

LEVELED Book • X

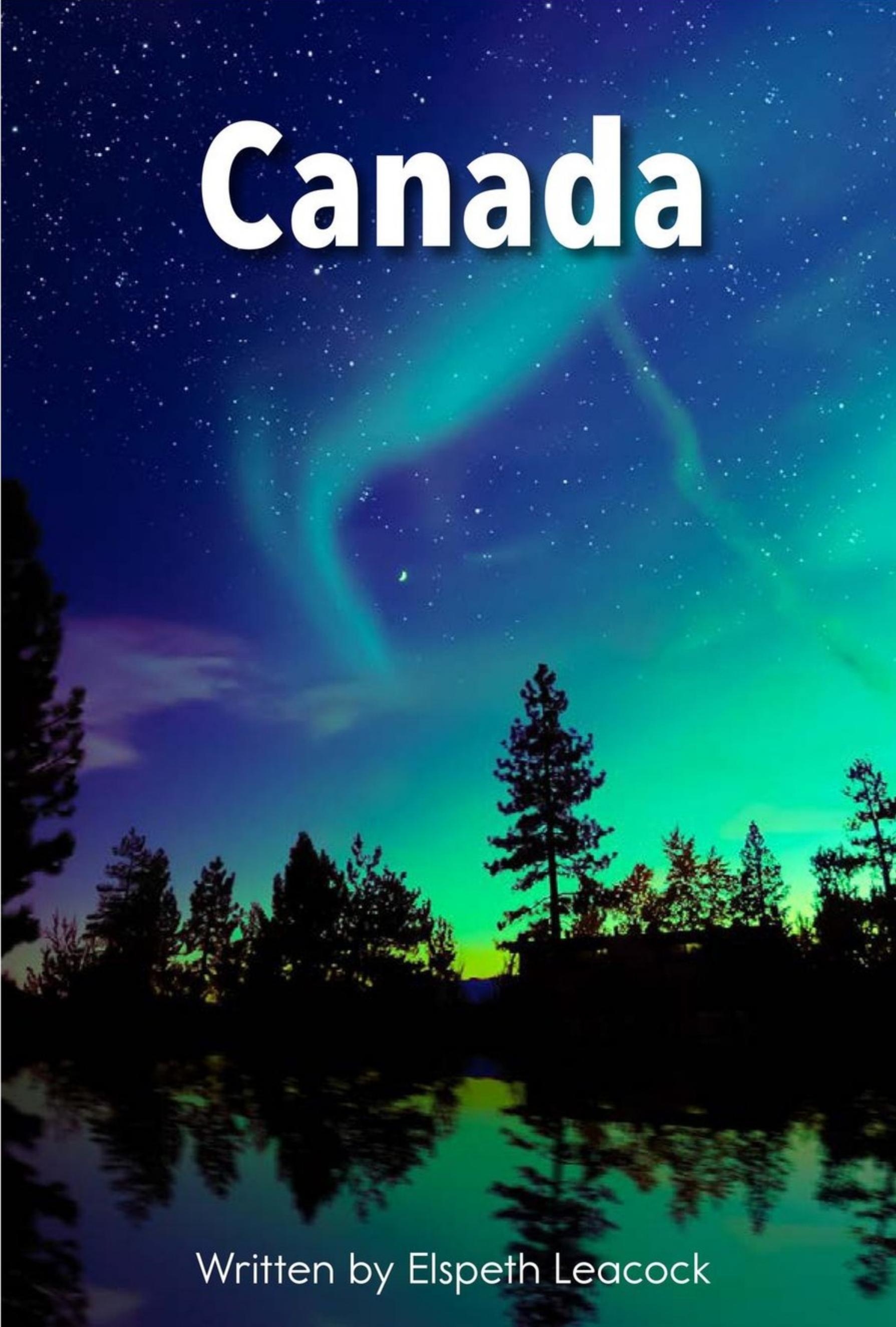
# Canada

Written by Elspeth Leacock



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## Focus Question

What makes Canada a diverse country?

# Words to Know

camouflage

commonwealth

democratically

diverse

dominion

First Nations

Inuit

Métis

migrating

provinces

traditional

tundra

Front cover: A mountain goat looks out over a river in Alberta, Canada.

Title page: The northern lights glow in the Canadian nighttime sky.

Page 3: Three young women wear the Canadian flag on their way to an event.

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Canada

Countries Around the World

Level X Leveled Book

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## Correlation

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# Canada



## Where Is It?

Canada is the northernmost country in mainland North America and the second-largest country on Earth. Large countries usually have many neighbors, but Canada has only one—the United States. The border between them is about 8,893 kilometers (5,525 mi.) long, making it the longest border in the world between two countries.

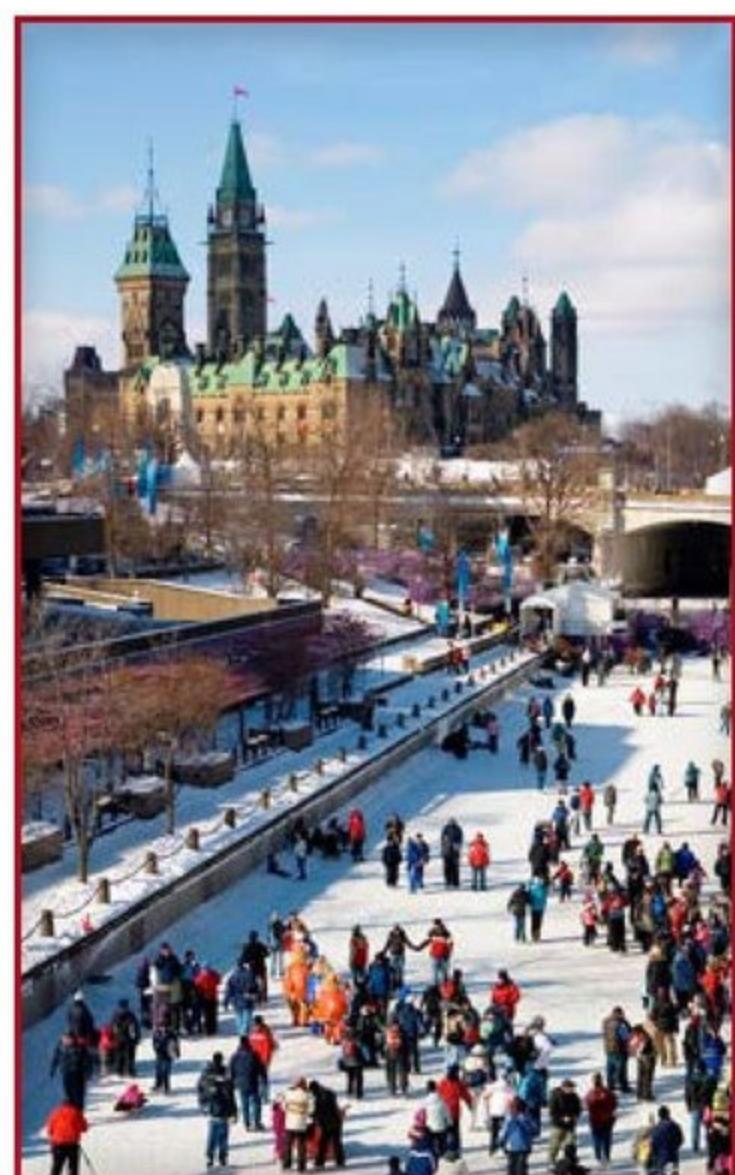
Canada's national motto is "From sea to sea" because the country stretches from the Pacific Ocean in the west all the way to the Atlantic Ocean in the east and the Arctic Ocean to the north.

Canada's 202,080-kilometer (125,566 mi.) coastline encircles not only the vast mainland but over 52,000 islands as well. It is by far the world's longest national coastline. Stretched out, it could circle the globe five times.

Canada consists of ten **provinces** and three territories, each with its own **democratically** elected legislature. Canadians also elect representatives to send to their Parliament in Ottawa, the country's capital.

There is a lot to see in Ottawa, and a good place to start is the observation deck of the 92-meter (302 ft.) Peace Tower. From there, visitors can see people boating on the Ottawa River or hiking in the city's many parks. In the winter they can also see people ice skating to work on the world's largest skating area, the Rideau Canal. The city also boasts 267 other outdoor rinks. From the tower, they can view the stately Parliament buildings, museums, hotels, and theaters along with signs and advertisements in Arabic, Spanish, and Chinese.

Ottawans skate on the 7.8 kilometer (4.8 mi.) long Rideau Canal with the Peace Tower in the background.





People gather for a public event in Ottawa.

## People

With one in every five people born in other countries, Canada is **diverse**. Most Canadians, however, do not think of themselves as a “melting pot,” in which different cultures blend together. Instead, many think of Canada as a “mosaic,” in which immigrants retain their culture and strengthen the nation through diversity.

Some of the first European settlers in the land we now call Canada were from France and England. Before Canada became a country, these people settled separate colonies that were often at war with each other. They had different languages and religions, but eventually the groups learned to get along. Because of this, Canada has two official languages: French and English.

Most Canadian Native peoples belong to three groups: **First Nations**, the **Inuit**, and the **Métis** (may-TEE). First Nations people and Métis live throughout the country, and the Inuit continue to live in the far north. Life in Native communities has changed over the years, but many who live in them continue to maintain **traditional** culture. For example, they teach about their history and learn to speak Native languages.

Through the years, many immigrants came from Germany and other European countries, as well as China, India, the Americas, and the Middle East.

While richly diverse, this vast country is sparsely populated. Probably due to better farmland and access to waterways, most of its population—90 percent, by some estimates—lives within 160 kilometers (100 mi.) of the country's southern border.

Many urban Canadians work in service industries such as tourism, transportation, or banking. Away from the cities, some people work to extract Canada's many resources such as oil, copper, and gold. Others farm the land or cut timber from the vast forests that blanket the country. Resources and manufactured goods are sold as far away as China, but most are traded across the border with the United States.

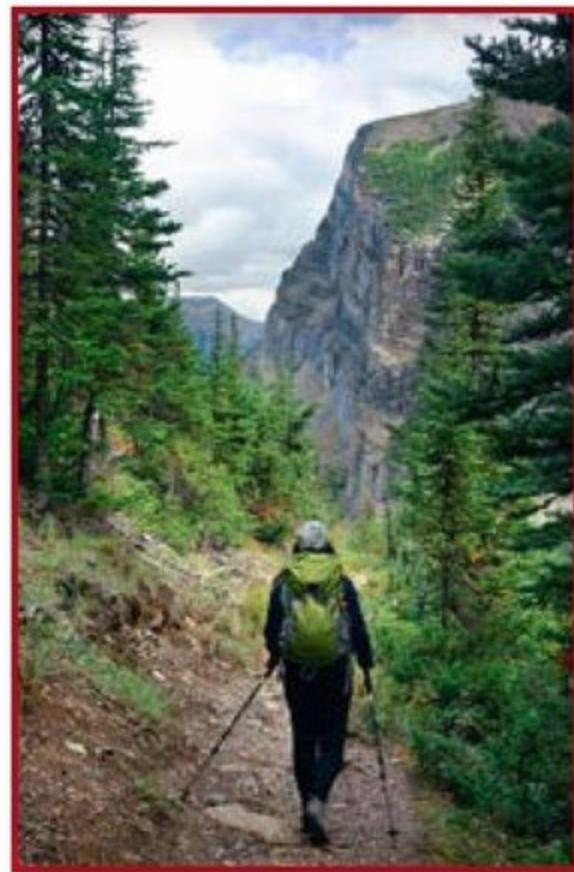
## Regions of Canada



### Land

Canada holds majestic mountains, vast plains, lakes, and endless forests. Parts of the north have ice and snow all year. Geographers divide the country into seven landform regions. In the east is the Appalachian region, with rolling forested hills dotted by farms. Waterways define another region, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence lowlands. It is the smallest region but an important one, known as “Canada’s heartland.” About half of all Canadians live in large cities in this region.

The forested Canadian Shield is a huge region that wraps around Hudson Bay. Long ago, glaciers scraped the area clean of soil and exposed the rocky surface. When the glaciers melted, thousands of lakes formed. Within this wet region lies a cold, marshy area known as the Hudson Bay lowlands.

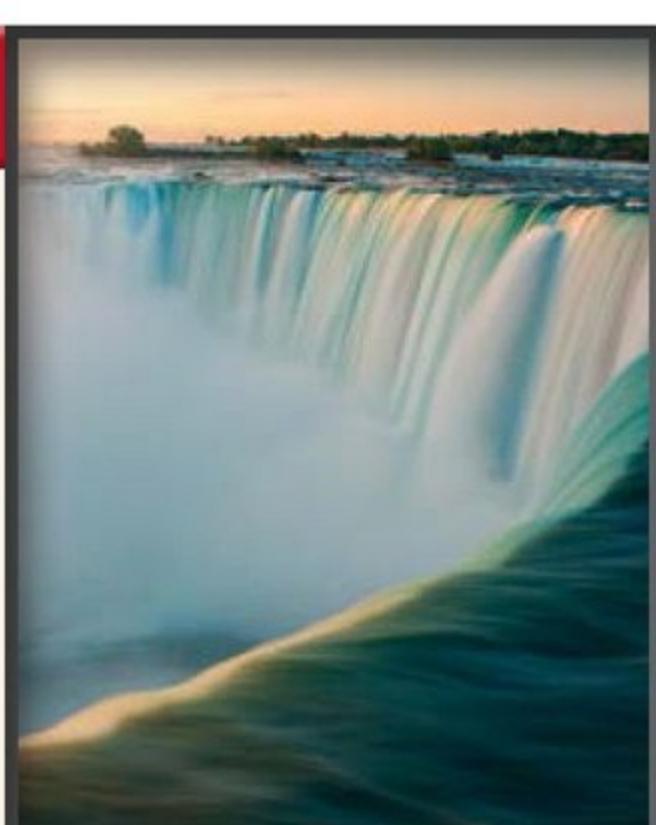


Tourists camp, hike, and canoe in parks in the Cordillera region.

The interior plains are grasslands in the south and forests in the north. Today the grasslands are used for raising livestock and growing grains. In the far west is the Cordillera region with great mountain chains. The highest are the Rocky Mountains, with snow-covered peaks reaching 3,954 meters (13,000 ft.). In between the mountains are fertile valleys where farmers grow fruit and other crops. To the north of all these regions and their forests lies the Arctic **tundra**, where freezing temperatures prevent any trees from growing.

## 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.





## Animals

In the Arctic, a land of ice and snow, animals tend to be white in color. Their **camouflage** helps them survive. Polar bears have black skin, but their fur looks snow white. Harp seal pups are hard to see because they, too, are white. The arctic fox has a white coat in winter but sheds it for a brown one when the snow melts. Beluga whales are white, as are birds such as the tundra swan.

In the forests south of the Arctic, moose, beaver, black bears, and wolves all blend in with the colors of the forest floor. The small animals of the grassy plains, such as ground squirrels and pocket gophers, dig underground tunnels to live in and raise their young. The best way to survive in the mountains is to be sure-footed. In the Rocky Mountains, goats and bighorn sheep have hooves that are great for running, jumping, and rock climbing.

All around Canada are animals that survive the cold winter and lack of food by **migrating**. Many birds migrate, but so do some fish, whales, turtles, grazing animals, and even dragonflies. Huge herds of grazing caribou move hundreds of miles from one part of Canada to another. Other animals go farther south, leaving Canada for a warmer climate. The champions for long-distance migration are the small but swift arctic terns. They fly from their breeding grounds in the Arctic all the way to Antarctica, a forty-day journey of some 35,500 kilometers (22,060 mi.). Then, six months later, they fly all the way back again.

### Canadian Wildlife

Canadians share their huge homeland with countless species of birds, fish, animals, and plants. The country works to protect the land, air, and water for people as well as the wildlife that lives there.



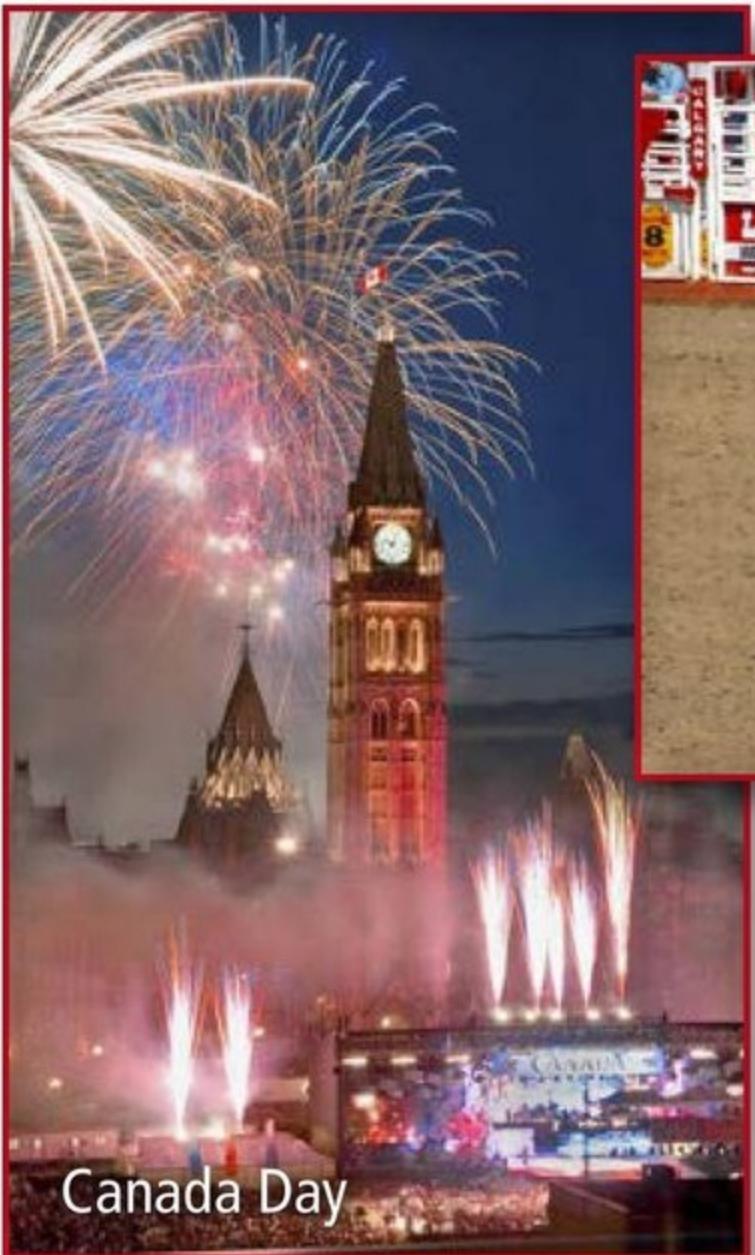
humpback whale

## History

For many thousands of years, what is now Canada was home to self-governing First Nations people and the Inuit. The first Europeans to arrive were the Icelandic Vikings who sailed from Greenland more than one thousand years ago. Survival was difficult, and they eventually left.

In 1497, British explorer John Cabot arrived in what is today eastern Canada and claimed land for England. Later, French explorers also claimed lands. More French and more English explorers came to claim land. As they explored, they found two resources that helped make money back in Europe: codfish and fur. This caused French and English traders to come, and colonies developed.

During the 1400s to 1700s, France and England were often at war, and the conflicts spread to their colonies. With each peace treaty, Canadian lands were ceded to the winner, and eventually Great Britain won out. The colonies grew, but so did their desire for more independence. There were rebellions, but they failed until finally, in 1867, Britain allowed the colonies to become a **dominion**, with its democratic government's capital in Ottawa. In 1931, Canada became fully independent when it became part of the British **Commonwealth** of Nations.



Canada Day

Calgary Stampede

Quebec Winter Carnival

## Celebrations

Canada Day, the nation's birthday, is on July 1. People celebrate with parades, barbecues, and fireworks. The largest celebration is held in Ottawa.

The Calgary Stampede celebrates Canada's old west with bull riding, barrel racing, steer wrestling, bronc riding—even chuck wagon racing. Called "The greatest outdoor show on Earth," it attracts about a million visitors.

Canadians have winter festivals, too, with dogsled races, skiing, and ice-skating. The Quebec Winter Carnival is the largest such festival in the world. There you can enjoy the snow-sculpture 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.

## Conclusion

Canada, one of the largest countries on Earth, includes regions of towering mountains, rolling plains, dense forests, frozen tundra, and endless rocky shores. Each region has its own plants, animals, resources, and people. The people who live there may speak French, English, or one of many other languages, but they are all Canadian and proud of their cultural mosaic.



Ice hockey originated in Canada and is the country's national sport. Players battle in a game in Montreal (top). Canadian fans cheer their team (below).





**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

<b>camouflage</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the colors, patterns, or shapes of an animal's body that allow it to blend into the background or hide (p. 10)
<b>commonwealth</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a group of states or countries that are associated with each other (p. 12)
<b>democratically</b> ( <i>adv.</i> )	in a way that allows people to have an equal vote or equal participation (p. 5)
<b>diverse</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	different or distinct from one another; made up of different or distinct people or things (p. 6)
<b>dominion</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	land or an area owned by a government or ruler (p. 12)
<b>First Nations</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who lived in present-day Canada before Europeans arrived or the descendants of those people (p. 7)
<b>Inuit</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a group of Native people who live in the Arctic region of North America (p. 7)
<b>Métis</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a group of people with a mix of First Nations and European ancestry (p. 7)
<b>migrating</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	moving from one habitat or region to another at a certain time each year (p. 11)
<b>provinces</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the largest areas that some countries are divided into (p. 5)
<b>traditional</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	of or relating to a long-established custom (p. 7)
<b>tundra</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a cold, treeless Arctic region where the ground is always frozen (p. 9)

# Canada

A Reading A-Z Level X Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,391

## Connections

### Writing

Investigate more facts about Niagara Falls.

Write a research report including information about the falls such as their size, number of visitors per year, and other relevant details.

### Social Studies and Art

Canada's national motto is "From sea to sea." Choose a new motto for Canada.

Then, make a poster that includes facts and pictures that support why you chose this as the new motto.

The logo for Reading A-Z features the word "Reading" in a red, sans-serif font. The letter "R" has a small yellow sun icon above it, and the letter "A" has a small yellow sun icon below it. To the right of "Reading" is the word "A-Z" in a larger, bold, red, sans-serif font.

Reading A-Z

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