

Canada, federated country in North America, made up of ten provinces and three territories. Canada is the second largest country in the world but has about the same population as the state of California. The capital city of Canada is Ottawa.

Most Canadians live in the southern part of the country. More than three-quarters of them live in metropolitan areas, the largest of which are Toronto, Ontario; Montréal, Québec; Vancouver, British Columbia; Ottawa, Ontario; Hull, Québec; and Edmonton, Alberta. French and English are the official languages. Canada has impressive reserves of timber, minerals, and fresh water. Canada is a parliamentary democracy, and the federal, provincial, and territorial legislatures are all elected. Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom is recognized as the queen of Canada. She is the official head of state. The queen is represented in Canada by the governor-general and ten lieutenant governors. Canada's original inhabitants are often called First Nations or Indians. The name Canada comes from a word meaning "village" or "community" in one of the Iroquoian languages. Modern Canada was formed in an event that Canadians call Confederation, in 1867, when three colonies of Britain merged to create a partially independent state of four provinces. Since then, six more provinces and three territories have been added. Canada achieved full independence in 1931 but continues to belong to the Commonwealth of Nations, a voluntary association of countries with ties to the United Kingdom. It is bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean; on the northeast by Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, which separate it from Greenland; on the east by the Atlantic Ocean; on the south by the United States; and on the west by the Pacific Ocean and Alaska. Canada's two greatest rivers are the St. Lawrence and the Mackenzie. Most Canadians live in cities, and most of the cities are close to the southern border. The largest urban centers are in Québec and Ontario provinces, or central Canada, where some two-thirds of the people live. Most of the population is ethnically British or French, although other European countries are well represented. Typical French colony is well-known Quebec. There lives also one of our greatest writer Škvorecký who emigrated there and became a professor on university. Canada is a beautiful country and I would like to visit it but I will never have money for traveling there.