



# The French Presence in ONTARIO

**39,310** people can speak French, but not English

**0.3%** of population

**533,560** people speak French as their first official language

**3.8%** of population<sup>1</sup>

**795,760** people have French as a mother tongue or speak it at home

**5.6%** of population<sup>2</sup>

**1,070,420** 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

**7.6%** of population<sup>3</sup>

**1,558,675** people can speak French, including 1,519,365 (10.8%) who can speak both English and French

**11.1%** of population

## EDUCATION

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

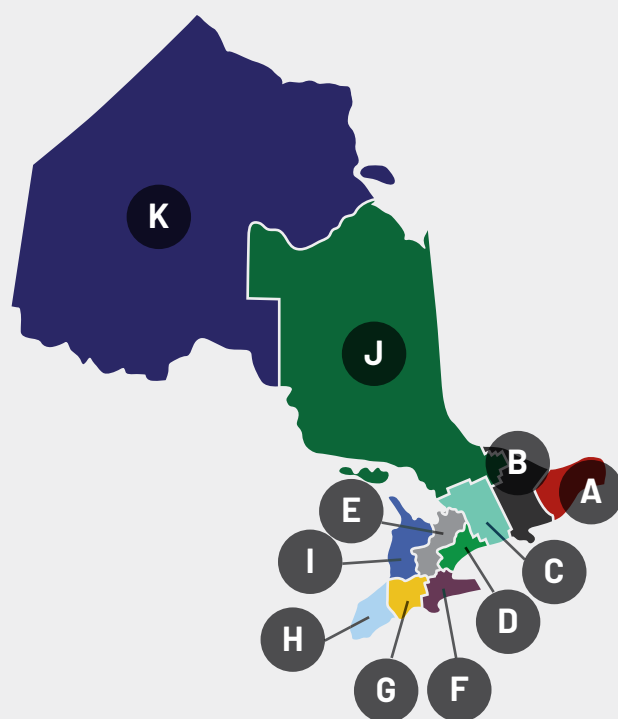
**742,281 STUDENTS** were in regular French-as-a-second-language programs or core French language programs

**282,984 STUDENTS** were in French immersion programs

**113,118 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>

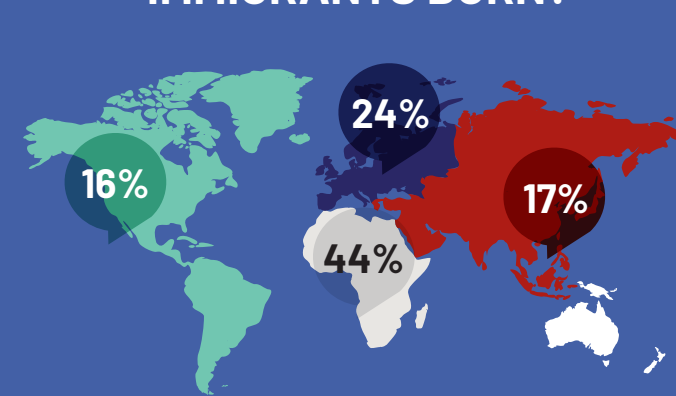


- Economic Regions:**
- A Ottawa: **44.8%**
  - B Kingston–Pembroke: **2.7%**
  - C Muskoka–Kawarthas: **0.8%**
  - D Toronto: **18.6%**
  - E Kitchener–Waterloo–Barrie: **3.7%**
  - F Hamilton–Niagara Peninsula: **4.5%**
  - G London: **1.6%**
  - H Windsor–Sarnia: **2.6%**
  - I Stratford–Bruce Peninsula: **0.4%**
  - J Northeast: **19.4%**
  - K Northwest: **0.9%**

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



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



## MEDIA

### NEWSPAPER



*Le Droit* (daily) and 16 French-language newspapers published weekly or monthly

### RADIO



7 French-language radio stations and Radio-Canada ICI Première and ICI Musique

### TELEVISION



3 French-language television stations, Télévision française de l'Ontario (TFO), ICI Radio-Canada Télé and Unis TV

## CELEBRATE!

### SPRING

**Théâtre Action** holds a yearly theatre festival for young French-speaking Canadians.

### FEBRUARY-MARCH

Toronto's **Cinéfranco**, founded in 1997, celebrates and promotes French-language films in Ontario.

**La Nuit sur l'étang** is a popular Francophone music festival that has been held in Sudbury since 1973.

### MAY

**The Franco-Ontarian Games** are held in different parts of Ontario every year and are the largest gathering of young Franco-Ontarians in the province.

### JUNE

**The Festival Franco-Ontarien** is a major festival in Ottawa for Francophones and francophiles that celebrates Franco-Ontarian culture and community.

### SEPTEMBER 25

**Franco-Ontarian Day**

### VARIOUS DATES

The St-Albert's **Festival de la Curd** has been celebrating Francophone culture in Eastern Ontario since 1994.

FOR MORE EVENTS, CHECK OUT [DESTINATIONONTARIO.COM/EN-CA/ARTICLES/FRANCOPHONE-FESTIVALS-AND-EVENTS](https://www.destinationontario.com/en-ca/articles/francophone-festivals-and-events)

## HISTORY

- ✦ **From time immemorial**, Indigenous peoples and their languages have been present in the land that we now call Ontario.
- ✦ **1610**: Étienne Brûlé, a member of French explorer Samuel de Champlain's crew, is the first European to set foot in what is now Ontario to learn more about the different Indigenous cultures. A French language begins to establish itself in the region, with forts and small communities along the St. Lawrence River.
- ✦ **After the American War of Independence (1775–1783)**, Loyalist refugees began to settle in what is now Ontario, resulting in the establishment of an English-speaking population in the province. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, other language groups settled in the future province of Ontario, contributing to the diversity of the English- and French-speaking communities.
- ✦ **19th and early 20th centuries**: The French presence in Ontario increases steadily, mainly in the eastern and northeastern parts of the province, with the development of the forestry, mining and railway sectors.
- ✦ **1910**: The Association canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (now the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario) is created to defend the right to an education in French.
- ✦ **1912**: The provincial government's Regulation 17 sets out that English is to be the only language of instruction in public schools across Ontario. Thanks to the work of committed

Francophones and Anglophones, this regulation was effectively repealed in 1927. In 2016, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne apologized on behalf of the Ontario government.

- ✦ **1975**: The Franco-Ontarian flag is adopted.
- ✦ **1986**: The Ontario government adopts the *French Language Services Act*, which gives French equal status with English in the provincial Parliament and courts, and guarantees the public's right to receive parliamentary services in French. The Act was modernized in 2021 to improve access to front-line services in French.
- ✦ **1987**: TVOntario launches La Chaîne française, now Télévision française de l'Ontario.
- ✦ **1997**: The Franco-Ontarian community works to prevent the closure of the Montfort Hospital.
- ✦ **2007**: The Office of the French-Language Services Commissioner is created.
- ✦ **2017**: The Office of Francophone Affairs of Ontario becomes the Ministry of Francophone Affairs.
- ✦ **2017**: Bill 177 recognizes the bilingual status of the City of Ottawa and marks the creation of the Université de l'Ontario français in Toronto, which would welcome its first cohort of students in 2021.
- ✦ **2019**: The French-Language Services Commissioner becomes part of the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario.

### 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 in Canada \(2021\)](#).

<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 as their first official language 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).