
**DOMINION INSTITUTE/CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR UNITY
NATIONAL ANGUS REID GROUP POLL**

- 1998 CANADA DAY QUIZ -

- Only Half Of Canadians Pass (50%) The Test -

- Results Show A Wide "Knowledge Gap" In Canada: 63% Of Those With A High School Degree Or Less Failed The Test, While 31% Failed Among The University Educated -

- Canadians' Knowledge Of Their History And Culture Remains Regionalized -



The Council for Canadian Unity



Le Conseil pour l'unité canadienne

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This National Angus Reid Group Poll was conducted by telephone between May 20th and 26th, 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,500 Canadian adults. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age / sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,500, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within ± 2.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

THE DOMINION INSTITUTE / CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR UNITY NATIONAL ANGUS REID GROUP POLL

CANADA DAY 1998 QUIZ

- Only Half Of Canadians Pass (50%) The Test -

- One In Four Canadians Think “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness” Is Canada’s Constitutional Slogan -

30 June 1998

Exactly half - 50% - of Canadians surveyed in a new poll failed their 1998 Canada Day Quiz. The poll consisted of 20 questions on Canadian history, politics and culture. Older Canadians and those with higher levels of education outperformed other demographic groups. Regional variations were pronounced, with Manitoba and Saskatchewan receiving the highest provincial averages (60%) and Quebec the lowest (37%). Overall Canadians were very aware of their national symbols, heroes and celebrities but demonstrated a poor knowledge of Canadian geography and political history.

These are some of the findings from a national survey conducted by the **Angus Reid** and released today by **The Dominion Institute** and **The Council for Canadian Unity (CCU)**. The telephone survey interviewed a randomly selected and proportionately representative cross-section of 1,500 Canadian adults. The survey has a $\pm 2.5\%$ margin of error 19 times of 20.

The Dominion Institute and the CCU commissioned the survey as part of their commitment to advance Canadians’ understanding of their society, and their ability to participate in it as active and informed citizens.

The Dominion Institute’s executive director, **Rudyard Griffiths** offered the following comment: “This survey reveals a disturbing gap between Canadians’ shared commitment to sustaining a common identity and our lack of knowledge about who we are and what we have accomplished together.” **Jocelyn Beaudoin**, president and CEO of the CCU commented “The survey shows that Canadians know quite a lot about the present, but they do not know as much about the history, heroes and events we have in common.”

To broaden Canadians' civic knowledge, The Dominion Institute and the CCU have partnered with **History Television** and **IPL Energy** to create an on-line version of the Quiz; the address is **www.historytelevision.ca**. Full results can be found at **www.angusreid.com**.

An illustrated booklet containing the quiz and detailed answers to each of the 20 questions can be obtained free of charge by calling 1-888-566-8066.

The Dominion Institute was founded last year by a group of young Canadians who wanted to help their generation rediscover links between their history, civic traditions and a common identity. The CCU is a long established non-profit, non-partisan organisation that operates educational programs for youth, and conducts research on unity related issues.

THE ANGUS REID GROUP

ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

Overall Results

In total, 50% of respondents passed the quiz (conducted between May 20th and 26th, 1998) —i.e. half of those surveyed answered 10 out of the 20 questions correctly. Overall breakdowns include:

- One in ten (13%) got 5 correct answers or less, while 37% answered between 6 and 9 questions correctly.
- Of those who passed the test, 39% answered between 10 and 15 questions correctly, while the remaining 11% answered between 16 and 20 questions correctly. (See Table 1)

The “Knowledge Gap” in Canada

The most successful groups in the population were those with a university education (69% passed the quiz), those with household incomes over \$45,000 (57% passed), those 55 years of age or older (62% passed) and men (61% passed). (See Table 2 and Table 3)

The less successful groups were those with a high school degree or less (56% failed the quiz), those with incomes lower than \$45,000 (58% failed), those between the ages of 18 to 34 (61% failed) and women (61% failed). (See Table 2 and 3)

Some examples of this “knowledge gap” are as follows:

- 73% of university graduates identified Alberta as the site of Dinosaur Provincial Park, compared to 39% of those without a completed high school education.
- 52% of those over the age of 55, and 44% of university graduates identified William Lyon Mackenzie King as the Prime Minister who sought the advice of his dead mother and dog, compared to 15% of those aged 18 to 34 and 21% of those without a high school diploma.
- 60% of university graduates and 50% of men could name The Order of Canada as the highest honour Canada gives its citizens, compared to 25% of those without a high school diploma and 36% of women.

The “knowledge gap” is most apparent in sections of the quiz which deal with historical and political events, as well as the geography of Canada. This gap narrows significantly when the line of questioning turns to national symbols, heroes and celebrities – for example, 83% of 18 to 34 year-olds were familiar with the Bluenose as compared to 86% of those aged 55 and older. In a couple of cases, the knowledge gap disappears entirely: 88% of those aged 18 to 34 identify Terry Fox as the man who ran across Canada to raise money to fight cancer, compared to 75% of those aged 55 and older.

Canadians’ Regionalized Historical Knowledge

Overall, Prairie residents (60% passed), Ontario residents (56% passed) and B.C. residents fared comparatively better (55% passed), whereas Quebec was at the bottom of the regional distribution with 37% of residents receiving a passing score. (See Table 1)

Canadians from the different parts of the country tended to perform better on questions which were directly related to their own region. For example, Quebec respondents did comparatively better when asked about Joseph Armand Bombardier, Calixa Lavallée, and Sir Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine and Robert Baldwin, while Atlantic Canadians did better when asked about Joey Smallwood or the Bluenose. These disparities indicate that Canadians' knowledge of their history and culture remains regionalized. (See Table 3)

Cultural Issues

- Three in ten respondents (32%), knew Marshall McLuhan was responsible for coining the phrase “the global village” and “the medium is the message”. Still, 13% thought the phrases belonged to Microsoft Chairman, Bill Gates; 10% to pop culture artist, Andy Warhol; 5% to Corel Corporation's Michael Cowpland; 4% famous Canadian economist Harold Innis; and 28% simply did not know. (See Table 3)
- In total, 43% of Canadians correctly identified the Order of Canada as Canada's highest honour given to a citizen who has distinguished himself or herself for outstanding achievement and service to their country or humanity as a whole. Over three in ten (34%) simply did not know. (See Table 3)
- To an open-ended question about the NHL team who has won the most Stanley Cups, 74% correctly volunteered the Montreal Canadiens, while 7% answered the Edmonton Oilers and yet another 5% named the Toronto Maple Leafs. (See Table 3)
- Out of 4 options, 39% of Canadians correctly selected Calixa Lavallée as the author of our National Anthem. Another 28% chose Robert Charlebois, while 16% said John A. Macdonald and 6% chose Gordon Lightfoot. (See Table 3)
- Six sports or entertainment personalities were named in the survey and respondents were asked to identify which were Canadian. In total, 47% were right in answering that NHL player Chris Chelios is not Canadian, 83% knew Shania Twain is Canadian, 71% knew Candace Bergen is not Canadian, 89% were right in saying Formula One driver Jacques Villeneuve is Canadian, 80% knew Michael J. Fox is Canadian and 59% were right in saying actor Catherine Deneuve is not Canadian. (See Table 3)

Political Issues

- When given three choices about the ‘slogan’ associated with Canada's Constitution, 44% of respondents correctly selected “Peace, Order and Good Government”, while 29% chose the French motto of “Liberty, equality and fraternity” and 24% selected the American motto of “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. (See Table 3)
- To an open-ended question, 30% of respondents correctly answered “William Lyon Mackenzie King” as the Prime Minister known to have regularly sought the advice of his dead mother and dog. Other Prime Ministers named were Pierre Trudeau (7%), John Diefenbaker (5%), John A. Macdonald (5%), Brian Mulroney (2%) and 1% named our current Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien. (See Table 3)
- Out of 4 choices, Kim Campbell was correctly selected by 81% of Canadians as the first female Prime Minister in Canada, while 6% selected Flora MacDonald, 5% Jeanne Sauvé and 4% Audrey McLaughlin. (See Table 3)

- Joey Smallwood was correctly identified by 35% of respondents as the “last father of Confederation”, while, out of 4 potential answers, 42% selected Pierre Trudeau, 12% Tommy Douglas and 4% Lucien Bouchard. (See Table 3)

Canadian History

- One in four (26%), correctly named Saskatchewan as the first province to introduce Medicare in Canada. Other popular choices were 22% for Quebec (80% of Quebec residents) and 29% for Ontario. (See Table 3)
- When asked who were Sir Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine and Robert Baldwin, 48% correctly chose “they formed an alliance of reformers in Upper and Lower Canada”, while 27% selected “were French and British military commanders” and 13% selected “the first Europeans to see the Rocky Mountains”. (See Table 3)
- To a multiple choice question about the major event in Winnipeg in 1919, 25% correctly chose “a general strike”, while 32% went for the “Red River Rebellion”, 22% “a great flood” and 8% chose the “first Stanley Cup game”. (See Table 3)
- In total, 60% could correctly identify Joseph Armand Bombardier as the Canadian responsible for the first commercially successful snowmobile, while 31% simply did not know. (See Table 3)

Canadian Heroes and National Symbols

- In total, 72% of respondents correctly identified Roberta Bondar as the first Canadian woman to be launched in space in 1992, while 9% chose “first Canadian woman President of General Motors of Canada”, 5% chose “first Canadian woman to play in the NHL” and 6% “first Canadian woman to win an Oscar for best actress.” (See Table 3)
- 85% correctly answered “the Bluenose” as the schooner built in Nova Scotia and commemorated on the 10 cent coin. Another 6% believed the sailboat in question was the Grande Hermine and 4% thought the Flying Dutchman. (See Table 3)
- 86% correctly identified Terry Fox as the man who, in 1980, set out to run across Canada to raise money to fight cancer.
- Over 8 in 10 respondents (85%) correctly identified Remembrance Day as the day Canadians honour those who have served in wartime. (See Table 3)

Geography

- “Alberta” was correctly named by 60% of respondents as the province famous for its provincial park which features an impressive deposit of dinosaur bones, while 6% believed British Columbia was famous for the same reason. (See Table 3)
- “Nunavut” was correctly named by 13% of respondents as the name given to the new territory to be created in Canada’s north in 1999. A total of 71% of respondents could not come up with an answer to this open-ended question. (See Table 3)

- In response to a multiple choice question, 32% of respondents correctly selected the Mackenzie as Canada's longest river, while 46% preferred the St. Lawrence and 13% chose the Fraser River. (See Table 3)

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COMMENTARY ON SURVEY RESULTS

Education's Impact on Identity (remark by Rudyard Griffiths, The Dominion Institute)

"This survey shows that education has a profound impact on Canadians' ability to identify with a common history and culture. 31% who benefited from a university education failed the quiz versus 74% who did not complete high-school. More needs to be done in and outside the classroom to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn about the people, places and events that define the Canadian experience."

National Symbols and Heroes (comment by Jocelyn L. Beaudoin, CCU)

"This survey provides proof that Canadians, young and old, know our national symbols and heroes. A remarkable 85% of Canadians were familiar with the famous schooner *Bluenose* and 72% could name Roberta Bondar as the first Canadian woman to be launched into space. Our national heroes and symbols play an important role in sustaining our sense of attachment to Canada."

Age and Knowledgeability (remark by Rudyard Griffiths, The Dominion Institute)

"This survey shows that younger Canadians are far less knowledgeable about Canada than their parents or grandparents. 62% of respondents over the age of 55 passed the quiz compared to 39% of 18 to 34 year-olds. As Generation X ages, Canadians' sense of identity is shifting from history and politics to Michael J. Fox, Shania Twain and Jacques Villeneuve."

Regionalism and Knowledge (comment by Jocelyn L. Beaudoin, CCU)

"This poll reveals the regional character of Canadians' perceptions of the great events and people in their history. For example, 100% of Newfoundlanders could identify Joey Smallwood as the 'last Father of Confederation', but only 35% of Canadians as a whole answered that question correctly. Similarly, 56% of Quebecers, but only 39% of Canadians as a whole, knew that Calixa Lavallée composed *O Canada*."

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RECOMMENDATIONS IN LIGHT OF POLL RESULTS

In light of the Canada Day 1998 Quiz findings about how little Canadians, and especially youth, know about their country's history and politics, The Dominion Institute believes it is important for governments to act. The Institute has a particular interest in ensuring that provincial education systems teach students more about Canada, in order to help them become active and informed citizens.

Rudyard Griffiths, executive director of The Dominion Institute, puts forward the following recommendations:

- “To address the poor score of young Canadians, The Council of Minister of Education should develop National Guidelines for Civic Education. These guidelines could set out the basic civic knowledge students would learn from the first grade onwards.”
- “Engaging society at large presents more of a challenge. Planning for millennium celebrations represents an important opportunity for the federal government to advance Canadians' knowledge of their history, heroes and shared heritage.”

For further information on these recommendations please contact the Institute.

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Printed copies of survey questions and answers: 1-888-566-8066