



Languages in B.C.

2011 Census Fact Sheet

- In 2011, 21,225 more people in B.C. reported they had no English language skills compared to 2006. Of those without English, 1,075 resided outside of Metro Vancouver.
- Despite this, the proportion of people with English language ability has not changed substantially: 96.6 per cent had an ability to speak English in 2011 compared to 96.9 per cent in 2006.
- There was little change in Metro Vancouver with 94.3 per cent speaking English in 2011 compared to 94.8 per cent in 2006.
- English was the primary mother tongue of more Metro Vancouver residents in 2011, with 57.5 per cent compared to 56.7 per cent in 2006.
- Other than English, Punjabi, Chinese languages and German continued to be the most common languages identified as a primary mother tongue.

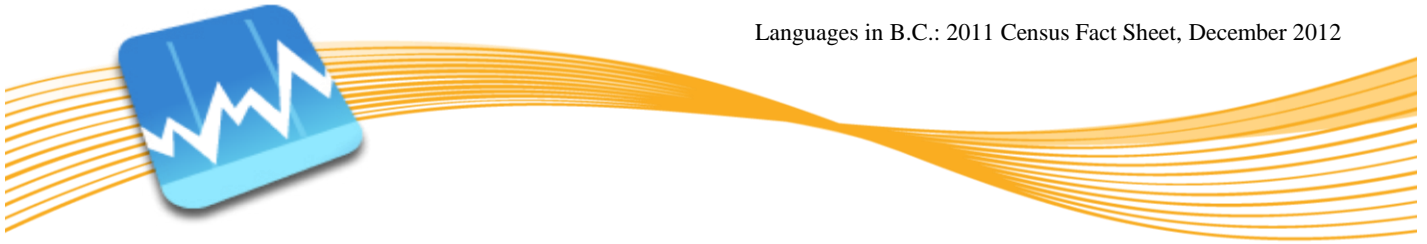
The release of the 2011 Census data on languages in October 2012 provides some insight into the language dynamics of individuals in B.C. and Metro Vancouver (referred to as Vancouver throughout this report). The data allows a comparison of three key aspects of language ability: knowledge of English, English spoken in the home and primary mother tongue. Data is drawn from the 2006 and 2011 Censuses from Statistics Canada, and includes both the immigrant and Canadian-born populations together. Detailed statistics on the immigrant population will be released in 2013 in the National Household Survey.

Table 1: Knowledge of the English Language

	English Speakers		No English Ability	
	2006	2011	2006	2011
B.C .	3,949,010	4,209,600	125,380	146,605
% of B.C. population	96.9%	96.6%	3.1%	3.4%
Metro Vancouver	1,988,380	2,162,385	109,580	129,730
% of Metro Vancouver population	94.8%	94.3%	5.2%	5.7%

Data Source: 2011 Census, Statistics Canada

The proportion of the B.C. population in 2011 with **knowledge of the English language** (see Table 1) has not changed substantially from the 2006 Census. In 2011, 96.6 per cent of the B.C. population spoke English, which is a slight decrease from the 96.9 per cent that spoke English in 2006. In Vancouver, a similar pattern is observed, with 94.3 per cent speaking English in 2011 and 94.8 per cent in 2006. Because Vancouver is the destination for the large majority of incoming immigrants, a lower proportion of English speakers is to be expected when compared to the rest of B.C.



In B.C., approximately 147,000 people (3.4 per cent of the B.C. population) had no English language ability in 2011. This compares with approximately 125,000 (3.1 per cent) in 2006. The majority of non-English speakers are found in Vancouver, where there were around 130,000 (5.7 per cent) people without English language ability in 2011, compared to 110,000 (5.2 per cent) in 2006. In 2011, B.C. had approximately 2,000 people who spoke French only, and Vancouver accounted for about 1,300 of them.

English language ability is based on responses to the knowledge of official languages question in the short form census. Respondents self-identify whether they speak “English Only”, “French Only”, “Both English and French”, or “Neither English nor French”. English language ability is the combined total of the “English Only” and “Both English and French” responses.

Table 2: English as the Language Most Spoken at Home

	2006	2011
B.C.	3,419,210	3,668,495
% of B.C. population	83.9%	84.2%
Metro Vancouver	1,541,835	1,700,860
% of Metro Vancouver population	73.5%	74.2%

Data Source: 2011 Census, Statistics Canada

The proportion of the B.C. population that **spoke English at home** (see Table 2) slightly increased in both B.C. as a whole and in Vancouver. In 2011, 84.2 per cent of B.C. residents spoke English at home, and in 2006, this proportion was 83.9 per cent. The proportion for Vancouver in 2011 was 74.2 per cent, an increase from the 2006 level of 73.5 per cent. The impact of Vancouver being the primary area of settlement for immigrants is much more pronounced when looking at the language most spoken at home than when looking at knowledge of English.

The **primary mother tongue** (see Table 3) of the B.C. population continued to be English, accounting for 71.7 per cent of the population in 2011 and 71.5 per cent in 2006. In 2011, 1.3 per cent of the B.C. population identified French as their primary mother tongue, 0.2 per cent identified an aboriginal language and 26.8 per cent identified an immigrant language¹. Responses indicating multiple mother tongues are excluded from this analysis due to data quality concerns (see disclaimer).

¹ An immigrant language is a language that is not English, French, or an aboriginal language. Immigrants with English or French as a mother tongue are not considered to have an immigrant mother tongue.

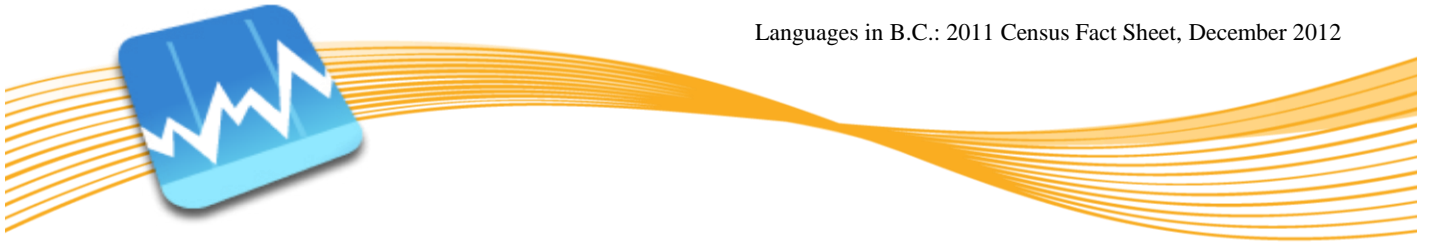


Table 3: Top Ten Primary Mother Tongue*

B.C.			
	2006 % of Population	2011 % of Population	2011 Population
English	71.5%	71.7%	3,062,430
Punjabi	3.9%	4.3%	182,915
Cantonese	3.3%	3.1%	133,245
Chinese, n.o.s.	3.2%	2.8%	120,045
Mandarin	1.8%	2.2%	94,055
German	2.2%	1.7%	73,625
Tagalog	1.3%	1.5%	66,120
French	1.4%	1.3%	57,275
Korean	1.2%	1.1%	48,975
Spanish	0.8%	1.0%	40,795
Persian (Farsi)	0.7%	0.8%	36,045
Vancouver			
	2006 % of Population	2011 % of Pop	2011 Population
English	56.7%	57.5%	1,282,500
Punjabi	5.6%	6.2%	139,230
Cantonese	6.0%	5.7%	128,110
Chinese, n.o.s.	5.7%	5.0%	111,495
Mandarin	3.3%	4.0%	90,190
Tagalog	2.2%	2.6%	58,505
Korean	2.0%	2.0%	43,840
Persian (Farsi)	1.3%	1.5%	34,420
Spanish	1.3%	1.4%	32,300
German	1.4%	1.2%	26,935
French	1.2%	1.1%	24,780

* single response

Data Source: 2011 Census, Statistics Canada

In Vancouver, almost half the population has a mother tongue that is not English. In 2011, 57.5 per cent of the Vancouver population reported English as their mother tongue, compared to 56.7 per cent in 2006. In 2011, 41.4 per cent of the Vancouver population identified an immigrant language as a primary mother tongue.

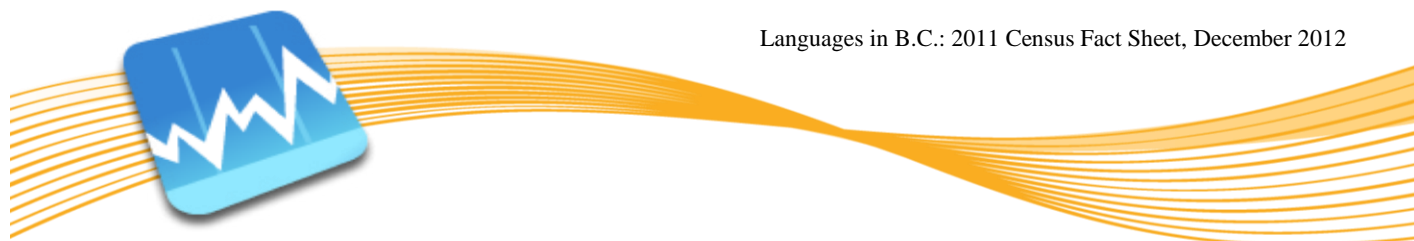
Comparing the mother tongue statistics to those of English as the language most spoken at home, it is clear that many non-native English speakers choose to speak English at home.

The top-10 mother tongues in B.C., including English, accounted for 90.8 per cent of the population in 2006, and 90.5 per cent in 2011. Punjabi, Chinese languages (Cantonese, Mandarin and Chinese, n.o.s.²) and German are the most common languages other than English in both census years. The top-10 languages haven't changed for the B.C. population, but the proportions and rankings have.

In Vancouver, the percentage of the population that had one of the top 10 languages as a mother tongue was 87.3 per cent in 2011, and 85.5 per cent in 2006. This change is driven by the increase in the proportion that has English as a mother tongue. Chinese languages, Punjabi and Tagalog are the most common languages other than English in both census years.

Chinese languages accounted for 8.1 per cent of the B.C. population in 2011, and 8.3 per cent in 2006. In Vancouver, Chinese languages accounted for 14.7 per cent of the population in 2011, and in 2006 this was 15 per cent.

²n.o.s. means not otherwise specified. In this case, Chinese n.o.s. indicates that the respondent speaks a Chinese language, but did not identify which dialect.



In both the entire province and in Vancouver, the proportion of the population with Tagalog as a mother tongue increased. This is consistent with the observed increase in immigration from the Philippines over the period. In 2011, there were approximately 66,000 Tagalog speakers in B.C. (88.5 per cent in Vancouver), an increase from 2006, when there were around 50,500 (90.9 per cent in Vancouver).

Of those without English language ability in B.C. in 2011, 76.4 per cent have one of the three Chinese languages or Punjabi as a primary mother tongue. For Vancouver, this was slightly higher, at 77.2 per cent. Please see the appendix for a table detailing the top-10 mother tongues of those without English language ability for B.C. and Vancouver in 2011.

Table 4: B.C. Communities' Incidents of Immigrant Language as Primary Mother Tongue

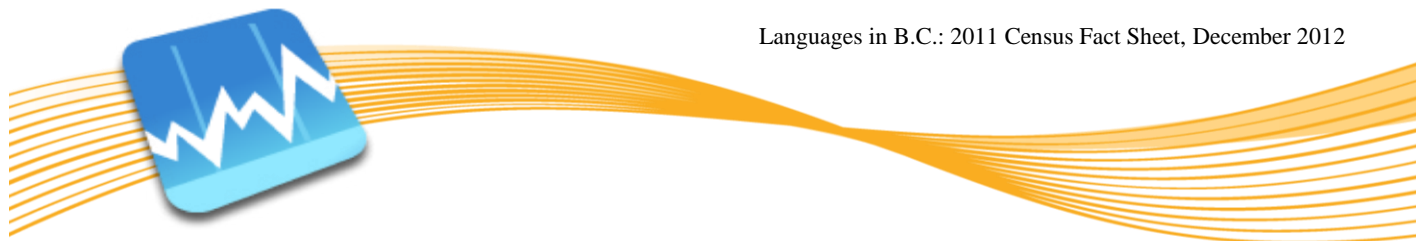
Community	2006	2011	Most Spoken 2011
Vancouver	41.0%	41.4%	Chinese Languages
Abbotsford - Mission	27.6%	28.0%	Punjabi
Squamish	18.9%	14.8%	Punjabi
Victoria	13.0%	12.3%	Chinese Languages
Prince Rupert	14.8%	11.9%	Vietnamese
Kelowna	13.1%	11.5%	German
Chilliwack	12.8%	11.0%	German
Penticton	12.6%	10.6%	German
Vernon	10.7%	9.7%	German
Nanaimo	10.9%	9.1%	German
Terrace	10.8%	8.8%	Portuguese
Prince George	8.9%	8.6%	German
Kamloops	9.2%	8.5%	German
Port Alberni	10.0%	8.1%	German
Parksville	9.1%	7.8%	German
Powell River	9.5%	7.7%	Italian
Salmon Arm	7.5%	7.1%	German
Duncan	9.3%	6.7%	German
Williams Lake	8.9%	6.4%	Punjabi
Fort St. John	5.6%	6.4%	German
Cranbrook	7.3%	6.3%	German
Quesnel	7.9%	6.2%	Punjabi
Courtenay	7.1%	6.1%	German
Campbell River	7.0%	6.1%	German
Dawson Creek	7.2%	5.8%	German

Data Source: 2011 Census, Statistics Canada

Looking at the change in proportion of immigrant languages speakers is important for language program and settlement services.

The proportion of the population with an immigrant language as a primary mother tongue was similar across censuses, and Abbotsford-Mission continued to have the second highest proportion of the B.C. Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs). Table 4 shows the CMA level changes in immigrant languages as the primary mother tongue.

There were significant changes in many CMAs across the province, but given the small populations of these areas (relative to Vancouver), these changes are not apparent when looking at B.C. totals. Duncan experienced a drop in the proportion of immigrant language speakers to 6.7 per cent in 2011 from 9.3 per cent in 2006. Significant drops have also been observed in Dawson Creek (5.8 per cent from 7.2 per cent) and Prince Rupert (11.9 per cent from 14.8 per cent).



Fort St. John had a different experience. The percentage of the population with an immigrant language as a mother tongue increased to 6.4 per cent in 2011 from 5.6 per cent in 2006.

Overall, the language profiles across the province and within the Vancouver CMA were similar between the 2006 and 2011 censuses. When the immigrant data is released, it is possible to drill down further to get a better look at the changes in the immigrant experience in B.C. and its regions.

For more 2011 census data on B.C. communities, please see B.C. Stats:
<http://www.B.C.stats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Census/OpenData.aspx>.

Data Sources:

Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population, 2007, and 2011 Census of Population, 2012. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.

Disclaimer: *Language statistics in the 2006 and 2011 Censuses may not be comparable for a number of reasons. A methodological report is expected from Statistics Canada detailing the differences. Analysts have noted that single responses for mother tongue have higher incidents of English declared than expected and increased levels of English and another language (multiple response). Analysis of mother tongue in this report is done at the single response level.*

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Appendix:

Top Ten Mother Tongues of Population without English		
B.C.		
2011	Population without English	% of population without English
Chinese Languages	76,055	51.9%
Panjabi (Punjabi)	35,975	24.5%
Persian (Farsi)	2,620	1.8%
Taiwanese	1,250	0.9%
Hindi	1,130	0.8%
Arabic	1,060	0.7%
Urdu	445	0.3%
Shanghainese	435	0.3%
Gujarati	370	0.3%
Fukien	195	0.1%
Vancouver		
2011	Population without English	% of population without English
Chinese Languages	73,705	56.8%
Panjabi (Punjabi)	26,455	20.4%
Persian (Farsi)	2,535	2.0%
Taiwanese	1,230	0.9%
Hindi	1,080	0.8%
Arabic	945	0.7%
Shanghainese	430	0.3%
Urdu	405	0.3%
Gujarati	345	0.3%
Fukien	190	0.1%
Outside of Vancouver		
2011	Population without English	% of population without English
Chinese Languages	73,705	56.8%
Panjabi (Punjabi)	26,455	20.4%
Persian (Farsi)	2,535	2.0%
Taiwanese	1,230	0.9%
Hindi	1,080	0.8%
Arabic	945	0.7%
Shanghainese	430	0.3%
Urdu	405	0.3%
Gujarati	345	0.3%
Fukien	190	0.1%