



# The French Presence in **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**1,785**

people **can speak French, but not English**

**Less than 0.1%**

of population

**65,568**

people **speak French as their first official language**

**1.3%**

of population<sup>1</sup>

**118,565**

people **have French as a mother tongue or speak it at home**

**2.4%**

of population<sup>2</sup>

**173,305**

people **have French as a mother tongue, or speak it at home, or use it at work or have it as a language of instruction at school**

**3.5%**

of population<sup>3</sup>

**328,650**

people **can speak French, including 326,865 (6.6%) who can speak both English and French**

**6.6%**

of population

## EDUCATION

For 2020–2021 in public schools from junior kindergarten to Grade 12:<sup>4</sup>

**184,464  
STUDENTS**

were in **regular French-as-a-second-language programs or core French language programs**

**53,493  
STUDENTS**

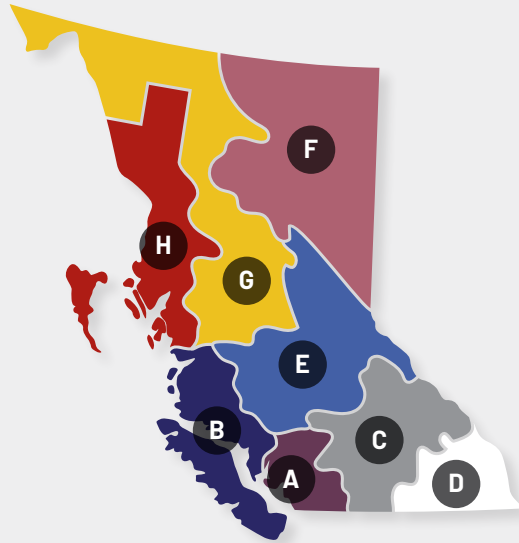
were in **French immersion programs**

**6,414  
STUDENTS**

were in **education programs in the minority official language (French)**



# WHERE DO PEOPLE LIVE WHO SPEAK FRENCH AS THEIR FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE?<sup>5</sup>



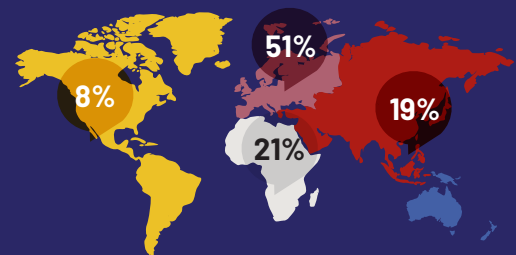
## Economic Regions:

- A** Lower Mainland-Southwest: **58.1%**
- B** Vancouver Island and Coast: **20.5%**
- C** Thompson-Okanagan: **12.4%**
- D** Kootenay: **4.1%**
- E** Cariboo: **2.3%**
- F** Northeast: **0.8%**
- G** North Coast: **1.2%**
- H** Nechako: **0.6%**

# WHERE WERE THEY BORN?<sup>6</sup>



# WHERE WERE FRENCH-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS BORN?<sup>6</sup>



## MEDIA

### NEWSPAPER



*La Source* is a bilingual newspaper that showcases the cultural diversity of the Vancouver region

### RADIO



CILS FM 107.9 (Victoria) and Radio-Canada ICI Première and ICI Musique

### TELEVISION



ICI Radio-Canada Télé and Unis TV

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FRANCOPHONE AND BILINGUAL EVENTS IN B.C., CHECK OUT **THE FRANCOQUIZ APP.**

## CELEBRATE!



### FEBRUARY

The **FrancoFun winter festival** in Prince George promotes the French language, culture and heritage.

### FEBRUARY-MARCH

The **Festival du Bois** in Maillardville honours French-Canadian traditions and culture. It is the largest Francophone festival on Canada's West Coast.

The **Maple Syrup Festival** in Nanaimo is a bilingual event that celebrates eastern Canada's sugar shack traditions and includes a variety of family-friendly entertainment.

MARCH 20: **B.C. Francophonie Day**

### MAY

Victoria's **Festival de la francophonie** showcases local Francophone and francophile bands, Francophone artisans and community organizations.

### JUNE

The **Festival d'été francophone** in Vancouver celebrates French-Canadian music and culture.

# HISTORY

- ✦ **From time immemorial**, Indigenous peoples and their languages have been present in the land that we now call British Columbia.
- ✦ **End of the 18th century**: Beginning in the 1770s, European ships started to explore the territory's coast. In 1793, Scottish explorer Alexander Mackenzie and six French-Canadian voyageurs crossed the Rocky Mountains and became the first English and French speakers to visit the interior of what would become the future province.
- ✦ **1812**: Over 300 French Canadians are engaged in the fur trade or farming in the territory.
- ✦ **1858**: Before the gold rush, French was the most widely spoken European language in the west. In the following years, an increasing number of English-speaking people from Canada, Great Britain and the United States started settling in what is now British Columbia, as did other language communities, including those of Chinese origin.
- ✦ **1909**: French-speaking families from Quebec settle on the banks of the Fraser River, east of Vancouver, in what would become Maillardville, now an important historical site for the province's French-speaking community.
- ✦ **1945**: The Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique is created to represent the interests of the Franco-Columbian community.
- ✦ **From the second half of the 20th century**, Francophones from other Canadian provinces and Europe, later joined by newcomers from elsewhere in the world, came and expanded British Columbia's Francophone community.
- ✦ **1982**: The Franco-Columbian flag is adopted.
- ✦ **1997**: Through an amendment to the *British Columbia School Act*, the legislative assembly officially recognizes the educational rights of Francophones in the province, as already set out in the Constitution in 1982.
- ✦ **2020**: A Supreme Court ruling requires the province to build more all-French schools and to correct the underfunding of the French-language education system.

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## Sources and notes:

Unless indicated otherwise, all data is from Statistics Canada, *Census Profile*, 2021 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa.

<sup>1</sup> For additional information, please see our [Snapshots of official languages \(2021\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0214-01.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Data provided by Statistics Canada, from 2021 Census of Population (2A-L). Includes all individuals having French alone or in combination with another language as a mother tongue, or a language spoken at home, or a language used at work or, among school-aged children who could speak French, had attended a regular French-language school or a French immersion program.

<sup>4</sup> [Statistics Canada. Table 37-10-0009-01.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0196-01.](#)

<sup>6</sup> Data provided by Statistics Canada, from 2021 Census of Population (2A-L).