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## Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series

# Key facts on the French language in Saskatchewan in 2021

by Nicolas Auclair, Catherine Frigon and Gabriel St-Amant

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# Key facts on the French language in Saskatchewan in 2021

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

This fact sheet gives an overview of the situation of French in Saskatchewan in 2021. It begins by providing information on the changes in the number and proportion of the population who can have 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 primary 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.

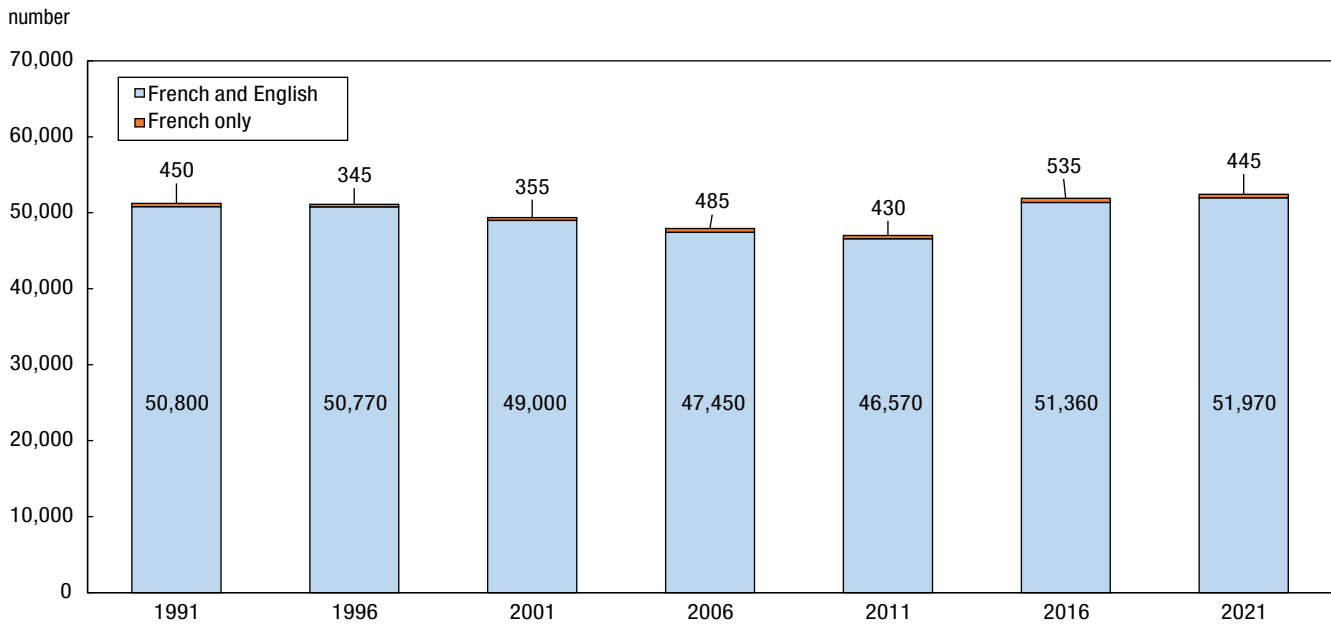
The information presented in this fact sheet comes from the Census of Population. To learn more about census concepts and the historical comparability of data, please refer to the 2021 Census of Population *Languages Reference Guide* and the *Instruction in the Minority Official Language Reference Guide*.

## Highlights

- In 2021, 52,415 Saskatchewan residents could have a conversation in French. After falling from 1991 to 2011 (-4,250), this number rose in the following 10 years (+5,415). The demographic weight of this population dropped from 5.3% in 1991 to 4.7% in 2021.
- In 2021, 12,885 people (1.2% of the population) spoke French at least regularly at home. Among those with French as one of their mother tongues, nearly two in five (38.6%) spoke French regularly at home.
- In 2021, 4,465 workers (0.8%) living in the province used French at least regularly at work. Most of them worked in educational services (42.8%) or public administration (11.0%).
- In 2021, 1 in 25 immigrants (4.0%) could conduct a conversation in French. This proportion was lower than that of the non-immigrant population (4.9%).
- Just over 1 in 7 Saskatchewan residents (14.8%) who had French as their only first official language spoken in 2021 were born outside Canada.

## Ability to conduct a conversation in French

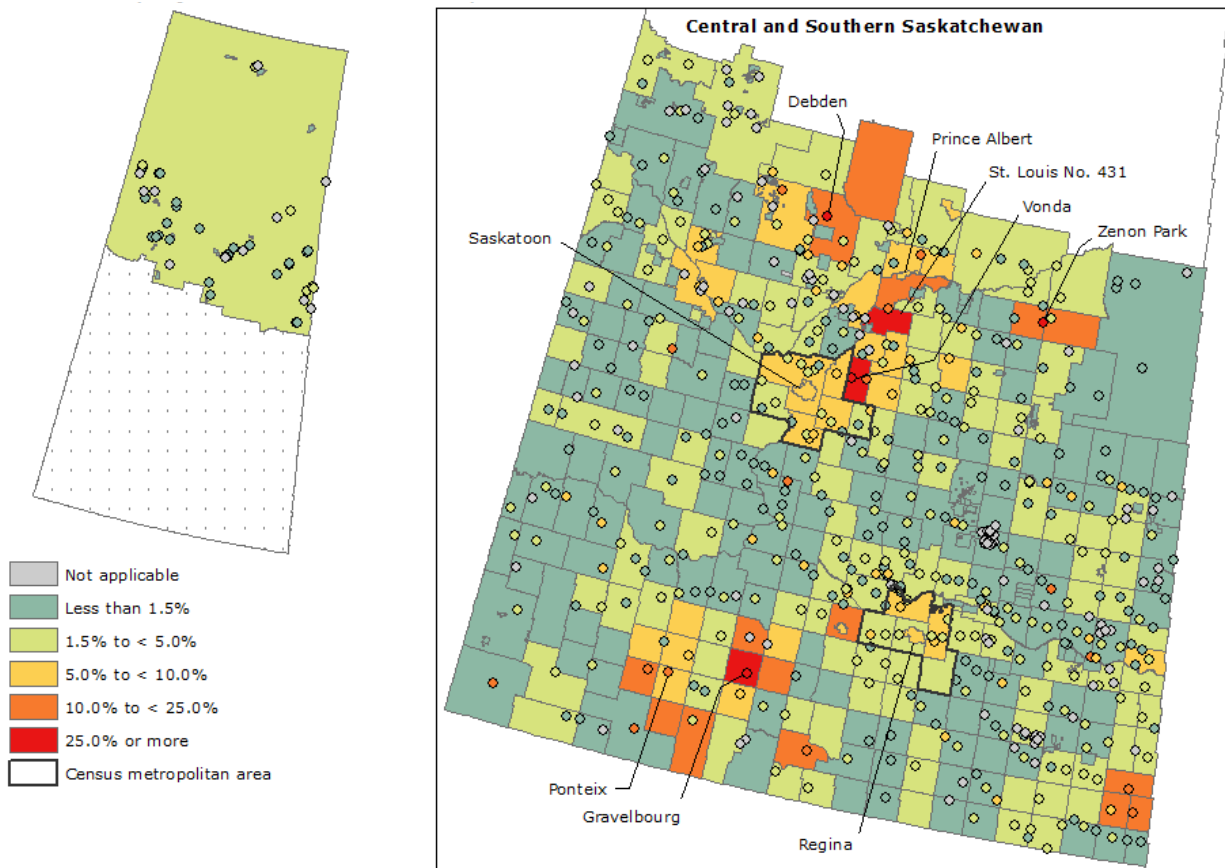
**Chart 1**  
Population who can conduct a conversation in French, Saskatchewan, 1991 to 2021



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

- In 2021, 52,415 Saskatchewan residents could have a conversation in French. Almost all (99.2%, or 51,970 people) could also do so in English.
  - The number of people who could have a conversation in French was higher in 2021 than in 1991 (+1,165). However, this increase is recent. After falling between censuses from 1991 to 2011 (-4,250), it recovered in the next 10 years, rising by 5,415 to an all-time high in 2021.
- The demographic weight of the population that could conduct a conversation in French fell from 5.3% in 1991 to 4.6% in 2011, before edging up to 4.8% in 2016. In 2021, this proportion was 4.7%.
  - From 1991 to 2021, the number and proportion of Saskatchewan residents able to conduct a conversation in French was up among those who did not learn French first at home in their childhood: while 30,925 people (3.2%) could have a conversation in French in 1991, this rose to 38,680 (3.5%) in 2021.

**Map 1**  
**Proportion of Saskatchewan’s population who could conduct a conversation in French, by census subdivision, 2021**



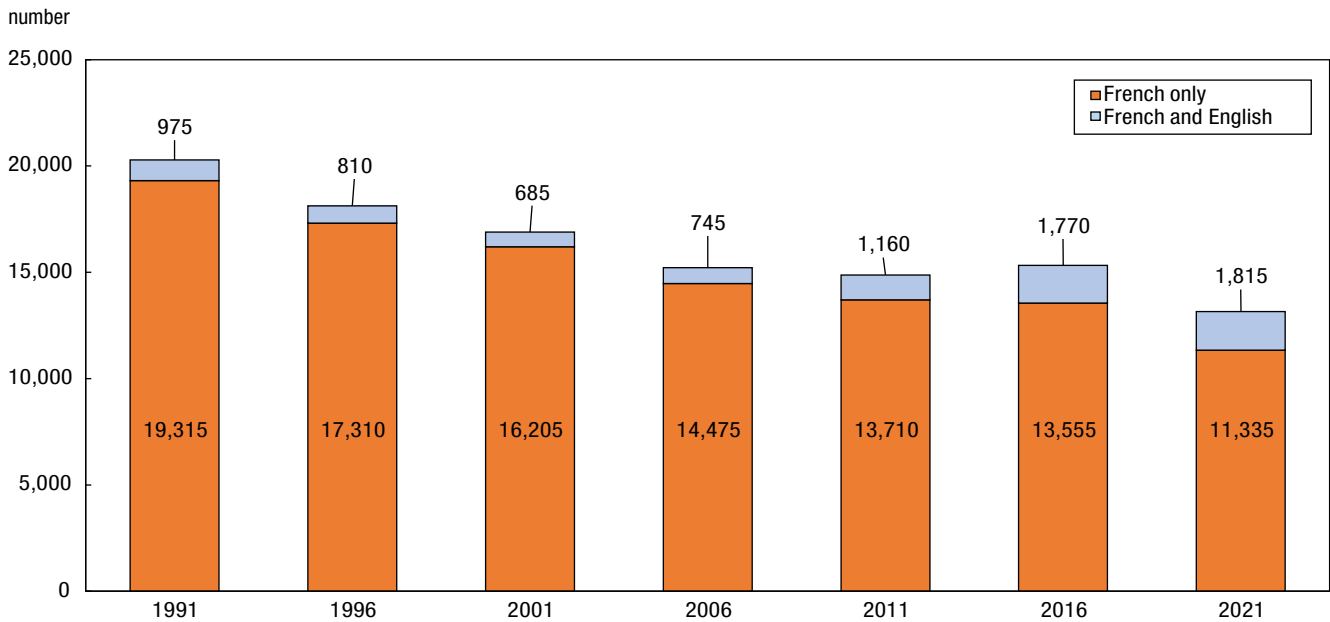
**Note:** Circles represent census subdivisions with a smaller land area.  
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

- In 2021, in 719 of Saskatchewan’s 832 municipalities,<sup>1</sup> less than 5% of the population could conduct a conversation in French. Conversely, in 16 municipalities, 15% or more of the population knew French.
- The municipalities with a population of more than 500 that had the highest proportion of people who knew French were St. Louis No. 431 (40.5%) in the Prince Albert area, and Gravelbourg (36.4%) and Ponteix (20.9%) in the Swift Current and Moose Jaw areas.
- The municipalities that had the highest number of people who knew French were Saskatoon (17,115), Regina (13,755) and Prince Albert (2,655).

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, Saskatchewan, 1991 to 2021

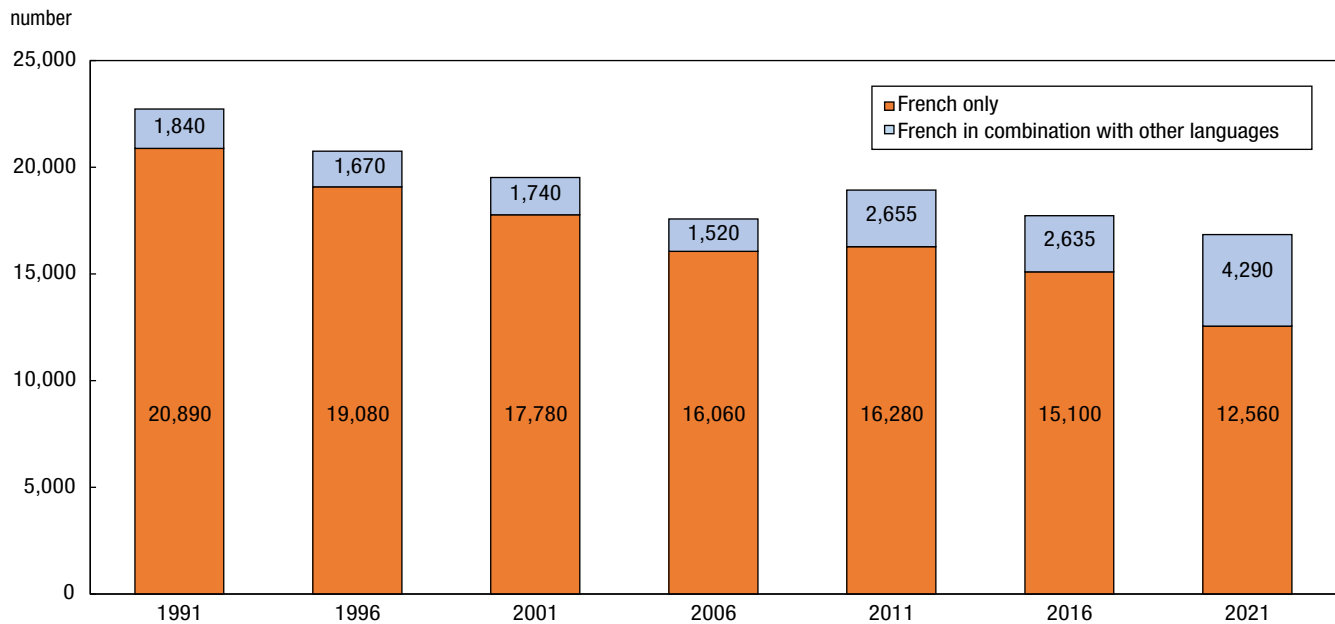


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 11,335 Saskatchewan residents (1.0% of the population) had French as their only first official language spoken and 1,815 residents (0.2% of the population) had both French and English as their first official languages spoken.
  - From 1991 to 2021, the number of people who had French as their only first official language spoken fell (-7,980 people), as did their demographic weight (from 2.0% to 1.0%). In 2021, both the number and proportion were the lowest ever recorded in a census in Saskatchewan.
- The number of Saskatchewan residents with French and English as their first official languages spoken rose from 1991 to 2021 (+840).

## French as a mother tongue

**Chart 3**  
**Population with French as mother tongue, Saskatchewan, 1991 to 2021**



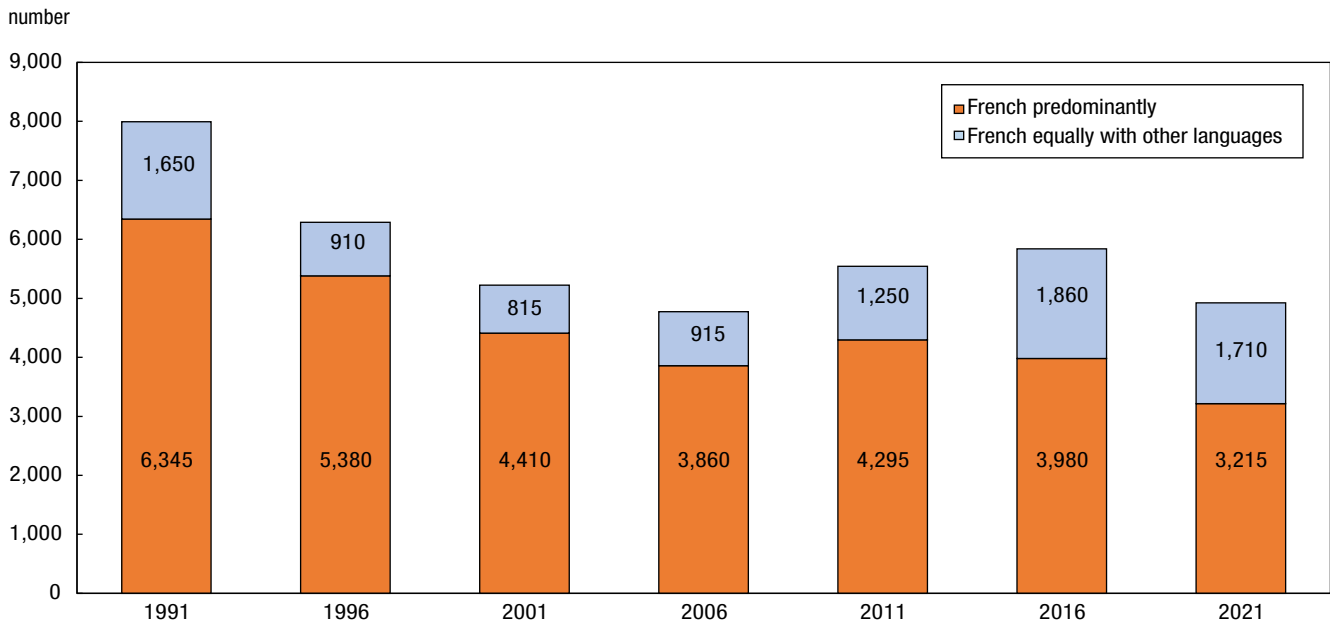
Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 16,850 Saskatchewan residents (1.5% of the population) had French as one of their mother tongues, down from 1991 (22,725 people, or 2.3%) and 2016 (17,735 people, or 1.6%).
  - In 2021, 74.5% of these residents (12,560 people) had French as their only mother tongue, while 25.5% (4,290 people) had French as their mother tongue along with other languages (mainly English).
- Among people who were married or in a common-law relationship and who had French as one of their mother tongues, more than a quarter (28.6%) 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, Saskatchewan, 1991 to 2021

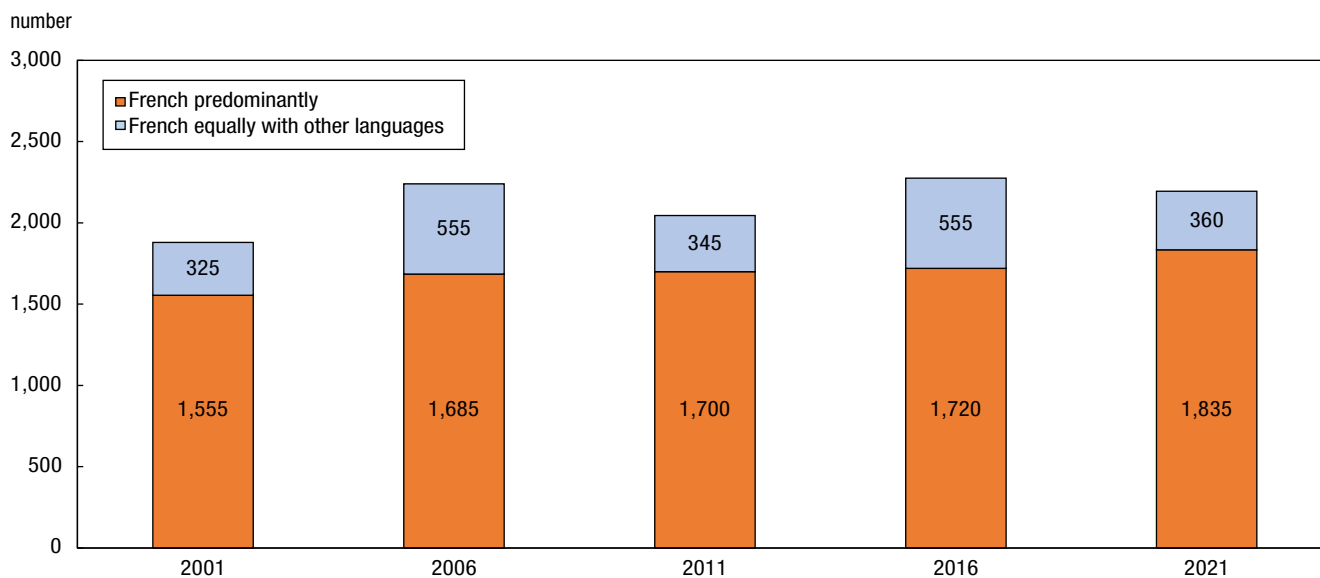


Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2021.

- In 2021, 12,885 Saskatchewan residents (1.2% of the population) spoke French at least regularly at home.
  - Of these, nearly two in five (38.2%, or 4,925 people) spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages, down from 1991 (-3,075) and 2016 (-920).
  - Moreover, 7,960 people (61.8%) spoke French at home as a secondary language while speaking another language more often (generally English).
- Among people with French as their mother tongue, alone or with other languages:
  - Nearly two in five (38.6%, or 6,500 people) spoke French at least regularly at home in 2021. However, this rate varied by age, ranging from 71.3% among those under age 15 to 26.6% among those aged 45 and older.
  - Less than a quarter (23.2%, or 3,915 people) spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages, down from 1991 (31.9%, or 7,250 people).
- Among Saskatchewan residents whose mother tongue is not French, 6,390 (0.6%) spoke French regularly at home.
  - The vast majority of these residents (84.1%, or 5,375 people) spoke French at home as a secondary language while speaking another language more often (generally English).

## French used at work

**Chart 5**  
Population using French most often at work, Saskatchewan, 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, 2001, 2006, 2016 and 2021, and the National Household Survey of 2011.

- In 2021, 4,465 Saskatchewan residents used French at least regularly at work. This represents 0.8% of the province's workers.<sup>2</sup>
- In Saskatchewan, 2,195 people used French most often at work in 2021, predominantly or equally with other languages, accounting for 0.4% of the province's workers.
  - The number of people who used French most often at work fell slightly from 2016 (-75), but was still higher than in 2001 (+315).
- In 2021, among workers who used French at least regularly at work, most worked in educational services (1,910 people, or 42.8%), public administration (490 people, or 11.0%) or health care and social assistance (335 people, or 7.5%).<sup>3</sup>
- Among workers who spoke French most often at home, predominantly or equally with other languages, 52.1% also used it regularly at work in 2021.
- In 2021, a third of workers (33.4%) who used French regularly at work lived in the Regina census metropolitan area (CMA), and close to a third (31.1%) lived in the Saskatoon CMA.

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

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

## Instruction in French at the primary and secondary levels

- In 2021, 15,535 (5.8%) of the 266,595 children under 18 living in the province were eligible<sup>4</sup> for instruction in French at the primary and secondary levels.
  - Just over a third of eligible children (35.0%, or 5,440 children) lived in the Saskatoon CMA.
  - Just under 3 in 10 eligible children (27.4%, or 4,255 children) lived in the Regina CMA.
- In Saskatchewan, 21,770 people were attending or had already attended a regular French program in a French-language school in Canada, representing 2.1% of the population aged 5 and older.
  - Of those who had never attended a French-language school, 42,560 (4.1%) had attended a French immersion program in an English-language school.
  - Among school-aged children<sup>5</sup> who were eligible for instruction in French, 7,005 (59.7%) were attending or had already attended a regular French program in a French-language school in Canada.

## French among immigrants

- In 2021, the proportions of recent<sup>6</sup> immigrants and established<sup>7</sup> immigrants living in Saskatchewan who could have a conversation in French (3.3% and 4.3%, respectively) were lower than the proportion of the non-immigrant population (4.9%).
  - The proportion of immigrants who spoke French at least regularly at home (1.8%) was higher than for the non-immigrant population (1.0%).
  - The proportion of immigrants who had French as their only first official language spoken (1.1%) was similar to the proportion for the non-immigrant population (1.0%). However, the proportion of immigrants who had French and English as their first official languages spoken (0.7%) was higher than that of the non-immigrant population (0.1%).

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

5. Children aged 5 to 17.

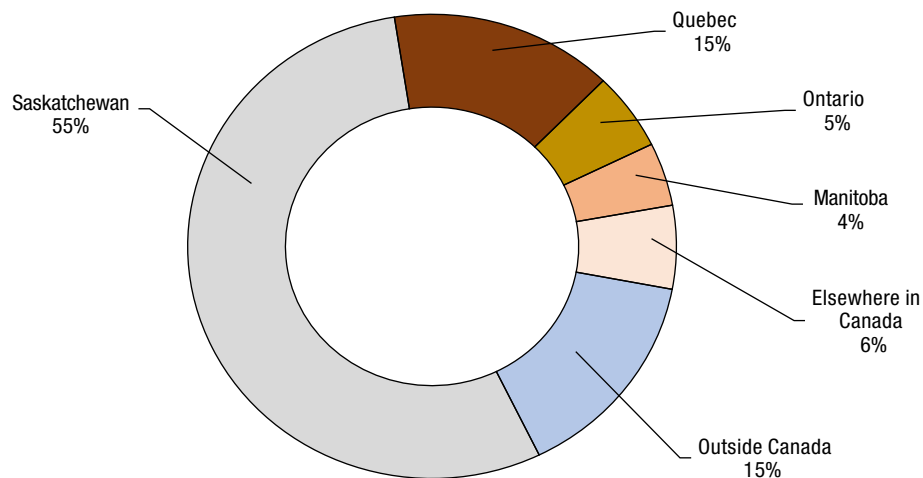
6. Immigrants admitted from 2016 to 2021.

7. Immigrants admitted before 2016.

## Mobility and birthplace of the French-language population

### Chart 6

#### Place of birth of the population whose only first official language spoken is French, Saskatchewan, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

- In 2021, among Saskatchewan residents whose only first official language spoken is French, more than half (54.7%, or 6,255 people) were born in the province.
  - Nearly a third (30.4%, or 3,470 people) were born in another province or territory, with most coming from Quebec (14.8%, or 1,695 people), Ontario (5.4%, or 615 people) or Manitoba (4.4%, or 500 people).
  - More than one in seven people (14.9%, or 1,700) were born abroad, specifically in Africa (9.7%)—including Mauritius (1.9%) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1.9%)—or in metropolitan France (2.6%).
- From 2016 to 2021, the net interprovincial migration of the Saskatchewan population whose only first official language spoken is French was negative (-525).
  - While 940 people whose only first official language spoken is French moved to Saskatchewan from another province or territory from 2016 to 2021, 1,465 people left the province during the same period, with the majority settling in Quebec (29.5%), Ontario (20.3%) or Alberta (20.3%).

## Appendix

**Table 1**  
**Comparison of selected French-language indicators, Saskatchewan, 1991 to 2021**

Indicator	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
	percent						
French as first official language spoken <sup>1</sup>	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.2
French only	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.0
French and English	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Knowledge of French <sup>2</sup>	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.6	4.8	4.7
French only	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
French and English	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.7
French as mother tongue	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.5
French only	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.1
French in combination with other languages	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4
French spoken most often at home	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4
French predominantly	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
French equally with other languages	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
French used most often at work <sup>3</sup>	..	..	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4
French predominantly	..	..	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
French equally with other languages	..	..	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	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, Saskatchewan, 2021**

Frequency <sup>2</sup>	French used at work <sup>1</sup>		French spoken at home	
	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total population</b>	<b>528,900</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,116,040</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Only	1,065	0.2	2,090	0.2
Mostly	770	0.1	1,125	0.1
Equally	360	0.1	1,710	0.2
Regularly	2,275	0.4	7,960	0.7
No mention	524,435	99.2	1,103,160	98.8

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

2. “Only” includes people who solely use or speak French. “Mostly” includes people who predominantly use or speak French along with at least one secondary language. “Equally” includes people who use or speak French most often equally with at least one other language. Finally, “regularly” includes people who use or speak French as a secondary language and have at least one other main language.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

**Table 3**  
**Use of French at work,<sup>1</sup> by frequency and industry sectors, Saskatchewan, 2021**

Selection of industry sectors	Use of French at work			
	At least regularly <sup>2</sup>		Most often	
	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,465</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,195</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	245	5.5	115	5.2
Construction	110	2.5	35	1.6
Retail trade	155	3.5	35	1.6
Finance and insurance	220	4.9	50	2.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	140	3.1	40	1.8
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	105	2.4	0	0.0
Educational services	1,910	42.8	1,490	67.9
Health care and social assistance	335	7.5	140	6.4
Other services (except public administration)	210	4.7	95	4.3
Public administration	490	11.0	50	2.3
Other sectors	560	12.5	150	6.8

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, Saskatchewan, 2021**

Age group	Mother tongue					
	Total		French <sup>1</sup>		Other languages	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,885</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>6,390</b>	<b>0.6</b>
0 to 14 years	4,185	1.9	1,465	71.3	2,725	1.2
15 to 44 years	4,915	1.1	2,380	49.4	2,540	0.6
45 years and older	3,785	0.8	2,660	26.6	1,130	0.3

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, Saskatchewan, 2021**

Immigration status and period of immigration	Knowledge of French <sup>1</sup>		French spoken at home <sup>1</sup>		First official language spoken			
					French only		French and English	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,065</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>12,590</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>11,425</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Non-immigrants	46,115	4.9	9,865	1.0	9,820	1.0	720	0.1
Immigrants	5,550	4.0	2,485	1.8	1,465	1.1	985	0.7
Recent immigrants <sup>2</sup>	1,440	3.3	760	1.8	485	1.1	305	0.7
Established immigrants <sup>3</sup>	4,110	4.3	1,730	1.8	980	1.0	680	0.7
2011 to 2015	1,470	3.9	745	2.0	375	1.0	310	0.8
2001 to 2010	1,295	4.4	590	2.0	295	1.0	270	0.9
1991 to 2000	455	5.4	170	2.0	105	1.3	55	0.7
1980 to 1990	335	5.6	75	1.3	60	1.0	30	0.5
Before 1980	555	4.3	145	1.1	150	1.2	20	0.2
Non-permanent residents	400	2.5	240	1.5	145	0.9	95	0.6

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.

**Table 6**  
**Comparison of French-language indicators, by Census Metropolitan Area, Saskatchewan, 2021**

Census Metropolitan Area	Knowledge of French <sup>1</sup>		French spoken at home <sup>1</sup>		First official language spoken			
					French only		French and English	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total - Province</b>	<b>52,420</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>12,885</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>11,335</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Saskatoon	19,090	6.1	4,520	1.4	3,215	1.0	795	0.3
Regina	14,755	6.0	3,890	1.6	2,445	1.0	605	0.2

1. Includes all mentions of French.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.