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About Canada's Arctic

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Totalling 64% Average (Grade of C)*

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Toronto, ON – Canada is well-known around the world for its vast arctic, often characterized as “the True North Strong and Free”, but a new poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami suggests that various aspects about Canada's arctic are not well-known among Canadians themselves.

Over 1,000 Canadians were given the “North Poll”, a simple true or false quiz of 20 questions relating to Canada's arctic and the Inuit who live there. Tallying the individual scores, the tabulations revealed that one in three (31%) Canadians performed very poorly on the quiz, earning a grade of F (13%) or D (18%). Three in ten (28%) were awarded a mediocre grade of C based on their knowledge of Canada's arctic, answering 12 or 13 of the 20 questions correctly.

On the other hand, 16% of those who took the poll performed admirably, receiving a grade of A, correctly answering at least 16 of the 20 questions. Further, one quarter (25%) received a B having answered 14 or 15 questions accurately.

The average score that Canadians received was 12.7 out of 20, which translates into a 64% average. One respondent out of 1,007 got a perfect score. The lowest score achieved by one individual was 3 out of 20. Some other results are as follows:

- Men (13.3/20) on average performed better than women (12.2/20).
- Older Canadians (13.3/20) on average performed better than middle-aged (12.8/20) or younger Canadians (11.9/20).
- Those with a university education (13.5/20) only marginally outperformed those with some postsecondary education (13/20), or those with only a high-school diploma or less (12.2/20).
- Albertans (13.6/20) performed the best on average, followed by those in Ontario, Atlantic Canada and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (each at 13/20), British Columbia (12.3/20) and Quebec (12/20).
- Those with kids in the household (12/20) performed worse than those without kids (12.9/20).

In addition to the quiz, the poll gauged Canadians' attitudes towards the arctic. While two thirds (65%) of Canadians 'agree' (19% strongly/47% somewhat) that they 'have a fondness for Canada's arctic, and while most 'agree' (27% strongly/54% somewhat) that they 'enjoy learning about Canada's arctic', a majority (53%) '**disagrees**' (14% strongly/39% somewhat) that they are 'generally aware of the realities of life for the Inuit in the Canadian arctic'. Three quarters (74%), however, 'agree' (24% strongly/50% somewhat) that they would 'like to learn more about the Inuit way of life, its culture and its people'.

Perhaps this admitted lack of awareness of life in the arctic stems from the fact that only 7% of Canadians have ever travelled to the Canadian arctic, and only 6% have tried traditional Inuit food. Two in ten (20%) Canadians say they're 'likely' (5% very/16% somewhat) to travel to one of the four Inuit regions in the next ten years. Most, however, are 'not likely' (39% not at all/40% not very) to do so.

Interestingly, much confusion exists among Canadians when it comes to differentiating between Canada's First Nation (Indians), Métis and Inuit. Specifically, one half (51%) 'agrees' (11% strongly/40% somewhat) that they 'think of Canada's Inuit, First Nations and Métis as different tribes or sects of the same people, just living in different areas of the country'. While all are aboriginal peoples of Canada, the Inuit are not First Nation (Indians). The term "First Nation" is the contemporary term for "Indian", just as "Inuit" has replaced "Eskimo" in modern times.

With the Olympics coming up next year, most (84%) believe (36% strongly/48% somewhat) that 'Canada should take the opportunity to showcase Inuit achievements and accomplishments'. This would likely help to educate Canadians and the rest of the world on Canada's Inuit and their culture, tradition and practices.

One of issues that has gained Canada a lot of international attention through widespread media distribution is the traditional Inuit seal hunt. On this topic, seven in ten Canadians 'agree' (38% strongly/34% somewhat) that they 'oppose the European-Union ban on Canadian seal products and support the traditional Inuit seal hunting practices for cultural, economic, and subsistence reasons'. On the other hand, three in ten (28%) Canadians 'disagree' (11% strongly/18% somewhat) with this position.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between November 5 and 10, 2009, on behalf of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. For this survey, a national sample of 1,007 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

Detailed Results of the Quiz...

Few (16%) Canadians scored a grade of A on the twenty question quiz about Canada's arctic and Inuit. Others scored a B (25%), C (28%), D (18%) or F (13%). Below are the detailed results of the quiz, starting with the question answered correctly by the largest proportion, followed by the questions with comparatively poorer results.

- 1) Most (87%) knew that it was **false** to believe that it's possible to drive to all Inuit communities from southern Canadian cities.
- 2) Most (85%) knew that it was **true** that there are over 50,000 Inuit living in Canada.
- 3) Eight in ten (83%) knew that it was **true** that the average Inuit income is 30% less than what it is for the average, non-aboriginal Canadians.
- 4) Eight in ten (82%) knew that it was **true** that only one quarter of Inuit teenagers finish high school.

- 5) Eight in ten (81%) knew that it was **true** that climate change is affecting Inuit more so than the rest of Canadians.
- 6) Eight in ten (80%) knew that it was **true** that Inuit still hunt for food and clothing.
- 7) Eight in ten (77%) knew that it was **false** to believe that all Inuit communities have at least one doctor.
- 8) Three quarters (76%) knew that it was **true** that the life expectancy for Inuit is 15 years lower than for other people in Canada.
- 9) Two thirds (66%) knew that it was **true** that Inuit have signed modern land-claim agreements.
- 10) Two thirds (64%) knew that it was **true** that the concentration of artists in the Arctic is four times higher than the national average.
- 11) Two thirds (63%) knew that it was **true** that Inuit tuberculosis rates are ninety-times higher than the average Canadian.
- 12) Six in ten (60%) knew that it was **true** that the Inuit language is the strongest aboriginal language spoken in Canada.
- 13) Six in ten (58%) knew that it was **true** that the cost of living for the average Inuit is 50% higher than for non-aboriginal Canadians.
- 14) Six in ten (57%) knew that it was **false** to believe that it is required that at least one member of the federal cabinet be Inuit.
- 15) Six in ten (57%) knew that it was **false** to believe that Inuit live primarily on reserves.

16) A majority (55%) knew that it was **false** to believe that all Inuit communities are located “North of 60”.

There were four questions where only a minority of Canadians gave the correct response:

- 17) Less than one half (47%) knew that it was **false** to believe that the capital of Nunavut is Tuktoyaktuk.
- 18) Only four in ten (42%) knew that it was **true** that Inuit own airlines.
- 19) Only three in ten (27%) knew that it was **false** to believe that Inuit are First Nations.
- 20) Only one quarter (25%) knew that it was **true** that Inuit pay all taxes, including income tax, GST and PST (where applicable).

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