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WHAT DO YOUNG ADULTS KNOW

ABOUT CANADIAN HISTORY?

10 YEAR BENCHMARK STUDY

Ten-year benchmark study exploring how many young adults age 18 to 24 can pass a simple thirty question exam on Canadian history identical to the one given to same age group ten years previously by Ipsos-Reid and the Dominion Institute.

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IPSOS-REID / DOMINION INSTITUTE

TEN-YEAR BENCHMARK STUDY

Eight in ten (82%) Canadians age 18 to 24 fail basic Canadian history exam -one point (1%) more than failed in 1997

Less than half of respondents (46%) could name Canada's first P.M. and only one-quarter (26%) could give the date of Confederation

On the eve of Remembrance Day survey shows young peoples' knowledge of Canada's military heritage is up over last decade

Only five percent of respondents indicate that the test was "too hard" - one in ten embarrassed by their lack of knowledge

November 9, Toronto, Ontario- Over the last decade a major push has been made by public institutions, private foundations and advocacy groups such as the Dominion Institute to educate young people about Canadian history. Noteworthy initiatives include the CBC's *A People's History*, The Historica Foundation's "Heritage Minutes" and the construction of new Canadian War Museum at the cost of \$134 million. With the support of the Aurea Foundation, the Dominion Institute and Ipsos-Reid have undertaken a national survey of 18 to 24 year olds to discover whether or not the last ten years of significant and ongoing investments in history education in Canada have translated into greater levels of knowledge among young people. To do this, the Institute and Ipsos-Reid asked, by telephone, a nationally representative sample of 18 to 24 year olds thirty basic questions about Canada's past. These questions were identical to those that the Institute used to survey the same age group ten years ago in 1997.



Highlights of our study summarised in this factum include the following:

- Eighteen percent (18%) of Canadians scored a grade of at least 16 out of 30 on a basic Canadian history quiz, which is one point less (19%) than passed ten years ago.
- There appears to be a decline of knowledge in political history over the past ten years. For example, in 1997, 36% of Canadians knew the year of confederation compared to just 26% in 2007. Similarly, ten years ago, 54% knew the name of Canada's first Prime Minister, while just 46% now know that John A Macdonald held this position.
- Knowledge in military history has, however, increased. While in 1997, 31% of Canadians knew that the Battle of Vimy Ridge was fought in WWI, 37% now know that it was fought in WWI. Similarly, 37% now know that November 11th marked the end of WWI, compared to 33% who knew this ten years ago.
- Despite the low scores, just 5% offered that the quiz, overall, was too difficult.

Rudyard Griffiths, Co-Founder of the Institute comments on the results: "The verdict is in: after a decade of significant investments in history education we have failed to move the dial towards greater knowledge and understanding of Canadian history. It is especially disappointing to see the precipitous decline in knowledge of the basics of Canadian political history. One wonders whether Canadians will possess a common national memory a generation from now given that three-quarters of high school graduates were unable to give the date of Confederation – a ten percent point decline in ten short years."

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Study Methodology...

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Dominion Institute from Sep 6 to Oct 25, 2007. For the survey, a randomly selected sample of 1,004 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the aggregate results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had this entire population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within each sub-grouping of the survey population. The study methodology was precisely the same as it was 10 years ago so as to ensure consistency across time, and to provide accurate comparisons across the data.

The Results Across Canada – 2007 As Compared to 1997

While, overall, Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 performed only slightly worse in the history quiz this year as they did 10 years ago, some parts of the country performed better than they had in the past, while the performance of other regions declined.

- In British Columbia, just 15% of young-adult Canadians passed the quiz compared to the 23% that passed the quiz in 1997.
- While Alberta still performed ahead of the national average with 22% of young-adult Canadians passing the quiz this year, 27% passed the quiz in 1997.
- In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, 29% of young adults passed the quiz compared to just 16% who in 1997 who passed the quiz. This represents the largest increase in knowledge among any region in the country.
- In Ontario, 21% of young-adult Canadians passed the quiz, which is a small decline from the 23% that passed the quiz in 1997.
- In Quebec, just 9% of young-adult Canadians passed the quiz which is a decrease from 12% in 2007.

- In Atlantic Canada, 13% passed the quiz, which was a decline from 18% in 1997 who passed the quiz.
- In 1997, 24% of men and 14% of women passed the test. While in 2007, the same proportion of men (24%) passed, fewer women (12%) passed the test this year.

Questions That Evidenced The Most Improvement in Knowledge

In terms of the questions where Canadians evidenced the most improvement in knowledge, the following is a sampling of some of those questions. However, it appears that military history was the area in which Canadian young adults demonstrated the greatest improvement:

- In 1997, just 17% of Canadians knew that Chinese Canadians were forced to pay a head tax to immigrate to Canada. In 2007, 32% of Canadians now know this.
- In 1997, 31% of Canadians knew that the Battle of Vimy Ridge was fought in WWI, compared to 37% who now know this fact.
- In 1997, 33% of Canadians knew that November 11 marked the final day of WWI, whereas 37% now know that this date marked the final date of WWI.
- In 1997, 26% of Canadians could identify one of the War of 1812, the Revolutionary War, and the War of Independence as one of the wars where Canada was invaded by the United States, whereas in 2007, 29% of Canadians could name one of these as a war in which Canada was invaded by the United States.
- In 1997, 32% of Canadians identified the Acadians as the French-speaking early settlers of what is now New Brunswick and Nova Scotia who were expelled by the British, compared to 35% of Canadians who now responded correctly to this question.

- In 1997, 38% identified Halifax as the Canadian city that was severely damaged by a massive explosion in 1917, compared to 41% who now answered this question correctly.

Questions That Evidenced The Greatest Decline in Knowledge

In terms of the questions where Canadians evidenced the greatest decline in knowledge, the following is a sampling of some of those questions. However, Canadians appear to have lost the most knowledge when it comes to their political history:

- In 1997, 60% of Canadians knew that Free Trade was the economic issue that dominated the elections of 1988, 1991 and 1995. In 2007, though, just 22% of individuals identified Free Trade as the issue which dominated these elections.
- In 1997, 54% of Canadians knew that John A Macdonald was the first Canadian Prime Minister, compared to 46% who in 2007 knew this.
- In 1997, 67% knew that Wilfrid Laurier was Canada's first francophone Prime Minister, compared to 56% who in 2007 could identify Laurier as the first francophone Prime Minister
- In 1997, 65% named Louis Joseph Papineau as the leader of an 19th century rebellion in Quebec, compared to just 52% who could do the same in 2007.
- In 1997, 36% of Canadians knew that 1867 was the year of confederation. Just 26% of Canadians in 2007 answered this question correctly.
- In 1997, 51% of Canadians knew that Newfoundland was the last province to join confederation, compared to 38% of Canadians who now know this.
- In 1997, 40% of Canadians knew that Louis Riel was hanged by the Federal Government in 1885. In 2007, just 27% could recall Riel's name.

Performance by Subject Area

The thirty questions that make up the exam can be grouped under three broad themes: social history, political history and military history. When comparing how respondents did in 1997 versus 2007, questions that dealt with political history evidenced the greatest decline in knowledge. Respondents ability to answer questions related to Canada's social history was mostly unchanged. Interestingly, young Canadians knowledge of the country's military heritage showed the greatest overall improvement (or least amount of decline), which is a finding that suggests that the major anniversaries of Vimy and the end of the Second World War may have had a educative effect.

Immigrants Versus Those Born in Canada

In 1997, 20% of Canadians who were born in Canada passed the exam, compared to 16% of immigrants who received a passing grade. However, in 2007, the gap in knowledge between individuals who were born in Canada and those who immigrated to this country grew. More specifically, in 2007, 19% of young adults born in Canada passed the quiz, while just 9% of young adults who immigrated to Canada passed the quiz this year.

What Respondents Had to Say About The Exam

Following completion of the quiz, respondents had the opportunity to, unaided, give their impressions about the quiz and how they felt following the whole thing. Common answers include:

- One quarter (24%) admitted that they did not do very well, or that they did not know very much, while one in ten (10%) said that they did 'poorly' or 'bad'.
- Fourteen percent (14%) suggested that taking the quiz made them feel 'good'.
- Thirteen percent (13%) said that they did not know as much as they should.
- One nine (11%) believe that they should brush up on their Canadian history.

- One in ten (10%) suggested that they have forgotten much of their knowledge of history, and that they used to know more.
- One in twelve (8%) said that they felt embarrassed or stupid as a result of taking this quiz.
- Just 5% said that the quiz and its questions were too tough.

Table 1

OVERALL RESULTS OF THE TEST									
	REGION							Male	Female
	National	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	QC	Atlantic		
(Weighted Bases)	1004	130	120	71	389	226	67	506	498
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
16+answers correct	18	15	22	29	21	9	13	24	12
Failed exams	82	85	78	71	79	91	87	76	88

Table 2

Question	Right answer	National 2007	Change from National 1997	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NF	Immigrant	Male	Female
Name the two Canadians contained in the following list of writers and painters...	** Emily Carr **	64	-4	88	58	50	59	72	39	66	88	100	45	56	61	67
	** Robert Service **	22	-5	21	24	22	40	18	29	21	16	-	7	22	23	22
Which country took control of Quebec, away from France, by winning the battle of the Plains of Abraham?	** Britain ** ** England ** ** United Kingdom/UK	62	-1	58	65	53	68	56	78	30	56	-	55	57	67	56
Who was Canada's first francophone Prime Minister?	** Wilfred Laurier **	56	-11	46	45	69	68	60	60	33	43	-	38	40	61	51
What term is used to describe the severe economic hardships of the 1930's?	** Depression/Great Depression **	55	-9	65	58	44	59	70	17	64	84	50	46	51	58	52
In the 19th century, some inhabitants of what is now Quebec rebelled against the colonial government of the time. Who was the leader of that rebellion?	** Louis-Joseph Papineau **	52	-13	49	32	41	41	48	72	47	65	50	54	44	56	48
What was the name of the route to Canada taken by blacks escaping slavery in the US	** Underground Railway **	47	-4	49	45	63	67	64	6	60	70	50	70	28	48	46
Who was Canada's first Prime Minister?	** John A. Macdonald **	46	-8	46	50	50	67	60	19	37	47	50	38	40	51	42



Name one group of Canadians who were evacuated from the West Coast during WWII because of their ethnic origin?	** Japanese/Japanese Canadians **	42	-1	51	56	31	51	48	20	21	41	50	38	41	49	34
What Canadian city was severely damaged by a massive explosion in its harbour in 1917?	** Halifax **	41	+3	41	37	56	46	51	13	66	92	50	62	24	47	35
Which province was the last one to join Canada?	** Newfoundland **	38	-13	27	30	44	43	41	34	53	64	-	70	21	44	31
In 1944, Canadians joined in an event called D Day. What happened on that day?	** Invasion of Europe/Invasion of France/Invasion of Normandy **	37	+2	37	47	35	37	36	34	11	47	-	30	26	53	21
Remembrance Day in Canada falls on November 11. November 11 was the last day of which war?	** World War 1/WW1 **	37	+4	41	48	31	49	39	25	43	36	-	40	22	44	31
The battle of Vimy Ridge was an important victory for allied forces in what war?	** World War 1/WW1 **	37	+6	38	45	59	46	42	20	40	30	-	61	25	43	31
In what year were all Canadian women eligible to vote in federal elections?	** 1921 **	36	-6	42	39	34	51	39	22	40	43	-	16	34	38	33
Many of the early settlers of what is now New Brunswick and Nova Scotia spoke French and were resettled by the British government. What are those people and their descendants called?	** Acadians **	35	+3	22	29	28	35	26	55	79	72	50	38	20	37	34



The members of which ethnic group were once forced to pay a head tax to immigrate to Canada?	** Chinese Canadians **	32	+15	51	33	37	41	39	11	4	28	-	8	33	36	28
Name one of the wars in which Canada was invaded by the United States	** War of 1812 ** ** Revolutionary/War of Independence **	29	+3	25	33	34	40	38	12	7	27	-	23	17	37	20
What is the name of the Metis leader who was hanged by the federal government in 1885?	** Louis Riel **	27	-13	31	34	75	70	21	20	-	20	-	24	14	30	24
What year did Confederation occur?	** 1867 **	26	-10	20	24	28	48	31	18	7	31	50	14	16	29	22
What economic issue between the US and Canada dominated the Canadian Federal elections of 1891, 1911 and 1988?	** Free Trade ** ** FTA ** ** Trade ** ** Reciprocity **	22	-38	24	21	25	24	27	16	7	15	50	7	16	27	18
What American war helped convince Canadians and their leaders to unite and form a federation in the north?	** Civil War/American Civil War **	22	-8	23	23	19	27	24	15	18	24	-	15	21	25	18
What name is commonly used to refer to the British subjects who fled to Canada during and after the American Revolution	** Loyalists ** ** United Empire ** ** Loyalists **	20	-3	15	21	22	27	19	24	26	28	-	-	11	23	17
Name two countries Canada fought against during World War 1?	** Germany ** ** Austria/Austro-Hungarian** **Turkey**	17	+6	17	20	28	19	18	13	7	7	0	7	12	23	11
What term is commonly used to refer to early French fur traders in Canada?	** Voyageurs ** ** Coureurs des bois **	15	-2	10	13	12	43	8	30	-	5	-	-	7	19	12



Name the Canadian who received the Noble Prize for Peace in 1957 for his efforts to peacefully resolve the Suez Crisis and then went on to become Prime Minister.	** Lester B. Pearson **	12	-2	8	13	6	22	17	7	-	12	-	-	12	15	9
What is the name commonly given to the political and social movement that swept Quebec in the beginning of the 1960's?	** Quiet Revolution **	10	No change	4	7	6	8	6	26	-	-	-	-	5	12	8
Who was the first Canadian in space?	** Marc Garneau **	9	-7	5	4	6	13	8	17	-	4	-	-	7	12	6
What year was Canada's constitution patriated from Great Britain?	** 1982 **	9	-6	6	12	19	11	10	8	-	8	-	7	10	11	8
Name a Canadian who received the Noble Prize for the discovery of insulin?	** Banting ** ** MacCloud ** ** Collip **	6	-5	4	7	-	8	10	2	-	5	-	7	4	6	6
What is the name of the native people of Newfoundland who were hunted to extinction by Europeans?	** Beothuks **	3	-3	0	4	6	5	2	1	0	5	0	48	2	3	2
% Correct Answer																