

Module 4: En famille

Topic 5 Content: Canada

Geography



Canada is technically the second largest country in the world with an area of 3.85 million square miles. This North American nation is home to roughly 36 million people. It is divided into ten provinces and three territories. The nation's capital is the city of Ottawa, which is located in the Ontario Province. Some of the other major Canadian cities include Toronto, Ontario; Vancouver, British Columbia; Calgary, Alberta; Edmonton, Alberta; Montréal, Québec; Ville Québec, or Québec City, which is the capital of the Province of Québec.

Module 4: En famille

Topic 5 Content: Canada

History



As you can see in this map, up until the mid-18th century, a large portion of Canada was considered to be French territory. This collection of North American territory was known as New France, and even had a colonial government responsible directly to the King of France.

In the early years, the French settlers experienced wars with the native people and competition with Dutch fur traders; however, New France continued to grow and flourish. The English established Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, which cut deeply into French fur trade. This eventually led to a series of wars, in an attempt to end French claims to continental North America. The last of these wars ended in 1763, when a treaty was signed, ceding Canada and all other French territories in North America, except for Louisiana, to the British.

The Canadian Confederation, or L'Union Canadienne, was enacted in 1867, unifying the various territories into one country. Since then, Canada has expanded west, added provinces to its country, participated in two World Wars, built a trans-continental railway, hosted the Olympic Games in Montréal, and made huge gains in tourism and commerce.

Module 4: En famille

Topic 5 Content: Canada

Government



Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Canada is a parliamentary democracy. Its system of government holds that the law is the supreme authority. Responsibility for lawmaking is shared among one federal, ten provincial, and three territorial governments.

Canada is also a constitutional monarchy, in that its executive authority is vested formally in the Queen through the Constitution. This means that the Queen is the Head of State. The executive branch is comprised of the Crown, which is represented by the Governor General, the Prime Minister, who is the Head of Government, and the Cabinet.

Module 4: En famille

Topic 5 Content: Canada

Language



Canada is officially a bilingual nation, where both French and English are given equal status by public institutions. This came about due to the Law of 1969, which made French and English the official languages of Canada. The law does not require that Canadians speak both languages, but the government must provide all federal services in both languages in areas where more than 10% of the people speak French.

Québec is the only province in Canada with a French-speaking majority. Francophones account for 81% of the total population. Interestingly, the city of Montréal is the second-largest French speaking city in the world, after Paris.

Module 4: En famille

Topic 5 Content: Canada

Culture



Bonhomme Carnaval

Québec holds the oldest winter festival in Canada, known as the Winter Carnival. To relieve the tedium of winter, the Québécois gather and celebrate before Lent, from the end of January to mid-February. In French, this celebration is referred to as Carnaval. The Bonhomme Carnaval is the mascot of this celebration, and has even become the unofficial mascot for le Province de Québec. There are parades, ice sculptures, a masquerade ball, and outdoor sporting events like snowboarding, ice canoeing, snowshoes, hockey, and dog-sledding.

The national sport of Canada is ice hockey, but sports such as lacrosse, basketball, football, baseball, and martial arts are all popular. Many Canadian sports teams participate in leagues with American teams; the NHL, MLB, and NBA all have Canadian teams.

The country is also home to famous museums, such as the Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, or the National Gallery of Canada, and the Musée national des beaux arts du Québec, or the National Museum of Fine Arts of Québec.

Module 4: En famille

Topic 5 Content: Canada

Notable Canadians



Marc Garneau

There are many famous actors who hail from Canada, such as Jim Carrey, Ryan Gosling, Ellen Page, Seth Rogen, and Rachel McAdams, just to name a few. Some notable Canadian musicians include Céline Dion, Justin Bieber, Avril Lavigne, and Drake. Canada has also produced athletes, such as Wayne Gretzky and Georges St-Pierre; astronauts, like Marc Garneau; authors, like Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro; and playwrights, like Victor Lévy-Beaulieu.

Module 4: En famille

Topic 5 Content: Canada

Education



Elementary education, or *école primaire*, is mandatory in the Province of Québec. It starts with grade 1 and continues through to grade 6. Secondary school, or *école secondaire*, has five grades, called secondary 1-5 or simply grades 7-11. These students are typically aged 12 to 16. Upon completion of grade 11, students receive their high school diploma from the provincial government.

Québec has publicly funded French and English schools. In primary and secondary schools, most students attend a French language school. Since 2006, English is taught as a second language in French primary schools from grade 1 onwards, and a few schools also offer English immersion programs for advanced students. English schools offer a large range of programs that include French as a second language, French immersion, and fully bilingual programs that teach both English and French as first languages.