

Canada

A MOSAIC



BEFORE YOU READ

Reach Into Your Background

Have you ever made a mosaic, or a picture from tiles, beads, or other small bits of material? If you have, you know how satisfying it is to create a single pattern from many

different shapes and colors. Canadians are proud of their "mosaic" society. It is the product of different cultures that keep their own identities while contributing to the culture of the whole nation.

Questions to Explore

1. Why do Canadians consider their society a mosaic?
2. How have the indigenous peoples of Canada worked to preserve their cultures?

Key Term

reserve

Key People and Places

Gordon Lightfoot
Nunavut

Channel-surf Canadian radio or television, and you may be surprised at the different languages you hear. Journalist Andrew H. Malcolm describes the variety of languages in Canada this way:

“One Toronto radio station broadcasts in thirty languages, including announcements of arrival delays for flights from ‘back home.’ In many Vancouver neighborhoods the street signs are in . . . English and Chinese. One Toronto television station survived simply by broadcasting programs in many languages aimed at many different ethnic communities, including [Pakistani] movies in Urdu with English subtitles. Toronto’s city government routinely prepares its annual property tax notices in six languages: English, French, Chinese, Italian, Greek, and Portuguese.”

▼ For people across the world, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or Mounties, symbolize Canada.



LINKS TO LANGUAGE ARTS

Forming an Identity

Until the 1830s, no French-Canadian poets or novelists had any of their work published in Canada. The Quebec Movement of 1860 was the first attempt to preserve French culture. In the 1960s, Quebec poets worked to create a French-Canadian identity. One example is Paul Chamberland. In his book called *Terre Québec*, which means "the land of Quebec," he uses language to encourage pride in the province's French roots.

▼ Some French-Canadian drivers have license plates that refer to Quebec as *la belle province*, or "the beautiful province."



Canada: Ethnic Groups

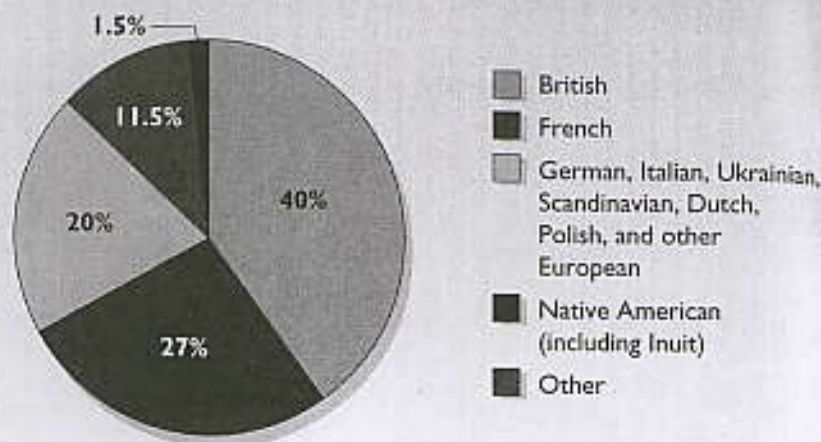


Chart Study Like the United States, Canada is very ethnically diverse. **Critical Thinking** Hundreds of years ago, Native Americans were the largest ethnic group in Canada. What group is largest today? What percentage of Canada's people are of European descent?

The People of Canada

The people who speak these languages came to Canada in search of better lives. Since Canada is the second-largest country in the world, it was attractive to newcomers in search of land and new opportunities. From the beginning, Canada's leaders made immigration easy. At first, they preferred European settlers. Laws set limits on immigrants who were Jews, Asians, or Africans. But that has changed. Today, people of all ethnic groups may move to Canada as long as they can support themselves.

Sometimes the ties among Canadians are not as strong as those among Americans. People in the United States may disagree with one another. But they rarely talk about forming independent states or countries. Some Canadian groups do.

For instance, the French Canadians of Quebec are very concerned about preserving their heritage. They are glad that Canada is a bilingual country. It has two official languages—English and French. In Quebec, special laws promote French culture and language. For instance, all street and advertising signs are written in French. An English translation of the sign appears below the French. But many French Canadians want more. They want Quebec to become a separate country. To show their determination, they have license plates that read *Je me souviens*, or "I remember." This refers to remembering their French heritage.

Canada's indigenous peoples also want to preserve their culture. Most, however, do not want to be independent. Instead, they are trying to fix problems from the past. In Canada, as in the United States, early European settlers took over the indigenous peoples' lands. Many indigenous peoples were sent to reserves. These were areas that the government set aside for them. Others were denied equal rights and facilities. In Canada, new laws allow the indigenous peoples to use their own languages in their schools. Now, people want their own languages on the street signs in their communities.

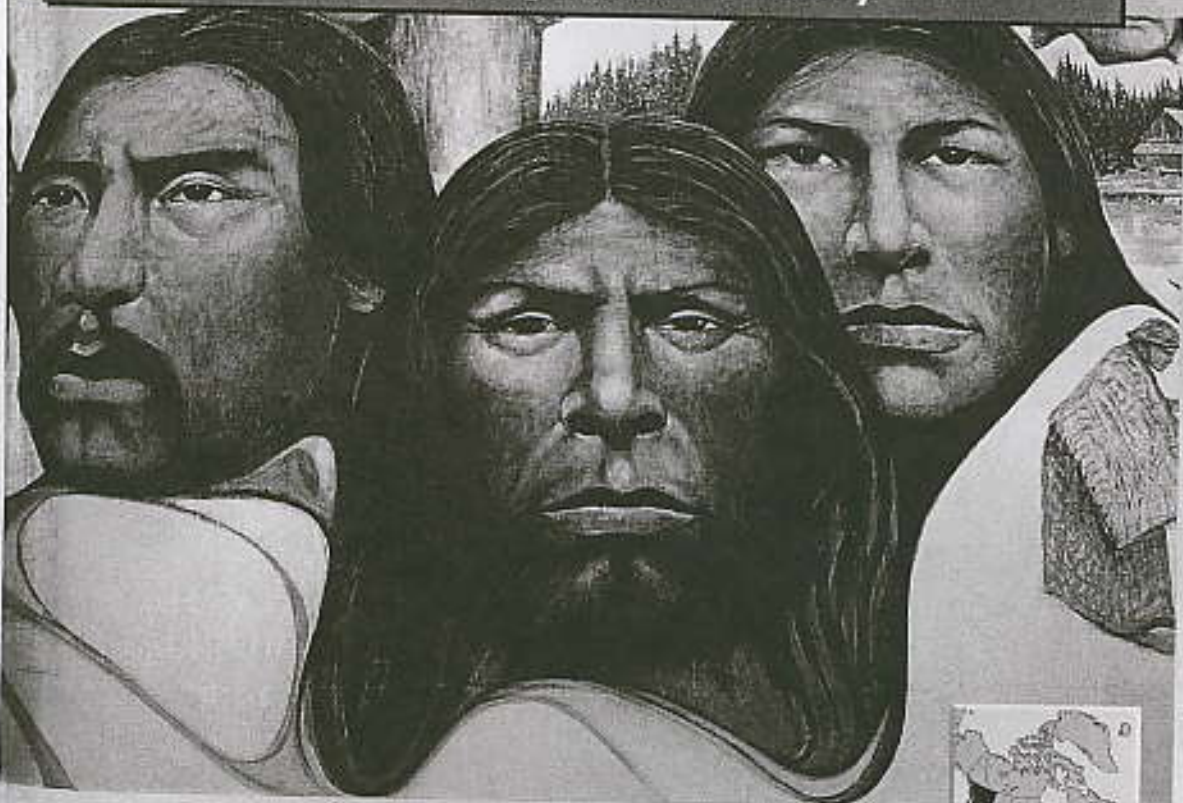
The Chippewa have a special problem. During World War II, the Canadian army took over Chippewa land for a military base. The Chippewa were sent to a reserve. The government said it would return the land after the war. Although the war ended in 1945, the land was not returned until 1994. The Chippewa sued the government for breaking its promise. They will use the money awarded to them for many projects. One big project is cleaning up dangerous waste that the military left behind. Chippewa chief Thomas M. Bressette feels his people deserved better treatment from the government:

READ ACTIVELY



Connect How is the history of Canada's indigenous peoples similar to that of Native Americans in the United States?

Remembering Canada's History



The community of Chemainus, British Columbia, is famous for its collection of 32 historical murals. The murals are huge, and the people depicted in them are larger than life. This mural honors the role that the country's indigenous peoples have played in Canada's history.