

# [Were pierre trudeau policies effective for canada history essay](https://assignbuster.com/were-pierre-trudeau-policies-effective-for-canada-history-essay/)

Pierre Trudeau was one of the longest serving prime ministers in Canada, from 20 April 1968 to 4 June 1979, and from 3 March 1080 to 30 June 1984. His personal motto was “ Reason before passion”. Trudeau has truly left a mark on Canada as one of the most well known politicians of his time. With a sense of Justice, he led Canada through difficult periods in Canadian history, and attracted attention and controversy. He had good intentions, and his policies were overall effective for Canada because of changes in foreign policy, the implementation of the war measures and official languages act, and patriation of the constitution.

One of Trudeau’s most effective policies was his foreign policy, where he dealt with the wide and changing world. There were many changes in the world from the 1960s to the 1980s, such as the United States becoming the top ranked economic power. China also became a great power, and in 1968, he proclaimed Canada’s willingness to recognize the people’s republic of China, and strengthened their relations. Trudeau realized the diversity of the globe, and wanted Canada to open its eyes to the opportunities and problems of the third world.

He did not care about the cold war alliance status, and was horrified by the illogic and danger of nuclear weapons. Trudeau noted that most of the past foreign policies were based on the cold war, and a re-assessment was needed. In 1969, he withdrew half of the Canadian forces from NATO. In addition, defence spending was stopped, and more money was used for Canada’s development. Finally, in 1984, the Canadian military was denuclearized.

By calling for a foreign policy independent of the United States, a stronger Canadian identity emerged, and Canada was made less dependant on the United States. Trudeau attempted to improve commercial relations with Europe, and diversity trade. As a result, average tariff was decreased from 16 percent in 1968, to 4 to 5 percent in 1987. In 1983, when cold war tensions rose between the United States and the Soviet Union, Trudeau set out on his Global Peace initiative, to try to reduce the level of hostility between the two countries, and promote understanding. He also supported dialogue between the wealthy and poor nations. Overall, Canada’s trade with the world was diversified, military spending decreased, and Canada’s culture was protected from the pull of the American entertainment industry.

The Official Languages act was one of the post important bills passed in Canadian history. There was a lot of discontent between French Quebec and English Canada. Passed in 1969, this act allowed civil servants to speak in either French or English at work. Equality was given in all operations of Canadian federal institutions. This was necessary, so that the rights of Franco-phones were protected. Trudeau’s vision was to see Canada as a confederation where all cultures would have a place.

This decreased the unfriendliness felt by most French speaking Quebeckers toward Ottawa, because of the increased number of federal members of Parliament and Cabinet ministers from Quebec.

During the Trudeau years, there was much discussion on the patriation of the constitution, an amending formula, language rights, and social policy. After Pierre Trudeau regained power by the end of February 1980, after being defeated in the spring of 1979, a battle started between Federalists and separatists. Trudeau and his Quebec members and ministers promised constitutional reform if the federalist forces won. Trudeau wanted the patriation of the Constitution, a charter of rights and freedoms that would protect the two official languages in Canada, and a strong federal government that could equalize opportunity in regions of Canada, and redistribute income.

Trudeau stated in the House of Commons on April 15, 1980, during the referendum campaign : “ The feeling of being a Canadian, that individual feeling which we must cultivate, the feeling of being loyal to something which is bigger than the province of the city in which we happen to live, must be based on a protection of the basic rights of the citizen, of an access by that citizen to a fair share of the abundance of wealth in this country and to the richness and diversity of its laws. In that sense, the nation interest must prevail over the regional interest…”

Pierre Trudeau strongly supported nationalism, and opposed the decentralization of the federal government. Faced with provincial demands for more power, he replied that they were out of the question and would proceed to repatriating the constitution without consent of the provinces. If more provinces wanted power, Canada would become more like 12 separated countries instead of one unified country.

Nine out of 10 provinces agreed on the patriation of the Constitution, the only holdout being Rene Levesque of Quebec. Canadians officially received the new constitution after the signing by Queen Elizabeth in April 1982. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was a significant bill of rights, was the first part of the Constitutional Act. It made Canada a fully independent nation. People were given fundamental freedoms, such as religion, belief, opinion, and expression, as well as the freedom of the press and other media. Even though these rights and freedoms were set in the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960, including them in a Charter of Rights in the Constitution would clarify and strengthen them.

Before the patriation, Canada was the only country in the world that did not control its own constitution. Even though Canada was a sovereign nation, we still had to ask London to make amendments to the constitution for us. Past prime ministers, such as king, Bennett, St-Laurent, and Diefenbaker failed, but Trudeau succeeded. This was extremely significant, because it set the foundations for Canada’s national identity.

Many Canadians disliked his policies, because they were considered biased toward Ontario and Quebec. For example, the National Energy Program was unpopular for western Canadians. The NEP program increased Canadian ownership in the oil industry, making Canada self-sufficient in oil. Ottawa kept the prices below world price. The NEP program increased Canadian ownership in the oil industry, making Canada self-sufficient in oil. Ottawa kept the prices below world price. The implementation of the war measures act was considered an attack on democracy. Many argue that during Trudeau’s term as prime minister, inflation and unemployment remained a big problem. Canada was left with a large debt, and increasing deficit. However, other western countries also had these trends.

After a walk in the snow in 1984, he decided to resign. Trudeau led a government guided by the desire to bring justice through equal opportunities. He worked for Canadian unity, and strengthened the sovereignty of the people. His policies were overall effectual for Canada, because of the changes to the foreign policy, various acts, and giving Canadians a constitution free of British guardianship.