

Vancouver, British Columbia, glitters at night.

FIRST LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Canada

We Don't Live in Igloos!

Canadians often chuckle at how little Americans know about their country.

by Sean McCollum

Are you outraged by the seal hunt in Saskatchewan? Amazed that a hockey puck adorns Canada's flag? Happy that Canadians are finally allowed to have dogs as house pets?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, be glad that Canadian comedian Rick Mercer has not found you. Mercer poses as a reporter in "Talking to Americans," a segment of a hit TV show in Canada. He asks passersby in U.S. cities questions about Canada. More often than not, Americans are happy to respond with their answers or opinions.

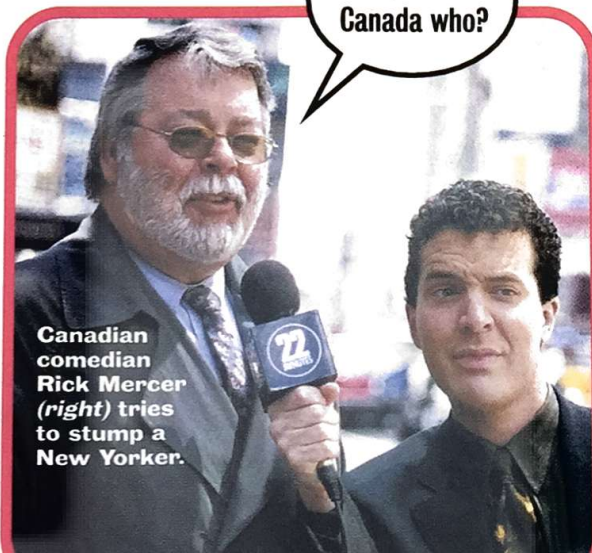
So why do Mercer's interviews get guffaws from his fellow Canadians? His questions are all bogus! A seal hunt in Saskatchewan? Not likely in that land-locked province. (See map, p. 19.)

Canadians love to joke about how little Americans know about their country. Like a kid who must put up with a bossy brother, many Canadians enjoy seeing Americans make mistakes, says John

Thompson. Thompson is a professor of Canadian Studies at Duke University in North Carolina.

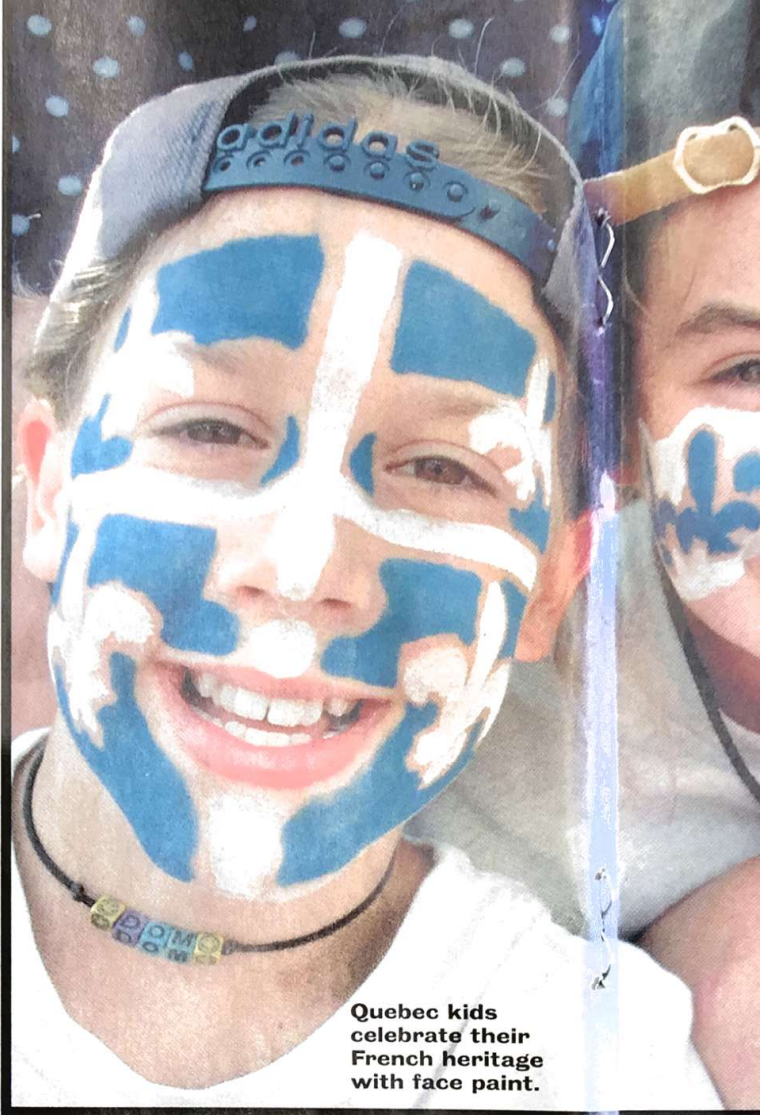
"The U.S. population is nearly 10 times larger than Canada's, and Canadians get a constant flow of American television," he says. "So it makes sense that they know more about the U.S. than Americans know about Canada." But, Thompson adds, "Americans really do need to learn more about their neighbors."

Here's your chance to upgrade your knowledge so Canadians can't fool you. Read the following, then test your Canada IQ by answering questions from Canadian kids on p. 18.



Canadian comedian Rick Mercer (right) tries to stump a New Yorker.

PIERRE PAUL POULIN / CORBIS SYGMA



Quebec kids celebrate their French heritage with face paint.

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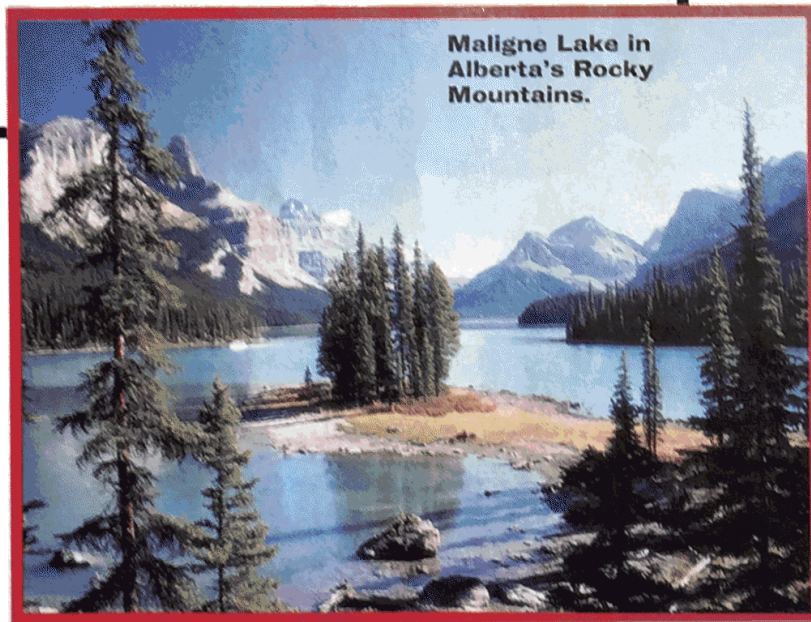
making it possible for oceangoing vessels to reach the Great Lakes. Four of the five Great Lakes wash onto the southern shores of Ontario, Canada's most populated province.

Head further west and you'll find Canada's "breadbasket"—the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. The rich soils of these provinces make them one of the great wheat-growing regions in the world.

The Rocky Mountains form a natural wall between parts of Alberta and British Columbia. "We're the most beautiful of all the provinces," says Vanessa about B.C. In addition to mountains and forests, its western coast is dotted with

islands and lined with inlets. And the sparkling city of Vancouver glitters in the Pacific Ocean's tidewaters.

Besides these 10 provinces, Canada has three huge northern territories. The newest is Nunavut, peopled mostly by native Inuit. It became a separate territory just two years ago.



Maligne Lake in Alberta's Rocky Mountains.

Varied Landscapes

Canada is the second-largest country in the world, after Russia. It stretches from the continental U.S. almost to the North Pole.

But don't let anyone tell you that some Canadians live in igloos. "We don't!" says Vanessa Stofer, 13, from British Columbia. "It's not an endless field of snow up here." However, 75 percent of Canadians *do* live within 100 miles of the U.S. border.

If you visit Canada, you'll discover a wide range of landscapes. In the east, the Atlantic Ocean batters the rocky coastlines and fishing villages of the Maritime Provinces. These include

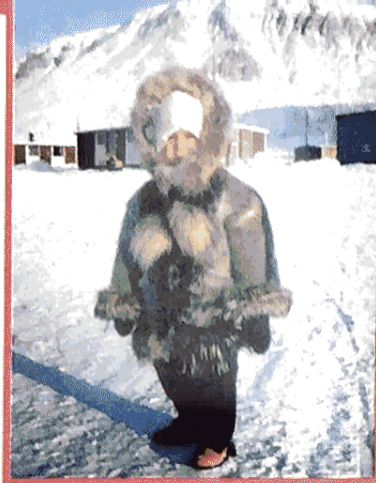
Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

The St. Lawrence River was the first highway into Canada, used by the French fur trappers who settled Quebec. In 1959, the St. Lawrence Seaway opened its canals and locks

A Mosaic of People

Canada's 31 million people are even more **diverse** (varied) than its landscape. Canadians, or their ancestors, immigrated from almost every corner of the world. A third of all Canadians

trace their family history to Great Britain, and a quarter to France. But nearly 10 percent track their ancestors to Asia. Only about two percent are **indigenous** (native) peoples. Most Canadians are proud of how well everyone in this ethnic **mosaic** (mixed pattern) gets along.



A child bundles up against the Canadian cold.

Differences between regions and ethnic groups, though, are the source of Canada's most difficult problems. The western provinces, for example, often complain that the national government back east in Ottawa, Ontario, does not pay enough attention to their needs.

The province of Quebec, with its large French-speaking population, presents unique problems to national unity. English and French are Canada's official languages and appear on most

signs. Canadian schoolchildren are required to study both languages.

But many French-Canadians worry that their language and culture will be overwhelmed by English speakers. For decades, Quebec's citizens have debated forming a separate country. In 1995, the province voted by a

narrow margin to remain part of Canada. "If Quebec leaves it will cut the country in half," says Vanessa, who is bilingual in English and French. "They've been part of Canada all this time, and I think it should stay that way."

Despite these problems, Canada is one of the most livable countries in the world. The U.S. could learn something, says Professor Thompson, from Canada's beautiful and clean cities, public transportation, effective gun control, health care, and diversity.

On the flip side, says Thompson, Canada could learn from the U.S. how to create more business opportunities and jobs for its people.

Like best buddies, Canada and the U.S. enjoy friendly competition. Luckily, it is a strong friendship. The U.S. could not wish for a better neighbor than the one to the north. "And we don't live in igloos!" reminds Vanessa. **ES**

Web Click on juniorscholastic.com for related Web sites.

Your Turn

Word Match

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. tundra | A. native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. diverse | B. varied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. indigenous | C. treeless plain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. immigrate | D. mixed pattern |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. mosaic | E. move into a different country |

Think About It

How is Canada like the U.S.?
How is it different?

What's Your Canada IQ?

We asked these Canadian 4-H Club members to test your knowledge of their country. Careful! They might have slipped in some trick questions.

1. What appears on Canada's flag?

- A. hockey puck
- B. pine tree
- C. maple leaf
- D. polar bear



Stephanie MacDiarmid, 13, Napan, New Brunswick

2. What is Canada's national animal?

- A. moose
- B. grizzly bear
- C. red-tailed hawk
- D. beaver



3. What is Canada's newest territory?

- A. Greenland
- B. Northwest Territories
- C. Nunavut
- D. Yukon

4. Who is Canada's Head of State?

- A. Queen Elizabeth II of the U.K.
- B. President Jacques Chirac of France
- C. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien
- D. Canada does not have a Head of State.

5. Who is Canada's President?

- A. George W. Bush
- B. Pierre Trudeau
- C. Jean Poutine
- D. Canada does not have a president.



Rory Gibbons, 13, Surrey, British Columbia

6. Where in Canada do wild penguins nest?

- A. Arctic Circle
- B. British Columbia
- C. Nunavut
- D. Wild penguins don't live in the Northern Hemisphere.

7. What is a "loonie"?

- A. a crazy American
- B. a hockey goalie
- C. a soft drink
- D. Canada's \$1 coin



Emily Tyler, 14, Langley, British Columbia

8. Which of these entertainers is Canadian?

- A. Jim Carrey
- B. Alanis Morissette
- C. Brendan Fraser
- D. Nelly Furtado
- E. all of the above



CANADA

- ★ National capital
- ☆ Provincial/territorial capital
- Other city
- National boundary
- - - Provincial/territorial boundary

0 500 mi.
0 800 km.

CANADA

Fur trappers were the first Europeans to explore much of Canada. Following France's defeat in the French and Indian wars (*see play, pp. 20-23*), the region was united into a British colony. Canada's independence from Britain became final in 1931. But Queen Elizabeth II fills a symbolic role as Canada's Head of State.

FACTS TO KNOW

AREA: 3,849,670 square miles, slightly larger than the U.S.

POPULATION: 31,000,000.

GOVERNMENT: Parliamentary democracy, led by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: English, French.

ECONOMY: Canadians enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living.

Canada was the first country to sign

the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the U.S. and Mexico, and is the largest trading partner of the U.S. Industries: mining, wood and food products, transportation equipment. Minerals: oil, gas, nickel, copper, gold, others. Major crops: grains, fruits, vegetables, and livestock. **PER CAPITA GDP:** \$24,800. **CURRENCY:** Canadian dollar, worth about 65 U.S. cents.

Questions

Study the map and Facts to Know to answer more questions from the Canadian quiz kids.

1. About how many people live in Canada? _____
2. What is Canada's capital city? _____
3. Which Great Lake does the U.S. not share with Canada? _____
4. Who is Canada's Prime Minister? _____
5. What two major Canadian cities are on the St. Lawrence River? _____
6. If you are at 60°N, 120°W, on what border are you standing? _____
7. What are Canada's official languages? _____
8. How many provinces does Canada have? _____
9. In what province do the Winnipeg Blue Bombers play football? _____
10. Alaska borders what Canadian territory? _____