

Catalogue no. 89-657-X2019016  
ISBN 978-0-660-32094-6

## Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series

# The French Language in Alberta, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures



Release date: December 10, 2019

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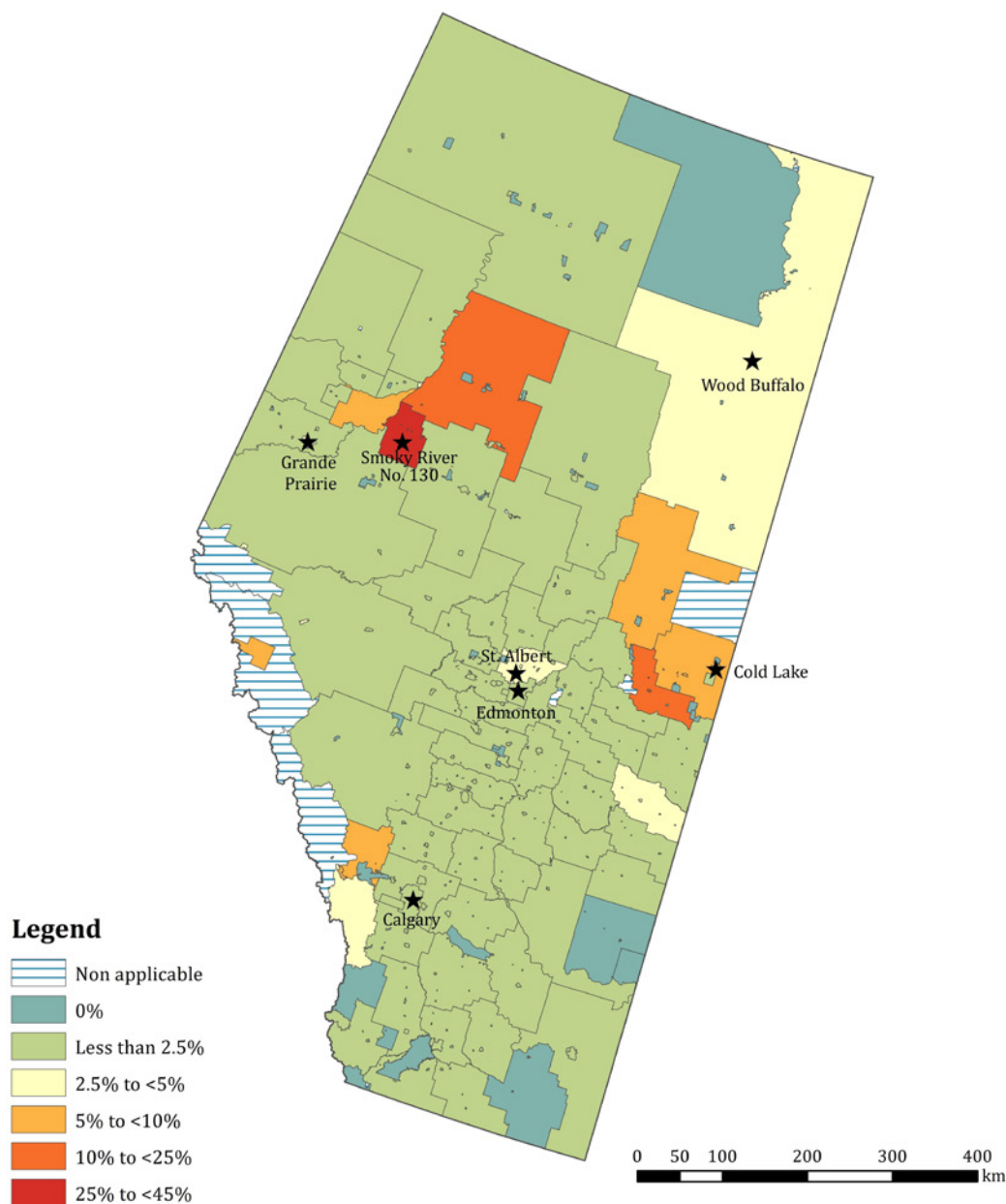
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# The French Language in Alberta, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures

The purpose of this document is to present an overview of the prevailing trends observed between 2001 and 2016<sup>1</sup> for the French language in Alberta. To this end, the document provides census-based information on the population<sup>2</sup> 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, Alberta, 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 79,835 persons who had French as a first official language spoken. As a whole, they represented 2.0% of Alberta's total population.
  - ▶ Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons who had French as a first official language spoken increased by 35.7% (+21,005 persons) – the fastest rate of growth for this population among the provinces.

**Table 1**  
**Selected French language indicators, Alberta, 2001 to 2016**

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
<b>Total population<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2,941,150</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,256,355</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,610,185</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,026,655</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>36.9</b>
French as first official language spoken <sup>2</sup>	58,830	2.0	62,785	1.9	71,370	2.0	79,835	2.0	35.7
Knowledge of French <sup>3</sup>	204,805	7.0	225,085	6.9	238,770	6.6	268,605	6.7	31.2
Knowledge of French only	1,895	0.1	2,200	0.1	3,205	0.1	3,890	0.1	105.3
Knowledge of English and French	202,910	6.9	222,885	6.8	235,565	6.5	264,715	6.6	30.5
French as mother tongue <sup>3</sup>	65,995	2.2	68,435	2.1	81,080	2.2	86,705	2.2	31.4
French spoken at home <sup>4</sup>	52,900	1.8	56,680	1.7	74,215	2.1	84,850	2.1	60.4
French spoken most often at home <sup>5</sup>	22,745	0.8	23,505	0.7	32,375	0.9	38,600	1.0	69.7
Only French spoken at home <sup>6</sup>	7,865	0.3	8,485	0.3	11,010	0.3	11,795	0.3	50.0
Mostly French spoken at home <sup>7</sup>	10,835	0.4	10,825	0.3	13,675	0.4	15,835	0.4	46.1
French spoken equally often with another language at home <sup>8</sup>	4,045	0.1	4,195	0.1	7,690	0.2	10,970	0.3	171.2
French spoken regularly at home (in addition to the main language)	30,155	1.0	33,175	1.0	41,840	1.2	46,250	1.1	53.4

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).

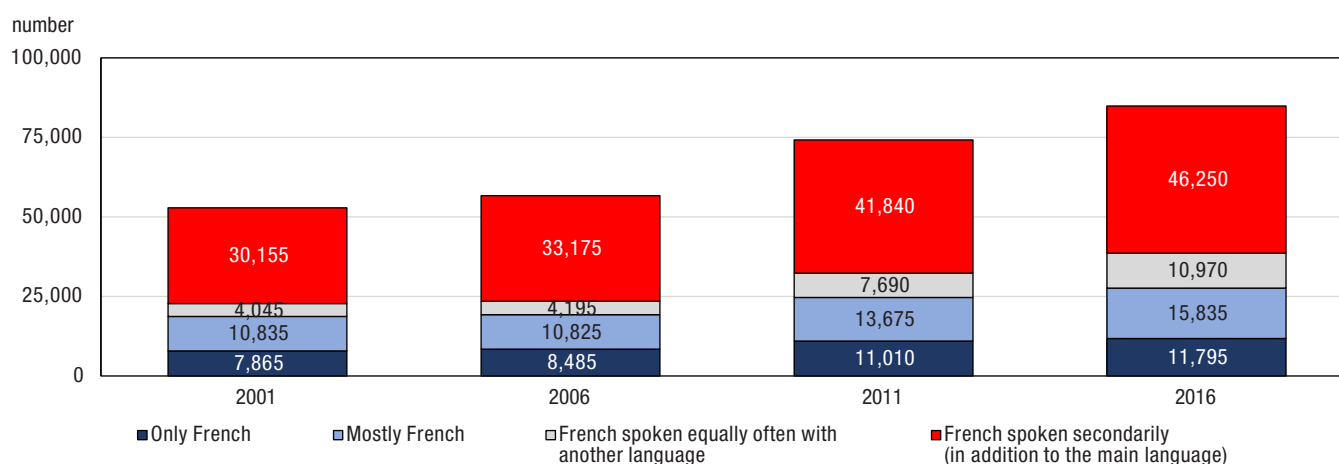
8. Includes persons who reported French and another language to Part A of the language spoken at home question (spoken most often).

**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, whether exclusively or along with another language, stood at 268,605 while representing 6.7% of Alberta's total population.
  - ▶ In the 2001 to 2016 period, the number of persons who reported being able to conduct a conversation in French increased by 63,800 persons which represents a 31.2% increase.
- In absolute terms, English-French bilingualism is on the rise in Alberta. In fact, as of 2016, 264,715 persons reported being able to conduct a conversation in both official languages compared to 202,910 in 2001, a 30.5% increase. However, in relative terms, English-French bilingualism in the province has decreased from 6.9% in 2001 to 6.6% in 2016.
- In 2016, 86,705 persons reported having French as their mother tongue<sup>3</sup>, either exclusively or along with other languages, and they represented 2.2% of Alberta's total population.
  - ▶ In the 15 years leading to 2016, the number of persons who report having French as their mother tongue, either exclusively or along with other languages, increased by 31.4%, that is, by an additional 20,710 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, Alberta, 2001 to 2016<sup>1</sup>**



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.

- The number of persons who reported speaking French at least regularly at home stood at 84,850 in 2016. Collectively, they represented 2.1% of Alberta's total population, up 0.3 percentage points in the 15 years since 2001.
  - ▶ In the 2001 to 2016 period, the number of persons who reported speaking French at least regularly at home increased by 60.4%, that is, by an additional 31,950 persons.
- In 2016, the number of persons who reported speaking French most often at home<sup>4</sup> stood at 38,600 whereas for those who reported speaking French as a secondary language this figure reached 46,250. Respectively, these populations represented 1.0% and 1.1% of Alberta's population.
  - ▶ Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons who reported speaking French most often at home<sup>4</sup> increased by 69.7% (+15,855 persons). Similarly, those who reported speaking French as their secondary language in addition to the main language have increased by 53.4% (+16,095 persons). In other words, the growth of French as a language spoken at home can be almost equally attributed to increases among both populations.
  - ▶ Among those who speak French most often at home<sup>4</sup>, less than half (43.7%) of the increase can be attributed to the gains made by those who speak French equally often with another language at home.

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

**Table 2**  
**French used at work, Alberta, 2001 to 2016**

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
<b>Working population<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,830,345</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,102,185</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,259,370</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,467,410</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>34.8</b>
French used at work <sup>2</sup>	28,065	1.5	32,510	1.5	31,170	1.4	36,600	1.5	30.4
French used most often at work <sup>3</sup>	7,495	0.4	8,555	0.4	9,460	0.4	11,430	0.5	52.5
Only French used at work <sup>4</sup>	1,640	0.1	1,770	0.1	2,485	0.1	2,075	0.1	26.5
Mostly French used at work <sup>5</sup>	3,300	0.2	3,775	0.2	3,875	0.2	4,480	0.2	35.8
French used equally often with another language at work <sup>6</sup>	2,555	0.1	3,010	0.1	3,100	0.1	4,875	0.2	90.8
French used regularly at work (in addition to the main language)	20,570	1.1	23,955	1.1	21,710	1.0	25,170	1.0	22.4

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, there were 36,600 workers who reported using French at work at least regularly. They represented 1.5% of the total working population of Alberta.
  - ▶ In the 15 years leading to 2016, those who reported using French at work at least regularly grew by 30.4% (+8,535 workers).
- Among those who reported using French at work at least regularly in 2016, 11,430 workers reported using French most often<sup>5</sup> whereas 25,170 reported using French as a secondary language in addition to their main language. Respectively, these two populations constituted 0.5% and 1.0% of Alberta's total working population that year.
  - ▶ In the 2001 to 2016 period, the number of workers who reported using French most often at work<sup>5</sup> increased by 52.5% (+3,935 workers). By contrast, the number of persons who reported using French as a secondary language in addition to their main language increased by 22.4% (+4,600 workers).
  - ▶ However, despite their different growth rates, these two populations contributed nearly equally to the growth in the use of French at work overall. In fact, in absolute terms, the increase in the population using French as a secondary language at work accounted for 53.9% of the growth in the use of French at work.

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