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2021 Census Fact Sheets

Updated content for the 2021 Census of Population: Immigration, ethnocultural diversity and languages in Canada

2021 Census of Population

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Updated content for the 2021 Census of Population: Immigration, ethnocultural diversity and languages in Canada

The census is the country's storyteller. Through good and difficult times, the census has been providing a detailed picture of Canada's changing mosaic—giving Canadians facts on where we came from, to where we are, and guiding decisions on where we want to be. To respond to the country's needs and write the next chapter of Canadians' data foundation, Statistics Canada conducted country-wide engagements. We also conducted a census test with over 135,000 households to determine whether new or revised questions under consideration can be easily understood and correctly answered. We listened to Canadians, because we know that this is about your census, your community, your future.

This series of fact sheets provides an overview of the changes in content for the 2021 Census of Population, as the census process is ever changing to reflect changes in the Canadian population and its demographic characteristics.

This fact sheet covers the theme of immigration, ethnocultural diversity and languages in Canada. This theme encompasses census content from the following topics: immigration and citizenship, place of birth of person/parents, ethnic or cultural origins, population groups, religion, language, and minority language educational rights.

For information on the broad social trends related to the specific topics within this theme, please see the respective sections below.



Immigration and citizenship

Why are these questions asked?

The citizenship question provides information on the legal citizenship status of Canada's population and the number of people who hold more than one citizenship. A question on citizenship has been included in the census since 1901.

The immigration variables provide information on the number of immigrants and non-permanent residents in Canada, as well as on the year in which immigrants were admitted to Canada. Additional variables such as immigrant admission category and applicant type provide information on the conditions under which immigrants have been granted the right to live in Canada (e.g., refugees, economic immigrants, immigrants sponsored by family).

Information on immigration and citizenship is required by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), as well as by provincial and territorial immigration departments, to develop and monitor immigration policies and programs. It is also used in support of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the *Citizenship Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

Current trends and data gaps on this topic

According to the 2016 Census, there were more than 7.5 million foreign-born individuals who came to Canada through the immigration process, representing over one-fifth (21.9%) of Canada's total population. Based on Statistics Canada's population projections from 2017, this proportion could reach between 24.5% and 30.0% by 2036.

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high-quality data, content changes were proposed for the immigration and citizenship questions for the 2021 Census.

The growth of the immigrant population and changes in source countries of immigration over the decades have led to greater diversification of the Canadian population's ethnocultural characteristics and the revised questions will better measure this growing diversity by providing a more accurate portrait of the immigration and citizenship data (e.g., a clearer question on citizenship and increased use of administrative data).

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met. Specifically, Statistics Canada has consulted with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, as well as various academics.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing and a feasibility study, Statistics Canada has modified the wording and format of the citizenship question. In addition, immigrant status and year of immigration information will be obtained from IRCC's administrative records.



Changes considered and tested successfully

Some inconsistencies in the responses to the questions on citizenship and immigration were observed in the 2016 Census, as well as in past censuses. These inconsistencies, which indicated a misunderstanding of the differences between immigrant status and Canadian citizenship status, were addressed before results were disseminated, but they required additional processing. For more detailed information on the data quality of these variables in 2016, please refer to [Place of Birth, Generation Status, Citizenship and Immigration Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016](#).

Resulting approach for 2021

In 2021, the citizenship question will change from a single question (with a “select all that apply” format) to a two-part question to clarify the main concepts being measured and improve data quality:

- Part A now asks whether this person is a Canadian citizen (by birth or by naturalization) or not a Canadian citizen.
- Part B asks whether this person is a citizen of a country other than Canada. If they answer yes, the question then asks them to specify the country of citizenship other than Canada.

In 2021, the questions on immigrant status and year of immigration will no longer be asked on the questionnaire. This information, along with immigrant admission category and applicant type, will be obtained from administrative immigration records to reduce response burden and improve data quality.

What to expect in 2021

In the 2021 Census, information on immigrant status and year of immigration will be replaced with administrative immigration data. The results of an extensive feasibility study indicated that key measures, such as immigrant status and period of immigration, would be comparable with previous census data. However, there will be some differences for specific single years of immigration. These differences are the result of improved data quality for the year of immigration variable, as the data are more reflective of the concept measured.

Statistics Canada will continue to obtain information on immigrant admission category and applicant type from administrative immigration data in 2021.

For the citizenship question, the results of the 2019 Census Test indicated that the updated version for 2021 produces similar results to those of the 2016 Census question for key measures such as Canadian citizenship status. The new format of the two-part citizenship question showed an increase in the number of responses for people who hold more than one citizenship, particularly for people who hold Canadian citizenship (by birth or by naturalization) and citizenship from a country other than Canada. This indicates improved data quality for multiple citizenships.



Place of birth of person/parents

Why are these questions asked?

The question on the place of birth of person is used to determine the Canadian province or territory or the country outside Canada in which the respondent was born. It provides information on the diversity of the Canadian population and on population movements within Canada and from other countries to Canada.

The question on the place of birth of parents is used to determine the country in which each of the respondent's parents was born. The main purpose of this question is to derive the generation status of the respondent (whether the person or their parents were born in Canada) and establish whether the person is in the first, second, or third generation or more. Generation status provides information on the diversity of Canada's population and makes it possible to study how the children of immigrants (second generation) are integrating into Canadian society.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

The growth of the immigrant population and changes in source countries of immigration over the decades have led to greater diversification of the Canadian population's ethnocultural characteristics. According to the 2016 Census, close to 2.2 million children under the age of 15 living in private households were born outside Canada (first generation) or had at least one parent born outside Canada (second generation). This corresponds to 37.5% of the total population of Canadian children. If current immigration trends continue, this population could represent between 39.3% and 49.1% of the entire population of children aged 15 and under living in Canada in 2036, according to Statistics Canada's population projections from 2017.

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high quality data for key statistics such as generation status, Statistics Canada has modified the wording and format of the question on the place of birth of parents for the 2021 Census. The version of this question for the 2021 Census will refer to the place of birth of each "parent," rather than the place of birth of the "mother" and "father." This is to make the question better reflect all possible current family arrangements.

No changes were made to the wording of the question on the place of birth of person for 2021 to maintain data quality and historical comparability.

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met. Specifically, Statistics Canada has consulted with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, as well as various academics, and the changes are also aligned with the recommendations from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing, 2015.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has modified the wording and format of the question on the place of birth of parents. No changes were made to the wording of the question on the place of birth of person for 2021.



Changes considered and tested successfully

For the question on place of birth of parents, concerns were raised that the wording of the question on the place of birth of the mother and father was not inclusive for all family types (e.g., same-sex couples, multiple parents).

Resulting approach for 2021

The version of this question for the 2021 Census will no longer include the terms “father” and “mother” to make the question more inclusive of different family types and reduce response burden.

The question now asks whether this person’s parents were

- all born in Canada
- all born outside Canada
- born in Canada and outside Canada

The respondent is then asked to specify the country of birth outside Canada, if applicable.

No changes were considered to the wording of the question on the place of birth of person for 2021.

The question on place of birth of person will return in 2021 with minor changes to the electronic questionnaire format.

What to expect in 2021

For the question on place of birth of parents, the results of the 2019 Census Test indicate that the updated version for 2021 produces similar results to those of the 2016 Census question for key measures such as generation status.

The question on place of birth of person will return for 2021 with no changes that will affect historical comparability.



Ethnic or cultural origins

Why is this question asked?

A question on ethnic or cultural origins has been included on the Census of Population since 1871. Furthermore, a question on this topic was asked in censuses even prior to Confederation, reflecting a long-standing, continuing and widespread demand for information on the ethnic and cultural diversity of the population.

Today, this information is used to support federal legislation, policies and programs such as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Governments, businesses, academics, researchers, and ethnic and cultural associations throughout the country also use this information to plan products and services.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high quality data, Statistics Canada has modified the wording and format of the question on ethnic or cultural origins. Canada is an increasingly diverse country and the revised question will better measure this growing diversity and remove the influence on responses, including only a small number of examples of ethnic or cultural origins on the questionnaire.

The revised question will not include any examples directly on the questionnaire, but instead will include a link to a list of over 500 examples of ethnic or cultural origins. This extensive list of examples will help respondents answer the question without prompting them to report the origins that had previously been included on the questionnaire.

These changes have been carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve the relevance and overall quality of the data on ethnic or cultural origins, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations, testing and analysis of past census results, Statistics Canada has modified the wording and format of the question on ethnic or cultural origins.



Changes considered and tested successfully

As stated in the [Technical report on changes in response related to the census ethnic origin question: Focus on Jewish origins, 2016 Census integrated with 2011 National Household Survey](#), there is evidence that providing examples as part of the question has influenced results over time.

Resulting approach for 2021

To address the limitations associated with the question asked in 2016 and better reflect Canada's growing diversity, for the 2021 Census, examples will be removed from the questionnaire to eliminate their effect on responses. Instead, to help respondents understand the question, a description of types of origins will be provided, along with a link to an extensive list of examples of ethnic and cultural origins. This list will provide more detail and diversity than what was disseminated in the past.

This new approach for 2021 will

- **encourage Canadians to self-identify without promoting specific responses:** the revised ethnic origin question allows respondents to report their origins without the influence of examples listed on the questionnaire, resulting in better-quality data that are more representative of the population
- **better reflect Canada's growing diversity:** respondents will be offered a much more extensive and diverse list of examples for self-identifying their ethnic and cultural origins.

What to expect in 2021

The results of the 2019 Census Test were in line with the findings of the [Technical report on changes in response related to the census ethnic origin question: Focus on Jewish origins, 2016 Census integrated with 2011 National Household Survey](#)—listing examples in the question itself has a significant prompt effect. This was generally the case for origins tested as examples, including for Canadian origins. The 2021 Census question will not contain examples in the question, but will include a linked extensive list of examples and an explanation of types of responses. Origins will be treated equivalently instead of providing benefits to a selection used as examples at the expense of those not used as examples. This yielded more varied responses and avoided the example-introduced bias that was found in the versions with examples in the question.

As a result, the updated version for 2021 will produce results that are not comparable with those of the 2016 question for many ethnic and cultural origins. Particularly affected are origins that were included in the list of 28 examples included directly on the questionnaire in 2016 (e.g., Canadian), which will now be included as part of a much more extensive list of examples of ethnic and cultural origins.

To better reflect the more diverse range of responses expected in 2021, a greater number of origins will be disseminated for the 2021 Census.

For more information on ethnic or cultural origins, including the results of the 2019 Census Test, please refer to [Ethnic or cultural origins: Technical report on the changes to the 2021 Census](#).



Population groups

Why is this question asked?

The primary purpose of the population group question on the census is to derive counts for the visible minority population. “Visible minority” refers to whether a person is designated as belonging to the visible minority population, as defined by the *Employment Equity Act*, and, if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs.

Data on Canada’s visible minority population are used by governments, businesses, community groups, health care providers, researchers and a variety of organizations throughout the country to ensure equal opportunity for everyone. Data on the visible minority population can be used by employers to compare the characteristics of their workforce with the characteristics of the population living in the same area.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

Canada is an increasingly diverse country—data from the 2016 Census indicated that 22.3% of the population were designated as belonging to one or more visible minority groups. Through population projections from 2017, Statistics Canada projects that this percentage would rise to between 31.2% and 35.9% by 2036.

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high quality data, Statistics Canada will continue to use the same wording for the question on population group in the 2021 Census as was used in the 2016 Census. This will allow for the visible minority population to be derived in accordance with the *Employment Equity Act*, thereby maintaining data quality and historical comparability.

However, in response to user feedback regarding the sensitivity and appropriateness of the term “visible minority” and the level of data disaggregation in disseminated data tables and analytical products, Statistics Canada will continue to explore alternative ways to measure various population groups. For the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada will continue to work with data users to develop alternative ways to present the data to better reflect the diversity between and within these groups.

This approach has been discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve the relevance, historical comparability and overall quality of the data on the population designated as visible minorities, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met. Specifically, Statistics Canada has relied on the advice of the Advisory Committee on Ethnocultural and Immigration Statistics, and will continue to rely on their advice as changes to the question on population groups are considered for the 2026 Census.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada will use the same wording for the question on population group in the 2021 Census as was used in the 2016 Census. This will allow for the visible minority population to be derived in accordance with the *Employment Equity Act*, thereby maintaining data quality and historical comparability.



Changes considered and tested successfully

Concerns have been raised that response categories in the question on population group may be too broad and may not reflect the socioeconomic disparities and issues experienced between groups or within the groups themselves.

In addition, concerns have been raised regarding the sensitivity and appropriateness of the term “visible minority” and regarding the level of data disaggregation in disseminated data tables and analytical products.

Resulting approach for 2021

The primary purpose of the question on population group is to derive counts for the visible minority population. To support the implementation of the *Employment Equity Act*, the wording of the question on population group for the 2021 Census will be identical to the wording used in the 2016 Census.

However, Statistics Canada will continue to explore alternative ways to measure various population groups. For the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada will continue to work with data users to develop alternative ways to present the data to better reflect the diversity between and within these groups.

What to expect in 2021

The 2021 Census will use the same wording for the question on population group as was used in the 2016 Census, thereby maintaining historical comparability.



Religion

Why is this question asked?

A question on religion has been included on the decennial Census of Population since 1871, reflecting a long-standing, continuing and widespread demand for information about religious affiliation and diversity in Canada.

Information on the religion of the population is commonly used by governments, as well as by religious groups, denominations and associations across the country. For example, it is used to assess the need and potential for separate religious schools in some provinces.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high-quality data, Statistics Canada has modified the format of the question on religion. Canada is an increasingly diverse country and the revised question will better measure the growing religious diversity in the country.

The revised question will include the same examples of religions and denominations on the questionnaire as had been included in 2011. However, the question will also include a link to a list of over 200 examples of religions and denominations. This approach will help respondents answer the question while encouraging them to provide more detailed responses than in previous censuses. As a result, a much greater number of religions and denominations will be disseminated for the 2021 Census.

These changes have been carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve the relevance and overall quality of the data on religion, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has modified the wording and format of the question on religion.

Changes considered and tested successfully

Concerns were raised about how the examples used in the religion question influenced responses, particularly for non-Christian religions (e.g., Judaism, Islam), as the lack of any denomination-level examples can lead respondents to report these religions rather than more specific denominations or schools of thought within them (e.g., Orthodox Judaism, Sunni Muslim).

Resulting approach for 2021

The 2021 Census will include a modified question on religion to encourage Canadians to provide more detailed responses.

Examples of religions and denominations will continue to be listed directly on the questionnaire. However, a link to an extensive list of examples of religions and denominations will also be included. This list will expand considerably on what was disseminated in past censuses to prompt respondents to provide more detail and more accurately reflect the diversity within the different religions in Canada..



What to expect in 2021

For the question on religion, the results of the 2019 Census Test indicate that the updated version for 2021 produces similar results to those of the 2011 question for the main religions (e.g., Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism) and for broader Christian denominations (e.g., Anglican, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, United Church).

As indicated, examples of religions and denominations will continue to be listed directly on the questionnaire. Without these examples, the 2019 Census Content Test found that many members of Christian denominations in particular reported more general responses, such as Christian. Therefore, removing these examples would make the data less useful for many users.

In addition, a link to an extensive list of religions and denominations encouraged many respondents to be more specific. For example, after reviewing this extensive list of examples, respondents with non-Christian religions were more likely to provide a more detailed response (e.g., Sunni Muslim rather than Muslim or Orthodox Jewish rather than Jewish). Similarly, respondents affiliated with a Christian denomination were more likely to provide a more detailed response (e.g., Anglican Church of Canada rather than Anglican).

Since the updated religion question for 2021 encourages respondents to provide more specific responses, a much greater number of religions and denominations will be disseminated. However, users will still be able to produce counts comparable with those from 2011 by summing the counts for the more detailed 2021 categories to recreate the broader religion or denomination-level categories of 2011.



Language

Why are these questions asked?

Questions on language (knowledge of official languages, home language, mother tongue, knowledge of non-official languages and language of work) provide a portrait of different aspects of languages in Canada. This information is notably used to

- estimate the need for services in English and French
- determine the rate of English–French bilingualism
- provide important information on the use of languages in and outside the home
- better understand the current state and evolution of Canada’s various languages—including official languages, Indigenous languages and immigrant languages.

This information is critical for many data users, such as governments (federal, provincial, territorial and municipal) and organizations that represent official language minority communities. The statistics gathered from these questions are also used to support legislation (e.g., parts IV and VII of the Official Languages Act, paragraph 23(1) a of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and Quebec’s *Charte de la langue française*).

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

Canada is a diverse country, linguistically, as evidenced from 2016 Census data. For example, 19.4% of the population speaks more than one language at home. To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high-quality data, content changes to the home language and language of work questions were proposed for the 2021 Census. These changes alleviate response burden and improve the quality of the data on the growing number of Canadians reporting more than one language.

As well, in response to the recommendations in a report tabled in May 2017 by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages (the Committee), variants of the question on mother tongue were developed and tested. The purpose of these variants was to convey to respondents that they could provide more than one “first language learned and still understood,” and an explanation of when more than one response should be provided (i.e., when the languages were learned at the same time). Since the Committee report implies that the current question on mother tongue may underestimate the size of the population with French as their mother tongue in Canada outside Quebec, the data obtained examined to what extent different variants of the question produce different estimates of this population.

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met. Statistics Canada created the Advisory Committee on Language Statistics, composed of language subject matter experts. Its role is to advise Statistics Canada on the concepts, methods, issues and challenges related to the agency’s Language Statistics Program, including emerging linguistic diversity. The committee members met a number of times in 2018 and 2019 to support Statistics Canada and provide advice on these complex issues.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has modified the wording and format of the questions on languages spoken at home and languages used at work. Changes to the mother tongue question were also tested..



Changes considered and tested successfully

Changes were considered to the home language and language of work questions to alleviate response burden and improve the quality of the data on the growing number of Canadians reporting more than one language..

Following recommendations made in the report on minority language rights-holders tabled in 2017 by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, two alternative versions of the question on the language first learned at home in childhood and still understood (mother tongue) were tested and considered.

Resulting approach for 2021

The order of presentation of the two parts of the home language question is reversed for 2021—the first part of the question will ask for all languages spoken regularly at home by the respondent. Those who report more than one language in the first part of the question will proceed to the second part on the language they speak most often at home. Despite this change to the question, the concepts being measured remain the same. The same change applies to the question on languages used at work.

Results from the 2019 Census Test revealed no clear statistical improvement in data quality when the alternative questions were used, nor was there a statistically significant change in the overall number of people reporting the minority official language as a mother tongue. Following discussions with Statistics Canada's Advisory Committee on Language Statistics and given that historical comparability could be affected, the 2016 mother tongue question is returning for 2021

What to expect in 2021

The 2021 Census questions on knowledge of official languages, mother tongue and knowledge of languages other than English or French will be asked as they were in the 2016 Census. For the 2021 Census, the home language and work language questions have been revised to reduce response burden and improve the data quality of responses of more than one language.



Minority language educational rights

Having high-quality information on minority language rights-holders in Canada is important to ensure the vitality of official language minority communities. A rights-holder is a person who can exercise their constitutional right to enroll their child in an official language minority school in Canada, namely an English-language school in Quebec or a French-language school in Canada outside Quebec.

Statistics Canada has conducted extensive qualitative and quantitative testing in collaboration with an expert Advisory Committee on Language Statistics to determine how to best measure minority language rights-holders' children in a way that provides information for minority rights-holders to exercise their rights to education in the minority language.

The purpose of adding questions about education in the minority official language at the primary and secondary levels is to determine the number of children of rights-holders under the three criteria set out in section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*: the parent's mother tongue, the parent's language of instruction, and the siblings' language of instruction.

The new questions, along with the existing question about mother tongue and information on the relationships between the members of the same household, will help to measure the number of children of rights-holders and consequently support the English and French educational programs in various regions of Canada.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

The availability of quality statistical evidence plays a key role in planning public services in Canada, such as school infrastructure and teaching services in the minority official language. In late 2016, various representatives of associations, school boards and official language minority communities (OLMCs) asked the Government of Canada and Statistics Canada to add questions to the 2021 Census to assess the needs of education in the minority language for OLMCs, and particularly to enumerate the children of rights-holders as per section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Statistics Canada made a commitment to use its scientific expertise to find the most appropriate method to collect these data on scientific and professional bases, including an in-depth evaluation of the potential and limitations of the various collection methods. The agency also committed to adequately and quickly respond to the need for accurate, high-quality data on children of rights-holders under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Approach for the 2021 Census

Over the past three years, Statistics Canada has worked with a number of key partners, including Canadian Heritage and an advisory committee on language statistics and on rights-holders, to determine the best way to measure the number of children of rights-holders in Canada

To produce quality data on the three above-mentioned criteria under section 23 of the Charter, Statistics Canada adopted a five-part approach:

1. Statistics Canada, in cooperation with expert advisors, developed five¹ questions and tested them to assess their quality. Subsequently, due to the conveyed complexity of the questions, and to facilitate a better understanding of them, Statistics Canada modified their wording and format.

1. Not all respondents are asked the five questions: Quebec residents may have a maximum of two questions to answer, while Canadians living in another province or territory may have a maximum of three questions to answer. Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents must answer only one question on the electronic questionnaire and two questions on the paper copy.



2. Statistics Canada conducted a statistical analysis of the 2019 Census Test data on the estimated number of children of rights-holders in order to check whether the results were statistically different based on the location of the questions (placed in two test panels) in the short- and long-form questionnaires, right after the existing series of questions on language or just preceding the questions on education.
3. Statistics Canada compared the results of the 2019 Census Test with provincial and territorial administrative data on annual enrolment in minority language schools.
4. Given that the 2019 Census Content Test (additional information can be found in [2019 Census Content Test: Design and Methodology](#)) was based on a sample of more than 135,000 households, Statistics Canada used data on mother tongue and language spoken at home from the 2016 Census long and short forms to determine whether the estimates from the long form (25% of households) were statistically different from the estimates produced by combining the data from the short and long forms (100% of households) for very small communities and small towns (municipalities).
5. Statistics Canada did an assessment to determine whether the census, combined with additional data sources (such as a postcensal survey and administrative data), could provide a more detailed, comprehensive data set and portrait to meet the needs of minority language users and communities

Changes considered and tested successfully

Data gap identified on the enumeration of children of rights-holder parents under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Resulting approach for 2021

Addition of five questions (briefly described below) to the Census of Population questionnaire, the responses to which will be combined with the responses to the questions on mother tongue and family structure:

1. Primary or secondary instruction in French
2. Type of program attended
3. Number of years of instruction
4. Primary or secondary studies in an English-language school
5. Number of years of instruction

What to expect in 2021

For the first time, the 2021 Census of Population will collect data on the children of rights-holders, as per all three criteria set out in section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The outcome of the consultations with the Advisory Committee on Language Statistics, the results of the qualitative and quantitative census tests, and the additional analyses conducted confirm that the census will provide quality data on the children of rights-holders at various geographic levels (e.g., provinces, municipalities and school catchment areas). These additional five questions will help to build the most detailed and comprehensive database to date on the children of rights-holders, and thereby provide Canadians with useful data for exercising their right to education in the minority language. For more information on the right to education in the minority language, including the results of the 2019 Census Content Test, please see [Minority language educational rights: Technical report on the changes to the 2021 Census](#).

Census data are believed to be one of the key aspects of a three-point strategy developed by Statistics Canada to create a data ecosystem about children of rights-holders in Canada. Through its statistical methodology and various data sources, and with the cooperation and commitment of Canadian Heritage, Statistics Canada could therefore provide the three data sets, as defined and required by the Court. Those sets comprise 1) an upper limit, or the total number of eligible children at the municipal level (census subdivisions) in accordance with criteria 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b) and 23(2) of the Charter; 2) the lower limit, or the number of children of rights-holders currently enrolled in a minority language school, obtained from administrative data from the provinces and territories; and lastly, 3) the number of rights-holder parents who are or would like to exercise their constitutional right to enroll their child in a minority school, obtained from a postcensal survey on official language minorities.



Additional information

The content of the 2021 Census questionnaire is the result of extensive engagement, discussions and testing, including comprehensive one-on-one interviews and a rigorous 2019 Census Test involving more than 135,000 households across Canada. Additional information on this can be found in the [2019 Census Content Test: Design and methodology](#) fact sheet.

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met.

For more information on the right to education in the minority language, including the results of the 2019 Census Content Test, please see [Minority language educational rights: Technical report on the changes to the 2021 Census](#).

For more information on ethnic or cultural origins, including the results of the 2019 Census Test, please refer to [Ethnic or cultural origins: Technical report](#) on the changes to the 2021 Census.

For further information on new and modified content, as well as a description of content that was tested but did not proceed to the 2021 Census questionnaire, see [Painting a Portrait of Canada: The 2021 Census of Population](#).