

VII LIFE IN CANADA

(a) Geographic Location and Climate

Canada occupies nearly half the North American continent with the exception of Alaska, and is territorially the second-largest country in the world. Its area is over 3.8 million square miles. It stretches over 3,200 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, and almost 3,000 miles from the Northern tip of Ellesmere Island to the United States border. It has a population of over 21 million inhabitants.

The climate in Canada varies greatly from region to region, but is generally one of extremes. In British Columbia, summers (June to September) are long and warm, while winters (November to March) are mild and wet in the coastal regions and cold in the interior. In the Prairie Provinces, the climate is dry and temperatures in summer and winter are extreme owing to the fact that these provinces are shielded from the Pacific Ocean and are in the interior of a large land-mass. The large water-surfaces of Eastern Canada produce a considerable modification in the climate of Ontario and Quebec. While summers are hot and humid, and winters cold, in southwestern Ontario winters are relatively mild and summers benefit from the cooling effect of the Great Lakes. Climate in the Atlantic Provinces is similar to that of Ontario and Quebec, though the Atlantic Ocean has considerable effect on the immediate coastal area, where temperatures are modified and conditions made more humid when the winds blow inland from the ocean.

When making arrangements to study at a Canadian university, overseas students ought to make enquiries about the climate of the particular area or city in which they will be studying and living. In winter, buildings are heated and in summer they are often air-conditioned.

(b) People

Canada is a country of two official languages, English and French. Bank-notes, stamps, government documents and packages containing common household goods are printed in both languages. In addition to Canadians of British and French ancestry, many other nationalities, mainly European, are represented among the Canadian people.

There is a great diversity of religions in Canada, but the majority of the population is Christian. Many non-Christian faiths are represented, and places of worship for those of other faiths can be found in some Canadian cities.