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But Americans Slightly More Likely than Canadians to Say It's Important to Commemorate Event, Teach the War in School

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Toronto, ON - Amidst the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the start of the War of 1812, nearly two in ten (17%) Canadians believe that the War of 1812 was the most important War in the formation of Canadian identity - far exceeding the 3% of Americans who say it was the defining war in the formation of American identity.

In fact, in a list of items that could be used to define Canadians identity, the fact that Canada beat the Americans in the War of 1812 places second (25%), only behind the fact that Canada has free healthcare (53%). The War of 1812 placed ahead of the notion that Canadians are more polite than Americans (15%), that Canada beat the Americans in hockey (6%) or that Neil Young belongs to Canada and not the United States (1%).

The Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Historica Dominion institute compares the attitudes between Canadians and Americans on the War, and the results reveal that while more Canadians acknowledge the significance of various outcomes of the war, Americans are more likely to believe that commemoration and promotion of their historical figures is important.

Two in ten (17%) Canadians believe that the War of 1812 was most important in the formation of Canadian identity, placing it well behind of the Second World War (47%), the

First World War (29%), but ahead of the War in Afghanistan (7%). Still, eight in ten (79%) Canadians 'agree' (28% strongly/51% somewhat) that 'the War of 1812 had a significant impact' on their nation's identity. Comparatively, just 3% of Americans believe the War of 1812 was the most important in the formation of American identity, placing it well behind the War of Independence (51%), Civil War (25%) or the Second World War (21%). However, when not compared to other wars, most (77%) Americans 'agree' (26% strongly/51% somewhat) that 'the War of 1812 has a significant impact' on their nation's identity.

Thinking about the significant outcomes of the War of 1812 for Canada, a majority (54%) believe the most significant outcome was that Canada fended off American invasions and avoided US conquest. Others believe the most significant outcome was that Canada gained independence from Britain (18%), that an independent aboriginal nation was created (3%), and the legacy for Laura Secord chocolate was created (2%). Just one quarter (23%) believe there was no significant outcome of the War of 1812, or they couldn't name one.

From the American perspective, one in three (31%) believe the most significant outcome of the War of 1812 was the creation of the Star Spangled Banner, while others believe that the most significant outcome was the burning of the White House (12%), that an independent Aboriginal nation was created (11%), or the election of President Andrew Jackson (10%). Nearly four in ten (36%) Americans believe there were no significant outcomes, or none that they could name, making them much more likely than Canadians (23%) to think so.

Despite the apparent gap in the perceived significance of outcomes of the war (suggesting that Canadians would be more supportive of commemorating and teaching their children about the War), Americans (80%) are more likely than Canadians (77%) to 'agree' that the War of 1812 bicentennial is an important commemoration. Further differences are revealed:



- Americans (80%) are more likely than Canadians (77%) to 'agree' that their national government should support the commemoration of the War of 1812.
- Americans (88%) are significantly more likely than Canadians (81%) to agree that teaching the War of 1812 should be mandatory in history school curriculum.
- Americans are much more likely (80%) than Canadians (60%) to agree that they learned about the War of 1812 in school.
- Americans are significantly more likely (91%) than Canadians (84%) to agree that the War of 1812 is something everyone in their country should know about.
- More Americans (58%) than Canadians (49%) agree that that their own nation is good at promoting its history.
- Eight in ten (84%) Americans and Canadians (83%) 'agree' that the War of 1812 was a significant moment in the history of their country.
- Americans (89%) are more likely than Canadians (87%) to agree that it is important to celebrate significant historical anniversaries.
- Americans (94%) are more likely than Canadians (91%) to agree that it is important to tell the stories of our historical figures.

One of the quirky notes about the War of 1812 is that Canadians textbooks typically claim that Canadians (British) won the war, while Americans would typically claim that their country won - or that at least a stalemate occurred. Americans (84%) are more likely than Canadians (78%) to agree that it is important who won the war.



Considering whether or not to attend a War of 1812 bicentennial celebration, 6% of Americans strongly agree that they plan to attend an event, while 5% of Canadians say the same.

Canadians and 1812...

Testing Canadians' knowledge of the War of 1812, Canadians were presented with a list of five historical figures and asked which of the five was not a key Canadian figure in the war. Only 35% of Canadians correctly identified Sir John A Macdonald as the figure who didn't have a role in the War. Others erroneously believed it was Laura Secord (32%), George Provost (18%), General Brock (9%) or Chief Tecumseh (7%).

Canadians were also asked why they thought Tecumseh and his confederacy of First Nations chose to form an alliance with the British during the War of 1812. A majority (61%) believes it was because the First Nations thought the British were more likely than the Americans to support them, while two in ten believe it's because they were mandated to do so by the British North American Act (19%), that their hunting practices required them to move further north (11%), or that they believed in the glory of the British Empire (9%).

Thinking about French Canada and the War of 1812, Canadians are much more split on their opinions. Four in ten (38%) are closest to the opinion that French Canadians played an important role in fighting off American attacks during the War of 1812, while one in three (31%) are closest to the opinion that many French forces were unsupportive of the British forces during the War of 1812 and refused to fight. While 17% believe the War of 1812 improved French-English relations, 14% believe the war worsened English-French relations.

Had the American invasion of Canada been successful, the potential consequence that concerns the highest proportion of Canadians is sharing American politics and government

(60%). Others are most concerned about sharing American gun laws (18%), sharing American patriotism (12%), sharing American citizenship with the cast of Jersey Shore (6%), or sharing American currency and holidays (4%).

Quebecers and 1812...

The data reveal that Quebecers and Canadians overall don't always have the same views when it comes to the War of 1812, its significance and its commemoration. However, a majority of Quebecers still believe in the significance of the War and the importance of commemorating its bicentennial.

- Quebecers are less likely (11%) than the average Canadian (17%) to believe that the War of 1812 was the most important war in the formation of Canadian identity.
- Quebecers (29%) are more likely than the average Canadian (23%) to think there are no significant outcomes of the War.
- Quebecers are less likely (77%) than the average Canadian (84%) to agree that the War of 1812 is something every Canadian should know about. They're also less likely (76%) than the average Canadian (83%) to say it was a significant moment in the history of their country.
- Fewer Quebecers (65%) than the average Canadian (77%) believe that the bicentennial of 1812 is an important commemoration.
- Fewer Quebecers (69%) than the average Canadian (81%) believe that the teaching of the War of 1812 should be mandatory in school curriculums. In fact, a minority (44%) of Quebecers say they learned about the War in school, compared to 60% of Canadians overall.



- Quebecers (43%) are more likely than the average Canadian (38%) to believe that French Canadians played an important role in fighting off American attacks during the war.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between January 26 to 30, on behalf of The Historica Dominion Institute. For this survey, a sample of 1,015 Canadians and 1,015 Americans from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to 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 and the United States of America 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.

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