



Census

BULLETIN | 2016

Language

Mother tongue

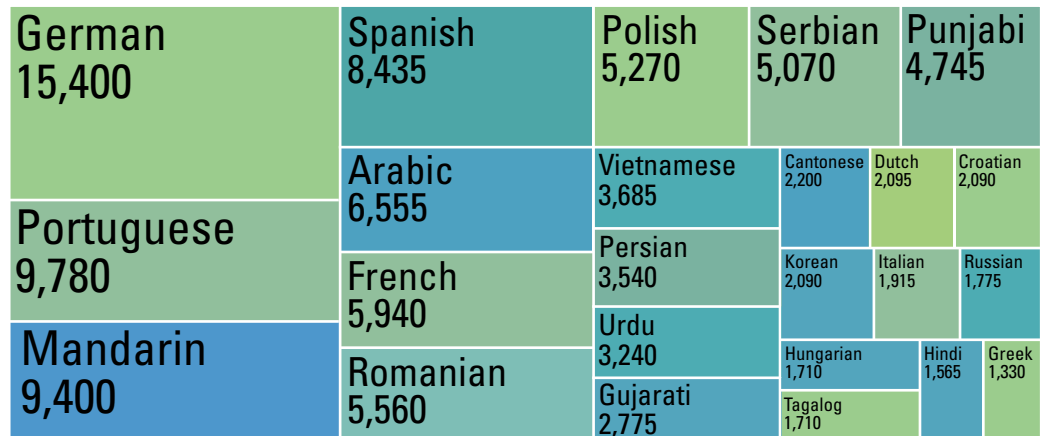
In total, the 2016 Census recorded over 120 mother tongues in Waterloo Region, representing countries throughout the world. English was the most prevalent mother tongue of people in the region, representing three out of four residents. There were also 129,930 people whose mother tongue was not English, an increase of 9.6 per cent from 2011.

German and Portuguese remained the top two mother tongues after English, representing three per cent (15,400 residents) and 1.9 per cent (9,780 residents) of the total population respectively (Figure 1). However, the number of people who reported these languages as their mother tongue, along with those who reported other European languages, has declined since 2011 (Table 1).



The term 'mother tongue' is used to refer to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood at the time of the Census

Figure 1: Top 24 mother tongues (other than English) in Waterloo Region, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011 and 2016 by Census Division

Percentage Change (%) 2011 - 2016

-10.7% 206.7%

Table 1: Waterloo Region's top 25 mother tongue languages (single response), 2016

2016 Rank	Language	Population	% of Total	Per cent Growth 2011-2016	2011 Rank	2011 to 2016 Rank Change
1	English	389,410	75.0%	3.7%	1	0
2	German	15,400	3.0%	-6.8%	2	0
3	Portuguese	9,780	1.9%	-2.4%	3	0
4	Mandarin	9,400	1.8%	206.7%	12*	+8
5	Spanish	8,435	1.6%	5.8%	4	-1
6	Arabic	6,555	1.3%	48.1%	9	+3
7	French	5,940	1.1%	-2.5%	5	-2
8	Romanian	5,560	1.1%	0.1%	6	-2
9	Polish	5,270	1.0%	-3.2%	7	-2
10	Serbian	5,070	1.0%	-0.2%	8	-2
11	Punjabi (Panjabi)	4,745	0.9%	22.6%	10	-1
12	Vietnamese	3,685	0.7%	15.5%	11	-1
13	Persian (Farsi)	3,540	0.7%	20.8%	13	0
14	Urdu	3,240	0.6%	15.7%	14	0
15	Gujarati	2,775	0.5%	28.2%	17	+2
16	Cantonese	2,200	0.4%	56.0%	22*	+6
17	Dutch	2,095	0.4%	-10.7%	15	-2
18	Croatian	2,090	0.4%	-4.8%	16	-2
19	Korean	2,090	0.4%	39.8%	21	+2
20	Italian	1,915	0.4%	-0.8%	18	-2
21	Russian	1,775	0.3%	14.9%	20	-1
22	Hungarian	1,710	0.3%	-6.3%	19	-3
23	Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	1,710	0.3%	28.6%	24	+1
24	Hindi	1,565	0.3%	36.1%	25	+1
25	Greek	1,330	0.3%	-5.0%	23	-2

*Cantonese and Mandarin were previously grouped under 'Chinese Languages' in the 2011 Census Bulletin; however, they have been separated in the 2016 Census Bulletin Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2016 by Census Division

The 2016 Census recorded over **120** mother tongues in Waterloo Region

Individuals with mother tongues other than English, notably Mandarin and Cantonese, are growing quickly, representing the shifting demographics of new waves of Canadians. While in 2011, Mandarin was the twelfth most common mother tongue in Waterloo Region, by 2016, it had become the fourth (Table 1). Similarly, in 2011, Cantonese was the 22nd most common mother tongue, and five years later, it had risen to sixteenth place. Despite this rapid growth, Mandarin and Cantonese only represented 1.8 per cent and 0.4 per cent of the total population.

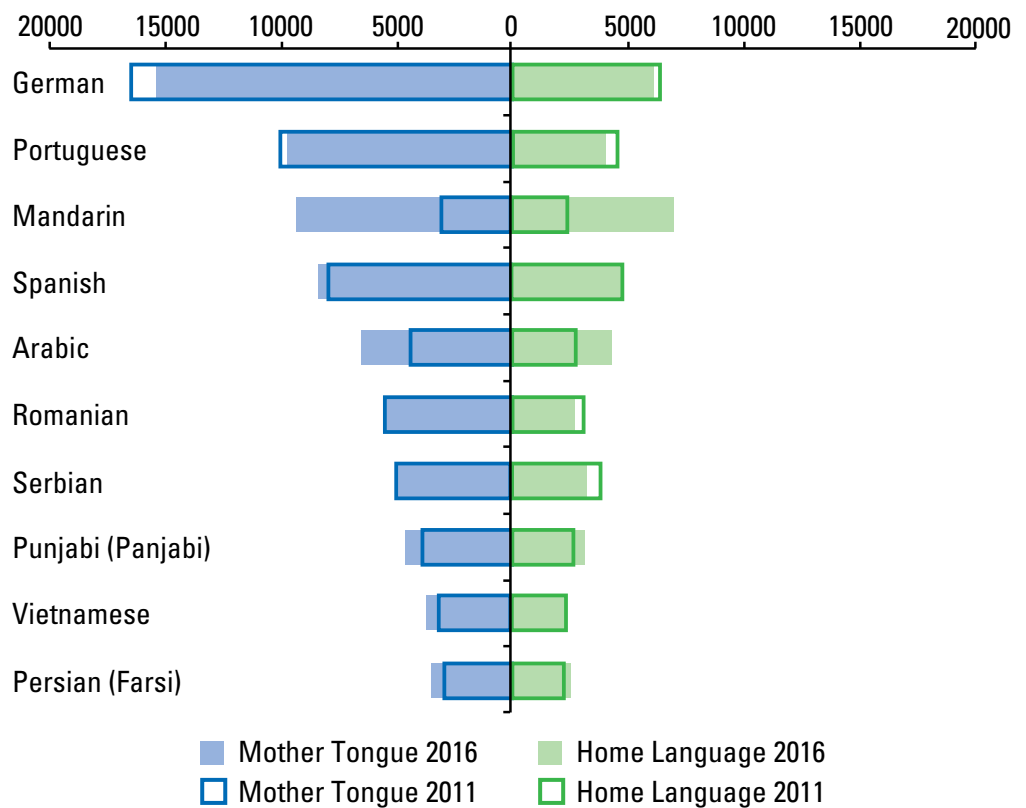
Languages spoken at home

In general, an individual's mother tongue will not necessarily be the same as the language spoken most often at home (Figure 2). Whether or not an individual's mother tongue is also their home language depends on several factors such as the amount of time passed since immigration (if applicable), and whether the individual is a first or second generation Canadian.

Less than half of the individuals with German or Portuguese mother tongues spoke these languages as their home language. However, for speakers of other languages, such as Farsi and Punjabi, an individual's mother tongue was much more likely to also be their home language. For example, seven out of ten individuals with Farsi as their mother tongue also spoke Farsi at home. These languages are more likely to represent newer waves of immigration compared to many European languages.

In Waterloo Region, 83.1 per cent of individuals spoke English as their primary home language, while the remaining proportion of the population spoke French (0.3 per cent), a language other than English or French (12.1 per cent), or a combination of English and a non-official language (4.2 per cent) (Table 2).

Figure 2: Mother tongue compared to home language in Waterloo Region, 2011 and 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2016 by Census Division

1 in 8 Waterloo Region residents speak a language other than English as their home language

Table 2: Languages most often spoken at home by municipality, 2016

Name	English Only		French Only		Non-Official Language Only		English and Non-Official Language Only	
	Count	Per cent of total	Count	Per cent of total	Count	Per cent of total	Count	Per cent of total
Waterloo Region	440,135	83.1%	1,660	0.3%	64,220	12.1%	22,260	4.2%
Cambridge	112,760	87.7%	385	0.3%	10,565	8.2%	4,590	3.6%
Kitchener	185,525	80.4%	815	0.4%	31,725	13.8%	11,995	5.2%
Waterloo	83,310	80.3%	345	0.3%	15,185	14.6%	4,735	4.6%
North Dumfries	9,830	96.3%	15	0.1%	225	2.2%	125	1.2%
Wellesley	7,820	69.4%	15	0.1%	3,265	29.0%	155	1.4%
Wilmot	19,675	96.7%	40	0.2%	410	2.0%	195	1%
Woolwich	21,210	86.3%	40	0.2%	2,850	11.6%	460	1.9%
Ontario	10,328,680	77.6%	277,045	2.1%	1,916,315	14.4%	719,590	5.4%
Canada	22,162,870	63.7%	6,943,800	20.0%	3,997,195	11.5%	1,284,975	3.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2016 by Census Subdivision

In 2016, Mandarin replaced German as the most common home language after English. Between 2011 and 2016, Mandarin rose from being the ninth most spoken home language to being the first. This change indicates the rapid growth of Mandarin speakers over this five year period. Seven out of 10 individuals who spoke Mandarin regularly at home lived in the City of Waterloo.

The proportion of the population that speaks a language other than English

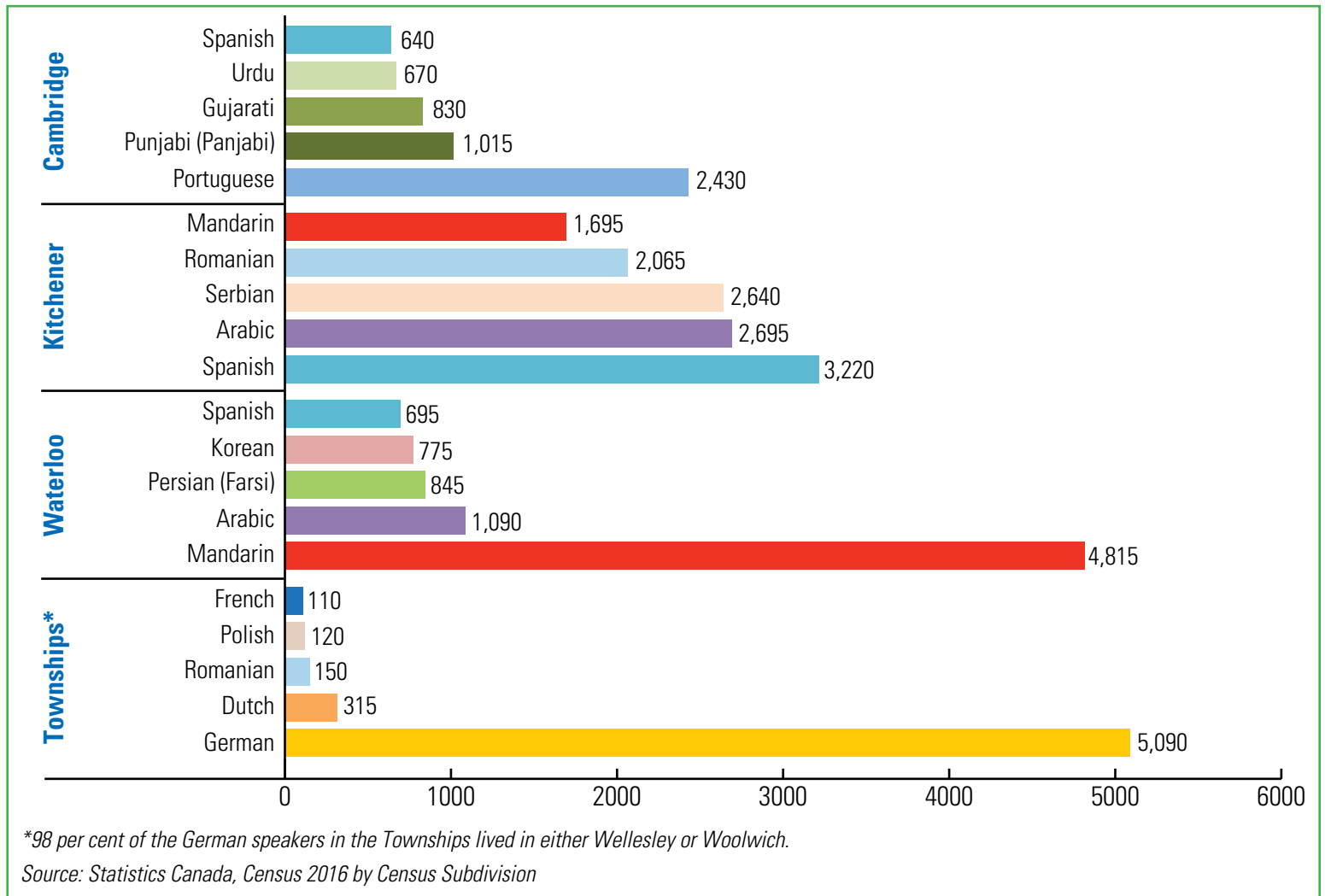
regularly at home varies widely from municipality to municipality (Table 2). In Wellesley Township, 29 per cent of the population spoke a language other than English or French as their home language, while in Kitchener and Waterloo, this number was closer to 14 per cent. For Cambridge and Woolwich, eight per cent and 12 per cent of the population respectively spoke a language that was not English at home. In the townships of North Dumfries and

Wilmot, a very small proportion of the population (two per cent) did not speak English as their home language.

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In 2016, **Mandarin replaced German** as the most common home language after English

Figure 3: Waterloo Region's top home languages (other than English) by municipality, 2016



After English, the most common home languages were different in Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge (Figure 3). While in Waterloo, Mandarin was the most common home language with 4,815 speakers; in Kitchener, it was Spanish with 3,220 speakers; and in Cambridge,

there were 2,430 individuals with Portuguese as their home language. German continues to be widely spoken in the region and was the third most common home language, representing 6,170 residents. Eight out of ten individuals who spoke German as their

home language lived in Wellesley and Woolwich, a reflection of the area's large Mennonite population. There were 690 people in North Dumfries and Wilmot who primarily spoke a language other than English at home.

Knowledge of Official Languages

In Waterloo Region, 98.2 per cent of the population had a working knowledge of at least one of Canada's official languages (Table 4). Compared to the provincial and national levels, Waterloo Region had a higher percentage of people with knowledge of at least one of the official languages.

In total, 9,300 individuals or 1.8 per cent of the region's overall population

had no knowledge of English or French. Amongst the adult population, these numbers were highest for those over 75, where 6.4 per cent of the population in this demographic did not speak an official language.

Out of Waterloo Region's total population, 6.5 per cent were bilingual in English and French.

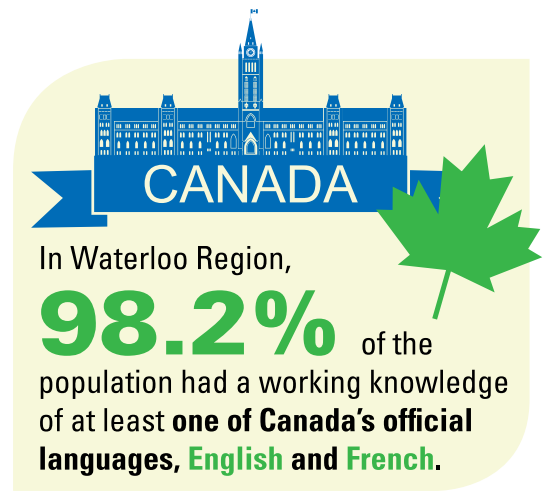


Table 4: Knowledge of official languages in Waterloo Region, 2016

Name	English only		French only		English and French		Neither English nor French	
	Number	Per cent of total	Number	Per cent of total	Number	Per cent of total	Number	Per cent of total
Waterloo Region	485,285	91.7%	215	0.0%	34,620	6.5%	9,300	1.8%
Cambridge	119,370	92.8%	35	0.0%	7,135	5.5%	2,060	1.6%
Kitchener	210,895	91.4%	130	0.1%	14,895	6.5%	4,725	2.0%
Waterloo	92,425	89.1%	40	0.0%	9,660	9.3%	1,660	1.6%
North Dumfries	9,675	94.8%	0	0.0%	495	4.9%	40	0.4%
Wellesley	10,460	92.9%	5	0.0%	355	3.2%	435	3.9%
Wilmot	19,280	94.8%	5	0.0%	1,010	5.0%	45	0.2%
Woolwich	23,175	94.3%	0	0.0%	1,065	4.3%	340	1.4%
<i>Ontario</i>	11,455,495	86.0%	40,040	0.3%	1,490,395	11.2%	326,935	2.5%
<i>Canada</i>	23,757,525	68.3%	4,144,685	11.9%	6,216,070	17.9%	648,970	1.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2016 by Census Subdivision

Census facts

- The term Census in this document refers to the Census of Canada conducted by Statistics Canada every five years. The most recent Census was conducted on May 10, 2016.
- All Canadians are required to complete a Census form. Language data presented in this bulletin is based on a complete sample of the population.

Definitions

Mother tongue: refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data was collected.

Home language: refers to the language the person speaks most often at home at the time of data collection.

Official languages: In Canada, official languages refer to French and English

Non-official languages: Non-official languages include both immigrant languages and Aboriginal languages. For a further description of Aboriginal languages spoken in Waterloo Region, please see Census Bulletin #7.

For further information please contact:



Region of Waterloo
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