

# Company culture in Canada

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL

Upper-intermediate

NUMBER

EN\_BE\_3913X

LANGUAGE

English

lingoda

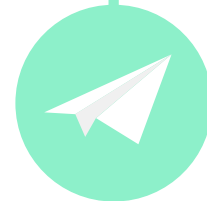




## Goals

- Can understand typical business culture and conduct in Canada
- Can use new terminology and understanding to give polite feedback and constructive criticism





Workplace culture differs across the world. **Communication styles and customs** can vary, increasing the chances of miscommunication.

**Skiing, maple syrup, ice hockey, beavers.** If you know what all of these things have in common you must have been to **Canada!**

Let's learn about business culture in **Canada!**



# Canada

What do you know about Canada?





## Making orders



Have you ever visited Canada?  
Have you met any Canadians  
before?

Discuss with your classmates or  
teacher.



## The economy of Canada

Canada is a rich country with a high **standard of living**. It has an economy dominated by services, which accounts for two thirds of the **GDP**. Strong sectors include telecommunications and tourism, but also manufacturing. The primary sector is also **dominant** as a result of Canada's **abundant** natural resources. The forestry and oil industries are particularly **vibrant** thanks to the country's **vast** land mass – over 3.85 million square miles.





## The economy of Canada

After shrinking during the global financial crisis, the economy of Canada has **rebounded** with bright **prospects** for foreign trade. It is the world's tenth largest economy and tenth largest exporter. It is a **favourable** place for **investment** due to a reliable banking system and good conditions for manufacturing.

Canada is the home of many **competitive** and internationally successful companies. Some of the most famous Canadian companies are in the oil and primary industries. Canadian companies also thrive in the global tech scene.





## Canadian business culture

Canadians can be more **reserved** than Americans, and value respect.

**Confrontation** is often avoided at the workplace, leading to a **flatter organisational structure**. This can sometimes be **misinterpreted** as informality.

While meetings may seem informal and relaxed, they always have a defined purpose and **agenda**. Similarly, although there may be a casual atmosphere in the office, there is also a sense of purpose, **commitment** and **clearly defined roles**.







## Canadian business culture

Employees often are given a high level of individual **responsibility** and **independence**. Punctuality is also essential – being late to a meeting or appointment requires a phone call.





## Comprehension

**Can you explain the meaning of the phrases below?  
Ask your teacher for clarification if necessary.**

The primary sector is also dominant as a result of Canada's abundant natural resources.

The economy of Canada has rebounded with bright prospects for foreign trade.

Confrontation is often avoided in the workplace.

While meetings may seem informal and relaxed, they always have a defined purpose and agenda.



## Respond in writing

**Respond to each of the questions below using full sentences.**

What are some of the most successful industries in Canada?

What makes Canada such a favourable place to invest and do business?

What are some key features of Canadian business culture?

A spiral-bound notebook with lined pages for writing. The notebook is open, showing several blank lines on the right page, ready for a response.



## Role play

You are preparing for an interview with a Canadian firm.

Talk to your teacher about what you will need to do to prepare for the interview and how you can succeed.





## Canadian spelling

- Canadian English uses a mix of British and American spellings.
- You may need to specifically memorise these, though you will be easily understood if you use the alternative spelling.
- More often than not, Canadian English follows **British spellings conventions**.

American spellings	British spellings	Canadian spelling
realize	realise	realize
color	colour	colour
traveling	travelling	travelling
center	centre	centre
judgment	judgement	judgement



## Canadian spelling

- Some of the major rules of Canadian spelling are summarised below.

The *U* is kept in words with the *-our* suffix.

*Z* is normally used in words like *paralyze*, in line with the American style.

As with British English, Canadian spelling favours the double-*l* in words like *travelled*.





## Transform the sentences into Canadian English

1. Please summarise the paragraph in your own words.



Please summarize the paragraph in your own words.

2. That artist uses such dazzling colors.



---

---

3. Did you recognise Jenny at the show last night?



---

---

4. She has a strong sense of personal honor.



---

---

5. James has gone traveling for the next few weeks.



---

---



## Canadian spelling

**Using correct spelling in the workplace is important.  
Use this page to write down the main spelling conventions in  
Canada.**







## Read through this email

To: jamie@canadaco.com

Subject: Project deadline

Hello,

I just wanted to remind you that the deadline for the project is next week. I trust your judgment and that you will get it completed on time.

I was also hoping you could do me a favor. I have to undertake a department-wide behavior review by next week. Could you possibly help me with this sometime this week?

Anyway, what do you think about joining us for lunch tomorrow? We are meeting at the center lobby at around 12 o' clock.

Regards,  
Julia



## Re-write the e-mail

**Re-write the e-mail using Canadian English spelling.**

-

□

×

To: jamie@canadaco.com

Subject: Project deadline

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## working culture

Two key aspects of Canadian working culture are:

**positive feedback and criticism**

**workplaces with a less hierarchical structure**



**Criticism** of someone's work or performance is often preceded by a positive remark.



The **hierarchy** of the company was very clear in the layout of the meeting.



## Feedback

- One aspect of the Canadian workplace which can confuse outsiders is understanding **feedback**.
- In Canada, feedback is indirect – critical comments are often **disguised** with positive comments. This is often referred to as **sugarcoating**.
- Employees not used to this style of communication may easily miss important signals or risk **miscommunication**.

- You did a great job on the project. Next time it would be even better if you included more research.
- You did an excellent job on your first attempt.
- Maybe you could have communicated with the client more clearly.





## Egalitarian culture

- The Canadian workplace can be less **hierarchical** than that of other cultures.
- While managers do still give directions and instructions, there is more **expectation** for employees to **show initiative** and **work out solutions** for themselves in Canada.

In order to thrive in an **egalitarian** workplace:

- **Take the initiative**, rather than waiting for instructions or orders.
- Ensure **expectations** between manager and employee are clear.
- **Don't assume** – if in doubt, ask.





## Write a dialogue

**Go through the dialogue with your teacher.  
What challenges do you recognise in the conversation?  
How would you reply?**



Hi Bob, how do you think your presentation went at the meeting yesterday? You seemed very confident.

Thank you, Marion. I was confident and think it went well for the most part.



It was a great first attempt. You used eye contact very well. We generally try to use a more visual approach to our presentations though – it makes it easier to understand the data.





## Listen and respond

**You have recently begun working at a Canadian firm.**

**Discuss some of the challenges of adapting to the working culture.**



Egalitarian culture?



Challenges with indirect feedback?



## Talk to the teacher

**Discuss how each of these elements of Canadian workplace culture can be tricky for new employees.**



sugarcoating

egalitarian  
culture

indirect  
feedback

constructive  
criticism

Canadian  
English

less hierarchy





## Talk to the teacher



Summarise what is important to remember when doing business in Canada.



## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





## Answer key

### Exercise p. 15

2. That artist uses such dazzling **colours**.
3. Did you **recognize** Jenny at the show last night?
4. She has a strong sense of personal **honour**.
5. James has gone **travelling** for the next few weeks.

### Exercise p. 18

Hello,

I just wanted to remind you that the deadline for the project is next week. I trust your **judgement** and that you will get it completed on time.

I was also hoping you could do me a **favour**. I have to undertake a department-wide **behaviour** review by next week. Could you possibly help me with this sometime this week?

Anyway, what do you think about joining us for lunch tomorrow? We are meeting at the **centre** lobby at around 12 o'clock.

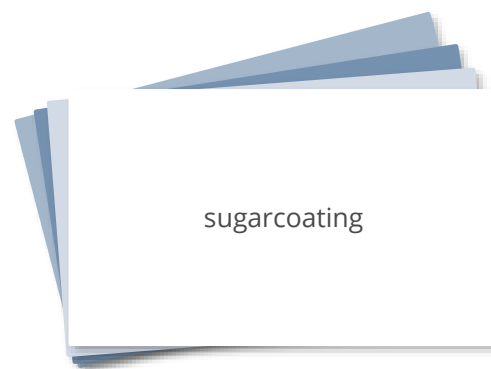
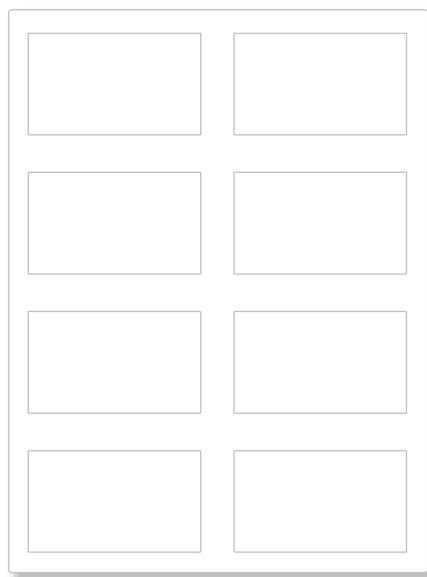
Regards,  
Julia





## Create flashcards

**Create flashcards to help you remember the Canadian customs you learnt during the lesson.**





## Write an e-mail

**Write an e-mail to a colleague about a presentation they recently did.**

**Write your feedback indirectly – use sugarcoating in order to provide constructive criticism and give them ideas for next time.**

-□×

To: gerald@canadacompany.com

Subject: Feedback on the project

Dear Gerald,

Job well done on the presentation yesterday! I just wanted to send you a quick e-mail to provide you with some constructive criticism for next time.

Firstly...



## About this material

Find out more at  
[www.lingoda.com](http://www.lingoda.com)

This material is provided by

lingoda



**lingoda** Who are we?



## Why learn English online?



## What kinds of English classes do we offer?



## Who are our English teachers?



## How do our English certificates work?



We also have a language blog!