

# Speaking Card 60

## Canada

March 2020

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**Geography:** Canada stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and is bordered by the United States to the south and northwest. It is the second largest country in the world by land area after Russia. Canada is divided into ten provinces and three territories. The national capital is Ottawa, the fourth largest city in Canada.

**Landscape:** Canada has very varied landscape. Northern Canada includes tundra and glaciers. Animals that live there include polar bears, seals and narwhals. On the west coast you will find the Canadian Rocky Mountains and large forests. In the middle of the country, there are large prairies suitable for growing wheat. Around the Great Lakes, Canada is full of hills and green meadows. The east coast of Canada is known for its cliffs overlooking the ocean.

**Political System:** Canada is a parliamentary democracy but also a constitutional monarchy. The Queen is the ceremonial head of the country (without any power). She is represented by the governor general. The legislative branch in Canada has two bodies: the House of Commons and the Senate. The House of Commons makes laws and the Senate reviews them. The party with the most seats in the House of Commons forms the government and its leader becomes the prime minister, the head of the government.

**History:** The first two European powers to explore Canada at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were France and England. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the first permanent settlements were founded by the French. Later, England and France started competing for the new land. In 1763, England gained control of Canada. This didn't come without issues, and in 1774 the French Canadians were given the right to practise Catholicism under British rule in the province of Quebec. In 1867, the Canadian provinces united into one federation called the Dominion of Canada, with

its own parliament. Canada became completely independent of the United Kingdom in 1982.

**Places:** Each of the provinces has its own unique qualities and sights. The main sights include Niagara Falls and major cities such as Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. You can't go wrong by hiking through Canada's amazing national parks, like Banff or Jasper on the west coast, or going skiing at one of the country's many mountain resorts.

**People:** The Canadian population is over 37 million. Most people from Canada are of French and British origin although a large number are from other cultures as well. There are also many indigenous people in Canada: the First Nations and the Inuits, who lived in Canada before it was discovered by Europeans. There are two official languages: English and French.

**Culture:** The most famous dish in Canada is poutine, which is chips covered with brown gravy and cheese curds. This dish comes from the province of Quebec. Canada is also known for being progressive with its laws. The country produces many movies and the best sport to watch while there is ice hockey. Famous Canadians include the actors Ryan Reynolds and Rachel McAdams, and the singers Justin Bieber and Drake.

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### SOLUTIONS

**Photos:** 2 Toronto, 3 Niagara Falls, 4 Banff National Park of Canada in the Canadian Rocky Mountains; **Task:** A maple leaf, B moose, C ice hockey, D inuksuk, an Inuit stone landmark