually English).

French used at work

Chart 5
Population using French most often at work, Prince Edward Island, 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, 2,715 Prince Edward Islanders used French at least regularly at work. This represents 3.6% of the province's workers.²
 - In Prince Edward Island, 1,240 people used French most often at work, predominantly or equally with other languages, accounting for 1.7% of the province's workers.
 - The number of people who used French most often at work increased steadily from 1,105 in 2001 to 1,310 in 2011, then turned downward from 2011 to 2016 (-175), before increasing again from 2016 to 2021 (+105).
- In 2021, among workers who used French at least regularly at work, most worked in the public administration (820 people, or 30.2%), in educational services (690 people, or 25.4%), or in health care and social assistance (180 people, or 6.6%).³
- Among those who spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages, 65.2% used French regularly at work.
- The majority of workers who used French regularly at work (52.3% or 1,420 people) lived in the Charlottetown CA, while 12.0% (325 people) lived in the Summerside CA.

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

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

Instruction in French in primary and secondary schools

- In 2021, 2,870 (9.8%) of the 29,305 children under 18 living in the province were eligible⁴ for instruction in French.
 - Nearly half (1,300 children) lived in the Charlottetown CA.
- In Prince Edward Island, 6,135 people attended or had already attended a regular French program in a French-language school in Canada, representing 4.3% of the population aged 5 and older.
 - Of those who had never attended a French-language school, 15,585 (10.9%) had attended a French immersion program in an English-language school.
 - Among school-aged children⁵ who were eligible for instruction in French, 1,435 (64.3%) were attending or had already attended a French-language school.

French among immigrants

- In 2021, the proportions of recent⁶ immigrants and established⁷ immigrants living in Prince Edward Island who could conduct a conversation in French (5.1% and 10.1%, respectively) were lower than the proportion among the non-immigrant population (13.7%).
 - The proportions of recent immigrants and established immigrants who spoke French at least regularly at home (2.6% and 3.2%, respectively) were similar to the proportion among the non-immigrant population (3.2%).
 - The proportion of recent immigrants and established immigrants who had French as their only first official language spoken (1.7% and 2.2%, respectively) was lower than the proportion among the non-immigrant population (2.9%). However, the proportions of recent and established immigrants whose first official languages spoken were both French and English (1.6 and 1.2%, respectively) were higher than the proportion among the non-immigrant population (0.1%).
- In 2021, about three-quarters (74.5%) of immigrants whose only first official language spoken is French were living in the Charlottetown CA.

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

5. Children aged 5 to 17.

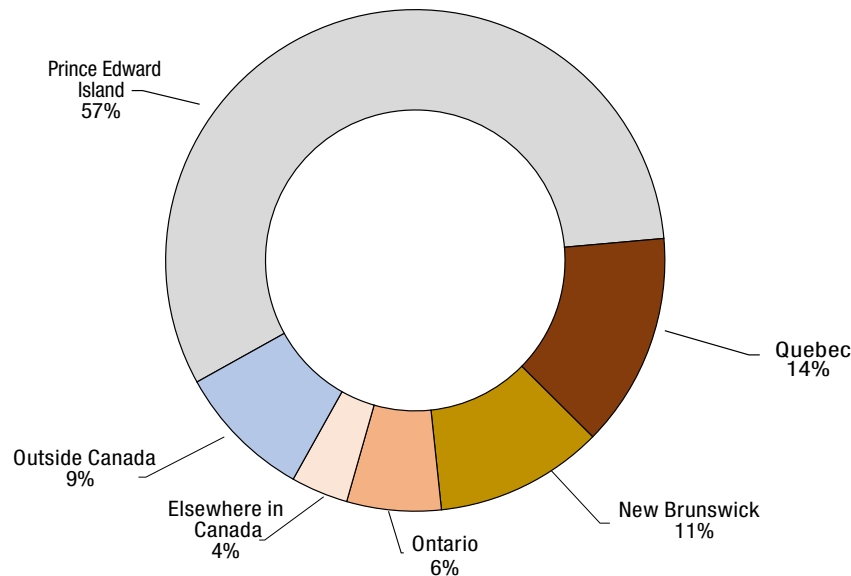
6. Immigrants admitted from 2016 to 2021.

7. 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, Prince Edward Island, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

- In 2021, among Prince Edward Islanders whose only first official language spoken is French, more than half (56.6% or 2,420 people) were born in the province.
 - More than one-third (34.5% or 1,475 people) were born in another province or territory, with the majority coming from Quebec (13.8%, or 590 people), New Brunswick (10.9%, or 465 people) or Ontario (6.1%, or 260 people).
 - Just under 1 in 11 (8.8%, or 375 people) were born abroad, specifically in metropolitan France (2.9%) or in Africa (3.0%).
- From 2016 to 2021, the net interprovincial migration of the Prince Edward Island population whose only first official language spoken is French was positive (+45).
 - While 470 people with French as their first official language spoken settled in Prince Edward Island from another province or territory from 2016 to 2021, 425 people left the province during the same period.

Appendix

Table 1
Comparisons of selected French-language indicators, Prince Edward Island, 1991 to 2021

Indicator	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
	percent						
French as first official language spoken ¹	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.1
French only	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.1	2.9
French and English	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Knowledge of French ²	10.3	11.1	12.1	12.8	12.4	12.7	12.8
French only	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
French and English	10.1	11.0	12.0	12.7	12.3	12.6	12.7
French as mother tongue	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.7
French only	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.7	3.4	3.0
French in combination with other languages	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7
French spoken most often at home	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.7
French predominantly	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.4
French equally with other languages	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
French used most often at work ³	..	..	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.7
French predominantly	..	..	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4
French equally with other languages	..	..	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3

.. 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, Prince Edward Island, 2021

Frequency	French used at work ¹		French spoken at home	
	number	percent	number	percent
Total population	74,870	100.0	152,455	100.0
Only	610	0.8	1,615	1.1
Mostly	430	0.6	465	0.3
Equally	205	0.3	500	0.3
Regularly	1,470	2.0	2,025	1.3
No mention	72,155	96.4	147,850	97.0

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

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 3
Use of French at work¹, by frequency and industry sectors, Prince Edward Island, 2021

Selection of industry sectors	Use of French at work			
	At least regularly ²		Most often	
	number	percent	number	percent
Total	2,715	100.0	1,240	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0	0.0	55	4.4
Construction	95	3.5	40	3.2
Manufacturing	55	2.0	20	1.6
Retail trade	145	5.3	35	2.8
Transportation and warehousing	45	1.7	0	0.0
Professional, scientific and technical services	135	5.0	65	5.4
Educational services	690	25.4	540	43.5
Health care and social assistance	180	6.6	100	8.1
Accommodation and food services	95	3.5	15	1.2
Public administration	820	30.2	220	17.7
Other sectors	215	7.9	195	15.7

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, Prince Edward Island, 2021

Age group	Mother tongue					
	Total		French ¹		Other languages	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Total	4,610	3.0	3,050	54.3	1,555	1.1
0 to 14 years	1,065	4.5	510	78.5	550	2.4
15 to 44 years	1,680	3.0	990	60.9	690	1.3
45 years and older	1,860	2.5	1,555	46.5	315	0.4

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, Prince Edward Island, 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	19,185	13.2	4,565	3.1	4,275	2.8	375	0.2
Non-immigrants	18,235	13.7	4,220	3.2	3,915	2.9	165	0.1
Immigrants	955	8.1	345	2.9	235	2.0	155	1.3
Recent immigrants ²	250	5.1	125	2.6	85	1.7	80	1.6
Established immigrants ³	700	10.1	220	3.2	155	2.2	85	1.2
2011 to 2015	90	5.6	25	1.5	20	1.2	25	1.5
2001 to 2010	235	13.9	115	6.8	55	3.3	35	2.1
1991 to 2000	60	8.5	15	2.1	15	2.1	0	0.0
1980 to 1990	75	10.3	10	1.4	0	0.0	10	1.4
Before 1980	230	10.6	60	2.8	60	2.8	10	0.5
Non-permanent residents	255	4.7	140	2.6	120	2.2	45	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.