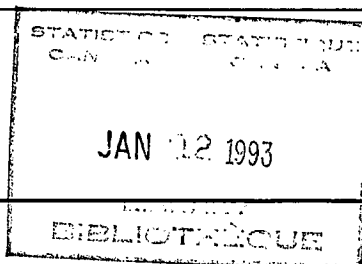




# The Daily

Statistics Canada

Tuesday, January 12, 1993  
For release at 8:30 a.m.



## 1991 CENSUS OF CANADA

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased numbers of Canadians speak a language other than English or French at home.
- Little change in the proportion with English home language.
- The number of people having French as home language increases, but their proportion of the total population continues to decline.
- English-French bilingualism increased in almost every province.
- Language shift among official language minorities increased.
- In Quebec, language shifts are turning more toward French than in the past.

#### Home Language and Mother Tongue Knowledge of Languages The Nation

**Home Language and Mother Tongue** and **Knowledge of Languages** are now available. These publications are based on data collected from a 20 per cent sample of households for the 1991 Census of Canada and provide information on languages spoken most often at home, mother tongue, and knowledge of languages.

Each publication presents tables with data for Canada, provinces, territories and, in some cases, census metropolitan areas. Together, they provide a wealth of information on English, French and non-official languages in Canada.

To obtain a copy of **Home Language and Mother Tongue** (93-317, \$40) or **Knowledge of Languages** (93-318, \$40) see "How to Order Publications." For more information, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.



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Statistics Canada conducted the 17th Census of Population since Confederation on June 4, 1991. Today's Daily provides information on home language, mother tongue and knowledge of languages to add to our new portrait of Canada and Canadians.

### **Increased numbers of Canadians speak a language other than English or French at home**

The number of people whose home language (the language spoken most often at home) was other than English or French was 2.3 million in 1991 (8.4 per cent of the population), compared to 1.9 million in 1986 (7.5 per cent of the population).

The higher proportion in 1991 was due primarily to the increased number of recent immigrants whose home language was neither English nor French and to the inclusion, for the first time in the 1991 Census, of non-permanent residents. However, if non-permanent residents are excluded from the comparison, the proportion of the population reporting home language other than English or French moved from 7.5 per cent in 1986 to 8.0 per cent in 1991. The increase was confined to the four provinces which received the most immigrants: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta.

Between 1971 and 1991, the ranking of the top home languages other than English or French changed considerably. In 1971, the top three home languages were Italian (spoken by 425,000 people), German (213,000) and Ukrainian (145,000). By 1991, Chinese (430,000) had moved from fifth to first place. Italian, the home language of 288,000, dropped from first to second place, while Portuguese (153,000) rose from sixth place in 1971 to third place

in 1991. Considerably fewer people had Ukrainian as home language (50,000) in 1991 and it slipped to twelfth place in ranking.

Comparison of 1971 and 1991 Census data shows that the number of people who spoke an aboriginal language as home language was essentially the same in 1971 (137,000 people) as in 1991 (138,000). It should be noted, however, that incomplete enumeration of some Indian reserves in 1991 may have resulted in underreporting of the number of people speaking an aboriginal language at home. (For further information, see the note on data comparability on page 15 of today's Daily).

Both international immigration and language shifts to English or French as the language used most often at home affect the number of people reporting home languages other than English or French. Rapid growth in a language group occurs when its members immigrate in large numbers. The rate of increase declines, however, as shifts to English or French become more common, even if immigration remains high. Finally, when immigration slows down, the number reporting a given home language declines because of little transmission from one generation to the next. In terms of home language, the Chinese, Spanish and Punjabi groups, among others, are in the growing phase, while those speaking Italian, German and Ukrainian at home are declining.

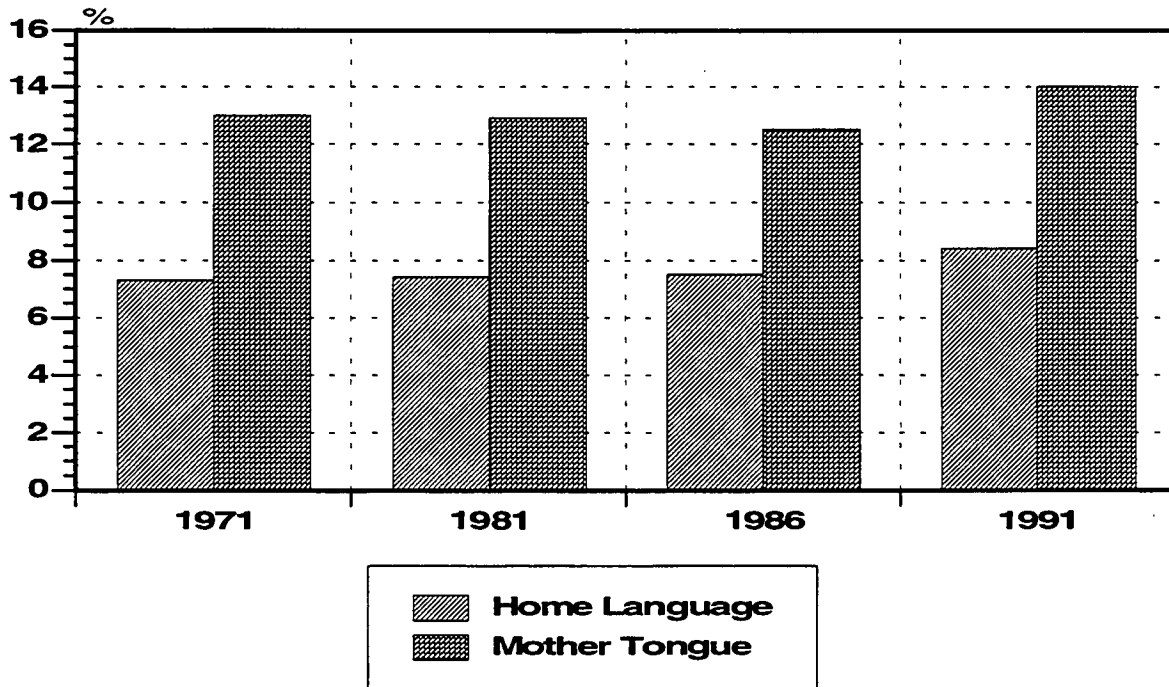
Languages other than English or French were reported less frequently as home language than as mother tongue. In 1991, the number of people with Chinese home language (430,000) was significantly smaller than the population whose mother tongue was Chinese (517,000). The contrast was much more marked for German: 134,000 with German home language compared to 491,000 with German as mother tongue.

### **Mother Tongue and Home Language**

**Mother tongue is defined as the first language a person learned at home in childhood and still understands at the time of the census. Home language means the language most often spoken at home during the period immediately preceding the census. Both concepts refer to language practices within the family, the first in childhood, the second at the time data are collected.**

**When people report that they most often speak a language other than their mother tongue at home, this does not necessarily mean that they never speak their mother tongue at home. They may speak it within the family, but less often than another language.**

## Population with Mother Tongue and Home Language Other than English or French, Canada, 1971-1991



### Ten Main Home Languages Other than English or French, Canada, 1971 and 1991

1971			1991		
Home Language	Number	%	Home Language	Number	%
Italian	425,230	2.0	Chinese	430,090	1.6
German	213,350	1.0	Italian	288,290	1.1
Ukrainian	144,755	0.7	Portuguese	152,530	0.6
Greek	86,830	0.4	Spanish	145,050	0.5
Chinese	77,895	0.4	German	134,460	0.5
Portuguese	74,765	0.3	Punjabi	123,775	0.5
Polish	70,960	0.3	Polish	117,150	0.4
Magyar (Hungarian)	50,675	0.2	Greek	93,160	0.3
Dutch	36,170	0.2	Arabic	82,450	0.3
Yiddish	26,330	0.1	Vietnamese	79,585	0.3

Note: In 1991, single and multiple responses were combined. See note on single and multiple responses on page 8.

# Population by Home Language, Canada, Quebec and Other Provinces and Territories, 1971-1991

Home language		Canada		Quebec		Other Provinces and Territories	
		Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%
Total	1991	26,994	100	6,810	100	20,184	100
	1991 a	26,771	100	6,766	100	20,004	100
	1986	25,022	100	6,455	100	18,568	100
	1981	24,083	100	6,369	100	17,714	100
	1971	21,568	100	6,028	100	15,541	100
English	1991	18,439	68.3	759	11.1	17,680	87.6
	1991 a	18,348	68.5	750	11.1	17,598	88.0
	1986	17,122	68.4	763	11.8	16,359	88.1
	1981	16,355	67.9	784	12.3	15,571	87.9
	1971	14,446	67.0	888	14.7	13,558	87.2
French	1991	6,290	23.3	5,655	83.0	635	3.1
	1991 a	6,280	23.5	5,646	83.4	634	3.2
	1986	6,032	24.1	5,364	83.1	668	3.6
	1981	5,940	24.7	5,276	82.8	664	3.7
	1971	5,546	25.7	4,870	80.8	676	4.3
Other Languages	1991	2,265	8.4	397	5.8	1,868	9.3
	1991 a	2,143	8.0	371	5.5	1,772	8.9
	1986	1,868	7.5	328	5.1	1,540	8.3
	1981	1,788	7.4	309	4.9	1,479	8.3
	1971	1,576	7.3	270	4.5	1,306	8.4

**Note:** Except for 1971, data were reconciled (see note on data reconciliation below) and multiple responses were equally divided between the languages reported.

**1991 a** Non-permanent residents are excluded to facilitate comparison with earlier years.

## Data Reconciliation

In the census, as in most large surveys, a small proportion of respondents provide inconsistent data. In almost every case, these data are corrected when the file is edited. In some cases, because of the sensitive or complex nature of the variable, the reported information is not changed and analysts are left to decide whether or not to make a correction.

For example, in the 1986 Census, of the 73,000 people in Quebec who reported French as their mother tongue and English as their home language, 26,000 stated that they could conduct a conversation in French but not in English. At the same time, elsewhere in the country, of the 16,000 people who reported English as their mother tongue and French as their home language, 6,000 stated that they could conduct a conversation in English but not in French (see **Language Retention and Transfer**, Catalogue No 93-153). These inconsistent situations also occurred, but somewhat less frequently, in the 1981 Census.

Due to improved questionnaire design, the number of inconsistent cases is much smaller in the 1991 Census. Thus in Quebec, of the 58,000 people who reported French as their mother tongue and English as their home language, only 3,000 also stated that they could conduct a conversation in French but not in English. A reduction can be observed in the total number of inconsistent situations of this type, both in Quebec and elsewhere in the country.

In order to improve the comparability of data from the last three censuses, home language was amended for the **Daily** in every inconsistent case by accepting the statement about knowledge of official languages. These corrections pertained only to English and French as home languages. After multiple responses have been distributed equally between the languages reported, the proportion represented by French as home language in Quebec is identical before and after reconciliation in 1991 (83.0 per cent), because of the small number of inconsistent cases. The change is more marked in 1981 (82.5 per cent before and 82.8 per cent after reconciliation) and in 1986 (82.7 per cent before, 83.1 per cent after).

## Little change in the proportion with English home language

The number of people who used English as home language rose from 17.1 million in 1986 to 18.4 million in 1991, which corresponded to a slight decrease in its proportion in the population (from 68.4 per cent in 1986 to 68.3 per cent in 1991). If non-permanent residents are excluded from the comparison, the proportion speaking English most often at home increased slightly (from 68.4 per cent in 1986 to 68.5 per cent in 1991). This increase was smaller due to higher immigration during the most recent five-year period, than the increases observed since 1971, when a question on language most often spoken at home was first asked on the Census.

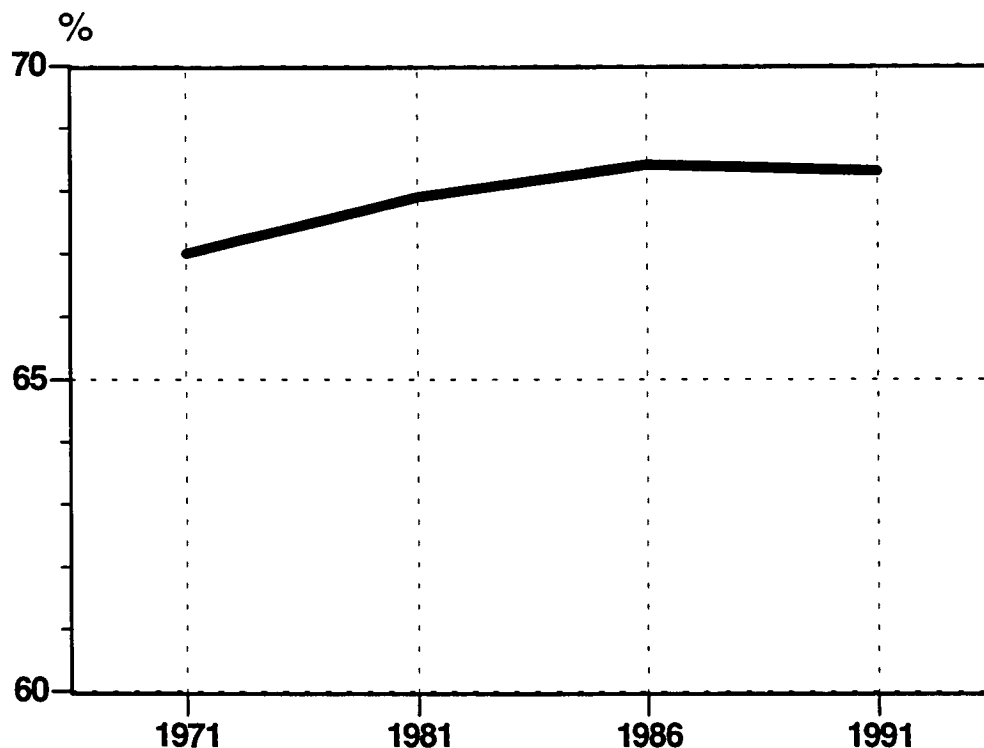
Between 1986 and 1991, Quebec experienced a slight decrease in the number of people whose home language was English (763,000 or 11.8 per cent of the population in 1986, compared to 759,000 or 11.1

per cent in 1991). This followed much more marked declines in the previous 15 years, when 888,000 people (14.7 per cent of the population) reported English home language in 1971, falling to 784,000 (12.3 per cent) in 1981 and to 763,000 (11.8 per cent) in 1986.

In the rest of the country, the number of people with English home language continued to increase, even though the proportion declined from 88.1 per cent in 1986 to 87.6 per cent in 1991. This decrease, however, was due primarily to the inclusion of non-permanent residents in 1991. If they are excluded from the comparison, the 1991 proportion (88.0 per cent) was only slightly below that of 1986 (88.1 per cent).

Between 1981 and 1991, the proportion of people with English home language decreased in Ontario and British Columbia (because of high immigration to those provinces), and in Quebec. It rose or remained the same in the other provinces and territories.

## Population with English as Home Language, Canada, 1971-1991



**Population by Home Language, Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1981 and 1991.**

		Total		English		French		Other Languages	
		Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%
Canada	1981	24,083	100	16,355	67.9	5,940	24.7	1,788	7.4
	1991	26,994	100	18,439	68.3	6,290	23.3	2,265	8.4
Newfoundland	1981	564	100	560	99.3	1	0.3	3	0.4
	1991	564	100	560	99.2	1	0.2	3	0.5
Prince Edward Island	1981	121	100	117	96.6	4	3.1	0	0.4
	1991	128	100	125	97.3	3	2.4	0	0.3
Nova Scotia	1981	840	100	807	96.1	24	2.9	9	1.1
	1991	891	100	858	96.3	22	2.5	11	1.2
New Brunswick	1981	689	100	468	67.9	217	31.5	5	0.7
	1991	716	100	489	68.2	223	31.2	5	0.7
Quebec	1981	6,369	100	784	12.3	5,276	82.8	309	4.9
	1991	6,810	100	759	11.1	5,655	83.0	397	5.8
Ontario	1981	8,534	100	7,311	85.7	332	3.9	891	10.4
	1991	9,977	100	8,500	85.2	318	3.2	1,159	11.6
Manitoba	1981	1,014	100	868	85.7	31	3.1	114	11.3
	1991	1,079	100	947	87.7	25	2.3	107	9.9
Saskatchewan	1981	956	100	885	92.5	10	1.1	61	6.4
	1991	976	100	921	94.4	7	0.7	48	4.9
Alberta	1981	2,214	100	2,025	91.5	29	1.3	160	7.2
	1991	2,519	100	2,305	91.5	20	0.8	194	7.7
British Columbia	1981	2,714	100	2,480	91.4	15	0.5	219	8.1
	1991	3,248	100	2,910	89.6	15	0.4	323	9.9
Yukon	1981	23	100	22	95.7	0	1.0	1	3.3
	1991	28	100	27	96.7	0	1.4	1	1.9
Northwest Territories	1981	46	100	29	63.0	1	1.4	16	35.7
	1991	57	100	38	66.8	1	1.6	18	32.0

**Note:** Data were reconciled and multiple responses were equally divided between the languages reported. See note on data reconciliation on page 4.

## The number of people having French as home language increases, but their proportion of the total population continues to decline

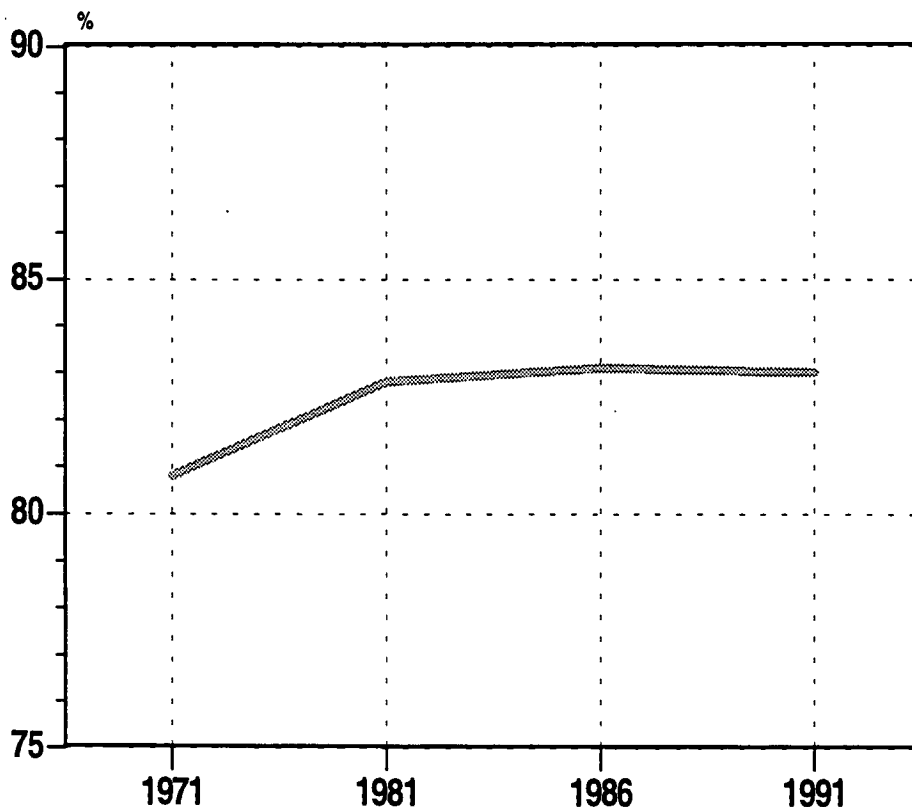
The population having French home language increased by 4.3 per cent, from 6.0 million to 6.3 million between 1986 and 1991. However, the proportion of the population using French as home language continued to decline, from 24.1 per cent in 1986 to 23.3 per cent in 1991 (23.5 per cent if non-permanent residents are excluded).

The proportion with French home language in Quebec declined from 83.1 per cent (5.4 million) in 1986, to 83.0 per cent (5.7 million) in 1991, due to the

inclusion of non-permanent residents in the 1991 Census. If they are excluded from the comparison, the proportion with French as home language increased from 83.1 per cent to 83.4 per cent.

Outside Quebec, the population using French home language declined from 664,000 in 1981 to 635,000 in 1991, representing a drop of 4.3 per cent over ten years. The relative size of this group decreased to 3.1 per cent in 1991 (3.2 per cent if non-permanent residents are excluded). The population with French as home language and the proportion it represented declined in most provinces. However, in New Brunswick, the number of people using French as home language rose from 217,000 in 1981 to 223,000 in 1991.

## Population with French as Home Language, Quebec, 1971 to 1991



### Single and Multiple Responses

Beginning with the 1986 Census, the questionnaire provided respondents with the opportunity to report more than one language in answer to the questions on mother tongue and language spoken most often at home. In 1991, most respondents (98.8 per cent) reported only one mother tongue, while 1.2 per cent reported more than one. The proportion of multiple responses was slightly higher for the question on home language (1.8 per cent). In 1986, multiple responses were much more common for both mother tongue (3.4 per cent) and home language (4.6 per cent). In 1981, even though the questions stated explicitly that only one language should be given, the proportion of multiple responses (2.2 per cent for both questions) was slightly higher than in 1991.

It would not be appropriate, except under special circumstances, to take only single responses into consideration in order to trace the evolution from 1986 to 1991 of the number or proportion in a particular language group. The size reported in 1991 would be overestimated in relation to that taken from 1986 Census data, because there were a larger proportion of single responses in 1991 than in 1986. On the other hand, if every mention of the language group under consideration (single and multiple responses) is taken together, the results of the 1991 Census in comparison to the 1986 Census would underestimate the size of the group. To be strictly accurate, both methods should be used at the same time.

To simplify the presentation of the change for home language groups, an intermediate method was used, based on equal distribution over the past three Censuses, of multiple responses among the languages reported. Although it is acceptable for comparing the 1981 and 1991 Censuses, it does not always ensure a high level of comparability with the 1986 Census, because of the much higher proportion of multiple responses in 1986. Statistics Canada does not yet have all the information which would enable analysts to allocate multiple responses more accurately.

### Large urban centres show greater language diversity

The highest proportions of people who had home language other than English or French were found in Toronto (21 per cent) and Vancouver (16 per cent). In those two centres, English was the leading home language (78 per cent and 83 per cent, respectively), while less than 1 per cent of the population had French as their home language. Ottawa-Hull and Sudbury were characterized by the predominance of English as home language (62 per cent and 76 per cent, respectively), a sizeable minority using French as home language (31 per cent and 21 per cent) and a relatively small proportion with home languages other than English or French (7 per cent and 3 per cent). French predominated as home language in Montréal (69 per cent), a strong minority had English as home language (19 per cent) and a significant proportion had home language other than English or French (11 per cent).

Other metropolitan areas showed less language diversity. In four of them, all in Quebec, the proportion of people using French as home language was 92 per cent or greater in 1991, while the proportion using English as home language was below 7 per cent. In the other 16 metropolitan areas, 88 per cent or more used English as home language, with the proportion using French being below 3 per cent.

### Knowledge of Languages

In the Census, knowledge of English and/or French was determined by a question about the ability to conduct a conversation in one or both official languages. A second question, asked for the first time in 1991, dealt with the ability to conduct a conversation in languages other than English or French. Respondents themselves assessed the threshold above which they reported they could conduct a conversation in a language.

**Population by Home Language, Census Metropolitan Areas, 1991**

	Total		English		French		Other Languages	
	Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%	Number (in thousands)	%
Calgary	748	100	677	90.4	4	0.5	68	9.1
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	160	100	2	1.0	158	98.8	0	0.2
Edmonton	832	100	748	89.9	7	0.9	77	9.3
Halifax	318	100	309	97.2	3	1.1	6	1.8
Hamilton	594	100	533	89.8	3	0.6	57	9.6
Kitchener	353	100	315	89.1	2	0.5	37	10.4
London	377	100	349	92.6	1	0.3	26	7.0
Montréal	3,091	100	596	19.3	2,144	69.4	351	11.3
Oshawa	238	100	226	94.8	2	1.0	10	4.2
Ottawa-Hull	912	100	569	62.4	281	30.8	62	6.8
Québec	638	100	10	1.6	623	97.6	5	0.7
Regina	189	100	182	96.2	1	0.5	6	3.3
Saint John	124	100	121	97.6	2	1.8	1	0.6
Saskatoon	208	100	197	95.0	1	0.6	9	4.4
Sherbrooke	137	100	9	6.4	126	92.3	2	1.4
St.Catharines - Niagara	360	100	333	92.4	7	1.9	21	5.8
St. John's	170	100	168	99.2	0	0.1	1	0.7
Sudbury	156	100	119	76.1	32	20.5	5	3.4
Thunder Bay	123	100	114	92.8	1	1.1	7	6.1
Toronto	3,863	100	3,021	78.2	22	0.6	820	21.2
Trois-Rivières	135	100	1	1.0	133	98.6	0	0.4
Vancouver	1,584	100	1,319	83.3	7	0.4	258	16.3
Victoria	284	100	271	95.7	1	0.5	11	3.8
Windsor	259	100	229	88.2	5	1.8	26	10.1
Winnipeg	646	100	571	88.4	15	2.4	60	9.2

Note: Data were not reconciled but multiple responses were divided equally between the languages reported.

## Nearly all Canadians can speak their mother tongue

In 1991, 83 per cent of the population could conduct a conversation in English (22.5 million people), 32 per cent in French (8.5 million) and 18 per cent in a language other than English or French (5.0 million). The most frequently known non-official languages were: Italian (702,000 people or 2.6 per cent of the population), German (685,000 or 2.5 per cent), Chinese (557,000 or 2.1 per cent) and Spanish (402,000 or 1.5 per cent).

Even when another language was used more frequently at home than the mother tongue, mother

tongue can nearly always still be spoken. Such is the case for those having French mother tongue (99.9 per cent in Quebec and 96.5 per cent in the rest of the country). Of those with mother tongue other than English or French, 96.9 per cent reported that they could conduct a conversation in at least one non-official language, usually their mother tongue.

Other than English and French, Spanish was the most frequently acquired second language. It can be estimated that some 214,000 people could speak Spanish as a second language in 1991. That figure is the difference between the number of people able to speak Spanish (402,000) and the population having Spanish as mother tongue (188,000).

### Twenty Most Common Languages, Canada, 1991

Language	Ability To Speak	%	Mother Tongue*	%	Home Language*	%
English	22,505,420	83.4	16,454,515	61.0	18,664,635	69.1
French	8,508,955	31.5	6,623,235	24.5	6,369,360	23.6
Non-Official Languages	4,981,605	18.5	4,255,960	15.8	2,463,435	9.1
Italian	701,910	2.6	538,690	2.0	288,290	1.1
German	684,950	2.5	490,650	1.8	134,460	0.5
Chinese	557,300	2.1	516,875	1.9	430,090	1.6
Spanish	402,435	1.5	187,615	0.7	145,045	0.5
Portuguese	254,465	0.9	220,630	0.8	152,530	0.6
Ukrainian	249,535	0.9	201,315	0.7	49,995	0.2
Polish	239,580	0.9	200,395	0.7	117,150	0.4
Dutch	173,290	0.6	146,420	0.5	19,915	0.1
Punjabi	167,930	0.6	147,265	0.5	123,775	0.5
Arabic	164,380	0.6	119,255	0.4	82,450	0.3
Greek	161,325	0.6	132,980	0.5	93,160	0.3
Tagalog	136,975	0.5	115,980	0.4	75,390	0.3
Vietnamese	113,115	0.4	83,630	0.3	79,585	0.3
Hindi	111,965	0.4	40,575	0.2	26,285	0.1
Hungarian	97,410	0.4	83,915	0.3	31,175	0.1
Cree	93,825	0.3	82,070	0.3	60,855	0.2
Russian	84,055	0.3	38,030	0.1	17,165	0.1
Gujarati	54,210	0.2	42,175	0.2	29,030	0.1

\* Includes single and multiple responses. See note on single and multiple responses on page 8.

## Relatively few people whose mother tongue was English or French knew other languages

Of those whose mother tongue was English or French, 3.9 per cent reported they could conduct a conversation in a non-official language. This proportion was higher among the population with English mother tongue (4.5 per cent) than among those with French mother tongue (2.6 per cent). This difference stems from the higher percentage of people with English mother tongue who grew up in families in which a second language (other than French) was spoken.

## The rate of English-French bilingualism increased in almost every province

In 1991, 67.1 per cent of the population reported an ability to speak English but not French (18.1 million people), 15.2 per cent spoke French but not English

(4.1 million people), 16.3 per cent spoke both official languages (4.4 million) and 1.4 per cent (378,000) were unable to speak either English or French. Quebec was still the province with the highest rate of bilingualism (35.4 per cent), followed by New Brunswick (29.5 per cent) and Ontario (11.4 per cent).

While nationally the increase in bilingualism from 1986 (16.2 per cent) to 1991 (16.3 per cent) was very slight, a significant rise was observed in every province except Ontario. There, the rate fell from 11.7 per cent in 1986 to 11.4 per cent in 1991. This decrease was due to high immigration during the period and to the inclusion of non-permanent residents in the 1991 data. The decline in bilingualism among those whose mother tongue was neither English nor French (6.3 per cent in 1991, compared to 7.1 per cent in 1986) outweighed the combined effects of the increases which occurred in the population having English as mother tongue (7.5 per cent in 1991, compared to 7.2 per cent in 1986) and among those having French as mother tongue (86.7 per cent in 1991, compared to 84.6 per cent in 1986).

English-French Bilingualism (in percentage), Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1971-1991

	1971	1981	1986	1991
Canada	13.4	15.3	16.2	16.3
Newfoundland	1.8	2.3	2.6	3.3
Prince Edward Island	8.2	8.1	9.4	10.1
Nova Scotia	6.7	7.4	8.1	8.6
New Brunswick	21.4	26.5	29.1	29.5
Quebec	27.6	32.4	34.5	35.4
Ontario	9.3	10.8	11.7	11.4
Manitoba	8.2	7.9	8.8	9.2
Saskatchewan	5.0	4.6	4.7	5.2
Alberta	5.0	6.4	6.4	6.6
British Columbia	4.6	5.7	6.2	6.4
Yukon	6.6	7.9	8.6	9.3
Northwest Territories	6.1	6.1	6.7	6.1

In Quebec, the rise in bilingualism was accompanied by an increase in the percentage of the population reporting the ability to speak English (from 40.2 per cent in 1986 to 40.9 per cent in 1991). The percentage of the population with French mother tongue able to speak English rose from 29.7 per cent in 1986 to 31.4 per cent in 1991, and offsets the decrease in the proportion able to speak English among the population having mother tongue other than English or French (67.5 per cent in 1991, compared to 69.8 per cent in 1986). The percentage of the Quebec population who spoke French changed little between 1986 (93.5 per cent) and 1991 (93.6 per cent), despite the increase observed in the population having neither English nor French mother tongue (68.3 per cent in 1991, as compared to 66.4 per cent in 1986).

### Language shift among official language minorities increased

In 1991, 6.1 per cent of people whose mother tongue was French spoke a language (almost always English)

other than French most often at home. The rate of language shift from French mother tongue was higher than in 1981 (5.1 per cent). The increase, although slight in Quebec (1.2 per cent in 1991, compared to 1.1 per cent in 1981), was more pronounced outside Quebec, where the language shift from French rose from 29 per cent in 1981 to 35 per cent in 1991. The pattern was the same in every province. It is possible, however, that part of this increase was due to an improvement in the census language questions. (See note on content considerations on page 13.)

In Newfoundland and the western provinces, the majority of the population having French as mother tongue used English more often than French at home. Outside Quebec, New Brunswick had the lowest language shift from French mother tongue (10 per cent), followed by Ontario (37 per cent).

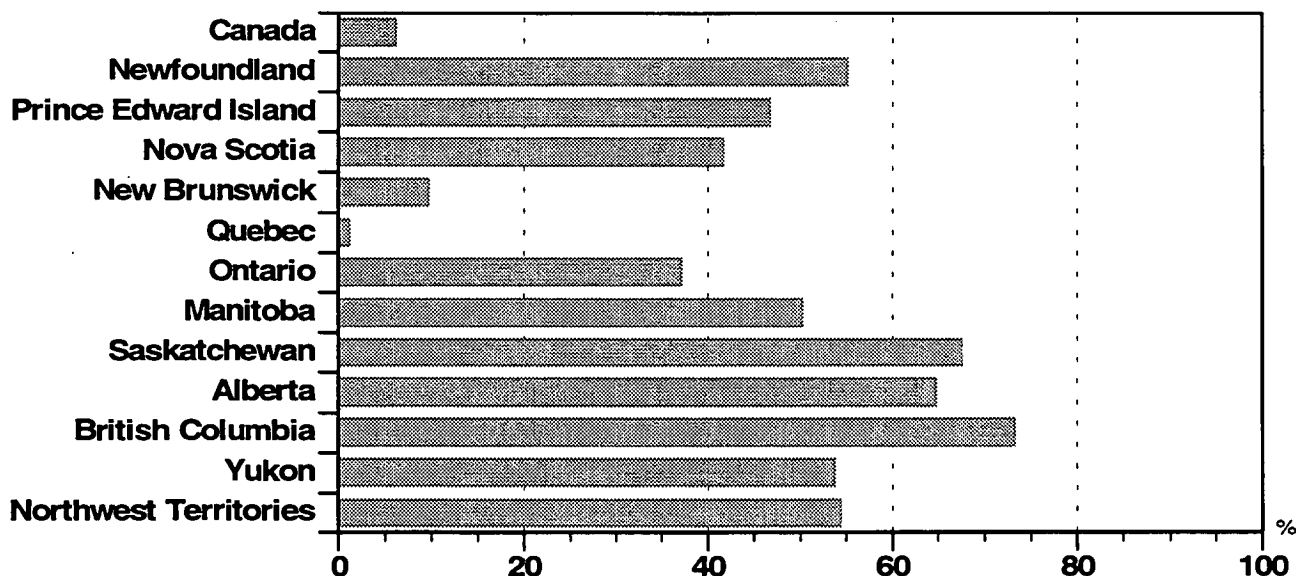
In Quebec, the language shift from English mother tongue also increased, from 7 per cent in 1981 to 10 per cent in 1991. Language shifts from English as mother tongue to French as home language (54,000) were of similar magnitude as shifts in the opposite direction from French to English (55,000).

**Rate of Language Shift by Mother Tongue, Canada, Quebec and Other Provinces and Territories, 1981 to 1991**

Mother Tongue		%		
		Canada	Quebec	Other Provinces and Territories
English	1981	0.8	7.3	0.5
	1991	0.7	9.8	0.4
French	1981	5.1	1.1	28.5
	1991	6.1	1.2	35.1
Other	1981	43.8	29.8	46.0
	1991	43.8	33.1	45.6

*Note: The rates were calculated with reconciled data. See note on data reconciliation on page 4.*

## Rate of Language Shift for French Mother Tongue, Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1991



### Content Considerations

**Changes in Data Collection:** Two significant changes were made to the 1991 Census long form questionnaire (completed by a 20 per cent sample of households) in order to better portray the language situation in Canada. The first was the addition of a new question on knowledge of languages other than English or French. The second - and more significant - was to group all the language questions together and change the order so that questions on home language and mother tongue followed the two questions on language knowledge.

The second change was implemented following testing which showed that grouping the questions resulted in an improvement in respondents' comprehension of the questions and therefore improved accuracy in reported information. The 1991 Census results clearly show that when mother tongue is asked as one of a series of language questions, there are significantly fewer

multiple responses (3.0 per cent gave multiple responses when the question on mother tongue was asked alone, compared to 1.2 per cent when the question was part of a series).

Data released in this Daily are taken from the long form questionnaire. A substantial decrease took place in the number and proportion of multiple responses to both the home language and mother tongue questions between 1986 and 1991, largely due to the changes described above. Although the changes provide more and better information, they make the task of comparing mother tongue and home language results from these two censuses more complex.

**Exclusion of Institutional Residents:** The analysis is based on data collected from a sample of 20 per cent of households which completed the long form questionnaire. As with the 1986 and 1981 Censuses, the data do not include institutional residents. The total number after weighting (26,994,000) is slightly smaller than the 100 per cent data (27,297,000).

## Language shift from languages other than English or French were less extensive in Quebec than elsewhere in the country

Nationally, the rate of language shift for the population with mother tongue other than English or French remained unchanged at 44 per cent from 1981 to 1991. In Quebec, the rate increased to 33 per cent in 1991 (compared to 30 per cent in 1981), a level still well below the combined rate for the other provinces and territories (46 per cent).

The rate of language shift varies from one language group to another depending largely on the length of time spent in Canada. Among groups in which immigration has slowed down in recent decades, language shift was often high: 87 per cent for those with Dutch mother tongue, 76 per cent Ukrainian mother tongue and 73 per cent German mother tongue. Conversely, groups experiencing high immigration usually have lower language shift: 18 per cent for Punjabi, 19 per cent for Chinese and 26 per cent for Spanish.

## In Quebec, language shifts are turning more toward French than in the past

In Quebec in 1991, 63 per cent of language shifts by those having mother tongue other than English or French were directed toward English and 37 per cent toward French. The French share was 29 per cent in 1986 and 28 per cent in 1981.

The French share of language shifts varied from group to group. It was over 50 per cent in some groups whose growth, fed by immigration, began in the last 15 or 20 years; these included those whose mother tongue was one of the Creole languages (97 per cent), Vietnamese (88 per cent), Spanish (72 per cent), Arabic (70 per cent) and Portuguese (57 per cent).

### Rate of Language Shift, Main Mother Tongue Groups Other than English or French, Canada, 1991

Mother Tongue	Rate of Language Shift (%)
Italian	48.0
Chinese	18.5
German	72.7
Portuguese	32.8
Polish	40.9
Ukrainian	75.5
Spanish	26.4
Dutch	86.8
Punjabi	17.9
Greek	31.5
Arabic	33.8
Tagalog	41.8

### Orientation Towards English or French of the Ten Largest Mother Tongue Groups Other Than English or French, Quebec, 1991

Mother Tongue	English (%)	French (%)
Italian	73	27
Spanish	28	72
Arabic	30	70
Greek	90	10
Portuguese	43	57
Chinese	79	21
Creole Languages	3	97
German	81	19
Polish	79	21
Vietnamese	12	88

### Data Comparability

Users of Census data should take into account factors which could affect the comparability of 1991 Census data with those from previous Censuses.

#### Changes in the Completeness of Enumeration:

No national census can obtain a complete enumeration of the population. Variations in the completeness of enumeration occur from one census to another, and can affect the comparability of data over time.

**Non-permanent residents:** In 1991, the census counted both permanent and non-permanent residents of Canada. Non-permanent residents are persons who hold student or employment authorizations, Minister's permits, or who are refugee claimants. The 1991 Census enumerated some 223,410 non-permanent residents in Canada, representing slightly less than 1 per cent

of the total population. The data released today are affected by this change in the Census universe. Users should be especially careful when comparing data from 1991 and previous censuses in geographic areas where there is a concentration of non-permanent residents, particularly the major metropolitan areas of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.

#### Incompletely Enumerated Indian Reserves:

Some Indian reserves and Indian settlements (a total of 78) were incompletely enumerated during the 1991 Census. Data for 1991 are therefore not available for those reserves and settlements. Because of the missing data, users are cautioned that for the affected geographic areas, comparisons (e.g. percentage change) between 1986 and 1991 are not exact. For larger geographic areas (Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas) the impact of the missing data is quite small, except for Aboriginal languages.

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**Statistics Canada has started consultations on 1996 Census content and post-censal survey topics. For information write: 1996 Census Content Determination Project, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.**

**The  
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