

LEVELED BOOKS

Canada



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Focus Question

How do Canada's culture and history make it special?

Words to Know

cultures

First Nations

glaciers

Inuit

interior

Métis

provinces

regions

territories

Front cover: A train on the Canadian Pacific railway

Title page: The northern lights glow in Canada.

Page 3: Ranchers herd cattle in Canada.

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Countries Around the World

Level S Leveled Book

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Canada



Where Is It?

Canada is the largest and northernmost country in mainland North America. The country is made up of ten **provinces** and three **territories**. Canada's motto is "From sea to sea" because it stretches from the Pacific Ocean all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. Most big countries have many neighbors, but Canada has only one—the United States.

The government's buildings are in Ottawa, the nation's capital. Most government workers speak both French and English because the country has two main languages. People speak other languages, such as Spanish and Chinese, in Canada, too. People there are from many different **cultures**. They enjoy different foods, wear different clothes, and pray in different ways. However, during the long, cold winter, Ottawans do something special together. They go ice-skating on the world's largest skating area, the Rideau Canal, or one of the 267 neighborhood rinks.

A hilltop houses Canadian national government offices in Ottawa.



People

Canadian Native peoples belong to three groups. The **Métis** (may-TEE) are mostly from the plains, **Inuit** live in the far north, and **First Nations** live all across the country. Many people have families who came from France or England long ago. They were the first people from Europe to come and stay in large numbers. Germans, Ukrainians, Italians, and others followed. Then people from China, India, other countries in Asia, and the Middle East began to come. Today, people from nearly everywhere live in Canada. One in five Canadians were born in another country. Many people say this makes the nation stronger.

Ice Hockey

Ice hockey is so Canadian that it was officially made a national sport. The rules of the modern game were written by a Canadian. The first modern games were played in Canada.

The sport soon spread to the United States, but most of the players in both countries are Canadian.



Nine out of ten Canadians live within 160 kilometers (100 mi.) of the United States border. Most people live in large cities where many work in hotels, banks, or schools. There are jobs in factories, too.

In some areas of the country, people drill for oil or mine copper or gold. Others farm the land or cut trees from the forests. Many Canadian goods are sold around the world, but most are traded across the border with the United States.

A farmer pours corn seed to plant on his farm in Ontario (right). Shoppers buy garlic at a farmers' market in Canada (below).



Regions of Canada



Land

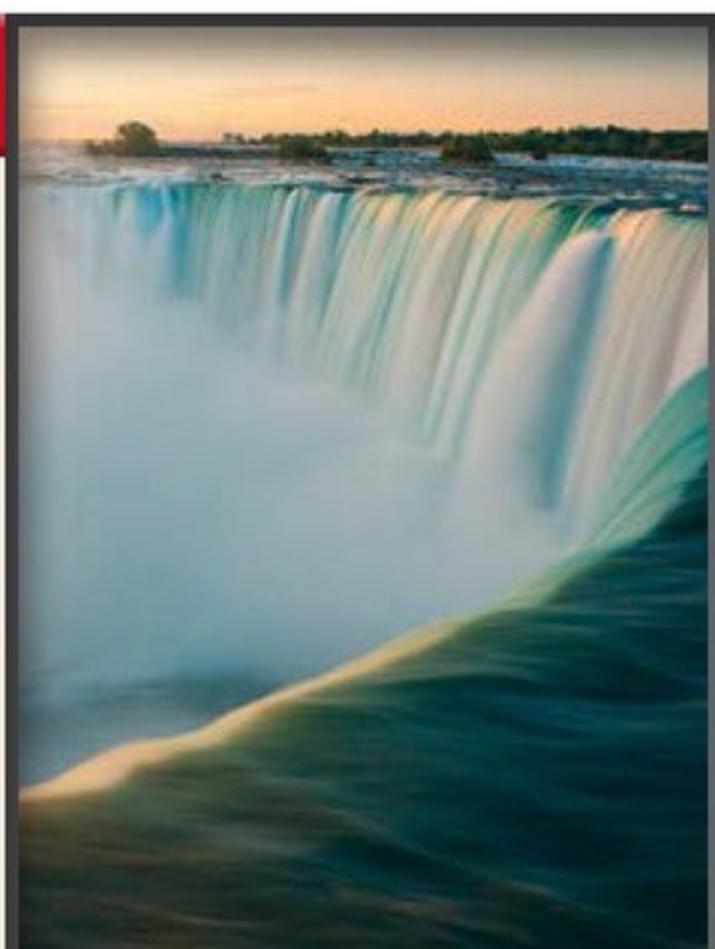
Canada is divided into seven main **regions**. In the west is the Cordillera region with tall mountain ranges. The Rocky Mountains are the highest range, reaching 3,954 meters (13,000 ft.). Then the land drops and flattens out, with lots of grass in the south and many trees to the north. These areas are the vast **interior plains**. Next, going around Hudson Bay is the huge Canadian Shield. Thousands of years ago, heavy **glaciers** slowly pushed across this land.

When the glaciers melted, rock piles were left, thousands of lakes formed, and endless forests grew. The frozen Hudson Bay lowlands sit within this region.

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence lowlands, or “Canada’s heartland,” is in the south. It is small but important—home to half of all Canadians and many of the country’s cities. Finally, there is the Appalachian region with its rolling, forested hills dotted by farms and edged with rocky shores. To the north of all these regions and their forests lies the Arctic, where freezing cold prevents trees from growing. Canada’s 202,080-kilometer (125,566 mi.) coastline not only wraps around the vast mainland but 52,455 islands as well. It is the world’s longest national coastline.

Niagara Falls

In the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence lowlands, water plunges down 57 meters (188 ft.) at Niagara Falls. The part of the falls in Canada—Horseshoe Falls—is 670 meters (2,200 ft.) long, which is as long as six football fields end to end.





caribou

harp seal pup



Animals

In the snow-covered north, many animals can hunt or hide because they have white fur. Polar bears are huge with black skin. Their white fur helps them blend in. Their main food is the harp seal. Before young seal pups learn to swim, they are stuck out on the ice. The seals use their white fur to blend in, too. As soon as a pup learns to swim, it sheds its white coat and grows a dark one.

In the northern forests, the ground is only covered in snow for part of the year. Snowshoe hares have winter coats of white fur to keep them safe. When the snow melts, these hares shed their white coats and grow brown ones that help them blend in with the dark forest floor.

In the steep and rocky mountains, it helps to be sure-footed. Bighorn sheep have feet that are great for jumping and rock climbing. All around Canada are animals that move with the seasons. Caribou walk hundreds of miles from one part of Canada to another. Other animals such as salmon, geese, and even butterflies leave Canada for warmer weather. The world champions for moving long distances are arctic terns. They fly from the Arctic all the way to Antarctica, a journey of some 35,500 kilometers (22,060 mi.). Six months later, they fly all the way back.



History

The first people to reach what is now Canada crossed a land bridge from Asia many thousands of years ago. Today they are called First Nations and the Inuit. The first people from Europe to arrive sailed from Greenland more than one thousand years ago, but they did not stay.

In 1497, explorer John Cabot arrived and claimed the land he saw for England. Then the French sent explorers to claim land for France. As more explorers came, they found codfish and fur. These items made money in Europe, so many more communities developed in the region.

In those days, France and England were often at war against each other in Europe and in their communities in Canada. When England won most of the battles, France lost its lands in Canada. People still wanted to be free from English rule. In 1867, Canada became a country with its own government. In 1931, Canada became free, while staying loyal to England.

Celebrations

Canadians celebrate their country's birthday every July 1 with fireworks and parades. They also celebrate the old west with bull riding, steer wrestling, and more in Calgary every summer. Winter is one thing that people celebrate everywhere in Canada.

People in different areas may enjoy ice-skating, dogsledding, skiing, and more. A winter festival in Quebec is the largest such event. People can enjoy a snow-carving contest, visit an ice castle, and even stay in a hotel made of ice and snow that is built every winter and melts away every summer.

A guest rests in his icy hotel room in Quebec (below). A woman competes in a barrel race in Calgary (right).



Conclusion

Canada is one of the largest countries on Earth, stretching “From sea to sea.” It has regions of ice and snow, tall mountains, endless forests, and big cities. The people who live there may speak French, English, or one of many other languages, but they are all Canadian and proud of their country.



People ice-skate to work, to school, or just for fun in Ottawa, Canada.



Population: 36,048,521

Land: 9,984,670 square kilometers
(3,855,103 sq. mi.)

Capital City: Ottawa

Official Languages: English and French

Currency: Canadian dollar



Source: Central Intelligence Agency (March 2016), World Bank

Glossary

cultures (<i>n.</i>)	the ideas and customs of certain groups of people (p. 5)
First Nations (<i>n.</i>)	people who lived in present-day Canada before Europeans arrived or the descendants of those people (p. 6)
glaciers (<i>n.</i>)	large bodies of accumulated ice and compacted snow that are found year-round and that slowly move downhill (p. 8)
Inuit (<i>n.</i>)	a group of Native people who live in the Arctic region of North America (p. 6)
interior (<i>adj.</i>)	of or related to the inner part of something; located inside (p. 8)
Métis (<i>n.</i>)	a group of people with a mix of First Nations and European ancestry (p. 6)
provinces (<i>n.</i>)	the largest areas that some countries are divided into (p. 4)
regions (<i>n.</i>)	specific places, locations, or areas (p. 8)
territories (<i>n.</i>)	areas of land or water under the control of a specific state or country; geographic areas (p. 4)

Canada

A Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book

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Connections

Writing

Choose two animals that live in Canada. Write a research paper on these animals, discussing how each has adapted to live in Canada's climate and terrain.

Social Studies and Art

Make a poster of Canada's seven main regions. For each region, include its name, a description of the land, major cities, and some of the animals that live there.

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