



# 2016 Calgary Profile: Chapter 3

## Language

Table of Contents					
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Canadian comparisons</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>12</b>
Results snapshot	1	Knowledge of official languages	7	<b>References</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Calgary in 2016</b>	<b>2</b>	Knowledge of non-official languages	<b>8</b>	<b>Glossary</b>	<b>14</b>
Knowledge of official languages	2	Languages spoken at home	8		
Knowledge of non-official languages	2	Mother tongue	9		
Languages spoken at home	3	Aboriginal languages	10		
Mother tongue	5				

### Introduction

This profile contains information from the 2016 Census of Canada about **Calgary** released by Statistics Canada. This chapter presents data that covers language. Subsequent chapters of the Calgary Profile will provide information about additional Census topics. In 2018, information will be released for Calgary communities and wards.

Highlighted terms throughout the document are defined in the glossary. Data quality information, notes and sources are found in the **Notes** and **References** sections at the end of the document. For more information visit our webpage or contact [socialresearch@calgary.ca](mailto:socialresearch@calgary.ca).

### Results Snapshot

2016 = ■ 2011 = ■

**Per cent who speak English most often at Home:**

75%  
79%



**Per cent whose Mother Tongue is an Immigrant Language:**

30%  
27%

**Per cent who can converse in English:**

98%  
98%

**Hello  
Nǐ hǎo  
¡Hola!**

**Per cent whose Mother Tongue is English:**

66%  
69%



**Population with an Aboriginal Language Mother Tongue:**

690  
775

Sources: Statistics Canada 2012a; 2017a.

Published November 27, 2017

## Calgary in 2016: Knowledge of Official Languages

About nine in 10 Calgarians could converse in English in 2016. The percentage of the population that could converse in English stayed steady at 90 per cent between 2011 and 2016.

<b>Knowledge of Official Languages in Calgary, 2011 and 2016</b>					
<b><u>Knowledge of Official Languages</u></b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2016</b>		<b>Change 2011-2016</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	
<b><u>Population</u> excluding <u>institutional residents</u></b>	<b>1,087,405</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,227,995</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13%</b>
English Only	979,520	90%	1,108,175	90%	13%
French Only	1,005	0%	1,170	0%	16%
English and French	81,455	7%	89,400	7%	10%
Neither English nor French	25,425	2%	29,245	2%	15%
Sources: Statistics Canada 2012a; 2017a.					

## Calgary in 2016: Knowledge of Non-Official Languages

About 38 per cent of Calgarians can converse in at least one non-official language. The top non-official languages in Calgary are Tagalog, Spanish, Punjabi, Cantonese and Mandarin, respectively. A person may report that they can converse in more than one language in the census.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Top 5 Non-Official Languages in Calgary (multiple responses), 2016</b>		
<b><u>Knowledge of Non-Official Languages</u></b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Total - Knowledge of Languages for the Population in Private Households</b>	<b>1,222,405</b>	<b>100%</b>
Non-Official Languages	460,425	38%
1. Tagalog	55,265	5%
2. Spanish	48,685	4%
3. Punjabi (Panjabi)	47,135	4%
4. Cantonese	42,445	3%
5. Mandarin	38,805	3%
Source: Statistics Canada 2017a.		

<sup>1</sup> The sum of all languages is therefore greater than the total population count. The populations that can converse in the languages in this table cannot be added together for a total population figure.

## Calgary in 2016: Languages Spoken at Home

Almost all Calgarians spoke a single language most often at home in 2016 (93 per cent). The population that spoke more than one language most often at home increased by 68 per cent, while the total population increased by 13 per cent. Most of the population speaking multiple languages most often at home spoke English and a **non-official language** (79,255 people).

Language(s) Spoken Most Often at Home in Calgary, 2011 and 2016					
Language(s) Spoken Most Often at Home	2011		2016		Change 2011-2016
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	
<b>Population excluding institutional residents</b>	<b>1,087,400</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,227,990</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Single Response<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1,037,895</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>1,145,000</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<i>Official Languages</i>	864,295	79%	932,600	76%	8%
English	857,565	79%	924,945	75%	8%
French	6,730	1%	7,650	1%	14%
<i>Non-Official Language</i>	173,595	16%	212,405	17%	22%
Aboriginal Language	200	0%	185	0%	-8%
<b>Non-Aboriginal Language</b>	173,395	16%	212,220	17%	22%
<b>Multiple Responses<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>49,510</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>82,990</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>68%</b>
English and French	1,610	0%	2,155	0%	34%
English and Non-Official Language	46,715	4%	79,255	6%	70%
French and Non-Official Language	460	0%	365	0%	-21%
English; French and Non-Official Language	730	0%	1,210	0%	66%

Sources: Statistics Canada 2012a; 2012b; 2017a.

The top non-official languages spoken most often at home in Calgary in 2016 were Punjabi, Tagalog, Cantonese, Mandarin and Spanish, respectively. Together, speakers of these five languages represented 51 per cent of the population that spoke a non-official language most often at home (single responses only).

Top 5 Non-Official Languages Spoken Most Often at Home in Calgary (single response), 2016		
Non-Official Languages Spoken Most Often at Home	Number	% of Total
<b>Total – Non-Official Languages</b>	<b>212,405</b>	<b>100%</b>
1. Punjabi (Panjabi)	26,985	13%
2. Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	22,235	10%
3. Cantonese	22,030	10%
4. Mandarin	20,880	10%
5. Spanish	16,740	8%

Source: Statistics Canada 2017a.

<sup>2</sup> A single response occurs when a respondent provides one language only.

<sup>3</sup> A multiple response occurs when a respondent provides two or more languages.

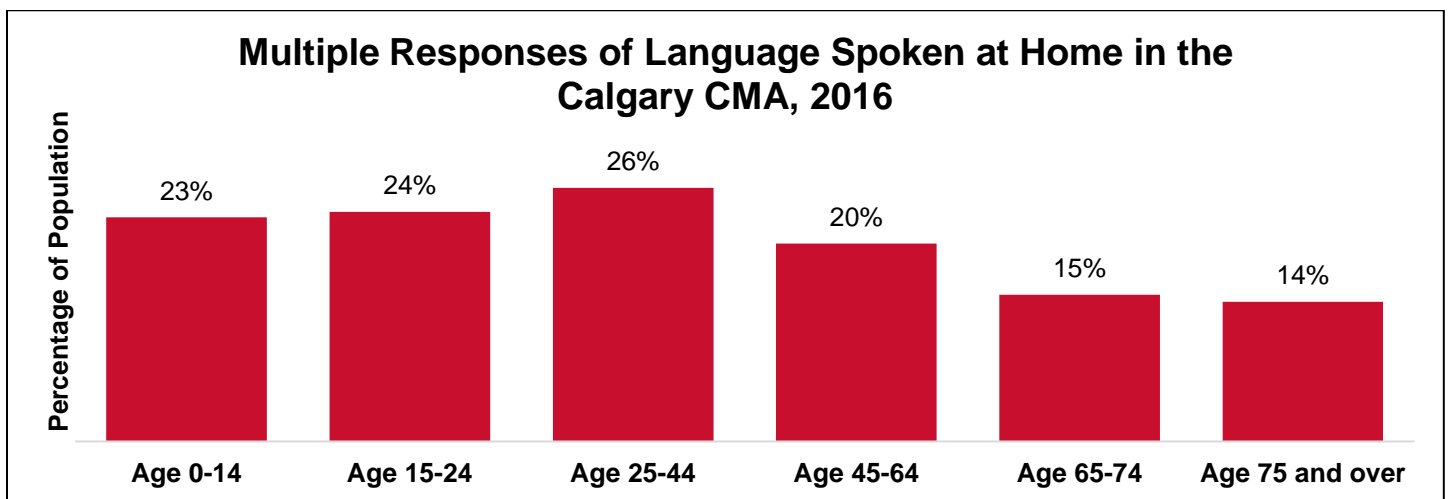
## Calgary in 2016: Languages Spoken at Home (continued)

In 2016, 32 per cent of the population spoke an immigrant language at home (388,290 people). One in ten Calgarians (10 per cent) spoke only an immigrant language at home (10 per cent), and a further 22 per cent spoke an immigrant language mostly, equally, or regularly at home.

The Population in Calgary that Speaks an Immigrant Language at Home, 2016		
Immigrant Language Spoken at Home	Number	% of Total
Population excluding institutional residents	1,227,990	100%
<b>Total – Immigrant Language Spoken at Home</b>	<b>388,290</b>	<b>32%</b>
<i>Only</i>	119,955	10%
<i>Mostly</i>	91,955	7%
<i>Equally</i>	80,450	7%
<i>Regularly</i>	95,935	8%
<b>No Mention</b>	<b>839,700</b>	<b>68%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada 2017b.

In the [Calgary Census Metropolitan Area](#) (CMA), people under 45 were more likely to speak more than one language at home than those age 45 and over.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017c.

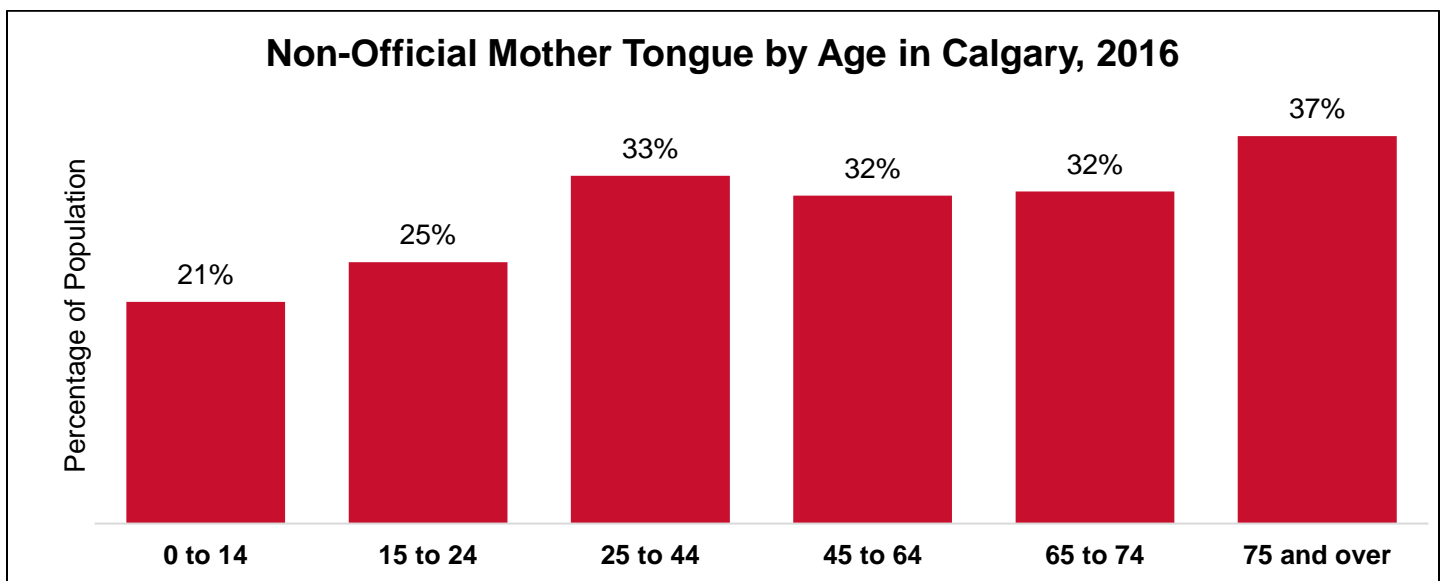
## Calgary in 2016: Mother Tongue

In 2016, 66 per cent of the population in Calgary had an English mother tongue. This was down from 69 per cent in 2011. The population with English and a non-official language as their mother tongues increased by 56 per cent between 2011 and 2016 while the total population increased by 13 per cent. The population with an Aboriginal mother tongue decreased by 11 per cent in this period.

Mother Tongue in Calgary, 2011 and 2016					
Mother Tongue	2011		2016		Change 2011-2016
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	
<b>Population excluding institutional residents</b>	<b>1,087,400</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,227,990</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Single Response</b>	<b>1,061,960</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>1,189,870</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<i>Official Languages</i>	769,425	71%	824,965	67%	7%
English	752,525	69%	806,815	66%	7%
French	16,900	2%	18,150	1%	7%
<i>Non-Official Language</i>	292,540	27%	364,905	30%	25%
Aboriginal Language	775	0%	690	0%	-11%
Non-Aboriginal Language	291,765	27%	364,210	30%	25%
<b>Multiple Responses</b>	<b>25,445</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>38,125</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>50%</b>
English and French	2,705	0%	3,195	0%	18%
English and Non-Official Language	21,230	2%	33,170	3%	56%
French and Non-Official Language	995	0%	1,005	0%	1%
English; French and Non-Official Language	515	0%	750	0%	46%

Sources: Statistics Canada 2012a; 2017a.

People under age 25 in Calgary were less likely to have a non-official mother tongue (single response) than others in 2016.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017d.

## Calgary in 2016: Mother Tongue (continued)

In Calgary, the top non-official language mother tongues in 2016 were Tagalog, Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin and Spanish, respectively. Taken together, this population represented 45 per cent of the population that had a non-official language mother tongue (single responses only). This list is similar to the top language spoken most often at home.

Top 5 Non-Official Language Mother Tongues in Calgary (single response), 2016		
Non-Official Language Mother Tongue	Number	% of Total
<b>Total - Non-Official Language Mother Tongue</b>	<b>364,905</b>	<b>100%</b>
1. Tagalog (Pilipino; Filipino)	39,285	11%
2. Punjabi (Panjabi)	35,780	10%
3. Cantonese	33,700	9%
4. Mandarin	28,355	8%
5. Spanish	27,075	7%

Source: Statistics Canada 2017a.

## Calgary in 2016: Aboriginal Languages

The top Aboriginal language mother tongues in 2016 were Blackfoot, Cree (not otherwise specified), Stoney, Ojibway and Plains Cree, respectively. Taken together, this population represented 76 per cent of the population that had an Aboriginal mother tongue (single response only).

Top 5 Aboriginal Mother Tongue Languages in Calgary (single response), 2016		
Aboriginal Language Mother Tongue	Number	% of Total
<b>Total - Aboriginal Language Mother Tongue</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>100%</b>
1. Blackfoot	225	33%
2. Cree; not otherwise specified	125	18%
3. Stoney	70	10%
4. Ojibway	55	8%
5. Plains Cree	50	7%

Source: Statistics Canada 2017a.

In Calgary, 940 people spoke an Aboriginal language at home in 2016. Most of those who spoke an Aboriginal language at home spoke it regularly (64 per cent). There were 110 Calgarians that spoke only an Aboriginal language at home. More females than males spoke an Aboriginal language at home (550 vs. 385).

The Population that Speaks an Aboriginal Language at Home in Calgary, 2016						
Aboriginal Language Spoken at Home	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
<b>Total – Aboriginal Language Spoken at Home</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Only</i>	60	16%	50	9%	110	12%
<i>Mostly</i>	30	8%	45	8%	75	8%
<i>Equally</i>	60	16%	95	17%	155	16%
<i>Regularly</i>	235	61%	360	65%	605	64%

Source: Statistics Canada 2017b.

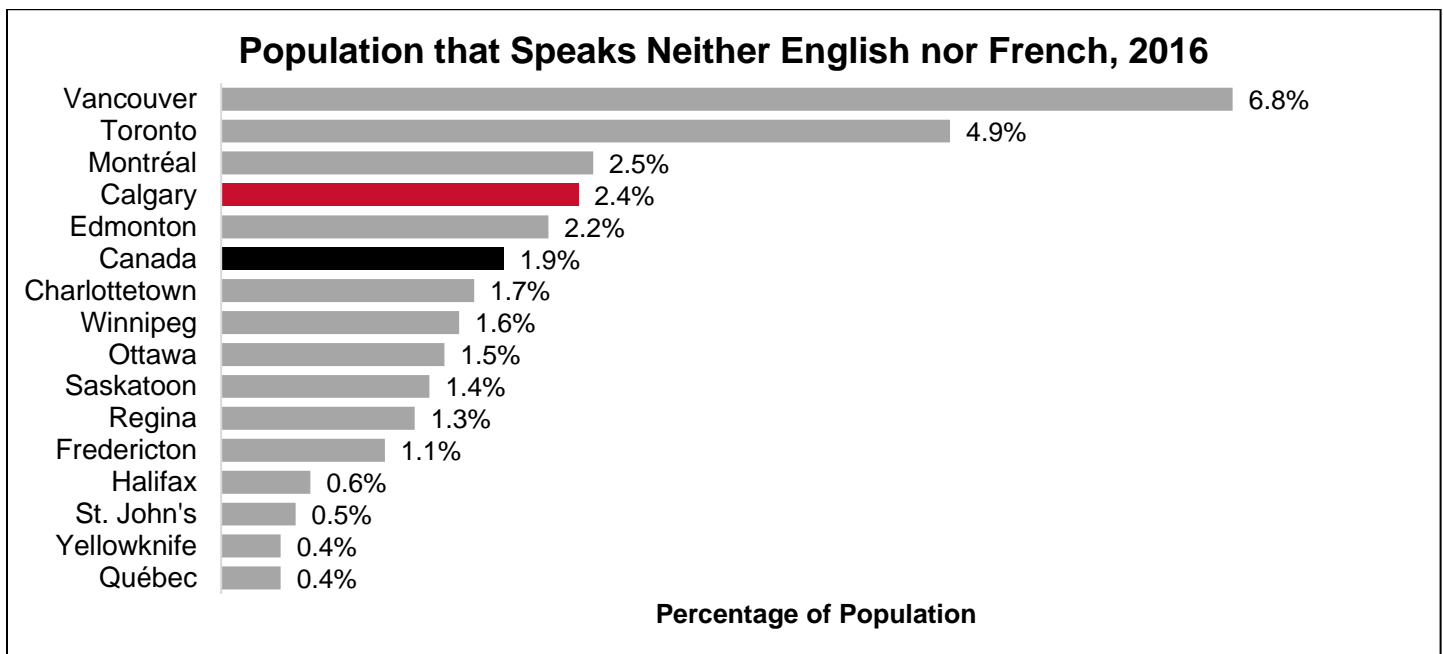
## Calgary in 2016: Aboriginal Languages (continued)

There are 1,140 people in Calgary that can converse in an Aboriginal language. The top 5 Aboriginal languages spoken in Calgary are Blackfoot, Cree (not otherwise specified), Plains Cree, Ojibway and Sarsi, respectively. A person may report that they can converse in more than one language in the census.<sup>4</sup>

Top 5 Aboriginal Languages in Calgary (multiple responses), 2016	
Knowledge of Aboriginal Languages	Number
<b>Aboriginal Languages</b>	<b>1,140</b>
1. Blackfoot	340
2. Cree, not otherwise specified	235
3. Plains Cree	90
4. Ojibway	90
5. Sarsi (Sarcee)	85
Source: Statistics Canada 2017a.	

## Canadian Comparisons: Knowledge of Official Languages

In 2016, the percentage of the population in Calgary that spoke neither English nor French (2.4 per cent) was higher than the Canadian average, but lower than some of the other Canadian **major cities**.

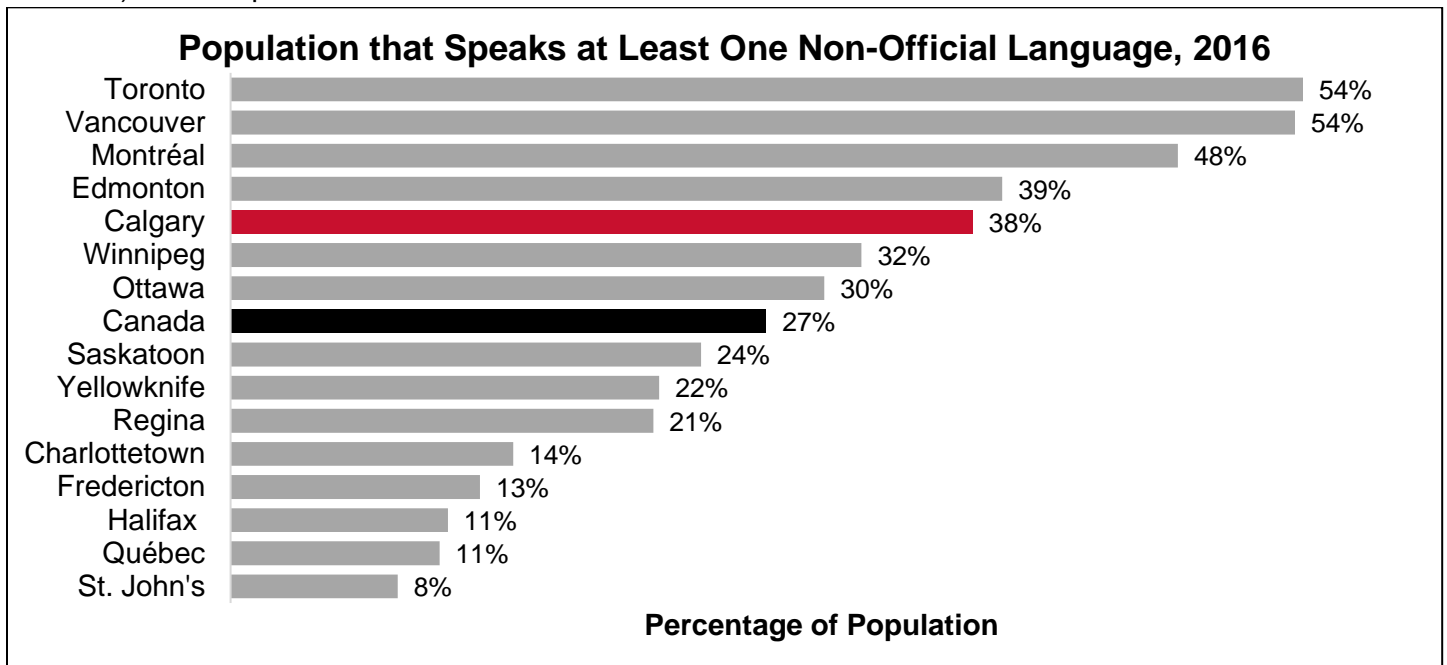


Source: Statistics Canada 2017e.

<sup>4</sup> The sum of all languages is therefore greater than the total population count. The populations that can converse in the languages in this table cannot be added together for a total population figure.

## Canadian Comparisons: Knowledge of Non-Official Languages

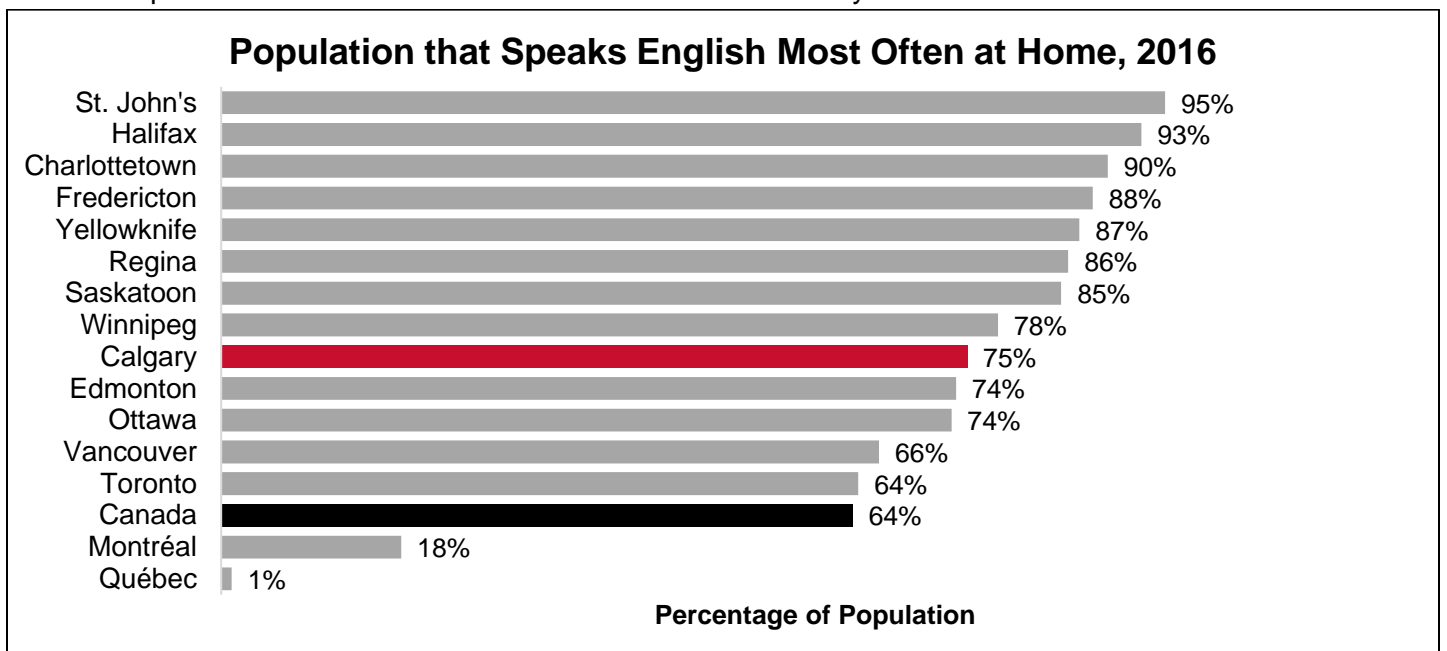
About 38 per cent of the population in Calgary could converse in at least one non-official language in 2016. This was higher than the national rate and lower than rates in larger major cities (Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal) and comparable to the rate in Edmonton.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017a.

## Canadian Comparisons: Languages Spoken at Home

Three quarters of the population in Calgary spoke English most often at home (single response) in 2016. This was lower than most major cities in the Prairies and higher than rates in cities with very large populations. French is spoken more often at home in Montréal and Québec city.

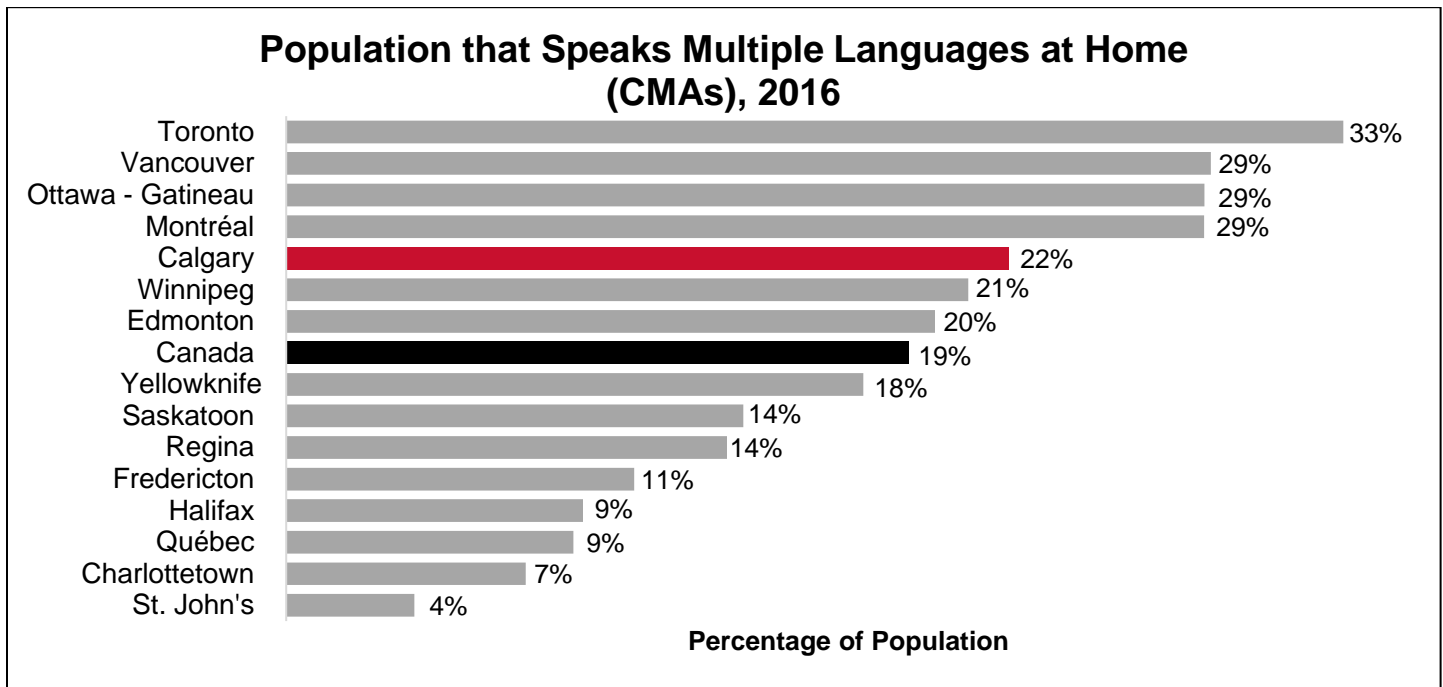


Source: Statistics Canada 2017f.



## Canadian Comparisons: Languages Spoken at Home (continued)

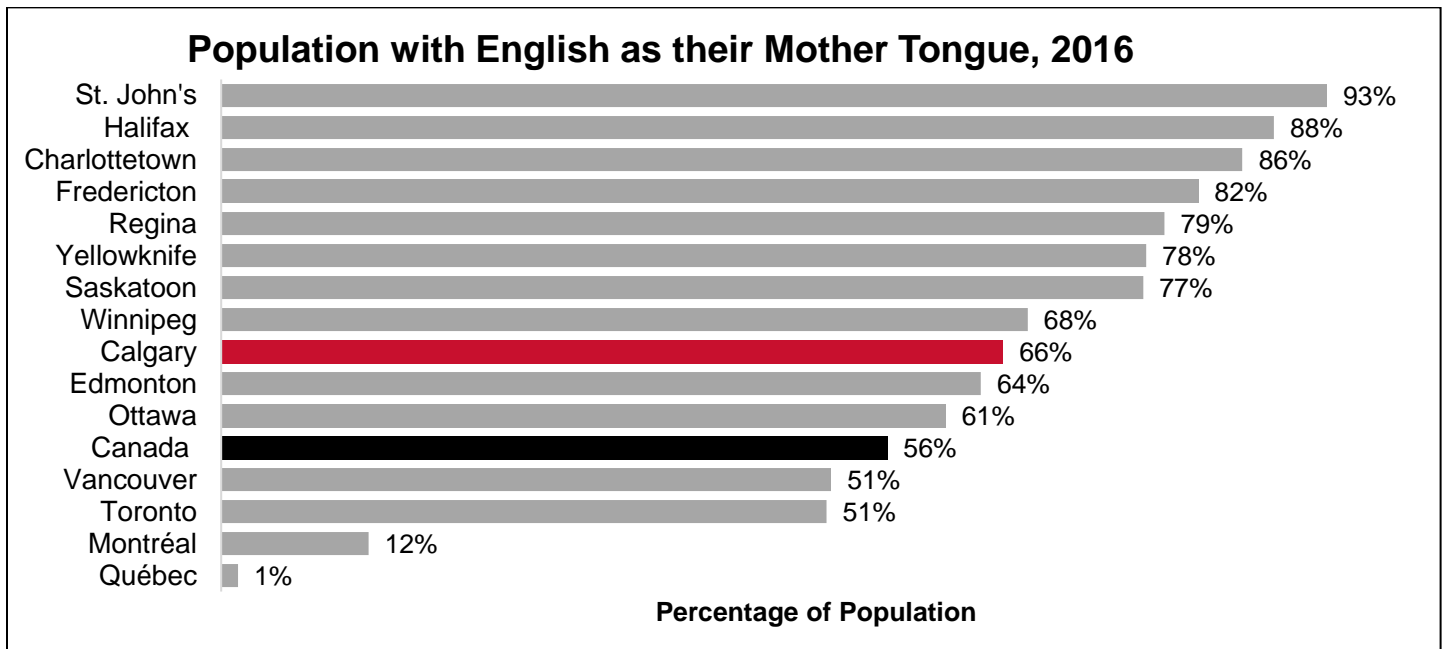
In comparison to Canada's biggest CMAs, the Calgary CMA has the lowest percentage of the population that speaks multiple languages at home.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017c.

## Canadian Comparisons: Mother Tongue

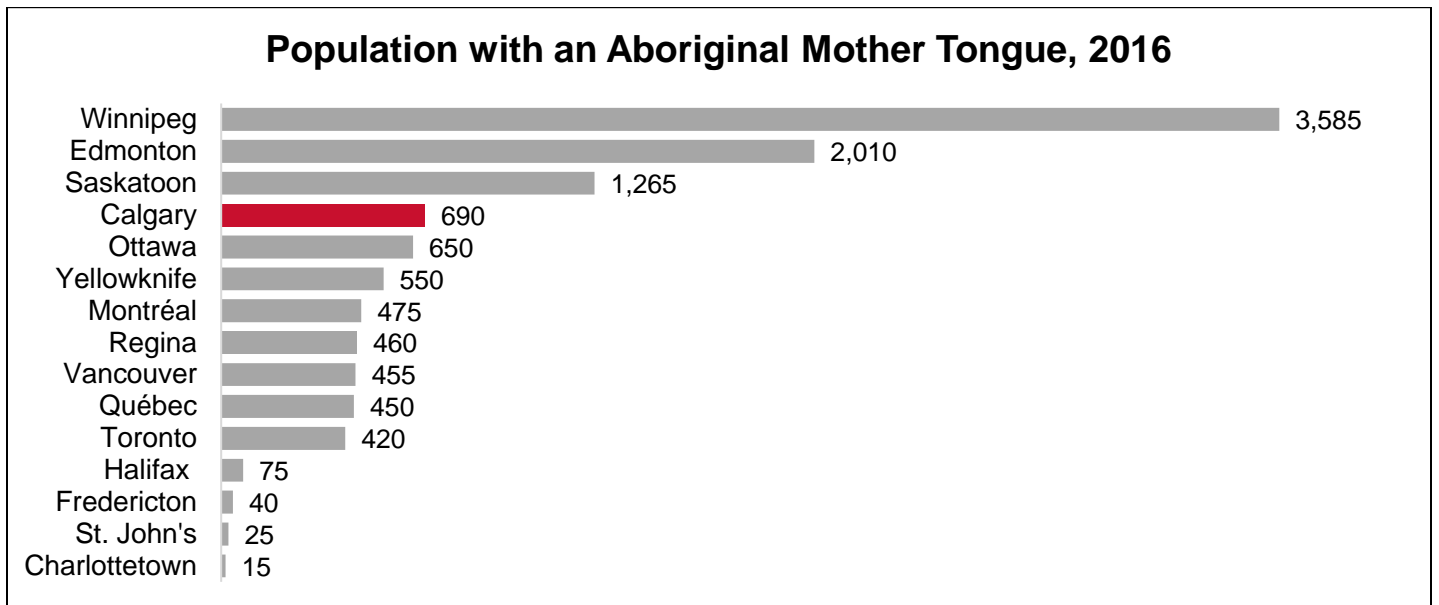
The percentage of the population with an English mother tongue (single response) in Calgary was among the lowest of the Prairie cities, but above the national average and the averages of the largest major cities.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017b.

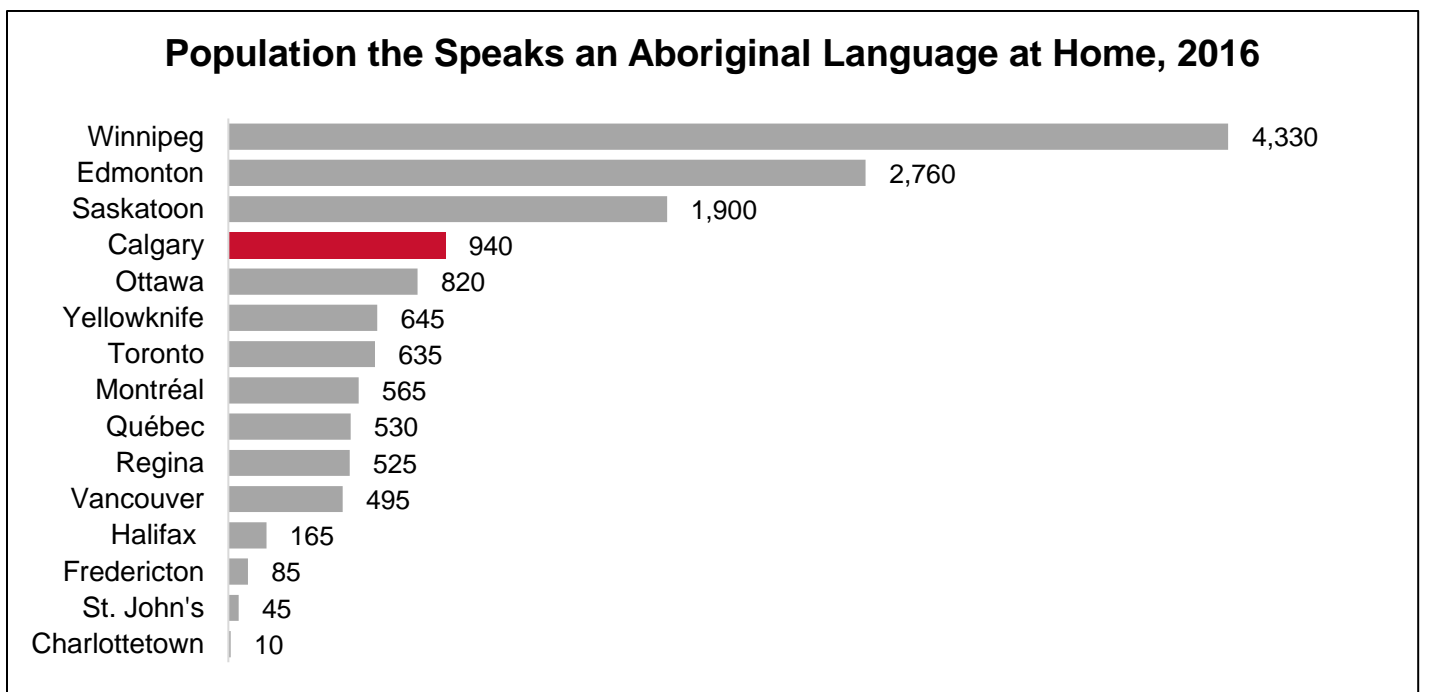
## Canadian Comparisons: Aboriginal Languages

Calgary's population with an Aboriginal mother tongue was 690, which was the fourth highest of selected major cities and lower than most major Prairie cities.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017b.

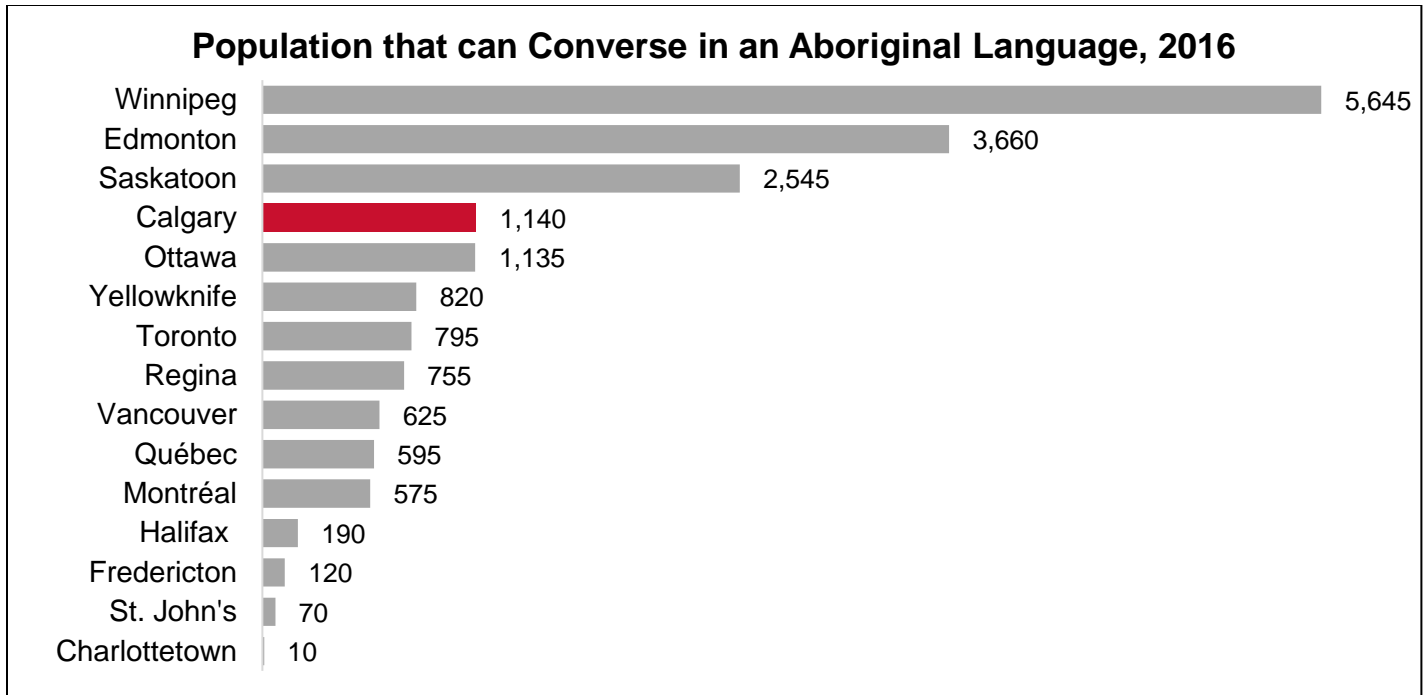
The population that spoke an Aboriginal language at home in Calgary in 2016 was 940, which was the fourth highest of selected major cities and lower than most major Prairie cities.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017b.

## Canadian Comparisons: Aboriginal Languages (continued)

Of major Canadian cities, Calgary had the fourth largest population of persons that could converse in an Aboriginal language. Almost three quarters of Aboriginal language speakers in major cities are living in Prairie cities.



Source: Statistics Canada 2017a.

## Notes

---

The data in this profile comes from the 2011 and 2016 Censuses of Canada conducted by Statistics Canada.

### Census of Canada

Data from the Census of Canada presented in this profile are based on the results of a short form questionnaire that was distributed to every household. Census day for the 2016 Census of Canada was May 10, 2016. The Census of Canada is conducted every five years.

### Population Universe

The population universe in this chapter is the total population excluding **institutional residents**.

### Random Rounding

To ensure confidentiality, Statistics Canada products include values and totals that are randomly rounded either up or down to a multiple of '5' or '10'. Therefore, in both the original data from Statistics Canada and in the compilation of this document, total values may not match the individual values. Similarly, percentages, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

### Comparability to 2011

The 2016 language questions are largely comparable with the 2011 census. The same four questions were asked of the entire population. Two changes should be noted. First, changes in question ordering appears to have led to an increase in the reporting of multiple languages spoken. Secondly, prompts were introduced into the electronic questionnaire, which led to more precise answers compared to previous censuses. Thus, when comparing this data with past data, broader family groups of languages should be used. For example, the increase of Mandarin and Cantonese were due in large part to changes to data collection. New instructions in the electronic questionnaire, asking respondents to indicate the Chinese language spoken at home or that was first learned as a child (mother tongue), as applicable, resulted in a sharp increase in certain Chinese languages, particularly Mandarin and Cantonese.

## References

---

Statistics Canada. 2012a. Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.

Statistics Canada. 2012b. 2011 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-314-XCB2011039. Last updated September 25, 2017.

Statistics Canada. 2017a. Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released August 2, 2017.

Statistics Canada. 2017b. 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016343. Released August 25, 2017.

Statistics Canada. 2017c. 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016345. Released August 25, 2017.

Statistics Canada. 2017d. Language Highlight Table, 2016 Census. Mother Tongue by Age. Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016005. Released August 25, 2017.

Statistics Canada. 2017e. Language Highlight Table, 2016 Census. Knowledge of Official Languages by Age. Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016005. Released August 25, 2017.

Statistics Canada. 2017f. 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016348. Released August 25, 2017.

## Glossary

<b>Aboriginal Language</b>	Languages (other than English or French) traditionally spoken by Aboriginal people in Canada, that is, First Nations people (North American Indian), Métis and Inuit.
<b>Calgary</b>	The Calgary census subdivision (CSD), as defined by Statistics Canada, unless otherwise indicated. The boundary of the Calgary census subdivision corresponds to the City boundary.
<b>Calgary Census Metropolitan Area</b>	The Calgary census metropolitan area (CMA), as defined by Statistics Canada. The boundary of the Calgary CMA includes the City of Calgary as well as the surrounding municipalities of Rocky View County, Airdrie, Beiseker, Chestermere, Cochrane, Crossfield, Irricana, and Tsuu T'ina Nation.
<b>Institutional Resident</b>	A resident of an institutional collective dwelling, such as a hospital, a nursing home or a prison.
<b>Knowledge of Official Languages</b>	According to the constitution, English and French are Canada's official languages. Knowledge of official languages means a person can conduct a conversation in English only, French only, in both or in neither language. For a child who has not yet learned to speak, this includes languages that the child is learning to speak at home.
<b>Knowledge of Non-Official Languages</b>	Knowledge of non-official languages means a person can conduct a conversation in a language other than English or French. For a child who has not yet learned to speak, this includes languages that the child is learning to speak at home.
<b>Immigrant Language</b>	Languages (other than French and English) whose presence in Canada was initially attributable to immigration. Other than French and English, this term excludes Aboriginal languages and sign languages.
<b>Language Spoken Most Often at Home</b>	The language the persons speaks most often at home at the time of data collection. A person can report more than one language as "spoken most often at home" if the languages are spoken equally often. For a person that lives alone, the language spoken most often at home is the language in which he or she feels most comfortable. For a child who had not yet learned to speak, this is the language spoken most often to the child at home. Where two languages are spoken to the child, the language spoken most often at home is the language spoken most often. If both languages are used equally often, then both languages are included.
<b>Major Cities</b>	For the purpose of this profile, major cities are defined as either national and provincial/territorial capitals or large cities.
<b>Mother Tongue</b>	The first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data was collected. If the person no longer understands the first language learned, the mother tongue is the second language learned. For a person who learned two languages at the same time in early childhood, the mother tongue is the language this person spoke most often at home before starting school. The person has two mother tongues only if the two languages were used equally often and are still understood by the person. For a child who had not yet learned to speak, the mother tongue is the language spoken most often to this child at home. The child has two mother tongues only if both languages are spoken equally often so that the child learns both languages at the same time.

<p><b>Non-Aboriginal Languages</b></p>	<p>Non-official languages that are not an Aboriginal language.</p>
<p><b>Non-Official Language</b></p>	<p>In Canada, ‘official languages’ refer to English and French. ‘Non-Official languages’ refer to all other languages.</p>
<p><b>Population</b></p>	<p>Includes Canadian citizens and landed immigrants whose usual place of residence is Canada. Also includes refugee claimants, holders of work and study permits, Canadian citizens and landed immigrants at sea or in port aboard merchant or government vessels, and Canadian citizens away from Canada on military or diplomatic business. Total population excludes government representatives and military members of other countries and residents of other countries visiting Canada.</p>