

Languages, 2006



Language is the most important way culture is transmitted. In Canada, there are two official languages, English and French. Their status is entrenched in the country's history, conferring rights and institutional support for Anglophones and Francophones. In addition, over 100 other non-official languages are also spoken in Canada.

While the number of people in Canada whose mother tongue is neither English nor French has increased substantially since the mid-1980s, they tend to adopt one of the two official languages as their home language with increasing length of stay in Canada.

Due to increased immigration since the mid-1980s, and the tendency of most immigrants to have a mother tongue other than English or French, the share of the allophone population has grown rapidly: from 13% in 1986 to 17% in 1996 and to 20% in 2006.

The proportion of Canadians reporting being able to conduct a conversation in English and French increased to 17.4% in 2006. For Anglophones, almost seven in 10 (68.9%) living in Quebec are bilingual, while this is the case for 7.5% of those living outside Quebec. For Francophones, the rate of bilingualism is 35.8% in Quebec and 83.6% for those living outside Quebec.

The text was adapted from Statistics Canada, The Daily, Tuesday December 4, 2007. (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/071204/dq071204a-eng.htm>) Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from the Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at www.statcan.gc.ca, or its toll-free access number 1-800-263-1136.