

Language Questions in the Census : Get the Facts



What questions will I be asked, in the census, on the languages I speak?

If you received the short form census, you'll have to answer the following questions:

- **Do you know French or English well enough to hold a conversation?** In other words, do you speak only English, or both languages?
- **What languages do you speak regularly at home?** Do you speak English only, English and French, English and another language?
- **Which of these languages do you speak most often?** You can answer that you speak one language more often than the other at home, or that you speak both of them equally.
- **What is the first language you learned at home as a child and that you still understand?** In other words, you're being asked what your mother tongue is.
- **A series of questions on the language in which you received your education.** These questions are new for this year. Their purpose is to better enumerate people with a right to education in the language of the minority. Here's what you will be asked:
 - Did you do any of your primary or secondary schooling in French in Canada?
 - In which type of program was this schooling in French done? In other words, did you do a regular French-language program or an immersion program?
 - For how many years did you attend a regular French program in a French-language school?

If you received the long form census, you will have to answer the same questions, but will also be asked two further questions on the **languages you use at work.**

Do I have to answer these questions for everybody in my family?

If you're filling out the census questionnaire on behalf of your entire household, you will have to answer these questions for each member.



Keep in mind that answers may vary depending on the person. **Take the time to read and understand the questions and discuss them with members of your household to answer in a way that best describes their specific reality.** It's possible that your spouse may say he or she uses French the most at home, but that your daughter will say that she speaks both French and English equally.

Why do I need to declare in which language I received my education?

If you live elsewhere than Quebec, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms grants your children to French-language education if:

- You, your spouse or your children have French as a mother tongue
- You, your spouse or one of your children received your education (entirely or in part) in French
- You, your spouse or your children are Canadian citizens

For the first time this year, the census will count the children who have a right to education in the language of the minority because their parents received their education in this language.

Until now, estimations of the number of children with that right were too low. This year, with these new questions, things will change.

Having more accurate numbers will allow for construction of schools designed from the start for the right capacity, instead of having schools built too small and running out of space after two or three years.

I went/my spouse went to a bilingual school. Does that count as French-language education?

Yes it does. Here's what counts as receiving your education in French:

- A regular French-language program in a French-language school;
- A regular French-language program in a bilingual school;
- A regular French-language program in an English-language school.

However, a **French immersion program** does not count as French-language education in the census.

My mother tongue is Arab, but I live in French. How do I ensure I'm counted as a Francophone?



Just describe your reality by answering that your mother tongue is neither French nor English, but that you know French and use it at home. This will enable Statistics Canada to include you in the data on people who use French as their main language of communication in daily life. That is to say – Francophones!

I've heard that if I declare that my spouse or I speak both French and English, we'll be sorted by Statistics Canada as only half Francophone. Is that true?



No, it's not true. Knowing both French and English has no bearing on whether you or your spouse get sorted as Francophone or not. In fact, Statistics Canada doesn't define who is a Francophone and who isn't.



Statistics Canada does calculate some variables to determine who uses French as a main language of communication in daily life, but mother tongue and languages spoken at home also factor into these calculations.

Why is it so important that I answer the questions on language in the census? What does it change?

Because your government, your municipality and community organizations need this information to know where they need to offer new services or improve existing ones. This includes recreation programs, day camps, the location of new schools and even employment assistance services!

Your answers are also important for researchers studying the evolution of language in Canada. The data allows them to:

- Measure language transmission by Francophones to their children;
- Understand how French-speaking immigrants contribute to the growth of Francophone communities;
- Understand how an ageing population and migration from rural regions to urban areas impacts the future of French;
- Determine what are the conditions of success for Francophone economic development in a minority situation.

What date do I have to fill out the census on and what happens if I'm late?

Officially, the census is on May 11. It's possible that you'll receive the form by mail or electronically before then, but you will be asked to answer based on your household's situation on May 11.

If you're late, you still have until the end of the month to fill out the questionnaire, but once again, keep in mind that your answers must reflect your household's situation on May 11.