

The Prime Ministers of Canada

Grades 4-8

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| **Canada** 

At Glance

Learning Expectations	Points to Ponder	Explore History	What Have You Learned?	Quizzes 1 & 2
Language Skills				
• Reading comprehension	•	•	•	•
• Summarizing events/details	•	•	•	
• Recalling information	•		•	•
• Expressing personal views	•	•		
Reasoning & Critical Thinking Skills				
• Making comparisons	•	•	•	
• Developing opinions and personal interpretations	•	•		
• Making inferences (e.g., why events occurred)	•	•		
• Developing research skills		•		
• Analyzing and evaluating historical information	•	•		
• Recognizing the validity of differing points of view	•	•		
• Identifying causes of conflict	•	•		
Understanding				
• Name the prime ministers of Canada and their role in Canadian history	•	•	•	•
• Understand what is involved in being a prominent politician	•	•		
• Develop an appreciation for the political system of Canada	•	•	•	
• Understand the connection between government, policies, and the laws that affect one's life	•	•		
• Have knowledge of some of the events that have shaped Canada including Confederation, and two World Wars	•	•		•
• Be able to discuss what each prime minister did during office	•	•		•
• Appreciate some of the benefits of different actions taken by various prime ministers	•	•		•
• Understand some of the character traits that successful prime ministers have possessed	•	•		
• Develop increased understanding in the issue of the separatist movement	•	•		
• Understand some of the complexities in international relations between Canada, Britain, USA, and other countries	•	•		



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Learning Outcomes

At the end of this resource, students will:

- be able to name the prime ministers of Canada
- understand what is involved in holding such a prominent office
- be able to tell what each prime minister did during his/her term of office
- demonstrate the ability to discuss events which took place in Canada and the world under each administration
- be able to express judgments regarding the benefits of different actions taken by various prime ministers

Teaching Suggestions

- Teachers should have a large map of Canada on a wall in the classroom to pinpoint the location of various events which took place during each prime minister's term in office.
- This resource may be used when studying the Canadian government, elections or Confederation.
- An ideal time for using this resource would be during an election campaign.
- It would be beneficial for students if the teacher could make arrangements for a visit to the class by the Member of Parliament for the electoral district in which the school is located.
- The students should also be able to view one of the proceedings from the House of Commons on the appropriate TV channel.
- If it is possible, a tour of the Parliament buildings and the House of Commons would give the students a better idea of how the government of Canada works. Another possibility would be to use slides or pictures of Ottawa in class.
- A variety of material on Canada, Ottawa, and the prime ministers should be made available to the students.
- Have a chart on the bulletin board with the names of the prime ministers where students can add information about each prime minister as he/she is studied.
- Students' writings and drawings should be displayed in the classroom.
- As a culminating activity for this resource, students can pretend to be a prime minister of his/her choice and deliver a speech during his/her term of office. A website which can be used for speeches is www.collectionscanada.ca/primeministers.
- There are also quizzes on each of the prime ministers at this site that the students can do.



The Prime Ministers of Canada

Glossary of Selected Terms

Auditor General: this is the person, with his/her staff, responsible for making sure that the government is held to account for its use of public funds and doesn't waste the people's money.

backbencher: MPs who do not have as much power to influence government policy, do not have a special appointment or office, and are not front spokespersons for their party.

by-election: a special election that is held to fill a seat that has become vacant in between general elections.

“called to the bar”: a certificate issued by a provincial Law Society that officially makes someone who has studied law and passed their exams a solicitor who is able to practice law in the courts.

Canadian Constitution: is the chief document outlining Canada's basic laws and how it operates. It includes how the government is run, and the civil rights (personal rights) of Canadian people.

capitalism: an economic system whereby there is little government control over the prices of goods. Instead, prices fluctuate by how much people will pay for goods, and how much people are willing to sell them for.

concription: when governments force their citizens, usually males, to enlist in the military.

constituency: a group of voters from a certain area, known as a **riding**, that elect a member of Parliament to represent them.

depression: a time when the economics of a country is not in good shape; when there is not much money coming into the system. In the 1930s the Great Depression resulted in many people being without work, and there was great shortage of food and goods.

free trade: is a policy that allows things to be bought and sold internationally without **tariffs** (taxes on imports)

House of Commons: is that part of Canada's Parliament (government) that consists of all the elected members of Parliament. The House of Commons holds the most power over Canada's laws and policies. They meet in the Houses of Parliament in Ottawa.

Legislation: laws that have been enacted, or are being considered for enactment, in government. When a law is suggested it is called a **bill**, until it is accepted or rejected by Parliament.

Privy Council: a group of advisors to the Queen

secret ballot: a method of voting that keeps the vote hidden and private so that no-one else knows who the voter chooses. This is one way to help keep an election fair.

Senate: a group of politicians that are appointed as part of Parliament. They do not have a lot of power, and though their approval is required to pass a bill, they rarely go against the House of Commons.

separatist movement: a group of people that wish to have Quebec become its own country instead of being a province of Canada

social welfare: government provided assistance to individual citizens, including health care, education, financial support, etc.

Solicitor General: a position in provincial government that is responsible for prisons and police. There is no longer a Solicitor General in federal government in Canada.

spoils system: occurs when a newly elected leader appoints people to government positions because they worked hard to help them get elected, rather than because they would be good for the job.

union: an organization of a group of workers in an industry that fights to get and keep better working conditions and wages.



The Prime Ministers of Canada

Introduction: The Making of a Prime Minister

This is a book about the prime ministers of Canada. Canada is a democracy and a constitutional monarchy, which means that the head of state in Canada is HRH Queen Elizabeth II, the ruler of Great Britain, who is also the Queen of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and many other countries. Every act passed by the Government of Canada is done so in the name of the Queen or the Crown. The representative of the Queen in Canada is the Governor-General.

The leader of the Government in Canada is called the prime minister. This term means “first among equals”: even though all members of the Cabinet are equal, the prime minister is more powerful than the others. The prime minister is normally a member of the House of Commons. A non-member can hold the office but must win a seat in the House of Commons through an election. The prime minister can lose his/her seat in an election, but must win another seat very promptly. The traditional way of doing this has been to arrange to have a member of the majority party resign to allow the prime minister to run in a special election, called a by-election, in that district.

The prime minister is appointed by the Governor-General. Ordinarily this appointment is automatic. The leader of the party that wins the most seats in a general election becomes the prime minister of Canada. The prime minister then gives some of the members who have been elected by the people special jobs or portfolios. These members are called ministers and are placed in charge of the main government departments which are also called ministries. Some examples of ministries are Fisheries, Finance, Immigration, and Labour. These ministers and the prime minister form what is called the Cabinet.

What Does a Prime Minister Do?

The prime minister and the Cabinet work together to decide the laws of Canada and what new programs should be implemented. The duties of the prime minister are not specified in the Constitution. Generally, he/she follows the traditions of Parliament performing the duties that a prime minister has always done.

• Government Leader

The prime minister first and foremost must lead the government of Canada. He/She must speak in Parliament, to news reporters, and at national and international meetings. He/She decides what bills Cabinet ministers bring before the House of Commons, appoints senators to the Senate, recommends the Governor-General to the Queen, chooses lieutenant-governors for the provinces, and judges to the Supreme and federal courts.



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• Cabinet Leader

The prime minister has to also make sure that the Cabinet ministers he/she appoints do their job by holding regular meetings. It is in these meetings that the prime minister approves the bills that are to be voted on in the House of Commons.

• Member of Parliament

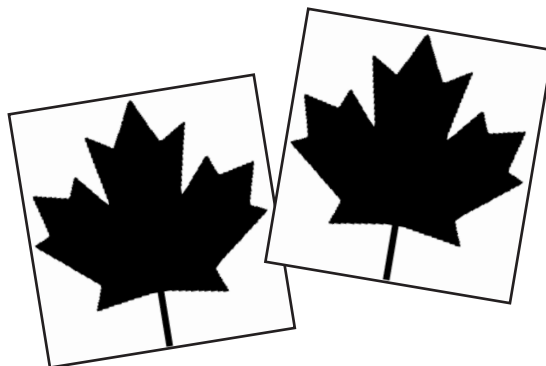
In addition to running the government and ensuring that all the ministries are running smoothly, the prime minister is also an elected member of the House of Commons. This means that he/she is also responsible for a particular electoral riding in a province of Canada. He/She has to make sure that the interests and concerns of the citizens of that riding are looked after.

• Party Leader

In order to be the leader of the Canadian government, a person must first win the leadership of political party. However, the prime minister must serve the interests of the country as a whole, not just a particular region, even if it means disagreeing with some of his/her Cabinet ministers. As party leader, the prime minister hosts and attends many party meetings and fund-raising events, and works to keep the party well-organized between elections.

• International Leader

The prime minister of Canada is also a world leader serving on many international committees and is required to do a lot of travelling outside Canada to attend meetings and help make decisions which affect the entire world.





The Prime Ministers of Canada

Becoming a Prime Minister

A person in Canada cannot automatically decide to become the prime minister of the country. A person in any part of the country can decide to enter politics at the time of a general election or a by-election. He/She must win the nomination to run for the party of his/her choice and be elected to represent that particular electoral riding by a majority of votes from the people. Once elected, the person then becomes a member of Parliament in the House of Commons in Ottawa.

Depending on the qualifications the representative might have, he/she could be asked by the prime minister to sit in the Cabinet in charge of a portfolio. When a leadership review is called, the person can then decide to run for the position of leader of the party. This requires lobbying other members of Parliament and a lot of travelling throughout Canada to win the votes and support of the general populace. If he/she is chosen to lead the party and that party holds the majority of seats in the House of Commons, then the Governor-General will appoint him/her to the position of prime minister.

The prime minister of Canada must call an election every five years. Elections can also be called at any time within that period. If the party of which the prime minister is the leader wins the most seats, then he/she will retain the position. There is no limit on the number of terms a person can serve as prime minister and a defeated prime minister can return to power in another election.

Being a prime minister means a loss of privacy. Everything a prime minister does and says becomes public knowledge and is often criticized very harshly in the press. The job is also dangerous, as many times the prime minister has to make decisions that are not popular with the people. Therefore, the prime minister is heavily guarded whenever he/she is out in public.

Since Canada became a country in 1867, there have been 22 different prime ministers. Several of these have served more than once and several have served for only a short period of time. There have been popular and unpopular prime ministers and some unpopular decisions have been made since the first prime minister took office in 1867.

Justin Pierre James Trudeau **Prime Minister: 2015 –**



Justin Trudeau was born on December 25, 1971 to parents Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Margaret Trudeau. His father was then the 15th Prime Minister of Canada and he was the second child in Canadian history to be born while his father was in office. Later, two younger brothers, Alexandra (Sacha) and Michel were born. Justin and his brothers lived at 24 Sussex Drive, Ottawa until their father was defeated in the federal election in 1979. His parents' marriage ended when Justin was five years old and his father had primary custody of their sons. In 1980, Justin and his brothers returned to 24 Sussex Drive when their father became Prime Minister for the second time.

While growing up, Justin attended a public school and travelled by bus with an RCMP car following. Later he attended a private college, McGill University and the University of British Columbia. After graduating he stayed in Vancouver and taught at several schools. In October of 2000, Trudeau's father died. A state funeral was held at which Trudeau delivered his famous eulogy which made him a prominent figure in Canada. Following his father's death, Trudeau became more involved with the Liberal Party and supported many Liberal candidates in elections. In 2007, Trudeau ran for the leadership of a Liberal Party in a Montréal riding and easily won the party's nomination.

Justin Trudeau believes middle-income families should pay lower taxes and people who are top income earners should be taxed higher. He wants to rebuild relations with First Nations people. Trudeau believes that new laws should be created to make the possession of marijuana for recreational purposes legal, and to establish stronger laws to punish people who sell it to minors. Trudeau believes in equal rights for women and the freedom for people to maintain their religious beliefs and symbols.

During the election called by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Trudeau narrowly defeated his opponent and entered parliament as a member of the Official Opposition in 2013. Two years later, Trudeau sought Canada's highest office as Prime Minister. In October of 2015, the Liberal Party won a majority which made Justin Trudeau Canada's second youngest person to become Prime Minister of Canada at the age of 43.

During his career, Trudeau met and married Sophie Grégoire, one of his youngest brother Michel's classmates and childhood friends. Grégoire and Trudeau reconnected as adults in June of 2003 at a charity ball as co-hosts. They dated, became engaged in 2004 and married in May of 2005. They have three children: Xavier James, Ella Grace Margaret and Hadrian Grégoire.

Today Trudeau and his family live in Rideau Cottage which is a 19th century home located on the grounds of the governor general's residence. Unfortunately the home of the Prime Minister at 24 Sussex Drive has been in need of repairs for years.

Name _____ Date _____

Points to Ponder

1. How did Justin Trudeau achieve fame before he was elected as the Prime Minister of Canada?

2. Justin Trudeau is the second youngest Prime Minister elected in Canada. Tell why you think this may be good for Canada.

Tell why you think it may be bad for Canada.

3. How do you think people in Canada feel about the government legalizing the use of marijuana? Tell why.

4. In what ways do you think Trudeau will build better relationships with First Nations people?



Explore History



1. When did Canadians become aware of Trudeau’s skills as a politician?

2. Do you think Justin Trudeau will be a successful Prime Minister? Tell why.

3. How do you feel about the Prime Minister and his family not being able to live at 24 Sussex Drive? What do you think the government should do about this problem?



The Prime Ministers of Canada

What Have You Learned?

Name _____ Date _____

Complete the following table of the prime ministers of Canada.

	Party	Dates	Occupation
John A. Macdonald			
A. Mackenzie			
John Abbott			
John Thompson			
Mackenzie Bowell			
Charles Tupper			
Wilfrid Laurier			
Robert Borden			
Arthur Meighen			
W.L.M. King			
Richard Bennett			
Louis St. Laurent			
John Diefenbaker			
Lester Pearson			
Pierre Trudeau			
Joe Clark			
John Turner			
Brian Mulroney			
Kim Campbell			
Jean Chrétien			
Paul Martin			
Stephen Harper			
Justin Trudeau			