

Canada- facts and figures essay



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Education in Canada

Education has two main goals: to give individuals the opportunity to develop themselves, and to provide society with the skills it needs to evolve in its best

interests. Canada's educational system is based on finding a coordinated approach

to the pursuit of these sometimes conflicting goals. Comprehensive, diversified, and

available to everyone, the system reflects the Canadian belief in the importance of

education.

Education in Canada consists of 10 provincial and two territorial systems, including

public schools, "separate" (i. e., denominational) schools, and private schools.

Children are required by law to attend school from the age of 6 or 7 until they are

15 or 16. To make it possible to fulfil this obligation, all non-private education through secondary (or "high") school is publicly funded. In Quebec, general and

vocational colleges (CEGEPs, or Colleges d'enseignement gnral et professionnel)

are also publicly funded and require only a minimal registration fee. Most other

post-secondary schools, however, charge tuition fees.

A provincial responsibility

Unlike many other industrialized countries, Canada has no federal educational

system: the Constitution vested the exclusive responsibility for education in the

provinces. Each provincial system, while similar to the others, reflects its particular

region, history, and culture. The provincial departments of education-headed by an

elected minister-set standards, draw up curriculums, and give grants to educational

institutions.

Responsibility for the administration of elementary and secondary schools is delegated to local elected school boards or commissions. The boards set budgets, hire

and negotiate with teachers, and shape school curriculums within provincial guidelines.

A broad federal role

The federal government plays an indirect but vital role in education. It provides

financial support for post-secondary education, labour market training, and the

teaching of the two official languages—especially second-language training. In

addition, it is responsible for the education of Aboriginals, armed forces personnel

and their dependants, and inmates of federal penal institutions. Overall, the federal

government pays over one-fifth of Canada's yearly educational bill.

One important part of this contribution is the Canada Student Loans Program,

which assists students who do not have sufficient resources to pursue their studies.

The program provides loan guarantees and, in the case of full-time students, interest

subsidies to help meet the cost of studies at the post-secondary level.

Provinces have

complementary programs of loans and bursaries.

Another federal initiative, scheduled to take effect in the year 2000, is

Canada

Millennium Scholarships. Through an initial endowment of \$2.5 billion, this

program will provide scholarships to more than 100,000 students each year

over 10

years. This represents the largest single investment the federal government

has ever

made in support of universal access to post-secondary education.

Scholarships will

average \$3,000 a year, and individuals can receive up to \$15,000 over a

maximum of

four academic years. These scholarships could halve the debt load that

recipients

would otherwise face.

Elementary and secondary schools

About five million children now attend public schools in Canada. In some

provinces,

children can enter kindergarten at the age of four before starting the elementary

grades at age six. General and fundamental, the elementary curriculum emphasizes

the basic subjects of language, math, social studies, introductory arts and science.

In general, high school programs consist of two streams. The first prepares students

for university, the second for post-secondary education at a community college or

institute of technology, or for the workplace. There are also special programs for

students unable to complete the conventional courses of study.

In most provinces, individual schools now set, conduct and mark their own examinations. In some provinces, however, students must pass a graduation examination in certain key subjects in order to proceed to the post-secondary level.

University entrance thus depends on course selection and marks in high school;

requirements vary from province to province.

Other schools

For parents seeking alternatives to the public system, there are separate as well as

private schools. Some provinces have legislation that permits the establishment of

separate schools by religious groups. Mostly Roman Catholic, separate schools,

which in 1995 accounted for about one-fourth of Canada's public school enrolment,

offer a complete parochial curriculum from kindergarten through the secondary

level in some provinces.

Private or independent schools have a current enrolment of over a quarter of a

million students, and offer a great variety of curriculum options based on religion,

language, or academic status.

Teacher training

Canada's elementary and secondary education systems employ close to 300,000

full-time teachers. Their professional training generally includes at least four or five

years of study (a Bachelor of Education degree normally requires university graduation plus one year of educational studies). Teachers are licensed by the

provincial departments of education.

Post-Secondary education

For most of Canada's history, post-secondary education was provided almost exclusively by its universities. These were mainly private institutions, many with a

religious affiliation. During the 1960s, however, as the demand for greater variety in

post-secondary education rose sharply and enrolment mushroomed, systems of

publicly operated post-secondary non-university institutions began to develop.

Today in Canada, some 200 technical institutes and community colleges complement

about 100 universities, attracting a total post-secondary enrolment of approximately

1 million. Student fees, owing to substantial government subsidies, account for only

about 11% of the cost of Canadian post-secondary education.

Canada's universities are internationally known for the quality of their teaching and

research. Examples include the neurological breakthroughs of Wilder Penfield at

McGill University and the discovery of insulin at the University of Toronto by

Frederick Banting, C. H. Best, J. J. R. Macleod, and J. B. Collip. Full-time enrolment

in Canadian universities stands at over half a million, with enrolments at individual

institutions ranging from less than a 1, 000 to over 35, 000. Women are well

represented in the universities: they receive more than half of all degrees conferred.

Canada's school system: a national asset

The Canadian belief in education is general and deep. And this belief is reflected in

a considerable financial commitment: Canada ranks among the world's leaders in

per capita spending on public education. Canada maintains this level of investment

because it continues to generate healthy returns. Almost everywhere, the quality of

education is directly related to the quality of life. In Canada, the high educational

level (almost half the population over the age of 15 now has some post-secondary

schooling) has proven to be a powerful contributor to the country's favourable

standard of living, its growth of opportunity, and its reputation as a place where

intellectual accomplishment is fostered and profitably pursued.

Canada

Canada's Landmass

Canada is the world's second-largest country (9 970 610 km²), surpassed only by the

Russian Federation.

Capital

Ottawa, in the province of Ontario.

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Provinces and Territories

Canada has 10 provinces and 3 territories, each with its own capital city (in brackets): Alberta (Edmonton); British Columbia (Victoria); Prince Edward Island (Charlottetown); Manitoba (Winnipeg); New Brunswick (Fredericton); Nova Scotia (Halifax); Nunavut (Iqaluit); Ontario (Toronto); Quebec (Quebec City); Saskatchewan (Regina); Newfoundland (St. John's); Northwest Territories (Yellowknife); and Yukon Territory (Whitehorse).

Geography

Diversity is the keynote of Canada's geography, which includes fertile plains suitable for agriculture, vast mountain ranges, lakes and rivers. Wilderness forests give way to Arctic tundra in the Far North.

Climate

There are many climatic variations in this huge country, ranging from the permanently frozen icecaps north of the 70th parallel to the luxuriant vegetation of

British Columbia's west coast. Canada's most populous regions, which lie in the

country's south along the U. S. border, enjoy four distinct seasons. Here daytime

summer temperatures can rise to 35C and higher, while lows of -25C are not uncommon in winter. More moderate temperatures are the norm in spring and fall.

Parks and Historic Sites

Canada maintains 38 national parks, which cover about 2% of the country's landmass. Banff, located on the eastern slopes of Alberta's Rocky Mountains, is the

oldest (est. 1885); Tuktut Nogait, in the Northwest Territories, was established in

1996. There are 836 national historic sites, designated in honor of people, places and

events that figure in the country's history. Canada also has over 1000 provincial

parks and nearly 50 territorial parks.

Mountain Ranges

Canada's terrain incorporates a number of mountain ranges: the Torngats, <https://assignbuster.com/canada-facts-and-figures-essay/>

Appalachians and Laurentians in the east; the Rocky, Coastal and Mackenzie ranges in the west; and Mount St. Elias and the Pelly Mountains in the north.

At

6050 m, Mount Logan in the Yukon is Canada's tallest peak.

Lakes

There are some two million lakes in Canada, covering about 7.6% of the Canadian

landmass. The main lakes, in order of the surface area located in Canada (many

large lakes are traversed by the Canada-U. S. border), are Huron, Great Bear, Superior, Great Slave, Winnipeg, Erie and Ontario. The largest lake situated entirely in Canada is Great Bear Lake (31 326 km²) in the Northwest Territories.

Rivers

The St. Lawrence (3058 km long) is Canada's most important river, providing a

seaway for ships from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. The longest Canadian

river is the Mackenzie, which flows 4241 km through the Northwest Territories.

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Other large watercourses include the Yukon and the Columbia (parts of which flow

through U. S. territory), the Nelson, the Churchill, and the Fraser-along with major

tributaries such as the Saskatchewan, the Peace, the Ottawa, the Athabasca, and the

Liard.

Time Zones

Canada has six time zones. The easternmost, in Newfoundland, is three hours and

30 minutes behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The other time zones are the

Atlantic, the Eastern, the Central, the Rocky Mountain and, farthest west, the Pacific, which is eight hours behind GMT.

Political System

Canada is a constitutional monarchy and a federal state with a democratic parliament. The Parliament of Canada, in Ottawa, consists of the House of

Commons, whose members are elected, and the Senate, whose members are

appointed. On average, members of Parliament are elected every four years.

Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada's constitution contains a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which sets out

certain fundamental freedoms and rights that neither Parliament nor any provincial

legislature acting alone can change. These include equality rights, mobility rights,

and legal rights, together with freedoms such as speech, association, and peaceful

assembly.

National Emblem

The maple leaf has been associated with Canada for some time: in 1868, it figured in

coats of arms granted to Ontario and Quebec; and in both world wars, it appeared

on regimental badges. Since the 1965 introduction of the Canadian flag, the maple

leaf has become the country's most important symbol.

The Canadian Flag

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Several people participated in designing the Canadian flag. Jacques St. Cyr contributed the stylized maple leaf, George Bist the proportions, and Dr. Gunter

Wyszecki the colouration. The final determination of all aspects of the new flag was

made by a 15-member parliamentary committee, which is formally credited with the

design. After lengthy debate, the new flag was adopted by Parliament. It officially

became the national flag on February 15, 1965, now recognized as Canada's Flag

Day.

National Anthem

O Canada was composed in 1880, with music by Calixa Lavalle and words by Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier. In 1908, Robert Stanley Weir wrote the translation

on which the present English lyric is based. On July 1, 1980, a century after being

sung for the first time, O Canada was proclaimed the national anthem.

Currency

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The Canadian dollar is divided into 100 cents.

Population

As of the summer of 1996, Canada's population was over 30 million.

Main Cities

As of July 1, 1996, the leading Canadian cities are Toronto (4. 44 million),

Montreal

(3. 36 million), Vancouver (1. 89 million), Ottawa-Hull, the National Capital

Region

(1. 03 million).

Distribution of Population

A large majority of Canadians, 77 percent, live in cities and towns.

Family Size

At the time of the 1996 national census, the average family size was 3. 1,

including

1. 2 children.

Living Standard

Canada ranks sixth in the world in standard of living (measured according to gross

domestic product per capita), behind only the United States, Switzerland,

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Luxembourg, Germany, and Japan. Canada's rank among nations tends to rise even

higher in assessments that consider GDP per capita along with other factors (e. g.,

life expectancy, education) that contribute to " quality of life."

Health Care and Social Security

Basic health care, with the exception of dental services, is free at the point of delivery. And prescription drugs are in most cases dispensed without charge to

people over 65 and social aid recipients. Canada also has an extensive social security

network, including an old age pension, a family allowance, unemployment insurance

and welfare.

Aboriginal Peoples

In 1996, about 3% of Canadians belonged to one or more of the three Aboriginal

groups recognized by the Constitution Act, 1982: North American Indian, Mtis, or

Inuit. Of this percentage, about 69% are North American Indian, 26% Mtis, and

5% Inuit.

Religion

According to the 1991 census, more than four-fifths of Canadians are Christian,

with Catholics accounting for about 47% of the population and Protestants about

36%. Other religions include Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism.

Some 12. 5%, more than any single denomination except Roman Catholic, have no

religious affiliation at all.

Languages

Canada has two official languages: English, the mother tongue of about 59% of

Canadians; and French, the first language of 23% of the population. A full 18%

have either more than one mother tongue or a mother tongue other than English or

French, such as Chinese, Italian, German, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Punjabi,

Ukrainian, Arabic, Dutch, Tagalog, Greek, Vietnamese, Cree, Inuktitut, or other

languages.

The Official Languages Act makes French and English the official languages of

Canada and provides for special measures aimed at enhancing the vitality and

supporting the development of English and French linguistic minority communities.

Canada's federal institutions reflect the equality of its two official languages by

offering bilingual services.

Ethnic Origin

In 1996, about 19% of the population reported “ Canadian” as their single ethnic

origin, with 17% reporting British Isles-only ancestry and 9% French-only ancestry.

About 10% reported a combination of British Isles, French, or Canadian origin,

with another 16% reporting an ancestry of either British Isles, French or Canadian

in combination with some other origin. Some 28% reported origins other than the

British Isles, French or Canadian.

Education

The educational system varies from province to province and includes six to eight

years of elementary school, four or five years of secondary school and three or four

years at the university undergraduate level. The 1996 census revealed that, among

Canadians aged 15 and over, about 23% had graduated from secondary school,

some 9% had bachelor's degrees, and about 6% had advanced degrees.

Sports

Canada's most popular sports include swimming, ice hockey, cross-country and

alpine skiing, baseball, tennis, basketball and golf. Ice hockey and lacrosse are

Canada's national sports.

Main Natural Resources

The principal natural resources are natural gas, oil, gold, coal, copper, iron ore,

nickel, potash, uranium and zinc, along with wood and water.

Leading Industries

These include automobile manufacturing, pulp and paper, iron and steel work,

machinery and equipment manufacturing, mining, extraction of fossil fuels, forestry

and agriculture.

Exports

Canada's leading exports are automobile vehicles and parts, machinery and equipment, high-technology products, oil, natural gas, metals, and forest and farm

products.

National Cultural Institutions: An Overview

CBC Since 1936, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), one of the world's

foremost public broadcasting organizations, has been helping Canadians to appreciate their nation and understand the Canadian experience. It now operates

two core national television networks (one in English, the other in French); four

national radio networks (two French, two English); radio and television services for

the North in English, French, and eight aboriginal languages; two self-supporting

specialty cable television services (one English, one French); and an international

shortwave radio service that broadcasts in seven languages. Working under the

terms of the Broadcasting Act, the CBC provides a wide range of programming that

informs and entertains Canadians from coast to coast. Its public programming

enjoys a high level of approval: over half of adult Canadians listen to CBC radio

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and about 9 out of 10 watch CBC television.

National Film Board Created in 1939, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is

a public agency that produces and distributes films and other audiovisual works

that reflect Canada to Canadians and the rest of the world. The NFB is a centre of

filmmaking and video technology as well as a storehouse for an important part of

the country's audiovisual heritage. Hailed over 3, 000 times at major festivals, the

NFB has won nine Oscars for its productions and an honorary Oscar “ in recognition of its dedicated commitment to originate artistic, creative and technological activity and excellence in every area of filmmaking.” Recent NFB

productions include documentaries, animation shorts, CD-ROMS and interactive

videos. NFB founder John Grierson wanted to establish a national cinema that would “ see Canada and see it whole: its people and its purpose.” This early

inspiration, through the work of the NFB, continues to consolidate the Canadian

character and give shape to the national dream.

Canada Council The Canada Council is an independent, arm's-length organization

created by the Parliament of Canada in 1957 to " foster and promote the study and

enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts." To fulfill this mandate, the

Council offers a broad range of grants and services to professional Canadian artists

and arts organizations working in music, writing, publishing, dance, theatre, visual

arts and media arts. Each year, the Council awards some 4, 200 grants in all

disciplines and some 10, 700 payments to authors through the Public Lending Right

Commission. The Council also administers the Killam Program of scholarly awards

and prizes, and offers a number of other prestigious awards, including the Glenn

Gould Prize, the Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prizes and the Governor General's Literary Awards. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the Public

Lending Right Commission also operate under its aegis.

Canadian Film Development Corporation (Telefilm Canada) Telefilm Canada, a

crown corporation, was created by Parliament in 1967. Telefilm's role differs from

that of the National Film Board in that Telefilm is a funding agency rather than a

producer or distributor. It has financed some 600 feature films and 1, 500 television

shows and series, helping to build what is now a multibillion-dollar Canadian industry. Telefilm support has also allowed Canadian talent and culture to acquire

currency abroad: At international film festivals, works backed by Telefilm Canada

have won more than 1, 600 prizes in some 35 countries. Of all who appreciate

Telefilm's contribution, it is perhaps the audiovisual artists who best understand

what it has meant to Canadian culture. Filmmaker Denys Arcand (The Decline of

the American Empire) states the perspective from his province in words that hold

true from Newfoundland to British Columbia: " The existence of Telefilm determined the existence of a Quebec film industry. Once again, in a province such

as Quebec, if there is no Telefilm, there is no film."

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) SSHRC is

Canada's federal funding agency for university-based research and graduate training in the social sciences and humanities. Created as an independent body in

1977, SSHRC reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry. SSHRC contributes to Canada's social and economic development through funding for

research and training in fields such as health care, social and legal issues, culture

and heritage, economics, and the environment. This research, besides being of

academic interest, furnishes an important part of the practical knowledge required

for sound decisions in matters affecting our standard of living and quality of life.

National Gallery of Canada Founded in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada holds

the country's foremost collection of Canadian and European art. The present gallery

building, located on Sussex Drive in Ottawa, is a formidable work of art in its own

right—a magnificent structure of rose granite, towering glass, and steel enclosing

over 30, 000 square metres of balanced space and light. The National Gallery has

always devoted itself to making Canadian art better known, sending exhibitions to

museums across Canada and around the world. The Gallery's permanent collections

of Canadian, Inuit, European, American, Asian, and contemporary art, together

with its special exhibitions and creative programming, give the Canadian public

wide access to art of an exceptional range and quality.

Canadian Museum of Civilization The Canadian Museum of Civilization, located

across the Ottawa River from Parliament Hill, is one of the most distinguished and

best equipped museums in the world. Designed by Douglas Cardinal and opened in

1989, the building is notable for its rare combination of massiveness and sweep,

which serves to bring the structure into accord with both its riverbank surroundings

and the flow of time depicted in its interior. With an archaeological collection dating

from 1842, and a tradition of anthropological research going back to 1910, the

Museum is an established centre for the study of human life in Canada.

Activities

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are based on four general areas of research: archaeology, ethnology, folklore, and

history. Now the nation's largest and most popular museum, the Canadian Museum

of Civilization attracts over 1.3 million visitors a year.

Canadian War Museum Established in 1880, the Canadian War Museum is located

in Ottawa at 330 Sussex Drive, next door to the National Gallery. It houses permanent and temporary exhibits about Canada's accomplishments in war and

peacekeeping. Artifacts of all types and periods illustrate Canada's past military

activities, from its days as a French colony to its modern missions in peacekeeping.

Life-size dioramas, displays, and a magnificent collection of war art allow visitors to

experience a part of Canada's military history. The museum reveals, in a way that

words alone cannot, how Canadians fought and how the fighting affected Canada.

More important, it stands as a memorial, and a tribute, to all Canadians who served

in war and peacekeeping.

National Library of Canada The National Library of Canada, at 395 Wellington

Street in Ottawa, is home to Canada's published heritage. The National Library's

main role is to acquire, preserve, and promote the world's most comprehensive

collection of Canadiana for all Canadians, now and in years to come. The Library

holds materials such as books, periodicals, sound recordings, manuscripts, and

electronic documents. Founded in 1953 as a department of the federal government,

the Library now contains some three million items. Notable strengths include

Canadian music, newspapers, and official government publications. The Library is

also a leading centre for Canadian rare books, city directories, literary manuscripts,

and literature for children and for adults.

National Archives of Canada Founded in 1872, the National Archives of Canada

today contains millions of records that bring the past to life, including texts, photographs, films, maps, videos, books, paintings, prints, and government files.

The National Archives acts as the collective memory of the nation, preserving an

essential part of Canada's heritage and making it available to the public through a

variety of means—publications, exhibitions, special events, and reference and researcher services. Public records also provide much of the evidence required to

uphold rights, substantiate claims, and maintain justice. The National Archives is

located at 395 Wellington Street in Ottawa.

National Arts Centre (NAC) The National Arts Centre, located on the banks of Ottawa's Rideau Canal, is Canada's leading bicultural theatre for the performing

arts. Designed by Fred Lebensold, the triple-hexagon building contains three superb

performance halls—the Opera, the Theatre, and the Studio—which together give the

NAC a seating capacity of over 3600. By consistently encouraging artistic excellence,

diversity, and youth, the National Arts Centre has helped to shape the careers of

countless Canadian artists. The National Arts Centre gives the public year-round

access to arts and entertainment, offering complete seasons of dance, English and

French theatre, music and variety. Prominent attractions include Festival Canada, a

summer celebration of the performing arts; and the National Arts Centre Orchestra,

one of the finest ensembles of its kind in the world.

Canada and the World

International Public Opinion

In 1997, a team of professional survey research firms under the supervision of the

Angus Reid Group polled 5, 700 adults living in 20 countries (including Canada).

The poll, which was conducted in 24 different languages, offers insight into the

attitudes of people around the world toward Canada, and the views of Canadians

themselves. This “ snapshot” of international public opinion shows that Canada is

held in very high regard indeed! Highlights of this public opinion survey include the

following:

Canada on the Top-Ten List

Participants in 20 countries were asked to list their choices of countries to live in,

after their own. A sizable majority in all 20 countries put Canada on their top-ten

list of places in which to live. Residents of France, the United States and the United

Kingdom–countries with whom Canada maintains very strong political, cultural

and trading relationships—are particularly impressed with our quality of life.

In

fact, Canada was the number one choice of people in the United States and

France

as the country they would most like to live in after their own.

These results reflect the findings of the 1995, 1996 and 1997 United Nations

Human

Development Report, which stated that Canada’s overall quality of life makes

it the

best country in the world in which to live.

Canadians also express contentment with their country and their quality of

life.

Overwhelming numbers of Canadians (nine of every ten surveyed) ranked

Canada

as one of the three best places to live. The degree of personal freedom

Canadians

enjoy, health care, the environment and the peaceful nature of our country

are

considered key ingredients in their quality of life.

Canada: What the World Likes ... and Doesn't Like

Canada is best known abroad for its natural beauty. For many people in other

countries, Canada is wide-open spaces, mountains, trees and lakes. They are also

viewed favourably for being environmentally responsible.

In all countries, the vast majority of people polled consider Canadians to be honest,

friendly, polite, well-educated, interesting and healthy.

Throughout the world, they are known as a modern, progressive nation with an

open and generous society, a country in which all people have the opportunity to

grow and develop in their own way, and a country that upholds its international

commitments.

As for what the world doesn't like about Canada, the first thing to be noted is that

in half the countries surveyed the majority of respondents couldn't think of a single

bad thing to say about Canada. But among those who did find something of

concern, one issue was a standout: their climate! The French, the British, the Australians and the Chileans all registered this concern.

Respecting Diversity

Canadians are proud and appreciative of our cultural diversity. Throughout the

world, they are regarded as a nation that respects the contributions and individuality of different cultures. In fact, Canada's deserved reputation for warmth

to all peoples is considered an important part of our country's international reputation.

Caring For and Helping Others

Canada has an excellent reputation for compassion towards its own citizens and also

for the ways in which we help countries in need.

Many of the people surveyed, and Canadians in particular, think our healthcare

system is among the best in the world. We are also admired for our generous network of social assistance programs

In 15 of the 20 countries surveyed, majorities agreed that Canada plays a

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“substantial role” in world peacekeeping efforts. Our continental neighbours in

Central and South America offered high praise in this regard, as did those polled in

the United States.

Canada has a solid reputation for generosity in providing aid to poorer countries. A

majority of Canadians think we are better than other well-to-do countries at providing aid and assistance to developing countries. In more than half of the other

19 countries there was majority support for the view that Canada is more generous

than other developed countries.

Multiculturalism

Ethnic and Racial Diversity in Canada

Multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. Our society

has always been pluralist and diverse and is bound to become even more so. Already

approximately two-fifths of the Canadian population has one origin other than

British, French or Aboriginal.

What is Multiculturalism?

In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt a multiculturalism

policy. In 1986 the government passed the Employment Equity Act and in 1988 it

passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

Founded on a long tradition of Canadian human rights legislation, the

Multiculturalism Policy affirms that Canada recognizes and values its rich ethnic

and racial diversity. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act gives specific direction to

the federal government to work toward achieving equality in the economic, social,

cultural and political life of the country. Through its multiculturalism policy, the

government wants to help build a more inclusive society based on respect, equality

and the full participation of all citizens, regardless of race, ethnic origin, language or

religion.

In a recent report of the UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development,

Canada's approach to multiculturalism was cited as a model for other countries.

Canada is recognized today as a world leader in this field.

The Federal Government's Multiculturalism Program

In 1997, the department of Canadian Heritage restructured the federal Multicultural Program. The renewed program works towards three main goals:

Identity. Fostering a society in which people of all backgrounds feel a sense of

belonging and attachment to Canada

Civic Participation. Developing citizens that are actively involved in shaping the

future of their various communities and their country

Social Justice. Building a nation that ensures fair and equitable treatment and that

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respects and accommodates people of all origins

Campaigns and Promotional Activities

Promotional activities seek to improve public understanding of multiculturalism and

racism and to encourage informed public dialogue and action on issues related to

ethnic and racial diversity in Canada.

March 21 Campaign: “ Racism: Stop It!”

The March 21 Campaign is at the heart of the Multiculturalism Program’s activities. This nationwide campaign is intended to make the public aware of the

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The March 21 campaign features a broad range of activities throughout the country, involving

community groups, schools, school boards, colleges, universities, private companies,

parliamentarians and media.

The Mathieu Da Costa Awards

In 1996, the Multiculturalism Program established the Mathieu Da Costa Awards as

part of Parliament's official designation of February as Black History Month.

This

program encourages intercultural understanding and provides an excellent vehicle

by which youth can develop an appreciation of the diversity and shared experiences

that form the Canadian identity.

Multiculturalism in the Media

The Broadcasting Act, passed in 1991, affirms that the Canadian broadcasting

system should, through its programming and the employment opportunities it

creates, serve the needs of a diverse society and reflect the multicultural and

multiracial nature of Canada.

The ' mainstream' media is slowly coming to reflect the diverse nature of the country. Successful television programs such as North of 60, Degrassi Junior High,

Jasmine and Ces enfants d’ailleurs are eloquent examples of this trend. The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television has a special Gemini award, called

“ The Canada Award/Prix Gmeaux du multiculturalisme,” which is sponsored by

the Multiculturalism Program. It honours excellence in mainstream television programming that best reflects the cultural diversity of Canada.

Ethnic radio and television broadcasting is also thriving in Canada. Nine radio stations in five cities devote much of their programming to specific ethnic groups,

notably the Italian, Ukrainian, German, Greek, Portuguese and Chinese communities. Toronto has a full-time ethnic television station which is available

throughout Ontario. Three ethnic specialty television services are licensed, and more

than 60 radio stations include ethnic broadcasting in their schedules.

Numerous

cable companies carry programming in a variety of languages on community channels.

In the print media, ethnic newspapers have flourished across Canada for more than

80 years. In Toronto alone, there are more than 100 daily, weekly, monthly or

quarterly ethnic-language publications. More than 40 cultures are represented in

Canada's ethnic press; many of these publications are national in scope, such as the

Chinese version of Maclean's magazine.

Multiculturalism and Business

Canada's diversity is increasingly recognized as an asset in both the domestic and

the international market, and as a major contributor to Canadian economic prosperity.

The Conference Board of Canada has worked with other business, industry and

trade associations to identify new ways for Canadian organizations to use Canada's

linguistic and cultural diversity to their advantage at home and abroad. Also, the

Business Development Bank of Canada consults regularly with ethnocultural business associations in major centres.

Canada's multicultural nature will become even more of an asset in the emerging

global economy. Canadian companies already recognize the benefits and are drawing on the cultural diversity of our work force to obtain the language and

cultural skills needed to compete successfully in international markets.

The Arts

Throughout the world, Canada is respected for its achievements in the arts.

In

music, dance, literature, theatre, cinema and visual arts Canadians are held in high

regard.

Music

The talents of Canadian musicians can be heard in all types of music.

Bryan Adams, Celine Dion, Sarah McLachlan, Leonard Cohen, Roch Voisine and

Daniel Lavoie are popular with rock fans all over the world. The group Kashtin has

added Montagnais to the list of languages in which Canadians songwriters and

performers can become famous.

Dance

Three large Canadian ballet companies perform on the international circuit: the

Royal Winnipeg Ballet; the Grands Ballets Canadiens; and the National Ballet of

Canada. They have been the home base and stepping stone to international careers

for dancers such as Karen Kain and Evelyn Hart.

Fans of modern dance throughout the world are delighted by the performances of

Canadian troupes that include: La La La Human Steps; the Toronto Dance Theatre; the Desrosiers Dance Theatre; and O Vertigo.

Every year, a growing number of independent choreographers and dancers mount

performances in Canada and abroad. Among this group of more than 150 are <https://assignbuster.com/canada-facts-and-figures-essay/>

Margie Gillis, Marie Chouinard, Ginette Laurin, Judith Marcuse, Peggy Baker
and

Jean-Pierre Perrault.

Literature

Canadian literature tells the story of Canada, in all its richness and diversity.

Canadian novelists, essayists, playwrights and poets such as Gabrielle Roy,
Jacques

Ferron, Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, Alice Munro, Anne Hbert, Yves

Beauchemin, Arlette Cousture, Michel Tremblay, Jacques Godbout, Hubert
Aquino,

Gaston Miron, Northrop Frye, Michael Ondaatje, Nancy Huston, Tomson
Highway

and Mordecai Richler have given voice to the deepest thoughts and feelings
of

Canadians.

Theatre

If all the world is a stage, Canada's role on that stage is prominent and much
admired. The compelling nature and high quality of Canadian theatre is
recognized

internationally. The Shaw and Stratford Theatre festivals are well known abroad.

Quebec theatre has become increasingly popular both at home and abroad in recent

years, thanks in good measure to the plays of Michel Tremblay, which have now

been translated into more than 20 languages.

Canadian theatre is distinguished by its innovative spirit and search for new forms.

Companies such as Carbone 14, UBU and One yellow Rabbit tour the world and

receive critical acclaim wherever they go. Others, like Green Thumb, Les Deux

Mondes and Mermaid have channelled their energies into creating outstanding

children's theatre.

The Cirque du Soleil has been revolutionizing entertainment under its yellow and

blue big top since 1984. Millions of people around the world have marvelled at its

spectacular productions, which blend theatre, acrobatics and music.

Cinema

Canadian cinema is known throughout the world for its universality and relevance.

International acclaim has been received by filmmaker David Cronenberg for his

film, *Naked Lunch*; by Denys Arcand for his films, *Decline of the American Empire*

and *Jesus of Montreal*; by Atom Egoyan for *The Sweet Hereafter*; by producer La

Pool for *Anne Trister*; and by the late Jean-Claude Lauzon for *Lolo* and *Night Zoo*.

The National Film Board (NFB), and Norman McLaren, in particular, have established Canada as an artistic force in the field of animation. The NFB has been

nominated for 61 Oscars and has won 10. Frederick Back's 1987 Oscar-winning

animated work, *The Man Who Planted Trees*, is a brilliant continuation of this tradition. Computer-image animation is now providing fertile ground for the imaginations and talents of Canadian artists in this field.

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Visual Arts

From the landscapes of Cornelius Krieghoff and the portraits of Thophile Hamel to

the multidisciplinary works of Michael Snow and the hyperrealism of Alex Colville,

the tradition of visual arts in Canada is rich and varied.

Sports

Think of sports in Canada and you'll likely think of hockey. Some of the world's

best-known hockey players are Canadian. And hockey is by far Canada's favourite

spectator sport and one of its most widely played recreational sports.

But ask young Canadians to list their favourite sports activities and a much broader

picture emerges. Those aged 13 to 24 cite swimming, downhill and cross-country

skiing, soccer, baseball, tennis and basketball. Canadians view sports as an integral

part of a well-rounded, healthy life.

Sports on Ice and Snow

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More than 450, 000 youngsters participate in organized hockey leagues.

Many more

play on streets, lakes and outdoor rinks and even dream of joining the

National

Hockey League (NHL).

The majority of the NHL players are Canadian and Canadians have fared extremely

well in international amateur hockey competition: the Men's Junior National Team

has won five consecutive World Junior Championships; the Men's National Team

captured silver medals in the 1992 and 1994 Winter Olympic Games; and the

Women's National Team has won every world championship played to date (1990,

1992, 1994, 1997), as well as the silver medal in the 1998 Winter Olympic Games.

Canada's Paralympic sledge hockey team won the silver at the 1998 Paralympic

Games in Nagano.

Skiing is a sport that has captured the hearts of Canadians. The country boasts

hundreds of ski areas, including world-renowned resorts in Banff, Alberta, and

Whistler, British Columbia, as well as an abundance of cross-country ski trails. In

international competition, Canadian skiers have excelled on the World Cup circuit

and at the Winter Olympic Games. Canada's Paralympians are champions on the

slopes. At the 1998 Paralympics in Nagano, Dan Wesley put together a top-flight

performance, winning gold in the men's super G for sit skiers, and taking a bronze

in downhill.

Sports Variety

A variety of warm-weather sports are played in Canada. These include swimming,

sailing, windsurfing, rowing, track and field, tennis, football, soccer, rugby, field

hockey and golf.

Swimming is not only one of the most popular recreational sports in Canada, it is

also a powerhouse event for Canadian athletes in international competition.

Canadians have won more than 50 Olympic medals in swimming events since the

1912 Summer Games in Stockholm and have held numerous world records.

Canada's swim team ended the 1998 World Cup short-course season in spectacular

fashion, winning eight medals including a gold for Jessica Deglau of Vancouver in

the women's 200 m butterfly.

Canada has also been a world leader in synchronized swimming since the sport

began more than 50 years ago. Synchronized swimming reached full medal status at

the 1988 Summer Olympic Games, where Carolyn Waldo won two gold medals for

Canada. At the Barcelona games in 1992, Sylvie Frchette was awarded the gold,

while the duo of Penny and Vicky Vilagos captured the silver. At the Atlanta Games

in 1996, the Canadian team won a silver medal.

Rowing has also enjoyed a recent upsurge in popularity in Canada following tremendous success on the international circuit. Canada won four gold and one

bronze in rowing at the 1992 Barcelona Summer Games, and followed up in the

1996 Atlanta Summer Games by winning six medals.

Soccer, the world's most popular sport, is now entrenched in Canada with a large

base of young competitors and a professional league.

The sport of basketball, invented by Canadian James Naismith, is also very popular

in Canada, with almost 650, 000 participants. In addition, the sport of wheelchair

basketball is one of the most popular sports for athletes with a disability. The

Canadian Women's Team is the reigning World and Paralympic champion.

In terms of spectator appeal, professional baseball and football rank with hockey at

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the top of the list. The annual Grey Cup game is traditionally one of the most watched sports events in Canada.

Major-league baseball teams in Montreal and Toronto attract millions of spectators

every season. In 1992, the Toronto Blue Jays became the first team outside the

United States to win the World Series. The Blue Jays added to their fame by

winning the World Series again in 1993. Baseball and softball are popular

recreational sports in Canada, with countless local teams and leagues in operation in

the summer and autumn.

The Department of Canadian Heritage, through Sport Canada, provides funding

and support to high-performance sporting excellence and fairness in sport. It

contributes to the hosting of amateur competitions—international, national and

interprovincial. It works with partners to support Canadian athletes and to link

sport organizations at the community, provincial and national levels.

International Role

With more than 60 national teams participating in international competition,

Canada has a wealth of technical and administrative sport expertise that it shares

with other countries through various programs and exchanges.

Canada has hosted almost every major international sports competition: the

Summer and Winter Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Pan-American Games,

World University Games, and Special Olympics. The 1999 Pan-American Games

will be taking place in Winnipeg. In 2001, Canada will host its first Jeux de la

Francophonie in Ottawa-Hull.

The Future

Nothing unites Canadians like sport. Over 9 million Canadians participate regularly

in one or more sports at some level. More than anything else, sport reflects what

Canadians value most: the pursuit of excellence, fairness and ethics, inclusion, and

participation. Canada also supports international events because during such events

the whole world becomes a global village, united in its love of sport and in its appreciation for the excellence of all athletes.

The federal government recently announced additional funding for sport of \$10

million a year over five years. These funds will directly support high-performance

athletes, employ additional full-time coaches, and provide additional opportunities

for athletes to train and compete.

Our National Anthem

O Canada!

Our home and native land!

True patriot love

in all thy sons command.

With glowing hearts

we see thee rise,

The True North

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strong and free!

From far and wide,

O Canada,

We stand on guard

for thee.

God keep our land

glorious and free!

O Canada,

we stand on guard for thee.

O Canada,

we stand on guard for thee.

HISTORY

“ O CANADA” was proclaimed Canada’s national anthem on July 1, 1980, a century after it was first sung on June 24, 1880. The music was composed by Calixa

Lavalle, a well-known composer; French lyrics to accompany the music were written by Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier. The song gained steadily in popularity.

Many English versions have appeared over the years. The version on which the

official English lyrics are based was written in 1908 by Mr. Justice Robert Stanley

Weir. The official English version includes changes recommended in 1968 by a

Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons. The French lyrics

remain unaltered.

French Language and Identity: A Vibrant Presence

According to the 1991 census, French is the mother tongue of 82 percent of Quebec's

population and is spoken at home by 83 percent of Quebecers. More than a million

Francophones live outside Quebec.

French is spoken by 8.5 million people in Canada, 25 percent of whom live outside

Quebec. Of this number, 6.6 million have French as their mother tongue.

More and more children are learning French in schools throughout Canada:

enrolment in French immersion programs jumped from 40 000 in 1978 to some 313

000 in 1996.

In 1995, 2. 7 million young people (54 percent of students) were studying French or

English as a second language, an increase of 10 percent in 25 years.

According to the 1991 Statistics Canada census, the level of bilingualism among

young Canadians aged 15 to 25 has risen from 16 percent to 23 percent in a single

decade. Young Canadians in this age group are the most bilingual generation in our

nation's history.

Internationally, it is estimated that some 800 million people speak English and 250

million speak French. As well, La Francophonie makes up 18 percent of the world

economy and accounts for more than \$100 billion in trade annually. Clearly, a

knowledge of both languages provides a competitive edge in the battle to conquer

new markets. As a bilingual nation, Canada has that edge.

The Official Languages Act makes French and English the official languages of

Canada and provides for special measures aimed at enhancing the vitality and

supporting the development of English and French linguistic minority communities.

Canada's federal institutions must reflect the equality of its two official languages by

offering bilingual services.

The Constitution Act of 1982 makes French and English the official languages of

Canada; the two languages have equal status in terms of their use in all the institutions of the Government of Canada.

The Soci t  Radio-Canada (the French-language division of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) broadcasts programs in French across the country. In

addition, since January, 1995 the Rseau de l'information (RDI) has been

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broadcasting French-language television news and public affairs programs
24 hours

a day. Its objective is to ensure a French current affairs presence throughout
the
country.

The Government of Canada supports a group of television networks from
Quebec

and across Canada as part of an international Francophone broadcasting
consortium known as TV5. Today, the Government of Canada contributes \$4
million annually so that TV5 can continue to provide high-quality domestic
and
international Francophone broadcasting for Canadians.

History

Aboriginal peoples are thought to have arrived from Asia thousands of years
ago by
way of a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. Some of them settled in
Canada,
while others chose to continue to the south. When the European explorers
arrived,

Canada was populated by a diverse range of Aboriginal peoples who, depending on

the environment, lived nomadic or settled lifestyles, were hunters, fishermen or

farmers.

First contacts between the native peoples and Europeans probably occurred about

1000 years ago when Icelandic Norsemen settled for a brief time on the island of

Newfoundland. But it would be another 600 years before European exploration

began in earnest.

First Colonial Outposts

Seeking a new route to the rich markets of the Orient, French and British explorers

plied the waters of North America. They constructed a number of posts — the

French mostly along the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes and the Mississippi

River; the British around Hudson Bay and along the Atlantic coast. Although

explorers such as Cabot, Cartier and Champlain never found a route to China and

India, they found something just as valuable — rich fishing grounds and teeming

populations of beaver, fox and bear, all of which were valued for their fur.

Permanent French and British settlement began in the early 1600s and increased

throughout the century. With settlement came economic activity, but the colonies of

New France and New England remained economically dependent on the fur trade

and politically and militarily dependent on their mother countries.

Inevitably, North America became the focal point for the bitter rivalry between

England and France. After the fall of Quebec City in 1759, the Treaty of Paris assigned all French territory east of the Mississippi to Britain, except for the islands

of St. Pierre and Miquelon, off the island of Newfoundland.

Under British rule, the 65 000 French-speaking inhabitants of Canada had a single

aim — to retain their traditions, language and culture. Britain passed the Quebec

Act (1774), which granted official recognition to French civil laws and guaranteed

religious and linguistic freedoms.

Large numbers of English-speaking colonists, called Loyalists because they wished

to remain faithful to the British Empire, sought refuge in Canada after the United

States of America won its independence in 1776. They settled mainly in the colonies

of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and along the Great Lakes.

The increase in population led to the creation in 1791 of Upper Canada (now Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec). Both were granted their own representative

governing institutions. Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada in 1837 and 1838

prompted the British to join the two colonies, forming the united Province of Canada. In 1848 the joint colony was granted responsible government except in

matters of foreign affairs. Canada gained a further measure of autonomy but remained part of the British Empire.

A Country Is Born

Britain's North American colonies — Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince

Edward Island and Newfoundland — grew and prospered independently. But with

the emergence of a more powerful United States after the American Civil War, some

politicians felt a union of the British colonies was the only way to fend off eventual

annexation. On July 1, 1867, Canada East, Canada West, Nova Scotia and New

Brunswick joined together under the terms of the British North America Act to

become the Dominion of Canada.

The government of the new country was based on the British parliamentary system,

with a Governor General (the Crown's representative) and a Parliament consisting

of the House of Commons and the Senate. Parliament received the power to legislate

over matters of national interest (such as taxes and national defence), while the

provinces were given legislative powers over matters of “ particular” interest (such

as property, civil rights and education).

Westward Expansion

Soon after Confederation, Canada expanded into the northwest. Rupert’s Land —

an area extending south and west for thousands of kilometres from Hudson Bay —

was purchased by Canada from the Hudson’s Bay Company, which had been granted the vast territory by King Charles of England in 1670.

Westward expansion did not happen without stress. In 1869, Louis Riel led an

uprising of the Mtis in an attempt to defend their ancestral rights to the land. A

compromise was reached in 1870 and a new province, Manitoba, was carved from

Rupert's Land.

British Columbia, already a Crown colony since 1858, decided to join the Dominion

in 1871 on the promise of a rail link with the rest of the country; Prince Edward

Island followed suit in 1873. In 1898, the northern territory of Yukon was officially

established to ensure Canadian jurisdiction over that area during the Klondike gold

rush. In 1905, two new provinces were carved from Rupert's Land: Alberta and

Saskatchewan; the residual land became the Northwest Territories.

Newfoundland

preferred to remain a British colony until 1949, when it became Canada's 10th

province.

The creation of new provinces coincided with an increase of immigration to Canada,

particularly to the west. Immigration peaked in 1913 with 400 000 coming to

Canada. During the prewar period, Canada profited from the prosperous world

economy and established itself as an industrial as well as an agricultural power.

A Nation Matures

Canada's substantial role in the First World War won it representation distinct

from Britain in the League of Nations after the war. Its independent voice became

more and more pronounced, and in 1931 Canada's constitutional autonomy from

Britain was confirmed with the passing of the Statute of Westminster. In Canada as

elsewhere, the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 brought hardship. As many as

one out of every four workers was without a job and the provinces of Alberta,

Saskatchewan and Manitoba were laid waste by drought. Ironically, it was the need

to supply the Allied armies during the Second World War that boosted Canada out

of the Depression.

Since World War II, Canada's economy has continued to expand. This growth,

combined with government social programs such as family allowances, old-age

security, universal medicare and unemployment insurance has given Canadians a

high standard of living and desirable quality of life.

Noticeable changes have occurred in Canada's immigration trends. Before World

War II, most immigrants came from the British Isles or eastern Europe. Since 1945,

increasing numbers of southern Europeans, Asians, South Americans and people

from the Caribbean islands have enriched Canada's multicultural mosaic.

On the international scene, as the nation has developed and matured, so has its

reputation and influence. Canada has participated in the United Nations since its

inception and is the only nation to have taken part in all of the UN's major

peacekeeping operations. It is also a member of the Commonwealth, la

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Francophonie, the Group of Seven industrialized nations, the OAS (Organization of

American States) and the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) defence pact.

A New Federation in the Making

The last quarter of a century has seen Canadians grapple once more with fundamental questions of national identity. Discontent among many

French-speaking Quebecers led to a referendum in that province in 1980 on whether Quebec should become more politically autonomous from Canada, but a

majority voted to maintain the status quo.

In 1982, the process toward major constitutional reform culminated in the signing of

the Constitution Act. Under this act, the British North America Act of 1867 and its

various amendments became the Constitution Act, 1867-1982. The Constitution, its

Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and its gener