

Site for Language Management in Canada

Native Languages

Number of Languages

For various reasons, it is difficult to know exactly how many aboriginal languages there are in Canada. Many natives speak English and French as a mother tongue, while others speak both an aboriginal and an official language. Others have only a passing knowledge of their ancestral language, while some minor languages are becoming or are already extinct. In addition, some natives do not participate in federal censuses, and the variety of dialects greatly complicates any classification.

Research has shown that there are between 56 and 70 aboriginal languages in Canada. An American non-governmental organization called *Ethnologue*, based in Dallas at the Summer Institute of Linguistics, lists 63 languages for Canada:

Language	Speakers	Family	Location
Algonquin	2,275	Algonquian	Quebec, Ontario
Assiniboine	200	Sioux	Saskatchewan
Atikamek	3,995	Algonquian	Quebec
Babine	1,600	Na-Dene	British Columbia
Bella Coola	200	Salishan	British Columbia
Blackfoot	4,745	Algonquian	Alberta
Carrier	2,000	Na-Dene	British Columbia
Cayuga	360	Iroquoian	Ontario
Chilcotin	705	Na-Dene	British Columbia
Chipewyan (Dene)	4,000	Na-Dene	AB, SK, MB, NT
Comox	400	Salishan	British Columbia
Western Cree	4,500	Algonquian	Ontario
Northeastern Cree	5,308	Algonquian	Quebec
Plains Cree	34,000	Algonquian	AB, SK, MB
Southeastern Cree	7,306	Algonquian	Quebec
Swampy Cree	4,500	Algonquian	Ontario
Dakota (Sioux)	2,085	Na-Dene	Northwest Territories
Dogrib	2,085	Na-Dene	Northwest Territories
Halkomelem	200	Salishan	British Columbia
Heiltsuk	300	Wakashane	British Columbia
Eastern Inuktitut	14,000	Eskimo-Aleut	Quebec, Labrador
Western Inuktitut	4,000	Eskimo-Aleut	Nunavut
Kaska	400	Na-Dene	British Columbia
Kutenai	120	Isolat	British Columbia
Kwakiutl	250	Wakashane	British Columbia
Lillooet	400	Salishan	British Columbia

Loucheux (Gwich'in)	430	Na-Dene	Northwest Territories
Malecite	655	Algonquian	Quebec, NB
Micmac	7,310	Algonquian	QC, NB, NS, PE, NL
Mohawk	350	Iroquoian	Ontario, Quebec
Montagnais (Innu)	8,483	Algonquian	Quebec, Labrador
Naskapi	1,177	Algonquian	Quebec, Labrador
Niska	2,000	Penutian	British Columbia
Nootka	590	Wakashane	British Columbia
Northern Ojibway (Oji-Cree)	8,000	Algonquian	Manitoba, Ontario
Ojibway (Saulteux)	35,000	Algonquian	BC, Saskatchewan
Okanagan	500	Salishan	British Columbia
Oneida	200	Iroquoian	Ontario
Onondaga	100	Iroquoian	Ontario
Sekani	500	Na-Dene	British Columbia
Shuswap	745	Salishan	British Columbia
North Slavey	290	Na-Dene	Northwest Territories
South Slavey	2,620	Na-Dene	Northwest Territories
Stoney (Nakota)	1,500	Sioux	Alberta
Thompson	595	Salishan	British Columbia
Tlingit	145	Na-Dene	BC, Yukon
Tsimshian	432	Penutian	British Columbia
Northern Tutchone	800	Na-Dene	Yukon
Southern Tutchone	1,000	Na-Dene	Yukon

It is also important to mention those languages on the verge of extinction:

- Abenaki: 20 speakers, Quebec
- Northern Haida: 30 speakers, BC
- Southern Haida: 10 speakers, BC
- Haisla: 25 speakers, BC
- Delaware: 8 speakers, Ontario
- Salish Straits: 30 speakers, BC
- Sarsi: 50 speakers, Alberta
- Sechelt: 40 speakers, BC
- Seneca: 25 speakers, Ontario
- Squamish: 20 speakers, BC
- Tagish: 2 speakers, BC
- Tahaltan: 40 speakers, Yukon
- Tanaha: 10 speakers, Yukon
- Tuscarora: 8 speakers, Ontario