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# C Is for Canada



Written by Amy Weber • Illustrated by Cende Hill

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## Subject: Greetings from Canada

Hey Stephanie,

It was so exciting to get your email yesterday! I've been looking forward to having a pen pal for some time now. I'm so glad your teacher in Omaha (that's in Nebraska, right?) contacted mine here in Vancouver (that's in British Columbia). Do you know where that is?

British Columbia is one of the 10 **provinces** in Canada (there are three **territories**, too). We don't have states like the United States.

Anyway, in your last email, you said that you are doing a report on Canada. Is this the kind of information that you're looking for? If not, could you be more specific? I hope I can help.

Your Canadian pen pal,  
Jacqueline



## Subject: My questions

Hi Jacqueline,

Good to hear from you. Here, let me list some of the topics that my teacher wants covered in the report so that you have a better idea of what information I am looking for: people, economics, government, history, culture, religion, and physical geography. Hope that's not too much.

So, what's your family like? My dad sells animal feed and my mom is a waitress at the truck stop outside of town. Do you have any brothers or sisters? I don't.



Thanks so much for doing this, and I can't wait to tell you about Omaha and the United States for your report next month.

Your friend,  
Stephanie

## Subject: My family

Hey Stephanie,

Wow, that is a lot of information to cover! How about this: I'll start by talking about my family (that will at least cover your "people" section) and then maybe that will help answer some of the other sections. Okay?

My dad is a fisherman in English Bay. He leaves before I wake up for school because he says he has to get to the Bay before the fish wake up! Vancouver has the largest port in North America, as far as exports go. It also rarely freezes, so my dad works year-round.



Fish are a major resource here. My dad says Canada exports about 80 percent of its fish. Other resources are iron ore, nickel, zinc, copper, gold, silver, coal, and oil. I found that information online at Statistics Canada (you may want to check it out).

My mom drives my brother and me to school every day. She's a French teacher (both English and French are the official languages here) at my brother's school. He's in 12th grade, so next year he will go to college. Some of my classmates take the bus or the train to get to school, and a few ride their bikes. School starts at 8:30 and ends at 3:00.



I'm in 4th grade, like you, and my most favorite class is social studies. Right now we're studying the Canadian government, lucky for you! Let me give you some facts about the government from my notebook.

Canada is a **democracy**, a government run by the people, just like the United States. We have our own **constitution** and our own bill of rights.

The United States is a **republic**, but Canada is a **constitutional monarchy** in which the king or queen of England is our chief of state. The prime minister leads **Parliament** (no president here). Canada's Parliament is made up of two houses, the Senate with 105 members and the House of Commons with 308 members. Hope that helps a little.

I have to go (my mom is calling me because it's time for lacrosse practice). I'll try to answer the rest of your questions when I get back.

Talk to you soon,  
Jacqueline



### Subject: Lacrosse?

Hi Jacqueline,

Thanks so much. What's lacrosse? Is it like soccer? That's what I play.

My mom was wondering where your grandparents are from. My grandparents are from Germany.

What do you do for fun? Every summer, my family goes to Florida and relaxes on the beach. Do you take any family vacations? Canada sounds so cool. Hope practice was fun.

Your friend,  
Stephanie

## Subject: Family heritage, family vacation

Hi Stephanie,

Practice was tough, I'm pretty tired, but I think I'm even more hungry. My mom is upstairs cooking dinner—we're having caribou. She learned how to make it from my grandpa who was **Inuit**. Looks like I'm starting to answer your family **heritage** questions.

Before I do that, I should tell you that, yes, I do play soccer but only in gym class, and it's not as fun as lacrosse. Lacrosse is kind of like soccer, but we use sticks with baskets on the end to pass the ball to another player or hopefully into a goal that's much smaller than a soccer goal.



Okay, back to my family. My dad's **ancestors** are from England. He can trace them as far back as the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897! My mother's father was Inuit, like I said, but her mother was of French descent—and that's why she knows French so well. To answer your religion question, most Canadians are Roman Catholic. Many others are Protestant, like us, or another Christian religion. Only a small number of people are Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, or Hindu.

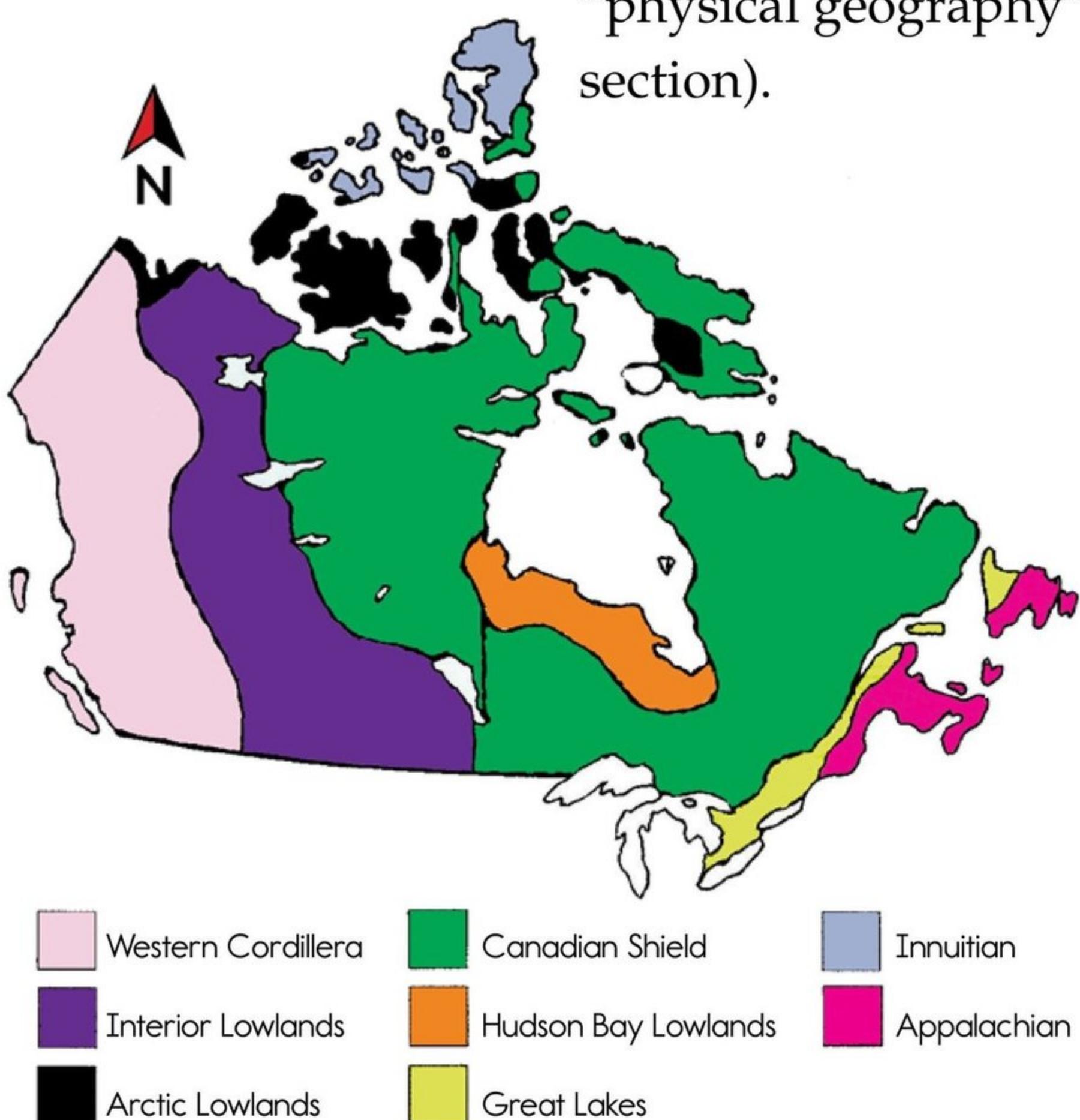


Two Englishmen pan for gold during the Klondike Gold Rush.



Yes, we take family vacations. This past summer we went to Mount Logan in the Yukon's Kluane National Park. The mountain rises to 5,959 meters (19,551 feet to you), which makes it the highest point in Canada. I was hoping that we would travel all the way around the country, all 9,984,670 square kilometers (or 3,854,045 square miles), but my mom and dad said that was too far. Did you know that Canada is the second largest country in the world?

Canada has eight land regions: the Canadian Shield, the Hudson Bay Lowlands, the Western Cordillera, the Interior Lowlands, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Appalachians, the Arctic Lowlands, and the Innuitians. Since we headed straight north from Vancouver, we stayed in the Western Cordillera land region. The scenery in this region is amazing. There are so many mountains (I hope this is helping with your “physical geography” section).





The two regions I really want to see sometime in my life are the Canadian Shield and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands. The Canadian Shield is the largest land region in Canada—it covers about half of the country! There are plains, mountains, and many ancient rocks there. The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands is mostly rolling lowlands. This is where Niagara Falls and Canada's main river, the St. Lawrence Seaway, are located. This area is often called Canada's heartland because it is a center for agricultural production and industry (isn't that kind of like Omaha?).

Dinner's ready, so I have to run (it smells great). As soon as I'm done, I'll finish answering the rest of your questions. Here I come, **caribou** stew!

Jacqueline



### Subject: Caribou or Moose?

Hi Jacqueline,

I had no idea Canada was so big, and I've never heard of caribou. Online, they look like moose. Is that true?

We have lots of deer here. Sometimes my friends and I see them in our backyards.

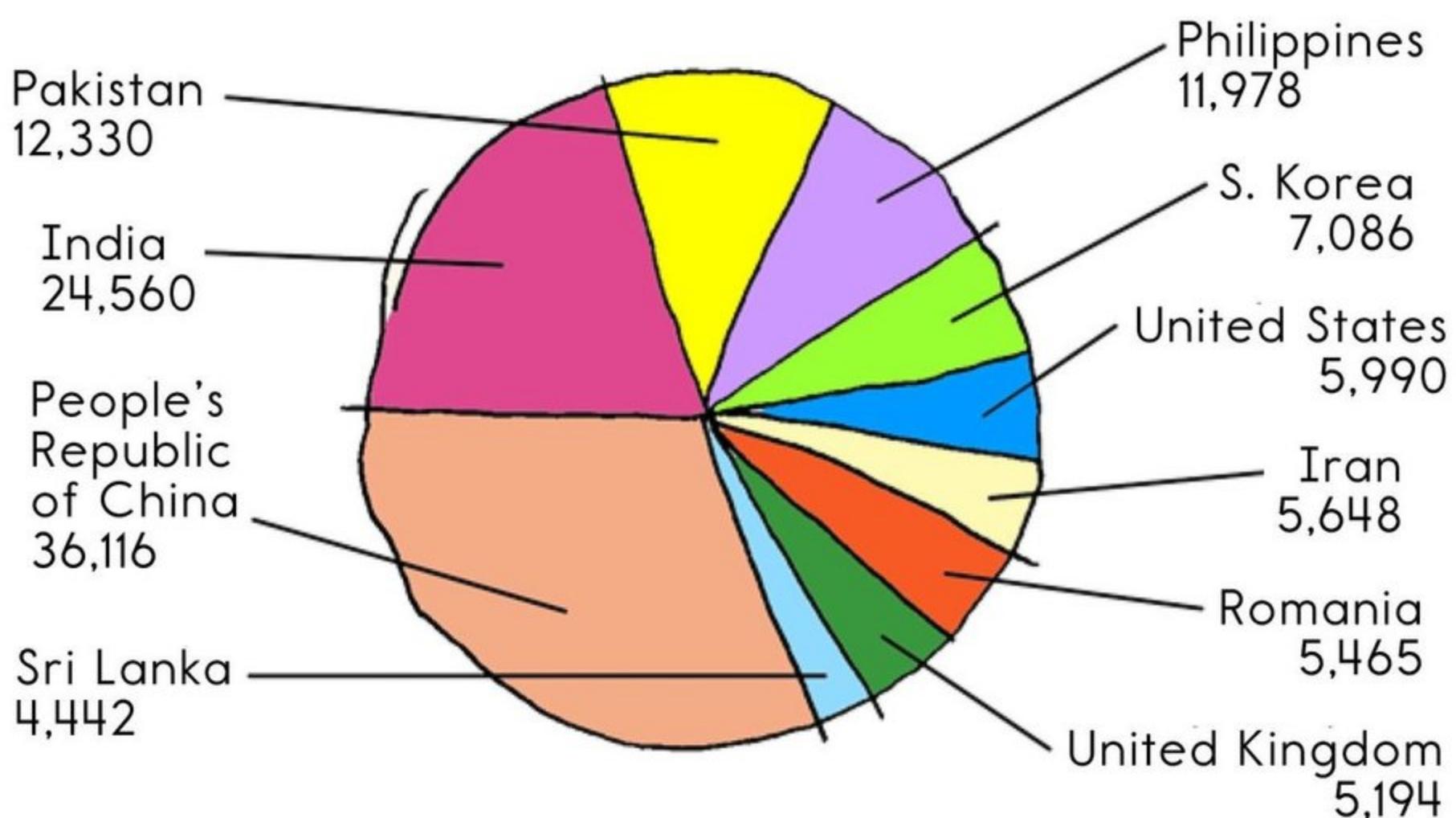
What are your friends like? Talk with you soon.

Your friend,  
Stephanie

## Subject: Come visit!

Hi Stephanie,

Many of my friends are on the lacrosse team, but my best friend Li is not. He's from China. Did you know that a lot of people immigrate to Canada from Asian countries? Each year when school starts, I look around my classroom and see more kids who are Asian. I worked on an immigration graph with Li in Math class last year that showed the number of people who came to Canada in 2003. I am sending you a copy of the graph we made (my mom helped me scan it to the computer). If you can't open it, please let me know.



You know what? I just looked at your original list of things your teacher wanted for this report, and I think we talked about all of them, except for history. I'll go bug my dad for that (he's a big history buff). Here, he just scanned me a timeline from one of his history books. I'll attach it, too.

- 9,000 B.C. Artifacts show that native Canadians are living in the present-day Ontario area.
- A.D. 986 The first European, a Viking named Bjarni Herjolfsson, sees the Labrador coastline.
- 1608 Samuel de Champlain ("Father of New France") founds Quebec City, which is the first permanent French settlement in Canada.
- 1610 Henry Hudson explores Hudson Bay.
- 1702 The French and British battle in Queen Anne's War.
- 1818 The Canada-U.S. border is established at the 49th parallel.
- 1841 An Act of Union brings together Upper and Lower Canada, creating the Province of Canada.
- 1867 Sir John A. Macdonald is the first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada.
- 1897 The gold rush begins in the Yukon.
- 1931 Great Britain gives Canada full authority over legislative matters.
- 1965 Canada issues a new flag.
- 1989 The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement starts.
- 1999 The Inuit Territory of Nunavut is created.



Hope I helped you with your report.  
Maybe this next summer, you could persuade  
your family to come visit Canada instead of  
Florida. You could visit Ottawa (the national  
capital) or Toronto (the largest city), but let's  
face it, Vancouver is the prettiest place to be in  
the summer. You'd love it. Can't wait to hear  
about Omaha and the United States next  
month. Take care.

Your friend,  
Jacqueline

## Glossary

<b>ancestors</b>	people from whom one descends (p. 12)
<b>caribou</b>	a type of large reindeer that lives in very cold places (p. 15)
<b>constitution</b>	basic laws of a state or nation that tell how the government is run (p. 9)
<b>constitutional monarchy</b>	a government in which a parliament oversees the power of a king or queen (p. 9)
<b>democracy</b>	a government in which the people vote for other people to represent them (p. 9)
<b>heritage</b>	something that is passed down from generation to generation (p. 11)
<b>Inuit</b>	a member of a group of native peoples living near the Arctic, such as northern Canada, Greenland, or Alaska (p. 11)
<b>Parliament</b>	a group of government officials who can make and change a nation's laws (p. 9)
<b>provinces</b>	lands divided up by a country (p. 5)
<b>republic</b>	a nation led by a president and governed by elected representatives (p. 9)
<b>territories</b>	lands controlled or owned by another country (p. 5)

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