Canada: Physical Geography

Introducing the Geography of Canada

- Canada is the second largest country (area). Only Russia is larger.
- ~4,800 km north to south, ~5,000 west to east.
- Canada is a northern country and 90% is so far north that the growing season is too short for agriculture.

Canada's Geography continued...

1. Size
2. Northern Location
3. Isolation

These three facts provide a context for Canada's history:

- Much later immigration and interest from the French and English
- Canada's involvement in two world wars without great danger of an attack.

Canada's Geography continued...

The physical geography of canada can be broken into:

- landforms

- soils

- surface waters

- climate

- vegetation.

● These 5 components can vary greatly from place to place.

Landforms and Soils

Regions are defined by underlying geologic structures and **topography**(surface landforms)

Physiographic Regions of Canada:

- Canadian Shield

- Western Cordillera

- Appalachians

- Innuitians

- Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands

- Interior Plains

- Hudson Bay Lowlands

- Arctic Lowlands

Canadian Shield

Canadian Shield continued...

- Largest Physiographic region, includes most of Quebec, Ontario, northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Nunavut, and half of NWT.
- Rugged landscape, including rock outcrops, bogs, muskeg, drumlins, eskers and lake basins.
- Soils are poor, thin, acidic or non-existent.
- Natural resources include: forest and mineral deposits (gold, uranium, copper and nickel).

Canadian Shield continued...

Western Cordillera

- Region includes Pacific mountain system and the interior Rocky mountains.
- Landscape is eroded.
- there are large peaks and valleys(between the mountains.
- Soils are limited to valley regions.
- Natural resources include: forests, minerals (gold) and hydroelectric power.

Western Cordillera continued…

Appalachians

- Older eroded mountains.
- Glacial landforms like drumlins and eskers.
- Soils are poor and swampy with the exception of the lowlands (PEI)
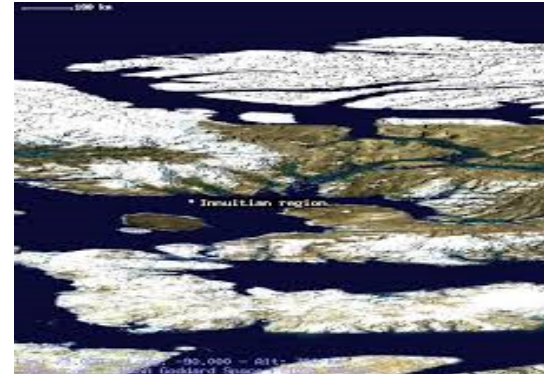- Natural resources include: coal.

Appalachians continued...

Innuitians

- Located far north, rugged and isolated, and made up of glaciers and icefields.

Great Lakes- St. Lawrence Lowlands

- Relatively small region which rests on sedimentary rocks.
- Natural resources include: fertile soils, construction material and opportunities for hydroelectric power.

Interior Plains

- Sedimentary rocks underlie this region.
- Extends from the Mackenzie River to delta to the border of the United States.
- Landforms are diverse, with flat areas,rolling hills, and valleys.
- Glacial lake soils.
- Prairies increase in elevation as you move west.
- Natural resources include: minerals, oil and gas.

Interior Plains continued...

Hudson Bay Lowlands

- A level area, comprised of muskegs and other poorly drained areas.
- Very few natural resources.

Arctic Lowlands

- Series of low islands.
- Natural resources include fossil fuels.

Factors Affecting Climate

- Latitude.
- Distance from oceans.
- Prevailing air movement.
- Landforms.

Climate Regions

- **<u>Arctic:</u>** Light snowfall, high winds, low temps.
- **<u>Subarctic:</u>** Cold winters, 6 months of snow. Warm summers.
- **<u>Pacific:</u>** High rainfall, mild winters and cool summers.
- **<u>Cordillera:</u>** Temps vary,most precip. in the south.
- **<u>Prairies:</u>** Light precipitation, cold winters, hot summers.
- **<u>Great Lakes- St. Lawrence:</u>** High humidity, warm summers and cold winters
- **<u>Atlantic:</u>** High precipitation,cool winters and warm summers.

Human Geography

Canada can be divided into 5 political boundaries:

- Atlantic: NF, PEI, NS, NB.
- Central: QC, ON.
- Prairie: MB, SK,AB.
- West Coast: BC.
- North: YT,NU, NT.

Canada's Population

- Canada's pop. has been increasing since 1867.
- **Demography** is the scientific study of population.

Natural Increase-Is the numerical difference between the number of births and deaths in a population.

Rate of Natural Increase- Refer to the overall rate at which a population increases.

Canada's Population

- 34.88 million (2012), up from 32 million in 2006.
- The annual rate of increase is .3%.
- Expected population in 2050 is 37 million.
- Slow population growth is because Canadian women are having fewer children. Currently our fertility rate is 1.5 children per woman - too low to maintain the current population levels.
- How then is our population growing?

Economic Geography

- 80% of Canada's exports go to the United States & 65-70% of imports come from the US.
- International trade agreements-such as NAFTA, North American Free Trade Agreement, between the US, Canada and Mexico make it even easier to trade between countries.