

## ● What basic facts do you know about Canada?

Canada is located in the north of the continent of North America... is the second largest country by area in the world... is part of the Commonwealth. Unlike many other Commonwealth nations it does not have the Union Jack on the flag. There is a maple leaf on the flag. The name 'Canada' comes from the Iroquois word 'kanata', meaning 'village' or 'settlement'. Despite its vast size, Canada has a relatively small population of 30 million. It is a multicultural / diverse country with two official languages, English and French. About 70% of the population speak English and 22% speak French.

## ● What do you know about the geography of Canada?

Canada is bordered by the USA to the south and the north-west (Alaska). Most people / About 80% of the population live 150 kilometres from the US-Canadian border. The southern part of the country is covered in forest. The northern part is mostly tundra. The Canadian Rocky Mountains lie along / skirt the west coast. There are also many lakes and rivers, the Mackenzie and St Lawrence rivers are the longest. The country is divided into ten provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) and three territories (Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon). Canada mostly has a continental climate with cold snowy winters and warm summers. The far north has a polar climate. Canada has / provides natural environment / habitat for many different animal species. Animals commonly found in Canada include the beaver, the Canadian national animal, the moose, the Canada goose, the black bear, the grizzly bear, which lives mostly in the north-west, the polar bear in the Arctic region and the coyote.

## ● Could you describe the Canadian political system?

Canada is a constitutional monarchy. The monarch of the United Kingdom, currently Queen Elizabeth II, is in fact the ceremonial head of state. She exercises / holds little power. Her representative is the Governor General. Canada has a federal system of government. It has a federal / national parliament located in the capital, Ottawa. The parliament is bicameral / has two houses / chambers, the Senate (the Upper House) and House of Commons (the Lower House). The government sits in the House of Commons. The leader of the government is called the prime minister. Each province also has its own parliament, which

is unicameral / single-chambered. The head of the government in each province is the premier.

## ● What do you know about the history of Canada?

Settlement in Canada goes back 25,000 years in some areas. The first Europeans to colonize the Canadian territory were the Portuguese in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They were replaced by the French who slowly established a colony up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century, control moved to the British. In 1812, the British colonies in Canada fought a war against the USA. In 1867, the country became more independent when it became a dominion of the United Kingdom. This status meant it was independent of the United Kingdom except in foreign affairs. In 1982 through the Canada Act, Canada became formally separated from the United Kingdom.

## ● What are some popular places to visit in Canada?

The most visited places are / include Ottawa, the capital of Canada, which is in Ontario; Montreal, the largest city in the French-speaking province of Quebec, and Toronto, the largest Canadian metropolis, also in the province of Ontario. Toronto's attractions include the CN Tower, the world's tallest tower. Vancouver is also a popular destination and is the largest city on the west coast. Tourists / visitors can admire the natural beauty in several national parks, such as Banff National Park in Alberta, which stands out / is notable for its dramatic landscape and wildlife.

## ● What are some characteristic Canadian sports and pastimes?

Canada is a great sporting nation. Popular sports include ice-hockey, American (Canadian) football, basketball and lacrosse. Another popular sport in Canada is curling. This team / group sport, originally from Scotland, is played on an ice rink. Players in pairs try to sweep a curling stone with broomsticks to a mark.

## ● Do you know any famous Canadians?

The award-winning writers Margaret Atwood, the author of *The Blind Assassin*, and Michael Ondaatje, the author of *The English Patient*, are Canadian. In music, famous Canadians are the singer and poet Leonard Cohen, one of the most influential song-writers of the last 50 years... the guitarist / singer-songwriter Neil Young, a very influential musician... the pop singer Nelly Furtado. Celine Dion is known as Queen of Pop. Prominent Canadian actors are the comedian Jim Carrey... Dan Aykroyd, who is famous for appearing in the film *Ghostbusters*.