Articles and Questions

Each **free article** of ***What in the World?*** includes:   
  
1) a PDF file

*and*

2) a Word file

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**40 Million and Counting**



On June 16, our country hit a major landmark. **Statistics Canada** says that was when the nation’s population reached 40 million.

“This is an exciting milestone for Canada,” said Chief Statistician Anil Arora. “It is a strong signal that Canada remains a dynamic and welcoming country.”

**The bigger picture**

The 40-million figure tells a bigger tale, too.

Canada’s population is expanding faster than it has in decades. The nation’s annual growth rate is 2.7 percent. That's the highest it’s been since 1957. As a result, Canada is the fastest-growing **G7** country. If the nation keeps growing at this rate, the population could hit 50 million in just 20 years.

**We help others . . .**

How to explain this massive population surge? It comes down to one word: **immigration**. In 2022 alone, Canada grew by over one million people. About 96 percent of this increase was due to people moving to Canada from other nations. That's more than twice the 430,000 **permanent residents** the federal government was expecting.

The numbers increased because Canada took in more **refugees** than planned. Many came from war-torn nations like Ukraine, Syria, and Afghanistan. Others came from Turkey and Syria after a huge earthquake last February destroyed homes in these nations.

Yet this **influx** of immigrants is just part of an ongoing trend. Some 40 percent of Canadian residents are already immigrants or children of immigrants. And in 20 years, immigrants will make up the majority of Canada's population.

**. . .and they help us**

Canadians have **humanitarian** reasons for accepting large numbers of immigrants. But we’re also being practical.

Canada’s current population is aging. In 1980, about six people were working for every retired person. By 2030, the ratio will be three to one. Meanwhile, the nation's birth rate has dropped substantially.

That means we risk not being able to replace the people leaving our **labour force**. With fewer workers, critical public services might suffer. Why? To fund schools, hospitals, and other **infrastructure,** the government relies heavily on the **income tax** that employed people pay.

As well, skilled newcomers fill our acute **labour shortages** in many fields, such as health care.

Canada is hoping immigration will help offset these problems. Many immigrants are young, so they’ll pay into the public system for years to help support services. They’re ambitious, too. The businesses they start and the purchases they make contribute to our **Gross Domestic Product** **(GDP)**. Plus, they’re often willing to relocate to small communities that benefit from their expertise.

**The downside**

Yet some observers have concerns about Canada’s growing population. They point to housing as a major issue. Homes now sell for over $700,000 on average across the country. That’s too costly for many people already living here. And there isn’t enough housing for everybody at any price.

Another worry? At present, one in five Canadians doesn’t have a family doctor. This shortage of medical care could worsen as the population ages and grows. What if the healthcare system stretches to the breaking point? That could put people at risk. Roads could see more cars, too, adding to pollution. Schools could become overcrowded. Public transit could struggle to handle more passengers.

“If we want to do more immigration, fine, but let’s have a suite of policies… that increase infrastructure investment for transit, housing, health care, [and] schools,” said one expert.

Others are looking at the impact Canada’s growth spurt is having on our present high level of **inflation**. Immigrants' need for consumer goods has pushed up demand, causing a shortage of these items. When demand exceeds supply, prices stay high.

**Reasons to celebrate**

So, there’s a lot to navigate as our population grows. Yet many people believe it’s worth pausing to mark this milestone.

“We are from far and wide, but united we are 40 million strong. There is no challenge we cannot overcome together,” Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said. “So let’s celebrate each other, and let’s celebrate as we continue to build this great country.”

**Canada’s “population clock”**

How could Statistics Canada be so certain that the population hit 40 million on June 16? Did someone welcome the newest immigrant personally, or see the baby born who ushered in this landmark?

Not exactly. The number is just a highly educated guess. The federal government uses a “population clock” – a **statistical model** that estimates the current population. This model is based on birth, death, and immigration trends. The model also gauges the number of residents in every province and territory. As of mid-August, the population was estimated to be 40,253,321 (an increase of over 253,000 since June 16).

**G7 (The group of seven nations):** an organization of the world’s seven largest advanced economies. They are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** the total value of all the goods and services produced by a country in one year

**humanitarian:** connected with helping people who are suffering and improving the conditions that they are living in

**immigration:** the process of coming to live permanently in a different country from the one you were born in

**income tax:** the amount of tax that you pay to the government according to how much you earn

**inflation:** a fall in the value of money and a general increase in prices; the rate at which this happens

**influx:** a lot of people, money, or things arriving somewhere

**infrastructure:** the systems that are necessary for a country to run smoothly: buildings, transport, water, and power

**labour force:** all the people who work in a country

**labour shortage:** when there are more job vacancies than there are workers

**permanent resident:** someone who has immigrated to Canada but who hasn’t yet become a full citizen

**refugee:** a person forced to leave their country or home, because there is a war or for political, religious, or social reasons

**statistical model:** a mathematical process that attempts to describe and predict the population by taking samples of it

**Statistics Canada:** a federal government agency that produces statistics to help better understand Canada and its population, resources, economy, society, and culture

**Comprehension Questions**

1. What is Canada's **population clock**?

2. Explain how this 'model' works.

3. What milestone did Canada’s population reach in mid-June?

4. Describe the recent rate of population growth in Canada.

5. What is an **immigrant**? Explain.

6. How many people moved to Canada last year?

7. What is a **refugee**? Explain.

8. Canada welcomed a large number of refugees in 2022. Which countries did many come from?

9. Explain why Canada's labour force is shrinking.

10. List two reasons why the government is concerned about a decrease in the labour force.

**Questions For Further Thought**

1. The article states that Canada grew by more than one million new immigrants in 2022, which makes it the fastest-growing member among G7 nations (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States). What reasons can you suggest to explain why the population is growing more quickly in Canada than in other G7 countries?

2. The article quotes Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: “***We are from far and wide, but united we are 40 million strong – and there is no challenge we cannot overcome together. So let’s celebrate each other, and let’s celebrate as we continue to build this great country.***” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons to support your response.

3. Statistics Canada is a federal government agency that produces statistics about Canada’s population, resources, economy, society, and culture. As you see it, why might it be important to track this type of data? Support your answer

with examples.

**Questions For Online Exploration**

*Note*: The links below are listed at **www.lesplan.com/en/links** for easy access.

1. Visit Statistics Canada and learn more about Canada's 40 million population milestone and our country's growth over time: **https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/population\_and\_demography/40-million**

Make note of 2 interesting facts that stood out to you in this summary.

2. Watch this video about the growth of Canada's population since it became a country in 1867:   
**https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/sc/video/canada-by-million**

List 3 of the key moments that contributed to large growth spurts in Canada's population.

3. Check out Statistics Canada's real-time model population clock:  
**https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2018005-eng.htm**

What did you notice? List two questions that you have about the data presented.

**Putting It All Together**

**A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. **What is the main reason for Canada's shrinking labour force?** a) an aging population b) a large number of refugees  
 c) an increasing birth rate d) people moving to the United States

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. **In 2022 about one million** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **came to Canada.** a) refugees b) migrants  
 c) immigrants d) tourists

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. **By 2043 Canada's population is expected to reach:** a) 40 million b) 47 million  
 c) 50 million d) 65 million

**B.** Mark the statements **T (True)** or **F (False)**. If a statement is **True**, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is **False**, write the words that make it true on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. **True** or **False?** About 40 percent of Canadians are immigrants or children of immigrants.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True** or **False?** GDP = Grand Domestic Product.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True** or **False?** Canada recently accepted many refugees from Ukraine who fled after a large earthquake destroyed their homes.

**C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.**

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Canada produces data about Canada's population, resources, economy, etc.

8. Canada's annual population growth rate is higher than any \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ country.

9. About one in five Canadians don't have a family \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

**D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. *(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)***

10. As you see it, what is the biggest challenge related to Canada's growing population? Give reasons to support your response.