

PHYSICAL REGIONS OF CANADA

Canada has many regions; political, physical and climate. We will begin discussing the physical regions.

There are 6 physical regions in Canada:

1. Atlantic
2. Great Lakes – St. Lawrence
3. The Shield
4. Interior Plains
5. Cordillera
6. The North

1. Atlantic Region

- Provinces included are Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and a small part of Quebec.
- Region is dominated by highlands and the Atlantic Ocean.
- Soil is very fertile (great for growing potatoes)!
- Harbours(natural) make fishing the number one resource and economic activity in this region. Due to lack of government control, the number and value of fish has decreased.
- Forestry is also another important resource. In the past, ships were built from the wood and sent to USA or Britain.
- Mining is another important economic activity. Some of the resources mined
- Originally, this area was inhabited by Micmacs and Beothuk.
- The population in this region accounts for only 10% of Canada's total population. Because they have such a small area, they have the largest population density in Canada.

2. Great Lakes – St. Lawrence

- Include the lowland areas in Ontario and Quebec (near the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes)
- The Canadian Shield and Niagara Escarpment are also part of this region
- Much of the landscape was carved out by glaciations. Deposits from these glaciers left rich farming soil.
- 1/2 of Canada's population lives in this area. Most of the people living in this area live in urban centers.

- The shape of the land and the climate makes this area ideal for farming. Fruit, vegetable and Dairy are the main farming methods practiced in this region.
- Because of the proximity to the USA, most of Canada's manufacturing takes place in this region. Iron, steel, automobiles and clothing are just an example.
- The nation's capital is in this region, so many decisions that affect out country are made in this region.
- Many companies that have head offices have those offices in this region as well. (Although many are moving them to Calgary).
- Because of the number of factories and other manufacturing plants, pollution is a HUGE problem.

3. The Canadian Shield

- This region covers more than 1/2 of Canada's land area. Provinces included in this region are: Quebec, Ontario, Labrador, and part of Manitoba.
- This region is made up of basically rock. All this rock was carved out from glaciers that retreated. Very little soil was left behind.
- With all the rock in this region, water does not flow. Many lakes have been created in this region because of this.
- The main vegetation in this region is a coniferous tree. (Cone bearing). As you go north, the trees become sparser. Eventually leading to tundra.
- The population in this area is very sparse (not a lot of people living in one area, very spread out)
- The majority of the economy is based on logging. There are also many pulp and paper mills in this region (to assist the logging companies)
- Due to the number of lakes and rivers in this region, it is easy to harness moving water for hydro-electricity.
- Tourism is another huge industry in the area. The many rivers and lakes attract people who enjoy fishing, hunting or just the natural surroundings.

4. The Plains Region

- Provinces included in this region are: parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, most of Alberta, BC and Northwest Territories.
- When people think of the Interior plains, they think flat land stretching as far as you can see. Most of the area consists of rolling hills and deep, wide valleys.

- Most of the vegetation in this region is farmland (mostly wheat). Grazing land also exists. The further north you go, the less vegetation you'll see.
- Ranching is another important economic activity. 40% of Canada's beef comes from this region.
- Even though this region is known for the agriculture, 2/3 of the people in this region live in cities and towns.
- In Alberta, oil and natural gas, coal and potash are also important resources in this region.

5. Cordillera

- This region includes most of British Columbia, parts of Alberta and the Yukon.
- Known for its high, rugged mountains, valleys and plateaus. The two main mountain ranges are the Rocky Mountains and the Coastal Mountains.
- Along the Fraser River is the Fraser Delta. This area has excellent soil for farming.
- With the warm, moist climate the vegetation is lush. Douglas fir and red cedar grow in abundance. The vegetation changes depending on the elevation and climate.
- Forestry, mining, fishing and farming are the main economic activities. Tourism and ranching also bring in money, but not as much as the others.

6. The North

- Located above the permafrost line. Provinces included are Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, and the extreme northern tips of Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec.
- Lowlands in this region are flat and swampy. (Around the rim of the Hudson Bay).
- Other parts of the islands formed by the Innuitian Mountains
- Vegetation in the region consists mainly of tundra (small bushes, mosses). These plants produce colourful flowers in the summer. The most northern reaches of this region have no vegetation; the mountains are permanently covered in ice and snow.
- Trapping and fishing are the basis for the economy in this region. With constantly changing technology, other economic activities have been increased, mining for example (diamonds!)