CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP TEST — CRAM SHEET

The Canada Atlas · study aid · checked November 2026

THE TEST

QUESTIONS
20
Multiple choice and true or false.

TO PASS
15 of 20
That is 75 per cent.

TIME
45 minutes

ATTEMPTS
3
You get three chances to pass.

WHO TAKES IT
Ages 18–54
On the day you sign the application. Under 18 and 55+ are exempt from the test and the language requirement.

LANGUAGE
English or French
The test itself does not score your language ability.

BASED ON
Discover Canada
Every question comes from the official study guide. It is free to read, download, or order on paper.

SUBJECTS
6 areas
History, geography, economy, government, laws and symbols.

PHYSICAL PRESENCE
1,095 days
Three years in Canada within the five years before you sign, with at least 730 days as a permanent resident.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Where Canadian rights come from
Magna Carta (1215), habeas corpus, English common law, French civil law, and the unwritten constitution inherited from Britain.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Added to the Constitution on April 17, 1982. It sets out fundamental freedoms, democratic rights, mobility rights, legal rights, equality rights and language rights.

Fundamental freedoms
Conscience and religion; thought, belief, opinion and expression including the press; peaceful assembly; and association.

Mobility rights
A citizen may live and work anywhere in Canada, enter and leave the country freely, and apply for a passport.

Multiculturalism
Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as official policy, in 1971. It is also protected in section 27 of the Charter.

Responsibilities of citizenship
Obeying the law, taking responsibility for yourself and your family, serving on a jury, voting, helping others in the community, and protecting Canada's heritage and environment.

Official languages
English and French have had equal status in Parliament, the federal courts and the federal public service since the Official Languages Act of 1969.

Equality under the law
Men and women are equal before the law. Practices that violate Canadian law, including spousal abuse and so-called honour killings, are not excused by custom or culture.

WHO CANADIANS ARE

Indigenous peoples
The Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes three groups: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Together they are about five per cent of the population.

First Nations
About 65 per cent of Indigenous people. Roughly half live on reserve, half off.

Inuit
Inuit means 'the people' in Inuktitut. Most live in the Arctic, across Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit region.

Métis
A distinct people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry, most numerous in the Prairies, with their own language, Michif.

The residential school system
From the 1880s to 1996 about 150,000 Indigenous children were taken to church-run, federally funded schools. Ottawa apologized in 2008 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reported in 2015.

The French fact
Quebec is home to most of Canada's francophones. Acadians are the descendants of French colonists who settled in the Maritimes from 1604.

Immigration
Canada admits a large number of newcomers each year relative to its population, and about one in five people living in Canada was born abroad.

HISTORY YOU NEED TO KNOW

Around 1000
Norse sailors (Vikings) built a settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland.

1497
John Cabot, sailing for England, was the first to map Canada's Atlantic coast.

1534–1542
Jacques Cartier made three voyages for France and recorded the name Canada, from the Iroquoian word kanata, meaning village. By the 1550s the name was appearing on maps.

1604–1608
The French founded Port-Royal in Acadia and then Quebec City (1608), under Samuel de Champlain, who allied with the Algonquin, Montagnais and Huron.

1610
English settlement began in Newfoundland.

1670
King Charles II gave the Hudson's Bay Company exclusive trading rights over the lands draining into Hudson Bay.

1701
The French and the Iroquois made peace in the Great Peace of Montreal.

1758
Nova Scotia held the first representative assembly in what is now Canada, in Halifax.

1759
Britain defeated France at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham at Quebec City, ending France's empire in America; both commanders died.

1763
The Treaty of Paris gave Canada to Britain, which renamed the colony the Province of Quebec. The Royal Proclamation set out how Indigenous land could be acquired.

1774
The Quebec Act allowed Catholics religious freedom and public office, restored French civil law and kept British criminal law.

1776–1783
More than 40,000 Loyalists fled the American Revolution to Nova Scotia and Quebec, including about 3,000 Black Loyalists. In 1792 some Black Nova Scotians founded Freetown, Sierra Leone.

1791
The Constitutional Act created Upper and Lower Canada, each with an elected assembly; the name Canada became official.

1793 and 1833
Upper Canada, under Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe, was the first province in the Empire to move toward abolishing slavery (1793). Britain banned the slave trade in 1807 and abolished slavery throughout the Empire in 1833.

1812–1814
The United States invaded and was repelled by British soldiers, Canadian volunteers and First Nations, including Tecumseh's Shawnee. Battles include Queenston Heights and Châteauguay; Laura Secord warned of an attack at Beaver Dams.

1832
The Montreal Stock Exchange opened.

1837–1838
Armed rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada failed. Lord Durham recommended uniting the colonies and giving them responsible government.

1840–1849
Upper and Lower Canada were united as the Province of Canada (Act of Union, 1840). Nova Scotia was the first colony to win responsible government (1847–48); the Province of Canada followed (1848–49). A government that loses a confidence vote must resign.

1864
Sir Leonard Tilley suggested the name Dominion of Canada, inspired by Psalm 72: "He shall have dominion from sea to sea."

July 1, 1867
Confederation: the British North America Act joined Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia as the Dominion of Canada. Sir John A. Macdonald was the first prime minister; Sir George-Étienne Cartier was a key Father of Confederation from Quebec.

1869–1870
Louis Riel led the Métis in the Red River Resistance, which led to the creation of Manitoba in 1870.

1870–1905
Manitoba (1870), British Columbia (1871), PEI (1873), then Alberta and Saskatchewan (1905) joined; the numbered treaties were signed across the West. The North West Mounted Police, today's RCMP, was founded in 1873.

1885
The Canadian Pacific Railway was completed on November 7 at Craigellachie, B.C. About 15,000 Chinese labourers built the hardest sections; Chinese immigrants then faced a head tax, for which the government apologized in 2006. The same year, the North-West Resistance ended and Riel was executed.

1890s–1914
Under Wilfrid Laurier, immigration boomed and settlers from Ukraine, Poland and other parts of Europe opened the Prairies.

1914–1918
More than 600,000 Canadians served in the First World War, from a population of about 8 million. More than 60,000 were killed and 170,000 wounded. Canadians captured Vimy Ridge in April 1917. More than 8,000 former Austro-Hungarian subjects, mostly Ukrainians, were interned as enemy aliens.

1916–1940
Manitoba was first to give women the vote (1916). Women won the federal vote in 1917–1918; Agnes Macphail became the first woman MP in 1921; Quebec gave women the vote in 1940.

1929–1939
The Great Depression followed the 1929 stock market crash; unemployment reached 27% in 1933. The Bank of Canada was created in 1934.

1939–1945
More than one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served in the Second World War, and 44,000 were killed. Canadians landed at Juno Beach on D-Day, fought in the Battle of the Atlantic and liberated the Netherlands. Japanese Canadians were forcibly relocated; the government apologized in 1988.

1927–1965
Canada built its social safety net: Old Age Security was devised as early as 1927, unemployment insurance (now employment insurance) came in 1940, and the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans in 1965. The Canada Health Act ensures a basic standard of health coverage; education is run by the provinces and territories.

1947
Canadian citizenship was created as a status of its own; before that Canadians were British subjects.

1947 (oil)
The discovery of oil in Alberta began Canada's modern energy industry. By 1951, for the first time, most Canadians could afford adequate food, shelter and clothing.

1948 and 1960
Voting rights widened: Japanese Canadians, the last Canadians of Asian descent denied the vote, gained it in 1948, and Indigenous people were granted the vote in 1960.

1949
Newfoundland and Labrador became the tenth province.

Cold War
Canada joined other Western democracies in NATO and the United States in NORAD, the North American Aerospace Defence Command. It also joined the United Nations and took part in UN peacekeeping in places such as Egypt, Cyprus and Haiti.

1950–1953
Canada took part in the UN operation defending South Korea in the Korean War; about 500 Canadians died and 1,000 were wounded.

1956 and 1975
Canada welcomed refugees from Communist oppression: about 37,000 Hungarians in 1956, and more than 50,000 Vietnamese after the Communist victory in Vietnam in 1975.

1960s
Quebec changed rapidly in the Quiet Revolution. Parliament set up the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963, which led to the Official Languages Act of 1969. In 1970 Canada helped found La Francophonie.

1965
The maple leaf flag was raised for the first time on February 15.

1980 and 1995
Quebec held two referendums on sovereignty; it was defeated both times.

1982
The Constitution was patriated and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms added, without the agreement of Quebec.

1999
Nunavut was created as a third territory with an Inuit majority.

HOW CANADIANS GOVERN THEMSELVES

Constitutional monarchy
The Sovereign, King Charles III, is head of state. The head of government is the prime minister.

The Governor General
Represents the Sovereign in Canada, appointed by the King on the prime minister's advice, usually for about five years. Louise Arbour has held the office since June 2026.

Three parts of Parliament
The Sovereign, the Senate and the House of Commons. A bill must pass all three stages to become law.

House of Commons
343 members elected by the voters, one per riding. The party with the most seats usually forms the government.

The Senate
105 senators, appointed by the Governor General on the prime minister's advice, representing the regions. They review and can amend bills.

Three branches
Executive (the Crown, prime minister and Cabinet), legislative (Parliament), and judicial (the courts).

Federal responsibilities
National defence, foreign policy, citizenship, criminal law, currency, interprovincial trade.

Provincial responsibilities
Education, health care, highways, natural resources, property and civil rights.

Municipal responsibilities
Local services such as snow removal, water, policing in many places, libraries and recreation. Municipalities are created by the provinces.

Who can vote federally
A Canadian citizen, at least 18 years old on election day, and on the voters list.

How often elections are held
Federal general elections are normally held every four years on a fixed date, though one can be called earlier.

The ballot
You vote for one candidate in your riding. The candidate with the most votes wins, even without a majority.

JUSTICE AND THE LAW

The Supreme Court of Canada
Nine judges, the final court of appeal since 1949. At least three must come from Quebec.

Presumption of innocence
Anyone charged with an offence is presumed innocent until proven guilty, and has the right to a fair trial.

Two legal traditions
Common law applies everywhere except Quebec, where the Civil Code governs private matters. Both have applied since the Quebec Act of 1774.

Police
The RCMP is the federal force and also polices eight provinces and the three territories by contract. Ontario and Quebec have their own provincial forces.

Serving on a jury
Jury duty is one of the responsibilities of citizenship.

SYMBOLS

The flag
Adopted February 15, 1965: a red maple leaf on white, between two red bands. The proportions are 1:2:1.

The maple leaf
Used as a Canadian emblem since the 1700s. The maple is Canada's official arboreal emblem, declared in 1996.

The beaver
An emblem of the fur trade, placed on the first Canadian postage stamp in 1851 and made an official emblem in 1975.

Coat of arms motto
A Mari Usque Ad Mare — from sea to sea.

National anthem
O Canada, first performed in 1880, adopted as the official anthem on July 1, 1980.

National sports
Hockey is the national winter sport and lacrosse the national summer sport, under a 1994 act of Parliament.

The Crown
A symbol of government shared by Parliament, the legislatures, the courts and the police.

Remembrance Day
November 11, marking the 1918 armistice. The poppy comes from John McCrae's poem In Flanders Fields, written in 1915.

Victoria Day
The Monday before May 25, marking Queen Victoria's birthday and the Sovereign's official birthday in Canada.

The Peace Tower
Part of the Centre Block in Ottawa, rebuilt after the fire of 1916 as a memorial to the war dead.

GEOGRAPHY AND THE REGIONS

Size
Canada is the second largest country on earth by area, after Russia.

Three oceans
The Pacific, the Atlantic and the Arctic.

The capital
Ottawa, chosen by Queen Victoria in 1857. The largest city is Toronto.

Atlantic provinces
Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick.

Central Canada
Ontario and Quebec, where most Canadians live and most manufacturing is done.

Prairie provinces
Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta — grain, oil and gas.

West Coast
British Columbia, with the Pacific ports and the forest industry.

The North
Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut: about a third of Canada's area and far less than one per cent of its people.

Longest river
The Mackenzie, about 4,200 kilometres, flowing north to the Arctic Ocean.

Highest mountain
Mount Logan in Yukon, 5,959 metres.

The Great Lakes
Superior, Huron, Erie, Ontario and Michigan; the first four are shared with the United States and drain through the St. Lawrence.

THE ECONOMY

Service industries
Roughly three quarters of working Canadians: transport, education, health care, construction, banking, retail, tourism and government.

Manufacturing
Concentrated in Ontario and Quebec: vehicles, aircraft, paper, processed food, technology.

Natural resources
Forestry, fishing, farming, mining, and oil and gas — the historic base of the economy from the fur trade onward.

Main trading partner
The United States. The 1988 free trade agreement became NAFTA in 1994 and CUSMA in 2020.

The cod collapse
The Atlantic cod fishery was closed in 1992, ending some 30,000 jobs at once — the clearest lesson in Canada about managing a renewable resource.