

I Am Canadian?

Canada Day Poll

A COMPAS Report to Global TV-Ottawa Citizen



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Consumer Research
Ottawa and Toronto
June 21, 2001**

I Am Canadian?

Fewer than One In Five Canadians Would Pass Our Citizenship Test

Fewer than one in five Canadians would pass our nation's citizenship test, according to a recent Global TV/Ottawa Citizen/COMPAS survey. Based on respondents' unprompted answers to a subset of actual test questions, only 17% of Canadians would be able to meet the pass requirement of answering six in ten questions correctly. To add insult to injury, almost as many Canadians (14%) are unable to answer correctly any question at all as are able to get a passing score of 60%. Respondents were asked:

As you know, when immigrants to Canada want to become Canadian citizens, they have to pass a citizenship test. I'm going to read you 10 questions from the test. For each question, please tell me if you know the answer. First of all [rotate series]

Who are the Metis...from whom are they descended?

What important trade or commerce did the Hudson's Bay Company control during the early settlement of Canada?

Which group of people played a major role in physically building the Canadian Pacific Railway across the west?

When did the British North America Act come into effect?

Which four provinces first formed the Confederation?

Which province is the only officially bilingual province?

Parliament created a new territory in Canada's North. What is the name of the new territory?

What does one call the Queen's representative in the provinces and territories?

What does one call a law before it is passed?

How many electoral districts are there in Canada?

Fewer than half of one percent of respondents were able to answer all ten questions correctly. In contrast, 14% of Canadians answered all ten questions *incorrectly* while another 14% answer correctly only one in ten questions. A "report card" is shown in table 1 below.



Table 1: Citizenship Test Report Card

	%
Number of questions correctly answered	
0	14
1	14
2	15
3	12
4	15
5	13
6	8
7	4
8	3
9	2
10	*

Pass rates rise significantly with education. The pass rate (i.e. answer at least six questions correctly) among Canadians with a high-school education is 5% compared to 15% among those with a college education, 36% among university graduates and 39% among those with a post-graduate education.

The pass rate is nominally higher in Quebec (21%) and nominally lower in the Prairies (14%) and B.C. (14%) compared to the national average of 17%. Pass rates in the Atlantic (17%) and Ontario (18%) approximate the national average.

High Scoring Versus Low Scoring Questions

Half of the questions were answered correctly by at least 40% of Canadians. These “high scoring” questions relate to the origins of the Hudson’s Bay Company (70%), the role of the Chinese in building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (45%), the lineage of the Metis (44%), Nunavut (44%) and the definition of a Parliamentary or legislative “bill” (40%). The full distribution of responses to the high scoring questions is shown in table 2 below.



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Table 2: High Scoring Questions

	Correct	Near Correct	Wrong	DNK	Ref
What important trade or commerce did the Hudson's Bay Company control during the early settlement of Canada	70	NA	4	26	-
Which group of people played a major role in physically building the Canadian Pacific Railway across the west	45	4	17	35	*
Who are the Metis...from whom are they descended	44	NA	21	34	*
Parliament created a new territory in Canada's North. What is the name of the new territory	44	NA	25	31	-
What does one call a law before it is passed	40	NA	9	51	*

Twenty-five percent or fewer Canadians provided correct answers to the remaining questions. These "low scoring" questions relate to the title of the Queen's provincial representative (25%), provincial membership at Confederation (21%), name of Canada's officially bilingual province (18%), ratification of the British North American Act (17%), and the number of electoral districts in Canada (2%). The full distribution of responses to the low scoring questions is shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Low Scoring Questions



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	Correct	Near Correct	Wrong	DNK	Ref
What does one call the Queen's representative in the provinces and territories	25	NA	34	41	-
Which four provinces first formed the Confederation	21	NA	34	45	1
Which province is the only officially bilingual province	18	NA	74 ¹	8	-
When did the British North America Act come into effect	17	10	6	66	*
How many electoral districts are there in Canada	2	7	28	63	*

Education Drives Correct Response Rates

Correct response rates to each question rise with education. For example, 60% of high school graduates understood that the Hudson's Bay Company controlled the fur trade compared to 69% among those with a college degree, 83% among university graduates, and 90% among those with a post-graduate education. For the sake of simplicity, the distribution of correct responses by education is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Correct Response in Percent by Education

¹ There are two categories of wrong answers for this question: the first category is comprised of respondents who gave "Quebec" as an answer and the second category is comprised of respondents who gave other wrong answers: "Quebec" 56%, other wrong answer 18%



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	High School	College	University	Post-grad/Law/Medicine
What important trade or commerce did the Hudson's Bay Company control during the early settlement of Canada	60	69	83	90
Which group of people played a major role in physically building the Canadian Pacific Railway across the west	33	56	55	54
Who are the Metis...from whom are they descended	34	51	54	56
Parliament created a new territory in Canada's North. What is the name of the new territory	29	52	58	62
What does one call a law before it is passed	23	51	49	71
What does one call the Queen's representative in the provinces and territories	12	28	35	50
Which four provinces first formed the Confederation	12	16	33	38
Which province is the only officially bilingual province	11	18	31	23
When did the British North America Act come into effect	9	20	23	37
How many electoral districts are there in Canada	0	4	5	4



Region and Language—The Uniqueness of Atlantic Canadians

In a manifestation of the aphorism, “where I sit is where I stand,” region and language are predictors of how well Canadians score on the test. Atlantic Canadians understand the lineage of the Metis less well than others but recognize New Brunswick’s bilingual status more readily. In particular, Atlantic residents are significantly

- ❑ less likely to correctly answer that the Metis descended from European settlers and Aboriginal women –Atlantic 34%, Quebec 52%, Ontario 40%, Prairies 45%, B.C. 49%, and
- ❑ more likely to know that New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province – Atlantic 54%, Quebec 17%, Ontario 17%, Prairies 13%, B.C. 6%.

With respect to language, English speaking Canadians are significantly more likely than French-speaking Canadians to correctly answer that the Hudson’s Bay Company controlled fur trade (72% versus 61%).

Age—The Curious Knowledge Gaps of the Young and the Old

The youngest Canadians (i.e. under 30 years of age) are significantly less likely to answer correctly that the Metis are descendents of Europeans and aboriginals (31% versus 44% among all Canadians), the Hudson’s Bay Company controlled the fur trade (53% versus 70% among all Canadians), the Chinese played a major role in building the CPR (23% versus 45% among all Canadians), the British North American Act came into effect July 1, 1867 (7% versus 17% among all Canadians), and that the Lieutenant Governor is the Queen’s representative in the provinces (17% versus 25% among all Canadians).

Why the young do so poorly is a challenge to explain. An explanation may be the diminished role of history courses in school or perhaps because the young have not had enough years to absorb the requisite knowledge almost by osmosis from the mass media.

For their part, the oldest Canadians (aged 60 or over) are significantly less likely to correctly answer that Canada’s North is now called Nunavut (33% versus 44% among Canadians as a whole) and that a law is called a bill before it is passed (22% versus 40% among Canadians as a whole)



Evidence of Gender Bias in the Citizenship Test

Pass rates are significantly higher among males compared to females. In practice, 25% of males answered at least six questions correctly compared to 10% of females. Some of the gender gap is attributable to the higher rate of formal education among men. Controlling statistically for education causes the gender gap to attenuate somewhat. The pass rate among males with a university or post-graduate education is 47% compared to 25% among females with university or post-graduate education. Thus, the gender gap abates from 2.5:1 to 1.9:1 after controlling for education. The fact that a test success gap remains even after education is controlled statistically suggests that there may be a gender bias to the questions in the citizenship test. Thus, the test constructed for immigrants to Canada may be biased in the direction of subjects that are inherently more interesting to males than females, thereby making it easier for males to excel at it.

Males are significantly more likely than females to offer a correct response to most of the individual questions, even after controlling for education. As shown in table 5 below, 91% of males with a first university or post-graduate degree correctly replied that the Hudson's Bay Company controlled furs/pelts compared to a 78% correct response rate among equally educated women.

Table 5: Responses by Gender Among University and Post-Graduates



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	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	f
	Correct		Near Correct		Wrong		DNK		Ref	
What important trade or commerce did the Hudson's Bay Company control during the early settlement of Canada	91	78	NA	NA	3	4	6	18	-	-
Which group of people played a major role in physically building the Canadian Pacific Railway across the west	59	49	2	6	22	17	15	29	1	-
Who are the Metis...from whom are they descended	51	59	NA	NA	30	12	19	29	-	-
Parliament created a new territory in Canada's North. What is the name of the new territory	68	48	NA	NA	18	33	14	19	-	-
What does one call a law before it is passed	66	44	NA	NA	6	14	28	42	1	-
What does one call the Queen's representative in the provinces and territories	52	25	NA	NA	25	38	23	37	-	-
Which four provinces first formed the Confederation	38	32	NA	NA	35	26	27	43	-	-
Which province is the only officially bilingual province	39	15	NA	NA	60 ²	85	1	-	-	-
When did the British North America Act come into effect	32	22	8	22	10	6	49	51	1	-
How many electoral districts are there in Canada	7	3	19	6	37	18	38	74	-	-

² There are two categories of wrong answers for this question: the first category is comprised of respondents who gave "Quebec" as an answer and the second category is comprised of respondents who gave other wrong answers: Among males: "Quebec" 46%, "other" 14%. Among females: "Quebec" 70%, "other" 15%.



Methodology

The national sample of 500 Canadian adults was interviewed June 14-17, 2001. Samples of this size are deemed accurate to within approximately 4.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal investigators on this study were Dr. Conrad Winn and Robert Laufer.

