

LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OFTEN AT HOME



What does this measure and why is it important?

This indicator measures the percentage of Basin Boundary residents that speak English, French or “other” languages most often at home. “Other” languages include Aboriginal languages and selected non-Aboriginal languages. This indicator also measures the number of languages that are spoken across the region. Data for this indicator were gathered from the [2011 Census of Canada](#).

These data provide insight into the cultural diversity of our region. Linguists and anthropologists around the world are studying the rapid demise of languages, as it is a concern regarding cultural identity in an increasingly globalized culture. While cultural diversity is difficult to quantify, a good indication is thought to be the count of the number of different languages spoken in a region.

What are the trends and current conditions?

The majority (96.7%) of Basin Boundary residents speak English most often at home. The proportion of Basin Boundary residents speaking French most often at home (0.5%) is similar to British Columbia (0.4%), but is much lower than Canada (20.6%). Our region has a much lower percentage of people who speak other languages most often at home—only 2.9% compared to BC (19.1%) and Canada (14.6%) (Figure 1). This is an indication that our region is less culturally diverse than BC or Canada. This is likely related to the fact that there are no large cities in our region that tend to support a higher diversity of language and culture.

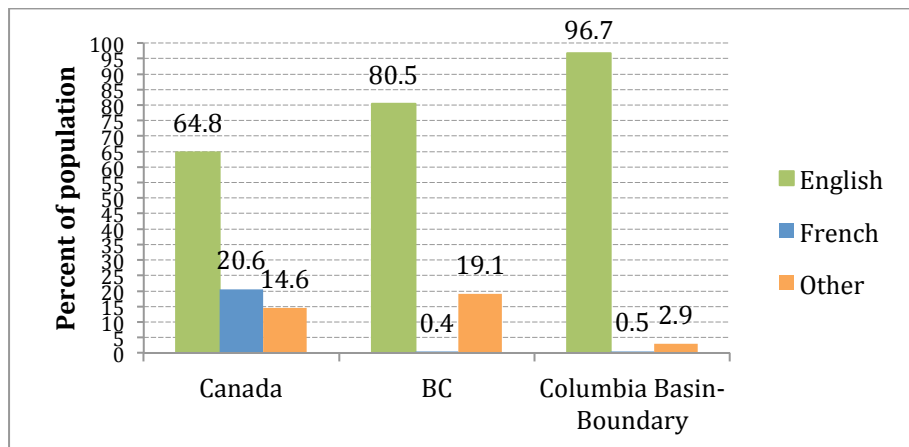


Figure 1: Language spoken most often at home
Source: Statistics Canada, 2012b

Census data indicates that there are at least 60 different languages spoken most often at home in our region. These include languages such as Afrikaans, Cantonese, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Panjabi, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Ukrainian. Higher numbers of people who speak other languages are generally found in the larger communities, such as Castlegar, Nelson, Cranbrook, Revelstoke, Golden, and Trail. The communities of Rossland, Revelstoke, and Nelson are also home to most of our region’s French speakers. There are also Aboriginal languages spoken across our region that are not explicitly captured in the census form.

Language, as well as religion and traditional practice, is an indicator of cultural diversity that could be further investigated for our region, and compared to other rural regions across Canada. Investigating cultural identity is another possibility.

