Canada

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bestofthereader.ca

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Welcome

This e-book is part of a series called Best of The Reader. The stories in the e-books are from *The Westcoast Reader*. It is a newspaper for adults who are improving their English reading skills.

To the reader

✔ You can use this book in a classroom, with a tutor, or on your own.

✔ Each story has exercises to go with it. These exercises can help you improve your English and reading skills.

✔ You can check your answers at the end of the book.

Three reading levels

There are three reading levels in this book. Here are the symbols for each level:

Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

To the teacher

Learners can read the articles and do the exercises individually, in pairs, or in groups.

The topics can be explored further through discussion or follow-up activities.

Teachers' Guide
There is a Teachers' Guide on this website. The guide has ideas and suggestions on how to use the e-books with students.

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Capilano University for this project.

A special thank you to the learners and teachers who helped choose the articles for this book.

All of the material in this book first appeared in *The Westcoast Reader* (1982 to 2009). Some of the articles have been updated. Most of the exercises and activities for learners are based on material from *The Westcoast Reader* Teachers' Notes (1982 to 2009).

Credits

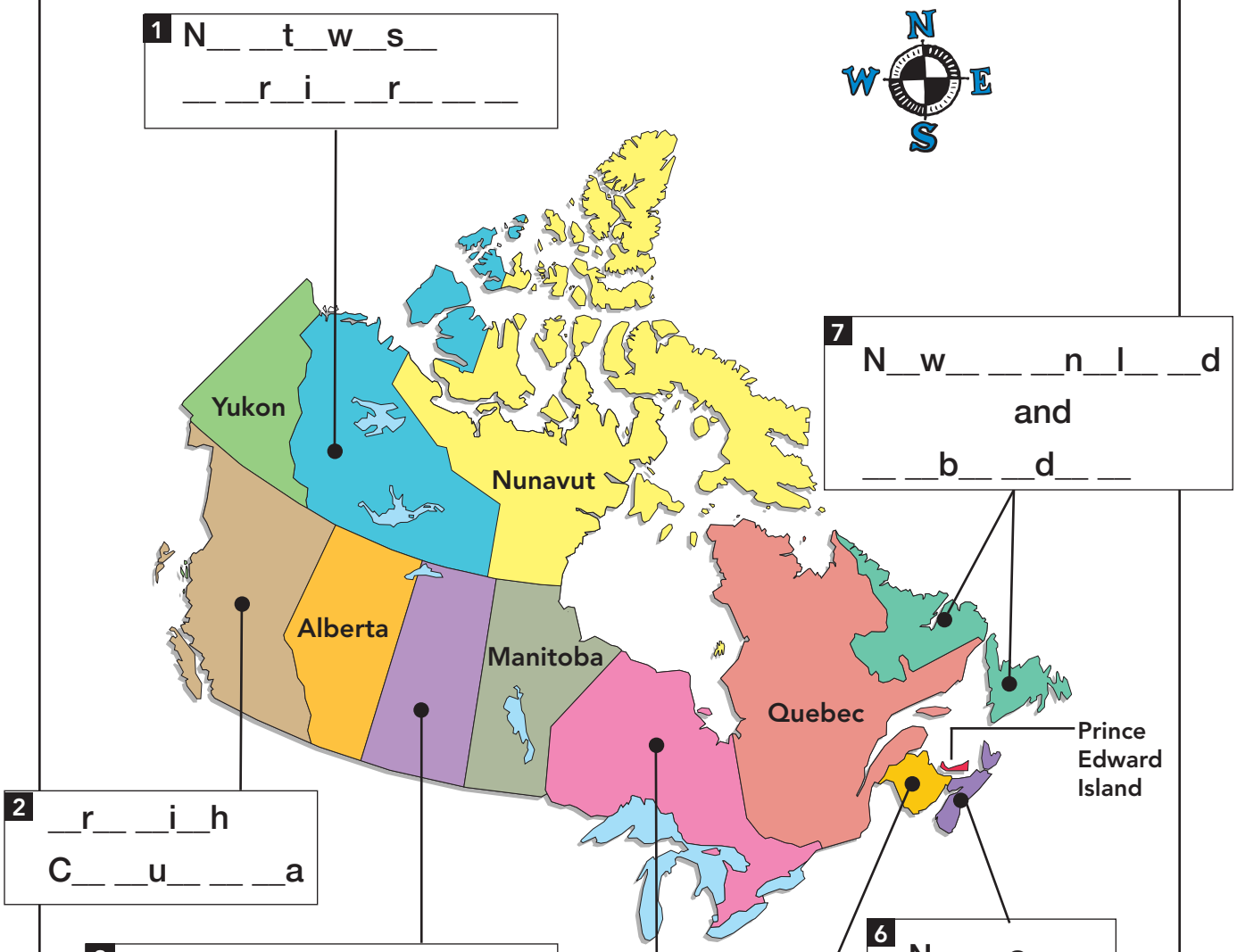
Photos
Front cover— iStockphoto (Parliament Buildings); *The Province* (girls); *The Vancouver Sun* (family)

Pages 5– 7: Canada Post; Page 9: iStockphoto; Page 11: iStockphoto (tree, syrup); Canada Post (stamps); Pages 12, 14: *Canada Coast to Coast*; Page 15: *The Vancouver Sun;* Page 17: BC Archives D-06009 (Carr top); BC Archives C-03805 (Carr house); BC Archives H-02813 (young Carr); Paintings: Skidegate (left), 1912, Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.73; Skidegate (right), 1912, Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.75; Three Cedar Trunks, 1937, Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.64 (All VAG photos: Trevor Mills); Page 19: *The Vancouver Sun;* Page 22: iStockphoto (Parliament Buildings); Jason Ransom (PM family); Page 24: *The Province* (dinosaurs); Page 28: *The Province* (Fox); Page 30: *The Vancouver Sun*

Illustrations
Cover, Pages 8, 9, 11: Guy Parsons; Page 13, 15. 18, 20, 22, 24, 26: Nola Johnston

Map of Canada

Fill in the names of the missing provinces and territories.



Ottawa is Canada's capital

Ottawa is the capital of Canada.
It is in the province of Ontario.

The city of Ottawa
is on the Ottawa River.

The Parliament Buildings
are the most important buildings
in Ottawa.

Canada's government meets
in the Parliament Buildings.

Write the sentences

Write the words in the correct order to make a sentence.

1. capital / of / Ottawa / The / is / Canada

   _____

2. is / province / It / of / in / Ontario / the

   _____

3. River / of / Ottawa / The / on / is / Ottawa / city / the

   _____

4. Ottawa / are / Buildings / The / in / Parliament

   _____

Categories

Add two more words to each category.

1. **countries:** Canada _____ _____
2. **cities:** Ottawa _____ _____
3. **provinces:** Ontario _____ _____
4. **rivers:** Ottawa _____ _____
5. **capital cities:** Ottawa _____ _____

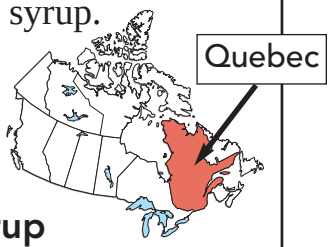
Maple leaf

Maple trees grow
in many parts of Canada.

The maple leaf
is a symbol of Canada.
There is a red maple leaf
on Canada's flag.

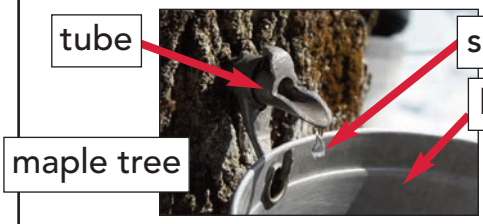
Maple syrup

Canada produces about 85 percent of the world's maple syrup. Most of Canada's maple syrup comes from Quebec.



Making maple syrup

In the spring, workers put a tube in each maple tree. They hang a bucket from the tube. Sap from the tree drips into the bucket.



The workers collect the sap. They boil it to make maple syrup.

A year in the life of a maple leaf

Spring
maple seeds

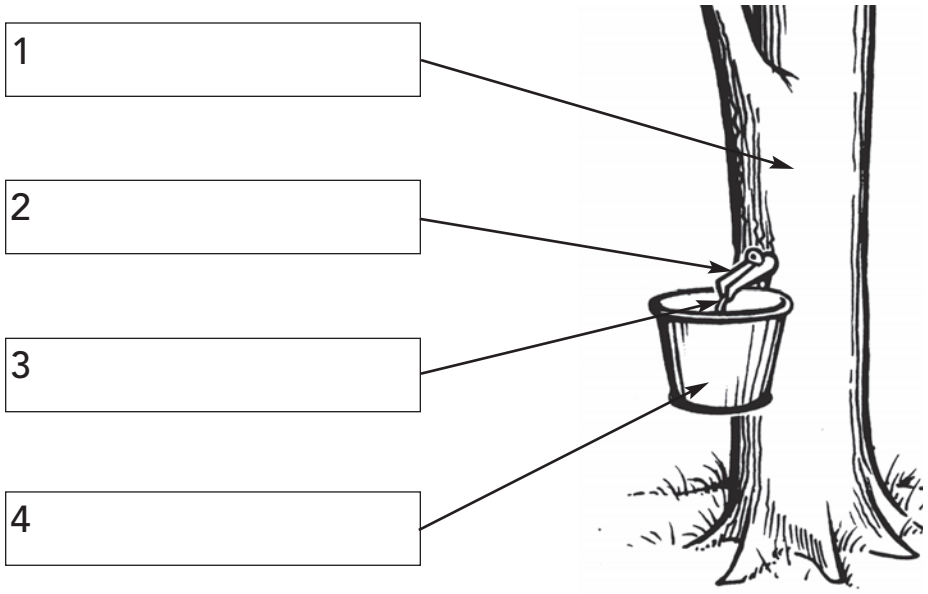
Summer
green maple leaves

Fall
red maple leaves

Winter
brown maple leaves

Label the drawing

1. Unscramble the letters in the box to make words.
2. Use the words to label the drawing.



cektub
bute
eter
asp

What is the meaning?

Match the word on the left with the meaning on the right.

____ 1. hang	a. to bring together from several places
____ 2. sap	b. a watery liquid in plants
____ 3. collect	c. a long hollow object
____ 4. hole	d. an opening into something
____ 5. tube	e. a container with an open top and a handle
____ 6. bucket	f. to attach something so it does not touch the ground

Canada's coins

Use the words in the boxes to finish the sentences.

1 The nickel has a _____ on it. This animal has thick fur and stong teeth. It lives in _____ and lakes in many parts of Canada.

2 The *Bluenose* is on Canada's dime. The sailing _____ was built in 1921. It was very fast.

3 The Canadian quarter has a caribou on it. Caribou are a kind of _____. They live in Canada's North.

4 A loon is on Canada's one _____ coin. This water bird lives near lakes in many parts of the country. Many people call this coin a "loonie."

5 Canada's $2 coin has a _____ bear on on it. The centre is a yellowish-gold colour. The outside _____ is a silver colour. Many people call this coin a "toonie."

deer dollar beaver ring ship rivers polar

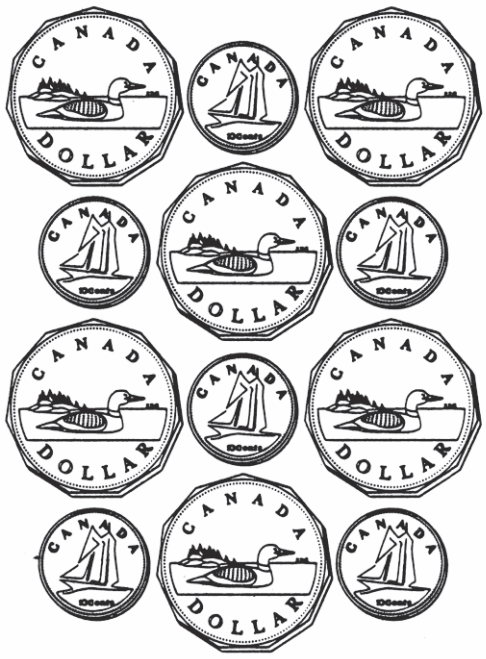
Canada's penny

For many years, Canada had a one-cent coin called a penny. In 2012, the Canadian Mint stopped making pennies. Canada's penny had two maple leaves on it.

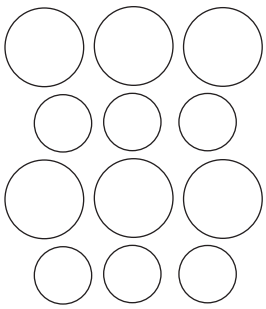
A coin trick

1 You will need six large coins and six small coins.

2 Arrange the coins in four rows like the ones below.



3 Now, can you rearrange the coins to make two rows of large coins and two rows of small coins?



There is only one rule: You can touch only one coin.

July 1 is Canada's birthday

In the 1600s and 1700s, people from Europe came to explore North America. Some of these people stayed and started colonies.

Four colonies join together

On July 1, 1867, four colonies joined together to form Canada. They were Ontario (Canada West), Quebec (Canada East), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.These colonies became Canada's first provinces. The other provinces and territories joined Canada later.

Canada Day

We celebrate Canada's birthday on July 1. Many cities and towns have parades. Some places have fireworks in the evening.

This map shows Canada in 1867.

When did the other provinces and territories join Canada?

- Manitoba ~ 1870
- Northwest Territories ~ 1870
- British Columbia ~ 1871
- Prince Edward Island ~ 1873
- Yukon ~ 1898
- Saskatchewan ~ 1905
- Alberta ~ 1905
- Newfoundland (and Labrador) ~ 1949
- Nunavut ~ 1999

Finish the chart

Finish the chart with the following information:

a. the date that each province and territory joined Canada

b. the abbreviation for each province and territory

Province or territory	Date joined Canada	Abbreviation
Provinces		
Alberta		AB
British Columbia		
Manitoba	1870	
New Brunswick		NB
Newfoundland and Labrador		
Nova Scotia	1867	
Ontario		
Prince Edward Island		
Quebec		QC
Saskatchewan		
Territories		
Northwest Territories		
Nunavut		
Yukon	1898	

Find the abbreviations (symbols) for Canadian provinces and territories at <www.canadapost.com>

Emily Carr is a famous Canadian artist

Emily Carr is a famous artist. Her paintings are in art galleries and museums in many parts of Canada.

Born in Victoria

Emily Carr was born in Victoria, British Columbia, in 1871.

The Carr family lived in this house in Victoria.

Studied art

Emily Carr began to draw at a young age. When she was 19 years old, she went to San Francisco to study art. Later, she studied art in Paris and London.

Emily Carr in 1891

Painted totem poles

Carr had an interest in the First Nations people of BC. She travelled by canoe to small villages along the coast. She often painted First Nations houses and totem poles.

Painted landscapes

Carr also liked to paint the forests and mountains of British Columbia.

Wrote books

Emily Carr wrote several books about her life. She died in Victoria in 1945.

The Westcoast Reader 3/2003

What word is missing?

One word is missing in each sentence. Draw an arrow where the missing word should go. Write the word on the line.

born
1. Emily Carr was in Victoria, British Columbia. born

2. Carr studied art Europe. _____

3. She often painted Nations houses and totem poles. _____

4. Carr also liked to the forest and mountains of BC. _____

5. Emily Carr in Victoria in 1945. _____

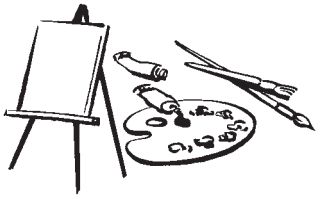
6. Emily Carr's paintings in many art galleries and museums. _____

Word families

Circle the correct form of the word. Then cross out the incorrect word.

1. Emily Carr's paint / paintings are in many museums in Canada.

2. Carr began to drawing / draw at a young age.



3. She studied / student art in San Francisco.

4. Carr traveller / travelled by canoe to small villages on the BC coast.

5. She had an interest / interesting in First Nations people.

6. Carr painting / painted the mountains and forests of BC.

Helping newcomers adjust to Canada

The Macena and Mbona families enjoy spending time together.

Thousands of immigrants and refugees come to Canada every year. They need to learn many things about their new home.

Program helps newcomers

There is a host program in Vancouver called Connections. It matches newcomers with Canadians. Hosts help newcomers adjust to life in Canada.

The Macenas are hosts

The Macena family came to Canada from Brazil 10 years ago. Now they are helping other newcomers.

The Mbonas are newcomers

The Mbonas are refugees from Africa. Yogabo and Alphonsina Mbona have six children. They came to Canada from Congo.

Families spend time together

Paolo and Christina Macena help the Mbonas in many ways. For example, they helped the couple find used furniture and inexpensive winter clothes.

The two families enjoy spending time together. Paolo says, "We like to go out together on the weekend."

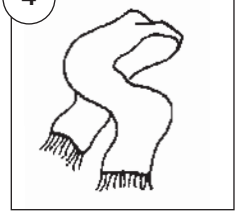
The Westcoast Reader 10/2007 • Adapted from *The Vancouver Sun*

Crossword: Winter clothes

The Mbonas had to buy winter clothes. What did they buy?

Across

1

4


6

7

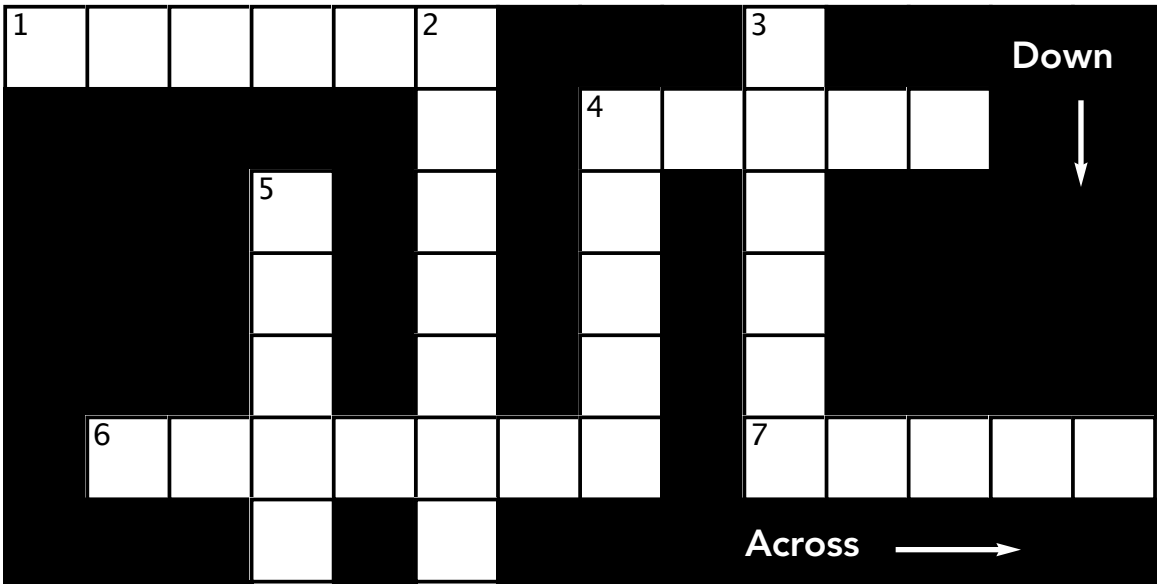
Down

2

3

4

5



Make a new word

Fill in the missing letters. Then take the circled letters and rearrange them to make a new word. The new word starts with a capital letter.

1. A country in South America ___ ___ (O) ___ ___ ___
2. Five, ___, seven ___ (O) ___
3. Husband and wife (O) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
4. The season before spring ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ (O)
5. Table, chair, bed (O) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
6. Opposite of teach ___ ___ (O) ___ ___

New word from circled letters ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

What's the word?

One of the three prefixes next to the root word is right for that word. Choose the correct prefix and write the new word on the line.

prefixes	root word	new word
1. un / in / dis	expensive	inexpensive
2. un / re / in	pay	_____
3. re / mis / im	possible	_____
4. un / mis / in	afraid	_____
5. un / dis / re	honest	_____

Members of Canada's Parliament

Canada has 343 Members of Parliament (MPs). They form a group called the House of Commons. Voters in every province and territory elect the MPs. These men and women meet to decide about important issues in Canada. They also make new laws.

Members of Parliament (MPs)

MPs represent the people who live in their areas.

✔ Each area is called a federal electoral district. It is also called a riding or a constituency.

✔ Canada has 343 federal ridings.

✔ MPs work in their ridings for part of the year. They also work in Ottawa for part of the year.

MPs meet in the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

Who is your MP?

Find your MP using your postal code.

1. Go to: www.ourcommons.ca/Members

2. Type in your postal code.

Federal election

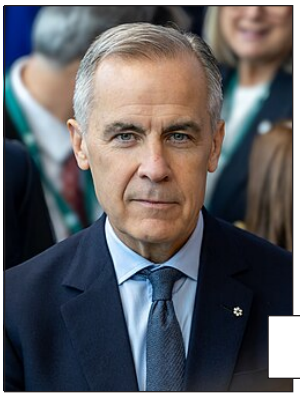
Canada had a federal election in April 2025. Voters elected 343 MPs. Five parties have MPs.

Party	Number of MPs
Liberal Party	174
Conservative Party	140
Bloc Québécois	22
New Democratic Party	6
Green Party	1
Total	343

Standings as of 04/13/2026

Canada's prime minister

The Liberal Party has the most MPs. It forms the government. Mark Carney is the leader of the Liberal Party. He is the prime minister of Canada. He first became prime minister in 2025.



Mark Carney

True or False

Circle T if the sentence is true. Circle F if the sentence is false (not true).

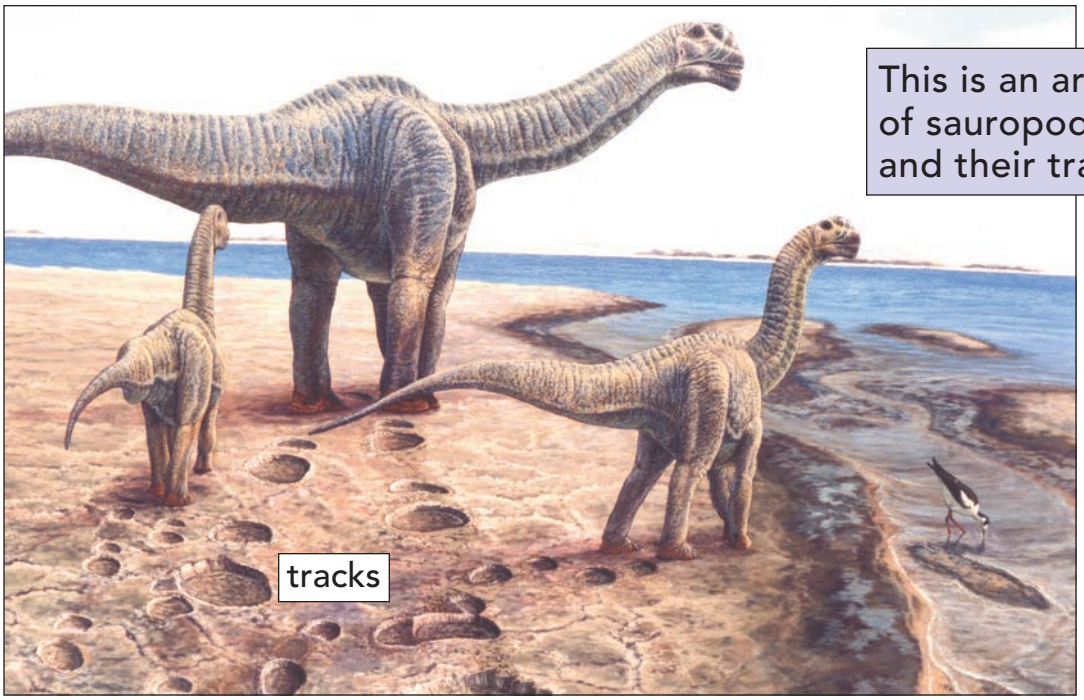
1. Mark Carney is the prime minister of Canada. **T** **F**
2. The Liberal Party has the most MPs. It forms the government. **T** **F**
3. The Conservative Party has the second most MPs. **T** **F**
4. MPs meet in the Parliament Buildings in Victoria. **T** **F**
5. Canada had a federal election in 2018. **T** **F**
6. You can use your postal code to find the name of your MP. **T** **F**
7. All the MPs belong to a political party. **T** **F**
8. The Green Party has fewer MPs than the New Democratic Party. **T** **F**
9. Canada has 308 federal ridings. **T** **F**
10. MPs decide about important issues in Canada. **T** **F**

Did you know?

Justin Trudeau

Justin Trudeau was the prime minister of Canada from 2015 to 2025. He was the leader of the Liberal Party.

Workers find dinosaur tracks in BC



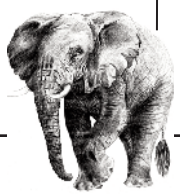
This is an artist's drawing of sauropod dinosaurs and their tracks.

In 2007, workers were building a road near the border between Alberta and British Columbia. The workers found a large number of dinosaur tracks in the rocks.

Scientists studied the rocks. They said giant sauropod dinosaurs made the tracks about 135 million years ago.

Sauropods were huge

Sauropods had long necks and long, powerful tails. The dinosaurs were about 20 metres long and 7 metres high. They probably weighed 30 tonnes. That's the weight of about six African elephants.



Biggest and oldest

Rich McCrea is a scientist. He studies dinosaurs. Rich says, "The tracks found in BC are the biggest ever found in Canada. They are also the oldest."

The Westcoast Reader 1/2009 • Adapted from *The Province*

Is it a, b, or c?

Circle a, b, or c to finish the sentences.

1. In 2007, workers were ____ a road near the border between Alberta and BC.
   a. surveying b. building c. repairing
2. The workers found a large number of dinosaur ____ in the rocks.
   a. bones b. skulls c. tracks
3. ____ studied the rocks.
   a. Scientists b. Road workers c. Teachers
4. They said sauropod dinosaurs ____ the tracks about 135 million years ago.
   a. built b. made c. covered
5. Sauropods had long ____ and long, powerful tails.
   a. ears b. beaks c. necks
6. The dinosaurs ____ weighed 30 tonnes.
   a. definitely b. probably c. undoubtedly

Match

Match the five words with their meanings.

____ 1. powerful	a. footprints
____ 2. huge	b. strong
____ 3. border	c. likely
____ 4. tracks	d. very big
____ 5. probably	e. boundary

Finish the words

Add the vowels (a, e, i, o, u) to finish each word.

1. d ___n___ s___ ___r
2. sc ___ ___ nt___st
3. w ___ ___ gh___d
4. ___l ___ ph___nts
5. b___tw ___ ___n

Terry Fox never gave up

Terry Fox ran on one artificial leg.

Terry Fox died in 1981, but Canadians still remember him.

Lost his leg

Terry Fox was born in 1958. He grew up in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia.

In 1977, Terry found out he had bone cancer. Doctors had to amputate most of Terry's right leg. He had to use an artificial leg to walk.

Decided to raise money

Terry decided to run across Canada to raise money for cancer research. He started his run in Newfoundland in 1980. He had to stop in Ontario because he had cancer in his lungs.

Terry Fox Runs

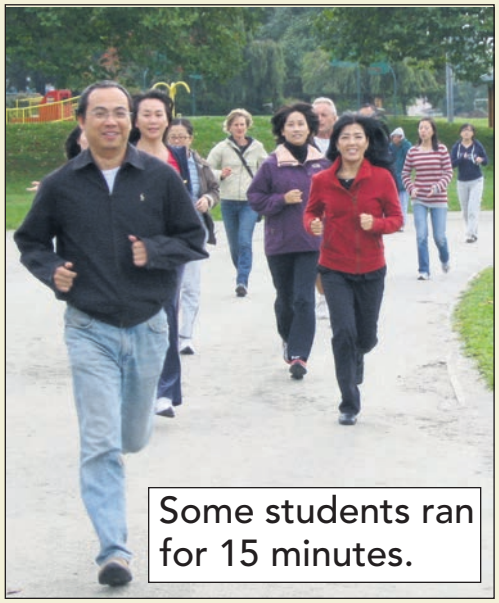
Terry Fox died in 1981. He raised $24 million before he died.

Every September there are Terry Fox Runs. The money from the runs goes to cancer research.

Students take part in Terry Fox Run

On September 26, our ESL class had a Terry Fox Run at our community centre.

Some people ran. Other people walked. We raised $337 for cancer research.


Some students ran for 15 minutes.

The Westcoast Reader 1/2009

Finish the sentences

Make sentences using the words from Lists A, B, and C.

List A	List B	List C
~~Terry Fox~~	he found out	~~in 1958.~~
In 1977,	to run across Canada	was for cancer research.
Doctors	$24 million	most of Terry's right leg.
Terry decided	that he raised	before he died.
Terry raised	had to amputate	to raise money.
The money	~~was born~~	he had bone cancer.

1. Terry Fox was born in 1958.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Who is your hero?

Terry Fox is a hero. He inspires people in Canada and around the world. Who is your hero? _____

Why is this person your hero? _____

_____

_____

Lots of Lees

Don Lee

Don Lee came to Canada from China in 1949. He says, "At that time, there were only a few Lees in Vancouver. And most of them were English."

More and more Lees

During the past 60 years, Don has seen a big increase in the number of Lees in Vancouver. Today Lee is the most common last name in the Vancouver area. Most of the Lees are from Korea or China.

Lee replaces Smith

For many years, Smith was the most common last name in the Vancouver area. Now, it is the fourth most common.

Top 10

Here are the top 10 last names in the Vancouver area in 2007.

	Last name	Number of people
1	Lee	5,863
2	Wong	5,101
3	Chan	3,752
4	Smith	3,623
5	Kim	2,387
6	Chen	2,368
7	Gill	2,100
8	Li	2,056
9	Brown	1,962
10	Johnson	1,843

Names

- A last name is sometimes called a family name or a surname.
- A first name is sometimes called a Christian name or a given name.
- A maiden name is a woman's family name before she is married.

The Westcoast Reader 1/2008 • Adapted from *The Vancouver Sun*

Last names

Many last names have meanings. For example:

- Kim means "gold" in Korean.
- Ivanov means "son of Ivan" in Russian.
- Petit means "small" in French.
- Castillo means "castle" in Spanish.
- Wang means "king" in Chinese.
- Cermak means "robin" in Czech.

Do you know the meaning of your last name? Write it on the line.

_____

You can find out about surnames at: www.surnames.behindthename.com

Opposites

Find the opposites of these words in the story.

1. many _____
2. then _____
3. bottom _____
4. decrease _____
5. rare _____
6. first _____
7. after _____
8. least _____

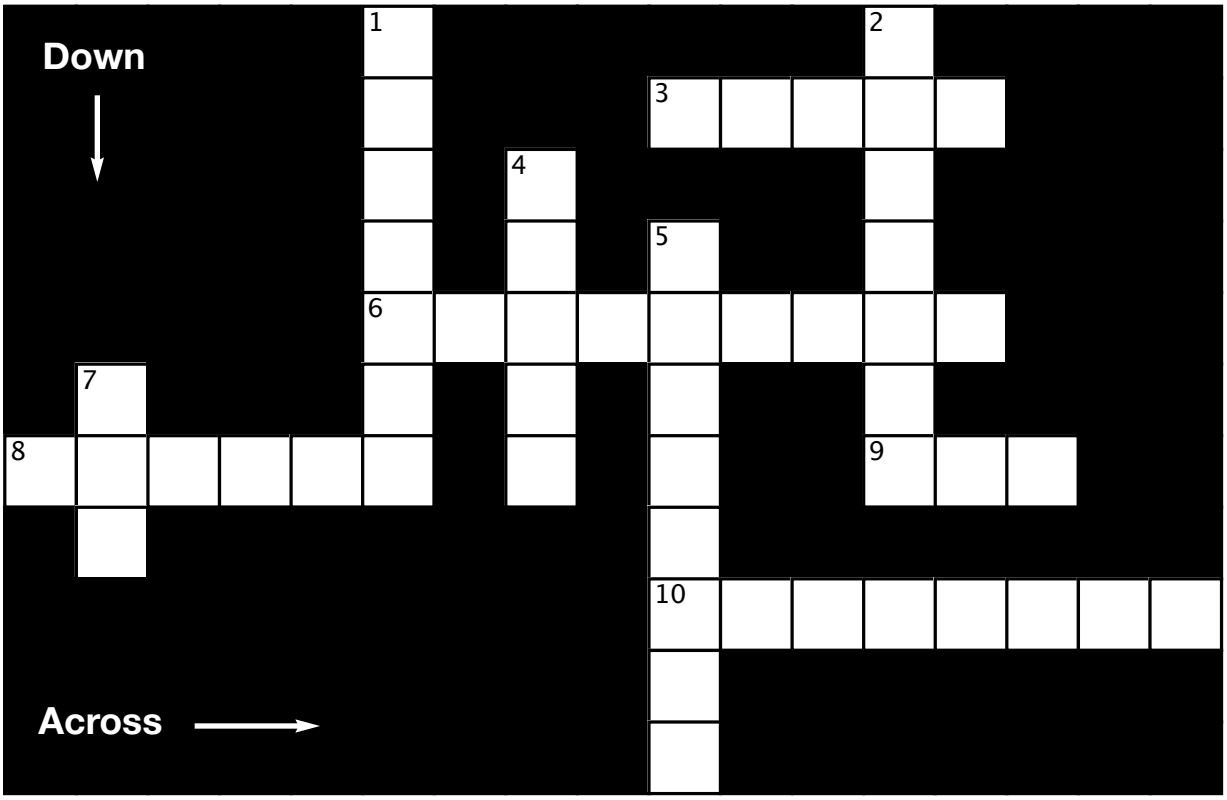
"Few" and "a few"

Use "few" or "a few" in the sentences.

1. Can I borrow _____ dollars from you?
2. She gave him _____ books to read.
3. Leo's English is excellent. He makes _____ mistakes.
4. I invited _____ friends to dinner on Friday night.
5. I often feel very lonely. I have _____ friends here.

"A few" means a small number.
"Few" means almost zero.

Crossword: Canada



Across

3. Emily Carr painted totem __.

6. Nunavut is Canada's newest __.

8. Canada's __ has a beaver on it.

9. Terry Fox lost a __ to cancer.

10. A sauropod is a kind of __.

Down

1. Ottawa is the __ of Canada.

2. Canada has 343__ ridings.

4. Canada has 10 provinces and __ territories.

5. July 1 is Canada's __.

7. The Mbonas have __ children.

Answers for exercises

Map of Canada (p 5)
1. Northwest Terrritories
2. British Columbia
3. Saskatchewan
4. Ontario
5. New Brunswick
6. Nova Scotia
7. Newfoundland and Labrador

Write the sentences (p 7)
1. The capital is Ottawa.
2. It is in the province of Ontario.
3. The city of Ottawa is on the Ottawa River.
4. The Parliament Buildings are in Ottawa.

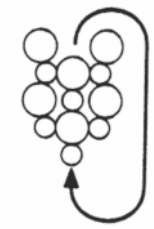
Categories (p 7)
Answers will vary.

Label the drawing (p 9)
1. tree 2. tube 3. sap 4. bucket

What is the meaning? (p 9)
1f 2b 3a 4d 5c 6e

Canada's coins (p 10)
1. beaver, rivers 2. ship 3. deer
4. dollar 5. polar, ring

A coin trick (p 11)
Solution: Put your finger on the middle of the top row. Move the coin around the other coins until it is below the middle coin on the bottom row. Without taking your finger off the coin, push the centre row up one place.



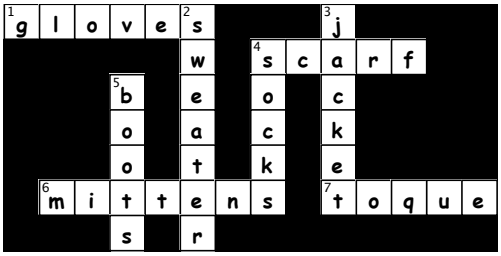
Finish the chart (p 13)

Provinces		
Alberta	1905	AB
British Columbia	1871	BC
Manitoba	1870	MB
New Brunswick	1867	NB
Newfoundland and Labrador	1949	NL
Nova Scotia	1867	NS
Ontario	1867	ON
Prince Edward Island	1873	PE
Quebec	1867	QC
Saskatchewan	1905	SK
Territories		
Northwest Territories	1870	NT
Nunavut	1999	NU
Yukon	1898	YT

What word is missing? (p 15)
2. in 3. First 4. paint 5. died 6. are

Word families (p 15)
1. paintings 2. draw 3. studied 4. travelled
5. interest 6. painted

Crossword: Winter clothes (p 17)



Make a new word (p 18)
1. Brazil 2. six 3. couple 4. winter
5. furniture 6. learn New word: **Africa**

What's the word? (p 18)
2. repay 3. impossible
4. unafraid 5. dishonest

Answers for exercises

True or false (p 20)
1T 2T 3T 4F 5F
6T 7T 8T 9F 10T

Is it a, b, or c? (p 22)
1b 2c 3a 4b 5c 6b

Match (p 22)
1b 2d 3e 4a 5c

Finish the words (p 22)
1. dinosaur 2. scientist 3. weighed
4. elephants 5. between

Finish the sentences (p 24)
2. In 1977, he found out he had bone cancer.
3. Doctors had to amputate most of Terry's right leg.
4. Terry decided to run across Canada to raise money.
5. Terry raised $24 million before he died.
6. The money that he raised was for cancer research.

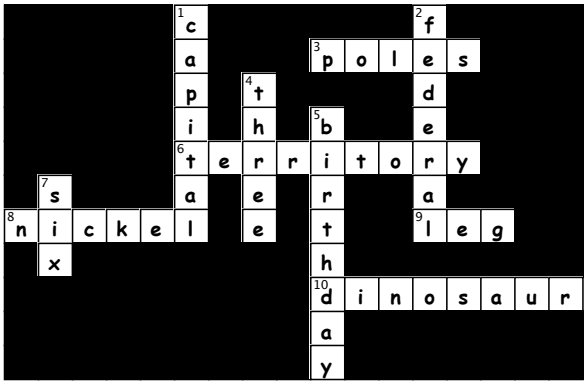
Opposites (p 26)

1. few	5. common
2. now	6. last
3. top	7. before
4. increase	8. most

"Few" and "a few" (p 26)

1. a few	4. a few
2. a few	5. few
3. few	

Crossword: Canada (p 27)



Who are they?

Look quickly through this ebook to find the names of these five people.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____