

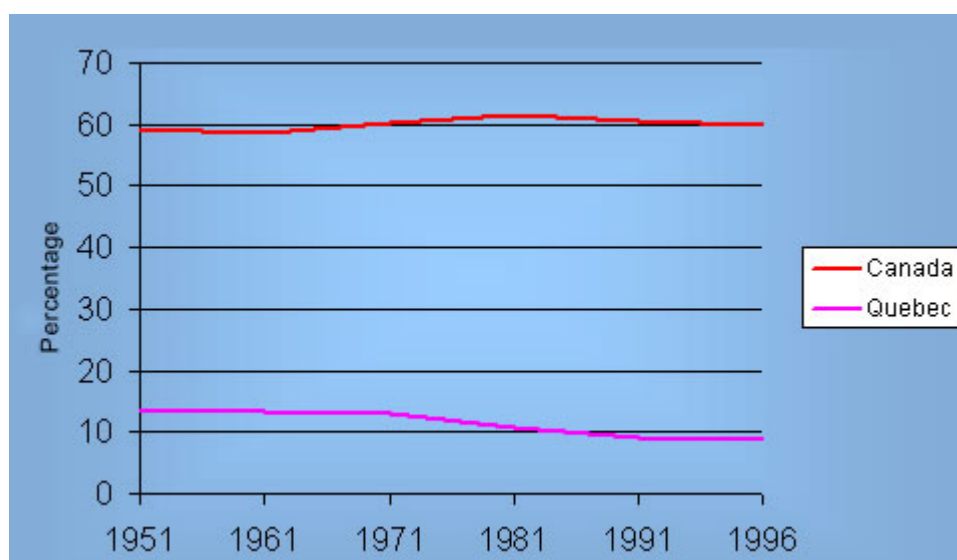
## Mother Tongue (English), 1996

### Abstract

This map shows the percentage of the Canadian population whose mother tongue is English. The 1996 Census defines mother tongue as the first language a person learned at home in childhood and still understood at the time of the census.

The 1996 Census showed that 24.0 million Canadians could speak English (84%), 19.3 million spoke English most often at home (68%) and 17.1 million had English mother tongue (60%). The percentage of the population which had English as its mother tongue (Anglophones) changed very little between 1951 and 1996. Since 1981, the figures have shown a slight decline in the percentage of Anglophones in Canada. Without the heavy immigration to Canada of many people with a language other than English or French as mother tongue, an increase in the proportion of Anglophones would have occurred.

In Quebec, the proportion of Anglophones has declined continuously, dropping from 14% in 1951 to 9% in 1996. This has resulted largely from the English mother tongue population leaving Quebec to live in other provinces, particularly during the 1970s (see Figure 1 below).

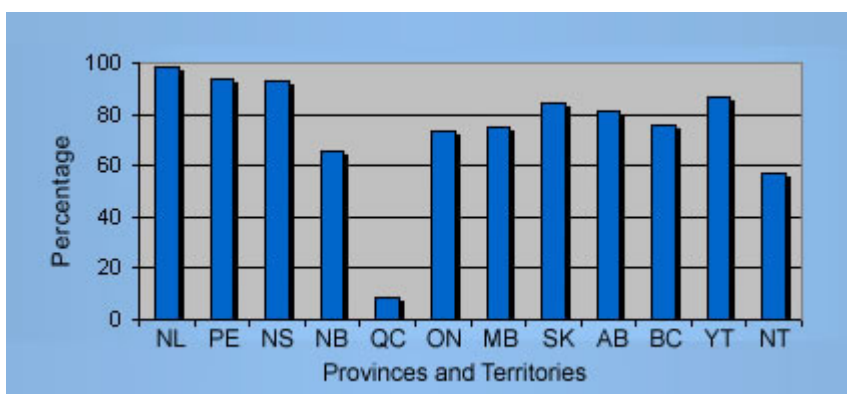


**Figure 1.** Percentage of Population with English Mother Tongue, Canada and Quebec, 1951 to 1996

**Source:** Canada. Statistics Canada. Census of Canada, 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 1996.

While, the proportion of Anglophones in Canada has changed very little since 1951, the number grew in each decade, more than doubling from 8.3 million in 1951 to 17.1 million in 1996. However, the pattern was very different in Quebec, where there was an increase of about 230 000 in the first two decades, followed by a decline of about 167 000 since then. As a result of this reversal, the net effect was only a slight increase in the number of Quebec Anglophones between 1951 and 1996.

Between provinces (as shown in the Figure 2 below), the percentage of Anglophones varies considerably. New Brunswick has a large proportion in each of the two official language groups (65% Anglophone and 33% Francophone), while Quebec is largely Francophone with the Anglophone population representing less than 9%. The three most eastern provinces have very high percentages of people whose mother tongue is English (more than 93%). Ontario and the western provinces where more immigrants have settled, have larger populations with non-official languages as mother tongue. This accounts for the lower percentages of Anglophones.



**Figure 2.** Population with English Mother Tongue, Provinces and Territories, 1996  
**Source:** Canada. Statistics Canada. 1996 Census.

Though the number of Anglophones increased in all provinces except Newfoundland and Quebec between 1991 and 1996, the proportion dropped in some provinces. The decline, slight in most cases, was largely attributable to the arrival of immigrants with a mother tongue other than English.

The text for Official Languages is based on the following publication:

Marmen, Louise and Jean-Pierre Corbeil. Languages in Canada: 1996 Census. New Canadian Perspectives Series. Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, and Statistics Canada, 1999. Catalogue number: CH3-2-8/1999.

## Mapping Notes

The data presented on the map layers were derived from the 1996 Census and were based on either the 288 census divisions (CD) or 5984 census subdivisions (CSD) for which data are released. The choropleth mapping technique is limited in use when displaying data for the large areas in the northern and rural regions, which contain small populations and are therefore, overemphasized. To view the population figures of a specific CD or CSD on a map, press the "Get Statistics" button and select the area of interest.

When comparing information between maps, it is important to understand that each map layer is based on a unique set of data. The class intervals used have been generated to represent the unique information on each map. As a result, the maps cannot be directly compared to each other. The individual maps, together with the supporting map text are the best sources for content comparison.

Note that in choropleth technique, areas are completely shaded and only one such layer can be viewed at a time.

At the time the census division boundaries were defined, Nunavut had not yet been designated as an official territory. It is therefore not referenced on the maps.

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## Definitions of underlined terms

**Census Division** : Census Division (CD) is the general term applied to areas established by provincial law which are intermediate geographic areas between the municipality and the province levels. Census divisions represent counties, regional districts, regional municipalities and other types of provincially legislated areas. In Newfoundland, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, provincial law does not provide for these administrative geographic areas. Therefore, census divisions have been created by Statistics Canada in cooperation with these provinces for the dissemination of statistical data. In the Yukon Territory, the census division is equivalent to the entire Territory. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

**Census Subdivision (CSD)** : Census subdivision is the general term applying to municipalities (as determined by provincial legislation) or their equivalent (for example, Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories). In Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and British Columbia, the term also describes geographic areas that have been created by Statistics Canada in cooperation with the provinces as equivalents for municipalities for the dissemination of statistical data. According to the national hierarchy, census subdivisions add together to form census divisions. The CDs form provinces and territories. Two additional levels are defined in the

national hierarchy to facilitate special data analysis. A special aggregation of census subdivisions called census consolidated subdivision (CCS) provides a level of geography between the CSD and CD which facilitates data analysis. In the rural context, the CCS is a grouping of smaller municipalities, usually contained within a larger municipality. For instance, a town located within a surrounding township will be grouped together with the township to form a CCS. In urban areas, CCSs are formed by contiguous groupings of CSDs. A principal user of the CCSs is the Census of Agriculture. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

**Choropleth map** : A thematic map in which areas are coloured or shaded to create darker or lighter areas in proportion to the density or a particular characteristic of the theme subject in that area.

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## Map Sources

### Mother Tongue (English)

Statistics Canada. 1996 Census of Population (20% sample data).

## References

Canada. Statistics Canada. 1998. 1996 Census Dictionary. Ottawa.  
(<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/92-351-u/4064723-eng.htm>)

Canada. Statistics Canada. 1997. 1996 Census: Mother tongue, home language and knowledge of languages. The Daily, Tuesday December 2. Ottawa.  
(<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/971202/dq971202-eng.htm>)

Marmen, Louise and Jean-Pierre Corbeil. 1999. Languages in Canada: 1996 Census. New Canadian Perspectives Series. Catalogue number: CH3-2-8/1999. Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, and Statistics Canada.  
(<http://www.pch.gc.ca/offlangoff/perspectives/english/census96/census96.pdf>)

## Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

### Federal Government

Canadian Heritage. Official Languages. Bilingualism in Canada  
[http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/biling/hist\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/biling/hist_e.cfm)

A chronology of key events charting the course of Canada's bilingualism since Confederation.

New Canadian Perspectives



<http://www.pch.gc.ca/offlangoff/perspectives/english/index.html>

Various on-line articles relating to Canada's Official Languages from the series entitled New Canadian Perspectives. Look for the link to "Languages in Canada: 1996 Census" by Louise Marmen and Jean-Pierre Corbeil.

Statistics Canada. 1996 Census of Population

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/info/census96.cfm>

