

# Exploring Canada

Grades 4-6

Written by S&S Learning Materials  
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# Exploring Canada



## Table of Contents

Expectations .....	4
Famous Canadian Tourist and Historical Attractions .....	4
Provincial Symbols and Other Trivia .....	5
Teacher Information .....	5
Important Facts About Our Country .....	5
Bibliography of Canadian Resources .....	6
Teacher Input Suggestions .....	6
Reproducible Maps .....	8
Student Booklet .....	13
Canadian History .....	14
Canadian Geography .....	41
Canada's Government.....	53
A Brief Look at Canada's Landmarks .....	77
Answer Key .....	91

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## Introduction

This book is a compilation of material on Canada for grades 4 to 6 students covering a wide range of topics such as the history and geography of Canada, Canadian government, and famous landmarks, to assist you in teaching your students about Canada. The different grade levels are integrated, so you will need to choose only those activities that students will be comfortable with. Reproduce the necessary pages and using the booklet cover page, collate them into individual booklets for your students.

This resource meets curriculum expectations including:

- distinguishing physical features
- different levels of government
- Canada's connection to the world



# Exploring Canada



## An Introduction to Canada

Canada is a very large country with a variety of climates, vegetation and landforms. Within its border you can find tall mountains, vast plains, thousands of lakes and large stretches of forest. Canada will let you experience hot summers and icy winters. There are large metropolitan centres where people from all over the world come to work or play. There are small villages that make the visitor feel like they have stepped back in time to a setting in the 1800s. Canada is definitely a land of contrasts.

It is easy to find Canada on a map of the world because it is so big in size. You can see why the Canadian motto is "From Sea to Sea" when you realize just how big this country is. It is the second largest country (in land mass) in the world. Located in the continent of North America, Canada lies on the northern border of the United States, with the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Arctic Ocean to the north. This country stretches just over 5 000 kilometres from east to west.

Because of its size and climatic conditions, exploration of Canada took a long time. Canada is a young country, when you compare it to the countries in Europe. It was settlers from Europe who helped to establish farms and villages throughout Canada and gradually helped it to grow from a small colony to an independent nation.

Though Canada has only been a nation since 1867, it is recognized as a leader in medical and technological research as well as the supplier of much of the world's resources. Canada's population may be less than that of countries with a much smaller area, but her contribution to the world community is formidable.





# Exploring Canada



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## An Introduction to Canada

Read the Information Card entitled "An Introduction to Canada".

Complete the following activities.

1. Why would visitors to Canada feel they had many choices in the types of activities they might want to experience?

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2. Using a geography resource book, find the ten largest countries in land mass, and list them from the largest to the smallest. Underline Canada in red.

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3. What problems would explorers have had in trying to cross the country of Canada?

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4. Using the library or internet as a resource, make a list of five to eight books or websites that would help you find out more about Canada. On a separate sheet of paper, record the information for each. Be prepared to present your findings to the class.



# Exploring Canada



## The First Canadians

There have been many theories as to who the first Canadians were or when they came to Canada. However, most scientists and historians seem to agree that the first people to arrive in Canada came by way of a "land bridge" that at one time connected Northern Russia and Alaska.

The people that we know as Native Canadians and Inuit are the descendants of these first immigrants to North America. Scientists believe that the first people to enter Canada did so about 30 000 years ago. They were tribes of ancient hunters, following the animals they killed for their food. At that time, before the end of the last Ice Age, these people were able to cross from the area where they lived, Northern Russia, and gradually moved into northern Canada. Over a period of thousands of years, their descendants gradually moved south, still following the animals that they depended upon for food and clothing.

Some of these people eventually reached South America. Many settled down in various parts of Canada and the United States to become the Native Canadians and Inuit that we are familiar with today.

The "land bridge" no longer exists. After the last Ice Age, the increase in the level of the ocean water caused the bridge to disappear beneath what we know as the Bering Strait. The ancient hunters were now "trapped" in the New World and it would be more than 10 000 years before new explorers set foot in Canada.





# Exploring Canada



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The First Canadians

Read the Information Card entitled "The First Canadians".

Complete the following activities.

1. Obtain a map of the world from your teacher. Locate Canada on the map. Show the route that the early Natives took as they moved from Asia to North America.

2. Who are the Inuit? What does the word mean? Where do they live today?

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3. Why did it take so long for North America to become settled by the Natives?

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4. Why do you think some hunters chose to stay in the Arctic regions of North America while others moved south and settled in warmer areas?

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5. When did the land bridge disappear and why did this happen?

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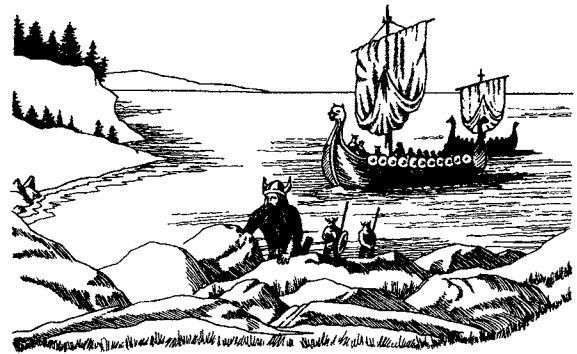
# Exploring Canada



## Vikings - Warriors and Explorers

The first Europeans to set foot in Canada were the Vikings. They came from that area in Europe called Scandinavia - the countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. These brave people were used to violent storms, rough seas and many weeks of travel on the ocean.

The Vikings had already settled on two northern islands, Iceland and Greenland. They had decided to explore further west hoping to find a place of rich farmlands and other treasures. Historians believe that the Vikings probably landed in North America about the year 1 000 A.D. Their first landing site was most likely Baffin Island. They were not impressed with the barren coast of flat stones and cold weather.



The Vikings were adventurous enough to continue their search for new land from "Helluland", the name they gave to Baffin Island to the area we know today as the Labrador coast, which they named "Markland".

They were still not truly satisfied with the results of their journeys and pressed on towards the south. In an area known today as Cape Cod, which they called "Vinland", they finally found the fertile farmland they had been seeking. The climate was good, their cattle would be able to stay outside all year and grapes grew in great numbers. However, there was one problem, The Vikings and the Native inhabitants of the area did not get along at all. The Viking colony only lasted a few years before the "Skraelings", their name for the Natives of that area, forced them to leave their new homes and return to friendlier settlements.

Though scientists and historians have long debated whether the Vikings spent much time in North America, one fact remains true. People have discovered remains of Viking relics in a number of sites in Newfoundland. The Vikings can definitely claim to be the first Europeans to land in North America, almost 500 years before Christopher Columbus.