

Settlement Patterns and Ways of Life in Canada

3.1 Introduction

James is a sixth grade student in Pond Inlet, a town in Nunavut. Located in the far northern part of Canada, Nunavut is the homeland for the Inuit people. When James goes to school in January, the sun never comes up. Looking out of his classroom window in the dark winter months, all he sees are streetlights and the lights of cars. Some of his classes at school are taught in English while others are in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit. The majority of sixth graders, including James, also speak Inuktitut at home. In fact, in their language, the town's name is Mittimatalik.

Compare James with Marie, a sixth grader in Quebec City, which is in eastern Canada. Marie is French Canadian, and all of her classes are in taught in French. Because of Quebec City's location, it is always light outside when Marie is in school—she can watch many people passing by on the streets outdoors. James and Marie live in the same country, but their experiences are very different.

Canada is such a large, diverse country that it is often called a **plural society**. This term reflects the fact that the Canadian people have come from many countries and cultures. While most people share a Canadian identity, many also keep the traditions of their parents and grandparents.

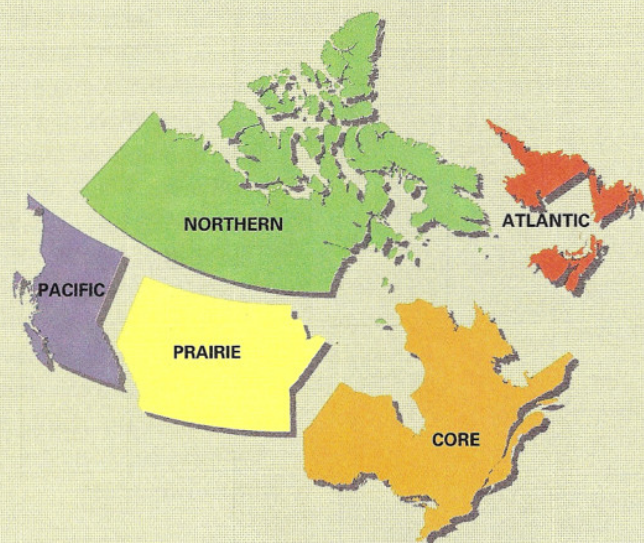
Canadians often divide their country into five **regions**. In this chapter, you will explore these regions and determine how differently people live in each one. You will also discover how location influences people's lives.

Essential Question

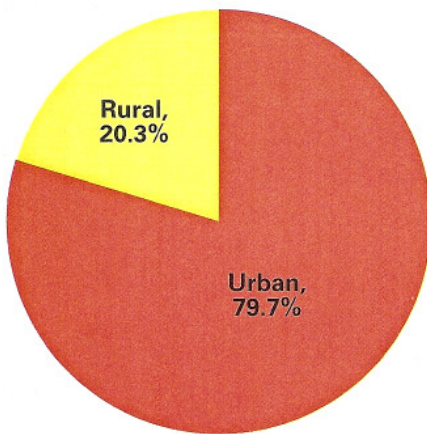
How does where you live influence how you live?

This illustration shows the five regions of Canada. Each region has a different climate. Each region's history and economy are different too. These differences affect how people live in Canada. Keep this illustration in mind as you try to answer the Essential Question.

Graphic Organizer



Canada's Population



Most Canadians Live in Cities

Eight out of 10 Canadians live in urban areas. Only one fifth live in rural areas. Most Canadians live in the ecumene as well. This is found in the southern part of the country, mainly the southeast.

3.2 The Geographic Setting

In area, Canada is the world's second largest country, covering most of the northern part of the North American continent. The United States is Canada's neighbor to the south, and the two countries share a border that is about 5,000 miles long. This is the longest unguarded border in the world.

Canada's Three "Founding Peoples" The first people to settle in Canada probably came from Asia thousands of years ago. Pursuing mammoth, huge bison, and other game, the people crossed over a broad land bridge linking the continents of Asia and North America. In time, their descendants became the Inuit and other Native American groups. Groups moved southward, gradually spreading throughout the Americas. But the native peoples who still live in Canada are known as Canada's first "founding peoples."

Canada's second and third founding peoples came from Europe. In the early 1600s, the French established a settlement, calling the place by its Native American name, Quebec. Meanwhile, English colonists had settled on the Atlantic coast in what is now the state of Virginia. France and Great Britain struggled for power worldwide and in the mid-1700s fought a war for control of North America. When the war ended in 1763, Great Britain was victorious. As a result, France gave up Canada to Great Britain.

In the 1800s, large numbers of English settlers came to Canada, but the French Canadians held on to their language and way of life. Meanwhile, Canada attracted settlers from Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, and Germany. By the early 1900s, Italians, Ukrainians, and Jews were arriving from southern and eastern Europe. Some settled in the big eastern cities while others began farms on the flat land in central Canada. Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino people came from Asia as well, and many settled along Canada's Pacific coast.

All of these groups have helped to shape Canada's plural society. Its founding peoples have kept their languages and traditions. Newer settlers have also held on to traditional ways. Yet all are Canadians.

A Thinly Settled Country Canada is large in area but small in population. In 2001, just over 30 million people lived there. That is fewer people than lived in the state of California.

Nearly 8 out of every 10 Canadians live in an **urban** area. These are areas in or around cities. The rest of the population make their homes in **rural** areas. These are parts of the country that are not near cities.

Most of Canada's people live within 100 miles of the United States. This strip of land lies within Canada's **ecumene**. An ecumene is a region that is well suited for people to live permanently.

Many Americans think that Canadians' lives are just like theirs. This is not the case. It is true that many Canadians live close to the United States. It is also true that Canada and the United States are each other's most important trading partner. And it is true that they are good allies. But there are many political, economic, and cultural differences between the two countries.

► Geoterms

ecumene a geographic region that is well suited for permanent settlement by people. Areas not included in the ecumene are generally too dry, too cold, or too rugged for permanent human settlement.

plural society a society in which different cultural groups keep their own identity, beliefs, and traditions

rural found in or living in areas that are not close to cities

urban found in or living in a city

Canadians Cling to the Border

Canada has only about one tenth as many people as the United States. Much of the Canadian north lies outside the ecumene. It is so cold that few people choose to live there. Most of Canada's people live within 100 miles of the U.S. border.

Population Density of Canada

