

# Introduction to Canadian Culture





I have a prime minister not a president and I speak English & French not American & I pronounce it “about” not “aboot”. I can proudly sew my country’s flag on my backpack. I believe in peace keeping not policing and I believe in diversity not assimilation and that the beaver is a truly proud & noble animal... A “chesterfield” is a couch... and it is pronounced “zed” not “zee” - Canada is the second largest land mass, the first nation in ice hockey and the best part of North America.”



# Quotes about Canada

**“The Canadian identity is bound up with the feeling that the end of the rainbow never falls on Canada”**

**Northrop Frye  
(Canadian Scholar)**

***“Canadians love to sit in the dark trembling with fear at weather forecasts”***

***Robert Morley (Actor)***

**“Phlegmatic Canadians are suspicious of adulation, but Americans love heroes; their system depends on them”**

**Allan Fotheringham (Canadian Journalist)**

**“I am rather inclined to believe that this is the land  
God gave to Cain”**

**Jacques Cartier (explorer, 1534)**



# **“This Land is my Land”**

## **Geography and its effect on the Canadian psyche**

- “It can’t be helped” “ Why bother?”
- Geography has kept French and English apart
- Canadians know only their immediate vicinity - this leads to stereotypes about people from other provinces



# Land

- Canada is the second largest country in the world, covering 3,851,788 sq. miles
- Much of the North is uninhabited due to Arctic climate and permanently frozen ground
- Most of the population lives within 160km of the US border



# The People of Canada

- Land of immigrants
- Searching for national identity
- British influence
  - Colonial mentality
- Inferiority complex

“While we would want never to be left alone in the world without America, we would also never want to be left in the world with America alone” Dalton Camp 1980

# The People of Canada

- Suspicious of heroes
  - Considerable fear of failure

“American students have been conditioned from infancy to think of themselves as citizens of one of the world’s great powers. Canadians are conditioned to think of themselves as citizens of a country of uncertain identity, a confusing past a hazardous future”

*Northop Frye*



- Honest (9.2/10)
- Friendly, easy-going
- Practical, savers
- Humorous
- Tolerant, but critical of US
- Prudish, often traditional
- Fair, gentle
- Generous, parochial
- Pioneers, independent
- Low key, uncomplicated
- Love family, mother nature
- Internationally impartial





# Establishing Credibility

- Get to know them! They want to know if they can get along with you before working with you
- Canadians are between British reserve and US friendliness
- Don't confuse Canada with America
- They are usually matter-of-fact
- Demonstrate humility
- Be sensitive to age, rank, status, politeness
- Show an understanding of regional, linguistic, ethnic and cultural differences in Canada



# Individualism

- Canadians are fairly individualistic
- Each person is viewed as a separate being, with a personal identity, goals, ideas, and values
- Numerous laws upholding the rights of the person
- But- people have the right to control their destinies only as long as their decisions don't negatively impact others



- Second among G7 nations on ecosystem vitality, natural resource management and efforts to reduce environmental stresses on human health
- You can play ice hockey 12 months a year, outdoors
- Where else can you travel 1000 miles over fresh water in a canoe?
- Canada leads the G7 nations in safety, opportunities and overall quality of life
- They might have to wait a while, but every Canadian -- rich or poor -- gets the health care they need, thanks to a publicly funded universal health insurance program.