

# The 2021 Census: It pays to be bilingual but fewer Canadians are listening

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## Introduction: Bilingualism Pays but fewer Canadians get the message

Yesterday's release of 2021 census data on languages in Canada revealed some key shifts in the evolution of official language bilingualism in Canada. Perhaps the most important change in this regard was the marked decline in the share of bilinguals outside of Quebec (from 9.8% to 9.5%) between 2016 and 2021

As this occurred Quebec's percentage of bilinguals increased rather noticeably from 44.4 to 46.4% over that period driven mainly by its francophone population. Indeed there were declines in percentage of bilinguals amongst the mother tongue English population both outside Quebec as well inside the province

The net result of the changes sees Montreal and Quebec emerging as veritable champions of bilingualism with Ottawa-the nation's capital- lagging behind.

Canada's bilingualism has been described as flowing across a bilingual belt from the Soo to Moncton but the locus center of that belt is increasingly situated in Montreal and Quebec City.

Ironically as the census results confirm once again bilingualism pays across the country as those reporting knowledge of both English and French make a good deal more income than do unilingual Canadians. That's message does not seem to resonate enough with Canadians.

As a country how bilingual are we really? And do the 2021 census results permit us to portray ourselves as such?

It's a question that needs to be asked in light of the census results.

# Bilingualism up in Quebec down outside of the province

	Total - Knowledge of official languages	English only	French only	English and French	Neither English nor French
Canada 2016	34767250	23757525	4144685	6216070	648975
Canada 2021	36620955	25261655	4087895	6581680	689730
Quebec 2016	8066555	372450	4032640	3586405 (44.4)	75060
Quebec 2021	8406905	445575	3980280	3898975 (46.4)	82075
Rest of Canada 2016	26700695	23385075	112045	2629625 (9,8)	573915
Rest of Canada 2021	28214050	24816080	107615	2682705 (9.5)	607655

# Montreal and Quebec City are the country's Capitals of Bilingualism

Mother Tongue	Ottawa		Gatineau		Montreal RMR		Quebec CMA	
	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016
<b>Knowledge of English and French</b>								
<b>Total</b>	36.7	37.6	65.1	64	56.4	55.0	41.5	38.9
<b>English</b>	28.3	29.2	54.6	57.9	68.8	70.7	84.7	87.8
<b>French</b>	91.2	91.9	67.6	66.0	54.1	52.2	40.2	37.8
<b>Other</b>	22.2	23.3	52.7	52.2	52.8	53.0	43.8	42.4

# In terms of average income data released yesterday bilingualism pays dividends across Canada's provinces but especially in Quebec

Income statistic: Average total income (\$) 2021	Total - Knowledge of official languages	English only	French only	English and French
Canada	54450	55250	43040	60550
Newfoundland and Labrador	48440	48080		56350
Prince Edward Island	46120	45760		49680
Nova Scotia	47480	46880	46600	53450
New Brunswick	45920	45840	33400	48760
Quebec	51160	43240	43240	59150
Ontario	56350	56100	38040	66700
Manitoba	49240	49080	31650	54450
Saskatchewan	53050	53050	43600	57300
Alberta	60850	61050	35920	66800
British Columbia	54450	54950	37400	61550

## It also pays in selected CMAs in Quebec and Ontario

Income statistic: Average total income (\$) 2021 In selected CMA s	Total - Knowledge of official languages	English only	French only	English and French
Montréal	53600	43280	43280	60650
Québec	54100	41120	47720	61500
Sherbrooke	48280	34160	42360	54150
Trois-Rivières	46760	28000	42520	54450
Ottawa - Gatineau	61900	60400	41640	67000
Ottawa - Gatineau	63900	60900	38680	71200
Gatineau	55450	48880	42120	60100
Toronto	59250	59600	38880	78400