Articles and Questions

Each issue of ***What in the World?*** includes:   
  
1) a PDF file (the complete document) **and**

2) a Word file that contains **only** the articles and questions. This file does **not** contain an Answer Key.

This **Word** file allows students to complete assignments using a computer either at school or at home. Teachers can assign all or parts of the file by email attachment or a school website. The **Word** file also allows teachers to:

• easily modify and format content including changing fonts and text sizes

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• save paper and copying costs and help protect the environment

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See: [www.libreoffice.org/discover/libreoffice/](http://www.libreoffice.org/discover/libreoffice/) [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)

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<https://support.google.com/docs/answer/187189?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform=Desktop>

**Liberals Win A Roller Coaster Election**



On April 28, Canadians made history at the polls. In a dramatic and unpredictable election, the Liberals, led by newcomer Mark Carney, won a **minority government**, earning 170 seats in the newly expanded   
343-seat House of Commons. That left the **Grits** just two seats short of forming a **majority government**.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives under Pierre Poilievre finished with 143 seats—their best result in decades. The **popular vote** results were close for the two major parties. The Liberals earned 43.7 percent, compared to   
41.3 percent for the **Tories**.

As for the smaller challengers, the Bloc Québécois, a **sovereigntist** party that only runs candidates in Quebec, garnered 22 seats under leader Yves‑François Blanchet. Meanwhile, Jagmeet Singh’s New Democratic Party (NDP) elected seven Members of Parliament (MPs). And the Green Party returned just one candidate to   
Ottawa—leader Elizabeth May.

**Whiplash!**

The results were a sharp contrast to what polls predicted just months earlier. At the start of 2025, the Conservatives appeared way ahead.

But that changed after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau resigned in January and the Liberals chose Mark Carney, a respected economist and former **central banker**, to take his place. By election night, the Liberals had pulled off a remarkable comeback, stunning many experts and voters.

How did the Conservatives lose their lead? The campaign struggled to adapt after Mr. Trudeau resigned. They also faced challenges from Tory premiers in Ontario and Nova Scotia who clashed with Mr. Poilievre over strategy and messaging. At the same time, the Liberals gained in Quebec, Ontario, and B.C. Still, the Conservatives had their strongest showing in years, picking up seats around Toronto, on Vancouver Island, and in Windsor and northern Ontario.

**The big issues**

Various issues dominated the campaign, but the largest was Canada’s relationship with the United States.   
The reason? U.S. President Donald Trump recently angered many Canadians by imposing punishing tariffs on Canadian imports and by musing about Canada becoming the 51st state. Mr. Carney made it clear that would “never, ever” happen and promised to stand up to Mr. Trump.

But Canada-U.S. relations wasn’t the only issue on voters’ minds. Many were also feeling the pinch from rising grocery bills, sky-high housing costs, and severe doctor shortages. Crime, public safety, and middle-class tax relief were also hot topics.

Each party offered different solutions. The Liberals promised to build nearly 500,000 homes per year—double the current rate—and to cut middle class income taxes. Meanwhile, the Conservatives pledged to eliminate the GST on new homes up to $1.3 million, crack down on crime, and lower taxes for workers and seniors. The NDP and Greens focused on social programs and the environment, but they struggled to gain traction as the campaign evolved into a fierce battle between the two largest parties.

**Defeats for leaders**

The 2025 election was full of surprises. Both the Conservative and NDP leaders lost their seats. Mr. Poilievre was defeated in Carleton, Ontario, and   
Mr. Singh finished third in Burnaby Central, B.C. Mr. Singh announced he would step down as NDP leader. But Mr. Poilievre pledged to stay on, pointing out that under his leadership, the Conservatives won 20 more seats than before and had increased the popular vote tally by nearly 10 percent.

Still, without a seat, Mr. Poilievre can’t debate, answer questions, or sit in the House of Commons. So Alberta MP Damien Kurek offered to resign his seat to allow Mr. Poilievre to run there in an upcoming **by-election**.

**A two-party system?**

With the Liberals and Conservatives winning over 85 percent of the seats and both surpassing 40 percent of the popular vote, many observers wondered if Canada was moving toward a true two-party system.

Supporting this argument? Voters on both sides tried to block the other party from winning a majority. As a result, many cast a strategic ballot for a party or candidate to prevent other less-preferred ones from winning. That squeezed out smaller parties like the NDP and the Greens. Over 17 percent of seats changed parties—a huge shift compared to previous elections. And all 59 seats that switched hands went either to the Liberals or Conservatives.

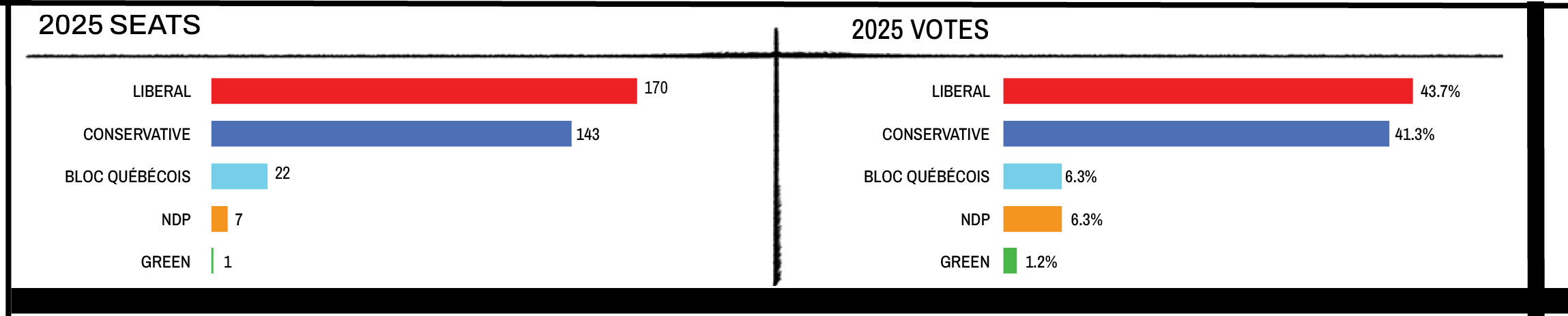
In part because of such strategic voting, the NDP dropped from 24 seats to just seven, losing official party status and leaving the party with little influence in the new Parliament. However, with 22 seats, the Bloc said it would support the Liberals if it was in Quebec’s best interest.

**The work ahead**

Mr. Carney’s first priority was to meet President Trump in Washington, D.C., in early May. Accompanied by key ministers, the prime minister pushed back against tariffs and defended Canada’s independence. The meeting was cordial, but important issues were not discussed in detail.

At home, Mr. Carney promised to kickstart the “biggest transformation” of the economy since World War II. He also planned to appoint a new cabinet, reopen Parliament, and deliver a throne speech, which King Charles III will read when he visits Ottawa in late May. As well, he signalled that he’ll “borrow” popular Conservative ideas, like taking a tougher position on crime and reforming the justice system.

“My government is getting to work, to build big, build bold, and build now,” he said.



**By The Numbers: An Engaged Electorate**

Over 19.5 million Canadians voted in the election, pushing turnout to 68.7 percent, the highest in over 30 years. A record number also voted early. Some 7.3 million people cast ballots at advance polls and another 1.2 million by special ballot, including Armed Forces members, those living abroad, and residents in remote communities.

**The First-Past-The-Post System: Is It Fair?**

Canada’s electoral system is called first-past-the-post. Under this model, candidates with the most votes in a riding win—even if they get less than half of the total vote. So if one candidate gets 40 percent of the vote, another gets 35 percent, and the third gets 25 percent, the candidate with 40 percent wins, even though 60 percent of voters chose someone else. This means parties can form government without winning the popular vote.

Other systems aim to reflect the will of voters more accurately. For example, in proportional representation, parties gain seats based on the percentage of votes they receive overall. So if a party gets 30 percent of the national vote, it gets about 30 percent of all the seats. And in ranked-choice voting, voters rank candidates by preference, ensuring that the winner has broader support. These systems are more complex to count, but they tend to result in more balanced representation.

**by-election:** a local election that happens at a different time from a general election

**central bank:** a public institution responsible for a country’s monetary policy, its currency, and controlling the money supply

**Grit:** a historical nickname for a Liberal Party member

**majority government:** when a political party has more than half of the seats in the House of Commons

**minority government:** when a political party has fewer than half of the seats in the House of Commons

**popular vote:** the total number of votes among a populace as an electorate

**sovereigntist:** a person or party supporting the independence of Quebec from Canada

**Tory:** a member or supporter of the Conservative Party

**On The Lines**

1. How many Members of Parliament sit in the House of Commons?

2. Name the five largest political parties in Canada that ran candidates in the recent federal election.

3. Which party won the most seats in the election? What was this party’s share of the popular vote?

4. Why was this result disappointing for this party?

5. How many seats did the other four political parties win, and what was each party’s share of the popular vote?

6. Which two leaders lost their seats? Which party leader resigned and which leader will continue as party leader?

7. What happened to the popular vote for the three smaller parties? Why did this happen?

8. Who did the prime minister meet with in early May? Where did this meeting occur and what was the result?

9. List at least three other important events or tasks that were on the PM’s agenda for May.

**Questions For Further Thought**

1. What reasons can you suggest to explain why the 2025 federal election is called “a roller coaster election” in this article?

2. Voter turnout for the federal election was higher than it has been for over 30 years, although only 68.7% of Canadians cast a ballot. As you see it, why were Canadians motivated to vote in this election? How important do you think it is for all Canadians to vote?

3. After the election, Prime Minister Carney said: “***My government is getting to work, to build big, build bold, and build now.***” What goals do you suppose this quote refers to? Give reasons to support your response.

4. Although Pierre Poilievre did not win in his riding, and his party did not form the government, he considers the 2025 federal election to be a success for the Conservative Party. Do you agree or disagree with his point of view? Give reasons to support your response.

5. Would you ever consider a career in politics? Why or why not?

**Questions For Online Exploration**

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

1. Check out these maps showing the outcome of the 2025 federal election:   
**https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/1024/cpsprodpb/7cfd/live/882057f0-2539-11f0-8f57-b7237f6a66e6.png.webp  
https://www.elections.ca/res/cir/maps2/map.asp?map=ERMap\_44&lang=e**

Find your province or territory on one of the maps. Describe the results and compare them to a neighbouring province or territory.

2. Almost 1 million Canadian students voted in a simulated election this spring. See the results of the Student Vote Canada program here: **https://studentvote.ca/canada/the-results**

What are some significant differences between the Student Vote results and the actual election results?

3. Listen to Prime Minister Carney’s victory speech:  
**https://globalnews.ca/video/11154692/canada-election-2025-carney-elected-pm-vows-to-govern-for-all-canadians-in-close-victory/** [2:20]

What message did Mr. Carney have for Canadians who voted for a different leader?

4. Listen to several concession speeches from the other party leaders:   
Pierre Poilievre: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQRBTf5xS1Y** [11:20]  
Yves-François Blanchet: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qhSHtebhfo** [8:52]  
Jagmeet Singh: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soYSDQ2Eepw** [3:43]  
Elizabeth May: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGy4xTspL10** [9:02]

Why is it important for party leaders to make a concession speech after an election?

5. Both Prime Minister Carney and Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre face challenges in the months ahead. Find out more here: **https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6742528** [1:47]

Which challenge do you think is the most important for each leader?

6. Political cartoons portray current events in a humorous way. View several political cartoons related to the 2025 federal election:  
**https://mackaycartoons.net/2025/05/01/thursday-may-1-2025  
https://mackaycartoons.net/2025/04/30/wednesday-april-30-2025   
https://mackaycartoons.net/2025/03/21/friday-march-21-2025**

Choose one of the cartoons above and explain the artist’s message.

**Putting It All Together**

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

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. **The legislature where MPs conduct Canada’s business is called the:** a) Senate b) House of Commons  
 c) Congress d) White House  
 e) National Assembly

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. **What was the most important issue in the recent federal election?** a) tariffs b) public safety and justice  
 c) Canada-U.S. relations d) cost of living  
 e) tax cuts

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. **Which political party is the Official Opposition in Ottawa?** a) Republican Party b) Conservative Party  
 c) New Democratic Party d) Bloc Québécois   
 e) Green Party

**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?** Very few Canadians voted in advance polls.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True** or **False?** The Liberals won a majority government in the recent election.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True** or **False?** Jagmeet Singh announced he would step down as party leader.

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

7. There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ elected MPs in Ottawa.

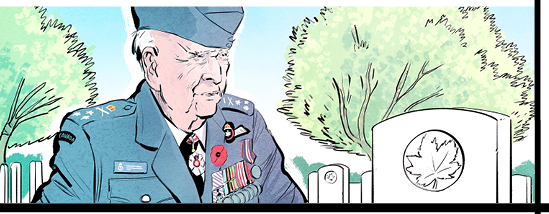
8. Yves-François Blanchet is the leader of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . (2)

9. Pierre Poilievre will run in an Alberta \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

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

10. As you see it, what was the significance of the recent election? Give reasons to support your response.

**Celebrating Canada’s Courage During WWII**



Eighty years ago in 1945, as World War II was winding down, Canadian soldiers helped free an entire country —the Netherlands. Their bravery came just in time. The Dutch in northwest Europe had suffered under a brutal **Nazi** **occupation** for four gruelling years. People were starving, cities had been destroyed beyond recognition, and despair was a daily reality.

The First Canadian Army was Canada’s main fighting force in northwest Europe. They faced fierce obstacles in the push to free the Netherlands, but they never gave up. They fought their way through strong resistance to **liberate** Dutch towns and cities, and delivered desperately needed food and aid. The price was high, however. Some 7600 Canadians lost their lives.

But their sacrifice was not in vain. On May 5, 1945, German forces in the Netherlands surrendered. Just three days later, on May 8, 1945, the **Allies** declared Victory in Europe (V-E Day).

**An emotional return**

The Dutch never forgot the losses the Canadians endured during this tough campaign. And the warm connection formed between the two countries has lasted all these years.

Proof of this deep bond? In early May, 22 Canadian veterans who served in World War II made a moving return to the nation they helped set free. They were part of a Canadian delegation marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the war.

Now in their late 90s or older, the veterans were welcomed with heartfelt gratitude. Many Dutch residents lined streets and attended ceremonies in their honour. They waved Canadian flags, decorated their homes with red maple leafs, and clamoured to take photos with the vets, eager to express their appreciation.

“It’s a sense of wonder,” said former pilot George Brewster. At age 102, he was the oldest returning vet and he was struck by the reception. For these veterans, being celebrated once again as heroes was a powerful reminder that their sacrifices were not forgotten.

**The tide of war**

Canada’s role in liberating the Netherlands was a proud achievement, but it was part of a much longer and more involved conflict.

During the war's first phase, Germany and Italy controlled most of western and central Europe. Great Britain and the Commonwealth (including Canada) fought alone. The situation was dire.

But by late 1941, the Soviet Union and the U.S. had joined the war against the Axis. The western Allies began to build up their military resources. On June 6, 1944, U.S., British, and Canadian forces crossed the English Channel and invaded “Fortress Europe.” The tide was starting to turn.

Canada played a critical role in the invasion, known as D-Day. Over 14,000 Canadians landed at Juno Beach, one of five main sectors on France’s Normandy coast. As they approached the shore, they faced pounding surf, deadly obstacles, barbed wire, and unyielding enemy fire.

It was a deadly mission, but the Allies pressed forward. Despite heavy losses, the Canadians advanced further inland on the first day than any other Allied force. By nightfall, 1074 Canadian soldiers had lost their lives.

Canadian medics, engineers, and **infantry** worked under unimaginable pressure. Their bravery made a lasting mark on the course of the war. The Juno landing and the fighting that followed opened the way for the Allies to advance into occupied France.

Over the coming weeks, the Canadians pushed toward Caen, a strategic crossroads. In August, they helped close the Falaise Pocket, trapping 50,000 German soldiers. This victory marked the collapse of Nazi defenses in Normandy

Next, the First Canadian Army began a long, difficult push across northern France and into Belgium. The terrain was difficult, the weather harsh, and the enemy was prepared and motivated. As the Allies advanced, resistance stiffened as the German soldiers realized their homeland was now increasingly threatened.

**A fierce campaign**

Canadian soldiers had a daunting task during the war’s final chapter. They fought during the coldest winter in 50 years, with relentless rain, snow, and freezing temperatures turning the low-lying landscape into a miserable, muddy **quagmire**. The challenging terrain was soggy and often flooded. Troops advanced along narrow **dikes** and were exposed to German attacks.

Destroyed roads and bridges made advances costly and slow. In key battles, the Canadians crossed open causeways under heavy bombardment and suffered many **casualties**. Yet they persisted. They opened the port of Antwerp so Allied armiescould receive needed supplies as they advanced into Germany. It was an important turning point in the war.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, Canadian troops moved from house to house, often fighting in cities and villages where every block was contested. Many civilians played a role too—sheltering soldiers, offering food, and risking their lives to pass on information.

**A great sacrifice . . .**

Canada’s contribution to World War II came at a steep cost. Of the more than one million Canadians who had joined the military, 45,000 lost their lives. Tens of thousands more were wounded. Many were teenagers when they volunteered—young men who had left school, farms, and families. Rows of gravestones in foreign lands mark their final resting places.

For many of those who returned, the war never fully ended. Some carried physical scars and others bore invisible wounds. Yet many veterans quietly helped build a stronger postwar Canada, raising families, creating businesses, and contributing to their communities with the same dedication they showed on the battlefield.

**. . . and a lasting legacy**

As Canada matured in the second half of the 20th century, its role in liberating Europe—especially the Netherlands—helped define the country’s global identity. The world saw that Canada was willing to stand up for democracy and human rights, at home and abroad. Our nation’s postwar commitment to **peacekeeping** and international cooperation goes back to the courage our soldiers showed during the war.

Stories about soldiers’ bravery are powerful reminders that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they stand up for what’s right. And the friendships formed between Canadians and the Dutch aren’t just about the past. They’re examples of how we can build a better future.

**Did You Know?**

World War II was a global conflict that began on September 1, 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. The **Allies** (Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States) fought against the **Axis** coalition (Germany, Italy, and Japan).

In June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union, opening the Eastern Front in Europe. The U.S entered the war after Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Germany surrendered in May 1945, and Japan surrendered in September 1945 after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

WWII was the deadliest and most destructive war in history, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 70 to 85 million people, many of whom were civilians.

**Did You Know?**

Every year, the Netherlands sends thousands of tulip bulbs to Ottawa as a symbol of gratitude for Canada’s role in liberating the Netherlands during WWII, and for sheltering the Dutch royal family during the war.

**Allies:** the military coalition that included the UK, the U.S., and the Soviet Union (Russia) formed during WWII to oppose the Axis powers

**Axis:** the military coalition that started WWII and opposed the Allied powers. It consisted of Germany, Italy and Japan

**casualty:** someone injured or killed in an accident or war

**dike:** a dam or high wall built to prevent flooding

**infantry:** soldiers trained to fight on foot

**liberate:** to free a country from the control of somebody else

**Nazi:** a member of the fascist party that controlled Germany from 1933 to 1945

**occupation**: a situation in which an army or group of people moves into and takes control of a place

**peacekeeping:** to prevent or stop fighting between countries or groups

**quagmire:** an area of soft, wet ground that you sink into

**On The Lines**

1. Which countries were the Allies in World War II? Which countries were the Axis powers?

2. When did this global war start? When did it end in Europe? When did it end in Asia?

3. When did the Allied forces invade Fortress Europe? What was the name of this invasion?

4. What was the name of Canada’s main fighting force?

5. Describe the conditions faced by many Dutch civilians under the German occupation.

6. Describe the conditions faced by Canadian soldiers who wanted to liberate the Dutch. How many Canadians were killed?

7. How many years have passed since the Netherlands was liberated and World War II ended?

8. Describe how the Dutch people remember and appreciate what the Canadian soldiers did in 1944 - 1945.

9. What did some Canadian veterans recently do? Describe the response that they received.

**Questions for Further Thought**

1. Thousands of Canadian soldiers lost their lives in battle trying to free Europe from Nazi rule in World War II. What do you think helped motivate soldiers to keep fighting in spite of the terrible conditions?

2. Since World War II, Canadian troops have continued to show their bravery and stand up for human rights by participating in peacekeeping missions around the world. As you see it, is peacekeeping just as important as fighting for democracy and freedom? Why or why not? Give reasons to support your response.

3. If you could speak to one of Canada’s veterans who helped free the Netherlands, what questions would you ask? What else would you want to say to this person?

4. Would you consider a career with the Canadian Forces in the future? Why or why not?

**Questions For Online Exploration**

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

1. Watch this video of Liberation Day celebrations in the Netherlands:  
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\_iSRi2VMVw** [2:30]

In what ways did participants show their appreciation to Canadian veterans?

2. Find out more about the gift of 100,000 tulip bulbs from Princess Juliana of the Netherlands to Canada:   
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOEtyN-RWAg&t=194s** [5:15]

Why was a gift of tulips given to Canada? How does this gift continue to remind Canadians of the appreciation of the Dutch people for their liberation?

3. Listen to a 91-year-old Dutch woman share her memories of being liberated by Canadian soldiers in 1945:  
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6-oMt8PvCU**

What special memories of that day have stayed with her for over 80 years?

4. A group of 21 Canadian WWII veterans returned to the Netherlands for the 80th anniversary of the end of the war. Watch their emotional return: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmivedodXoc** [1:10]

Why might veterans want to return to the Netherlands for this celebration in spite of their advanced age?

5. What do a 101-year-old war veteran and an 18-year-old Dutch student have in common? Find out how they became pen pals and eventually met during this year’s 80th anniversary celebrations:  
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=040kfU2ifRM** [2:26]

Why do you think the young man stayed in touch with the veteran after his school project was over? How do you think this might have affected the Canadian veteran?

6. Visit the Canadian Armed Forces website to see where Canadian forces are stationed. Choose one of the current operations.

Click on it and read about what Canadian soldiers are doing: **https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/list.html**

What did you learn?

**Putting It All Together**

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

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. **Which country did Germany invade to start World War II?**  
 a) Lithuania b) France  
 c) Poland d) Netherlands  
 e) Norway

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Which country was an Axis power in World War II?**  
 a) United Kingdom b) Italy  
 c) United States d) France  
 e) Soviet Union

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. **Canada’s main fighting force in Europe in 1944 was called:** a) Canadian Expeditionary Corps b) Fourth Canadian Army  
 c) Canadian Second Field Army d) Canadian Marine Corps  
 e) First Canadian Army

**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?** The Allied invasion of Fortress Europe was called D-Day.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True** or **False?** Some 45,000 Canadian soldiers lost their lives in the campaign to liberate the Netherlands.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True** or **False?** Japan surrendered before Germany in World War II.

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

7. Allied Troops landed in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , France on June 6, 1944.

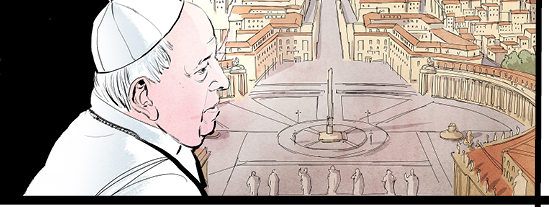
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years have passed since the end of World War II.

9. Twenty-two Canadian \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ returned to the Netherlands to participate in V-E Day ceremonies.

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

10. "***Stories about soldiers’ bravery are powerful reminders that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they stand up for what’s right.***" What is your understanding of this quote? Support your response with facts from the article.

**The Passing of A Beloved Pontiff**



On Easter Monday, April 21, the world woke to the news that Pope Francis, spiritual leader of the world’s   
1.3 billion Roman Catholics, had died. The cause of his death at age 88 was a stroke followed by cardiac arrest.

**Cardinal** Kevin Farrell, who delivered the sad news, spoke of Francis’s deep commitment to his faith.

“[Pope Francis] taught us to live the values of the **Gospel** with fidelity, courage, and universal love, especially in favour of the poorest and most marginalized,” the cardinal said.

**A last Easter blessing**

The last months of the **pontiff**’s life were marked by declining health. In February, he was hospitalized for 38 days with double pneumonia.

Yet he insisted on returning to work, even making a final appearance on Easter Sunday. Too weak to deliver his message, an aide read his words. But he personally blessed the throngs of the faithful in Rome’s St. Peter’s Square, calling out, “Brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!”

**Who was Pope Francis?**

The late Pope, named Jorge Mario Bergoglio by his Italian parents, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on December 17, 1936. He entered the **seminary** in his early twenties.

Francis was a Jesuit, a Catholic order focused on missionary work and education. His devotion to both these roles impressed Pope John Paul II, who appointed him a **bishop** in 1992. From then on, his rise in the Church was rapid. Yet he always maintained a simple lifestyle, favouring spirituality over ceremony.

**A pope of the people**

His peers recognized his special spiritual qualities as well, and in March 2013, cardinals elected him the 266th pope—the first-ever Jesuit pope and the first from the Americas.

The new pope chose the name Francis in honour of Saint Francis of Assisi, who was known to cherish all creation, to live modestly, and to promote peace. Pope Francis followed in the saint’s footsteps. He chose to live in a small guest house rather than the lavish residence where other popes had lived.

From the beginning, he signalled a new style of leadership. He wore simple **vestments** and often mingled with the crowds. He was known for washing prisoners’ feet, visiting refugees in distant lands, and calling for a “Church of the poor, for the poor.”

His time as leader of the Catholic Church was defined by a focus on mercy, inclusion, and social justice. He famously asked, “Who am I to judge?” when questioned about his open approach to LGBTQ+ issues.

He also championed the fight against climate change, publishing a landmark **encyclical** on the subject. And he repeatedly called for economic systems that served people rather than profit. He even tried to address the Church’s decades-long abuse scandals. He met with resistance, yet he persisted in seeking greater accountability.

**Progressive – to a point**

He came to Canada in 2022 to address another issue. The visit followed an earlier meeting at the Vatican with Indigenous delegates from Canada. The group was seeking an apology for the Church’s role in Canada’s Residential Schools, which operated from 1831 to 1996. At least 4000 Indigenous children died and thousands more were physically and mentally abused at these largely Catholic institutions.

“I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed,” he told Residential School Survivors and others who heard him speak in Alberta. He added that he wanted to ensure that “every child is treated with love, honour, and respect.”

Yet some felt Francis’s words of regret didn’t go far enough. And the Pope did preserve some of the Church’s more conservative positions, such as not allowing women to be **ordained** and maintaining a hard line on women’s reproductive rights. Many people also felt that his attempts to deal with the Church’s child abuse scandals fell short. But few doubted his sincerity.

**An outpouring of grief**

The response to Pope Francis’s passing was immediate and global. Social media lit up with tributes from world leaders and people of all faiths. From Jerusalem to the **barrios** of Buenos Aires, vigils and spontaneous gatherings marked the sense of loss.

Francis’s body lay in state for three days at St. Peter’s **Basilica**, where 250,000 people filed past, pausing to pray or leave flowers. Then, on April 26, hundreds of thousands filled St. Peter’s Square for the funeral Mass. The service, broadcast globally, included prayers in many languages and the soaring voices of the Sistine Chapel Choir. Heads of state, royalty, and religious leaders from every continent attended. Among them were Canada’s Governor General Mary Simon, U.S. President Donald Trump, and Prince William from the United Kingdom. But migrants and the poor also attended.

After the Mass, 150,000 people lined the streets to watch the procession carry the Pope’s coffin to Saint Mary Major, the humble basilica where he chose to be buried. The first pope in a century not to be interred in St. Peter’s Basilica, he was laid to rest beneath a simple stone marked with his papal name and a single white rose.

Many people focused on Francis’s legacy of kindness. “[His] **pontificate** will be remembered as a bridge between tradition and modernity” – one that “prioritized compassion over condemnation,” said Catholic scholar Andrew Chesnut.

**A new pope is elected**

With the official mourning period over, the conclave got underway and on May 8, 69-year-old Robert Francis Prevost was elected. He grew up in Chicago and he is the first American to fill the role, but he has strong roots in Latin America because of the many years he spent as a missionary in Peru He chose Leo XIV as his papal name.

The new pope is a member of the Order of St. Augustine—known for its community work. He, too, is said to be humble and committed to the poor and migrants. Observers say he will likely continue the Church’s focus on social justice and inclusivity.

“We must… be a Church that builds bridges… always open to… those who need our charity, our presence, dialogue, and love,” he told crowds gathered in St. Peter’s Square for his first address. “United hand in hand with God and among ourselves, let us move forward.”

**The Conclave, The Vatican and The Holy See**

When a pope dies or resigns, the Catholic Church enters a period of suspense known as the conclave. The word “conclave” comes from the Latin for “with key.” It reflects the tradition of locking the cardinals inside the Vatican until they choose a new pope. Only cardinals under the age of 80, of whom there are 135, can vote. They gather for a special Mass, then mark secret ballots. To be elected, a candidate must receive a two-thirds majority. After each round of voting, the ballots are burned. Black smoke from the Sistine Chapel chimney signals no decision. White smoke? A new pope is chosen.

The body that organizes the conclave is called the Holy See – the central governing, administrative, and spiritual authority of the Catholic Church. It has existed since the earliest days of Christianity and is recognized internationally as a sovereign entity. It can conduct diplomatic relations and sign treaties with nations around the world.

The Vatican, located in Rome, is the physical space where the Holy See operates. With about 1000 residents, it is the smallest independent nation in the world, covering just 49 hectares. As leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the pope heads both the Vatican and the Holy See.

**Did You Know?**

Of the estimated 2.5 billion Christians in the world, more than half are Roman Catholics.

**barrio:** a neighborhood, especially a Spanish one

**basilica:** a church that has been given special recognition by the pope for its historical, spiritual, or architectural significance

**bishop:** a person who holds a high position in a Christian church. A bishop is often in charge of a group of churches.

**cardinal:** the highest rank of priest in the Catholic Church

**encyclical:** an official letter from the pope sent to all bishops making a statement about the teachings of the Church

**Gospel:** the lessons taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles

**ordination:** the act or ceremony of making somebody a priest, minister, or rabbi

**pontificate:** the period of time when a particular pope heads the Roman Catholic Church

**pontiff:** another name for the pope

**seminary:** a college that trains priests, ministers, or rabbis

**vestments:** the special clothes worn by priests during church ceremonies

**On The Lines**

1. How many Christians are there in the world? How many Christians are Roman Catholics?

2. Where is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church located?

3. Name the leader of the Roman Catholic Church who recently passed away. How old was he when he died?

4. How long had he held this position?

5. When did he visit Canada? What was the purpose of his visit?

6. Briefly describe the legacy of this man.

7. Explain the process used to select a new pope.

8. Who was elected as the new pope on May 8? What papal name did he choose?

9. List at least two other important facts about the new pope.

**Questions For Further Thought**

1. The news of Pope Francis’s passing had a huge impact around the world. What reasons can you suggest to explain why hundreds of thousands of people paid tribute to the Pope on social media, in person, or by watching the broadcast of his funeral?

2. The article states: “***Pope Francis chose the name Francis in honour of St. Francis of Assisi who was known to cherish all creation, to live modestly, and to promote peace.***” As you see it, how did Pope Francis’s actions demonstrate these qualities?

3. Pope Francis “***will be remembered as a bridge between tradition and modernity.***” Which modern issues were important to Pope Francis? As you see it, is it important for a pope to be involved with current issues?

4. Pope Francis visited Canada only once, in 2022. As you see it, what was the significance of this visit?

5. The conclave of cardinals is responsible for choosing a successor to Pope Francis. Which qualities do you think are most important for someone in this role? Explain your choices.

**Questions For Online Exploration**

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

1. Watch the final public appearance of Pope Francis on Easter: **https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6730369** [0:57].

2. Pope Francis was elected to the papacy in 2013. Find out why this came as a shock to some:   
**https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.6532019** [3:34].

Why were some Catholics surprised by this choice?

3. Find out more about Pope Francis’s apology to Indigenous Peoples in Canada:   
**https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.6532019** [3:34].

How did his apology affect the Residential School Survivors at the ceremony?

4. Learn more about how Pope Francis advocated for climate change:   
**https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6732357** [2:09]

Who did the Pope hope to influence with his writing on this topic? As you see it, was he successful in influencing others to care for the planet?

5. View a timeline of the Pope's accomplishments during his 12-year papacy:  
**https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/253852/a-timeline-of-pope-francis-12-years-as-pope**.

Describe one event from the timeline and how it shows mercy, inclusion, or social justice.

6. Learn more about how a new pope is chosen: **https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6730531**[4:07]

What did you learn?

**Putting It All Together**

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

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. **How many Roman Catholics are there in the world?**  
 a) 250 million b) 675 million  
 c) 1.3 billion d) 2.5 billion  
 e) 4.6 billion

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Pope Francis belonged to a Catholic order focussed on missionary work and education called:**  
 a) the Jesuits b) the Dominicans  
 c) the Carmelites d) the Franciscans  
 e) the Oblates

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. **The secret meeting where cardinals vote for a new pope is called a:** a) conclave b) conquest  
 c) conspiracy d) convention  
 e) contest

**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?** Pope Francis was from Argentina.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True** or **False?** The headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is Vatican City.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True** or **False?** Pope Francis visited Canada last year.

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

7. There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ billion Christians in the world.

8. Smoke from burning papal ballots is coloured \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when cardinals select a new pope.

9. Pope Leo XIV is the first pontiff from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (2)

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

10. As you see it, what impact did Pope Francis have on the Roman Catholic Church and on the world? Give reasons to support your response.

**Fighting Back Against ‘Forever Chemicals’**

****

Donnie Gallant lives in Hazelbrook, PEI. For about half a year now, at a cost of $1200 a month, the provincial government has been supplying him and nine other Hazelbrook residents with bottled water.

The reason? **Health Canada** says drinking water should contain no more than 30 **nanograms** per litre of certain human-made chemicals called PFAS. Yet some nearby wells contain over 700 nanograms per litre. A nearby abandoned dump may be to blame. Groundwater tests showed levels of over 2000 nanograms per litre. Those figures are worrisome!

**about PFAS chemicals**

What are PFAS chemicals and why are they dangerous? The term PFAS is short for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances. First created in the late 1930s, these synthetic substances resist heat, grease, and water which makes them highly **versatile**. That’s why, since the 1950s, they have been used to manufacture a huge range of products—everything from cookware to takeout containers, carpets, firefighting products, and even makeup. In all, some 9000 PFAS compounds are used in various industries and consumer goods.

PFAS are so tough, they’re called forever chemicals. They have a unique structure that contains chains of carbon atoms fused to fluorine atoms, forming what’s known as a carbon-fluorine bond—one of the strongest bonds in chemistry. It is almost impossible for this bond to be damaged by heat, sunlight, or biological activity. That means PFAS can stay intact for thousands of years.

**Toxic – and everywhere!**

Since so many products made with PFAS are used and discarded every day, these chemicals end up in landfills where they leach into the soil and enter the environment and the food chain. Every day, PFAS are flushed down drains and into oceans, lakes, and rivers. And every day, as furniture, electronics, and other products containing PFAS age and break down, they create PFAS dust, which people inhale or ingest.

Researchers have found types of PFAS in fish caught across North America; in the air, rain, and water of the Great Lakes; in makeup, paper-based food packaging, and hygiene products; and in clothing, such as school uniforms, rain jackets, and kids' winter gloves.

Almost all Canadians have PFAS in their bodies and many scientists are growing concerned about serious PFAS-related health hazards. Health Canada warns PFAS can impact the liver, the kidneys, and the thyroid gland. PFAS can also interfere with the immune and nervous systems, and the chemicals can even impact a person’s **metabolism** and body weight.

“They attach to the proteins in our blood and can accumulate in our bodies, particularly in the liver and the kidneys,” said Université Laval researcher Dr. Amira Aker. “The older you are, the more PFAS you have in your body. We can also pass the chemicals to a growing fetus, so even newborn babies have PFAS in their bodies.”

Studies have shown that two types of PFAS are linked to liver disease and unsafe pregnancies. The first is perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), a chemical that repels stains, grease, soil, and water. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), used to make non-stick coatings on cookware and to protect carpets and fabrics, is also dangerous. Both have been banned in Canada.

That’s a step in the right direction, but experts worry that the ban doesn't go far enough. A 2019 study showed that 98.5 percent of Canadians already have some PFAS in their blood.

**Removing them ‘forever’**

There are ways to protect against PFAS. One widely used solution is granular activated carbon (GAC) filtration, which works by passing water through carbon that traps PFAS particles. This method is used in home filtration units to remove PFAS like PFOA and PFOS.

Other advanced methods include ion exchange resins which are tiny beads that help clean water by attaching onto harmful chemicals like PFAS. These chemicals have a negative charge and the resin beads have a positive charge—so when water flows through, the PFAS sticks to the beads, sort of like magnets. The clean water keeps going, while the dangerous chemicals stay behind. This approach works well, especially for getting rid of   
hard-to-remove PFAS that other filters might miss.

Then there’s reverse **osmosis**, which pushes water through a membrane that blocks most PFAS contaminants. This method works especially well in private wells or households using under-sink water treatment systems.

For land contamination—a concern near airports, firefighter training sites, and industrial zones—authorities sometimes use soil **excavation** and high-temperature **incineration** to eliminate PFAS. However, this approach is costly and it still leaves some PFAS in the environment.

None of these techniques destroy PFAS, however—they just keep some out of our bodies. But that may soon change. Researchers at the University of British Columbia have developed a silica-based material for a novel water treatment system that captures PFAS and actually destroys the chemicals. This system combines an activated carbon filter with a **catalyst** derived from forest or agricultural waste that breaks down PFAS into harmless components. Their work is still in early stages, however.

**On the legal front**

But what are authorities doing now to control the use of PFAS? Fe de Leon, a senior researcher at the Canadian Environmental Law Association, says that restricting each individual PFAS isn’t effective.

“You go one chemical at a time, and it doesn’t work because those chemicals are replaced,” she said. For example, PFOA was replaced with another PFAS called GenX. Now GenX has also been linked to liver-related health issues.

The federal government recently took an unusual step. Last March, it added the entire class of PFAS chemicals to the official list of toxic substances. Only one subset of PFAS was excluded –fluoropolymers. These are used to coat products like clothing, furniture, cookware, and food packaging. The risks from fluoropolymers are lower than from other PFAS.

Classifying all PFAS as toxic starts a process that will allow Canada to restrict their use in the future.

“The government can [then] move ahead with regulations. And those would involve removing [PFAS] from products… like firefighting foam and from industrial uses,” said Elaine MacDonald, of the environmental law charity Ecojustice.

**Safety tips**

Meanwhile, Canadians can try to reduce exposure to harmful PFAS. Ingredient lists on products with PFAS often start with "perfluoro." Avoid these if possible. Look for “PFAS-free” labels on clothes, cosmetics, fast food wrappers, and microwave popcorn bags.

Other measures include not using   
non-stick pans when they’re old or scratched, since they can release PFAS. And if your family uses well water or lives near an industrial area, consider buying a certified water filter that uses activated carbon or reverse osmosis to reduce PFAS in drinking water.

Its going to take time to figure out how to remove and avoid PFAS. Canadians don’t need to panic, but being aware of where these chemicals show up helps people make smarter, safer choices every day.

**The Teflon Story**

In 1938 DuPont scientist Roy Plunkett discovered one of the first PFAS by accident when he was researching new refrigerants. Nothing would stick to the strange, waxy substance he created and it was inert—it didn’t react to other chemicals. Dupont was soon using it to make Teflon pans.

**catalyst:** a substance that produces or speeds up a chemical reaction without being affected itself

**excavate:** to make a hole or hollow place in by digging

**Health Canada:** the federal department responsible for national health policy and safety

**incinerate:** to burn (something) completely

**metabolism**: the processes in plants and animals where food is changed into energy or used to make cells and tissues

**nanogram:** a unit of mass equal to one billionth of a gram often used in science to measure very tiny amounts of substances

**osmosis:** the passage of a liquid through a membrane

**versatile:** useful for doing a lot of different things

**On The Lines**

1. What does **PFAS** stand for?

2. When were these ‘forever chemicals’ first discovered? What is their purpose?

3. Why are they called ‘forever chemicals’?

4. How widespread are these forever chemicals in the environment?

5. Why are scientists worried about these chemicals? Explain.

6. List at least three ways people can protect themselves from PFAS chemicals.

7. What is the problem with all current filtration techniques? What new system is being developed at UBC to fight PFAS?

8. How has the federal government decided to approach the PFAS problem? Explain.

**Questions For Further Thought**

1. When PFAS were first introduced in the 1930s, they were considered helpful and versatile. As you see it, do the advantages of PFAS outweigh the risks? Give reason to support your response.

2. The article states that: “***98.5 percent of Canadians already have some PFAS in their blood.***” Respond to this fact. What feelings does it evoke and what thoughts does it provoke? Explain.

3. Under the heading Safety Tips, reread the suggestions for how to reduce your exposure to PFAS. Would you consider using any of these tips? Give examples to support your answer.

4. The article concludes with the message: “***You don’t need to panic, but being aware of where these chemicals show up helps you make smarter, safer choices every day.***” Why do you think the author included this message? Did it change the way you felt after reading the article?

**Questions For On Line Exploration**

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

1. Find out which household products contain PFAS:  
**https://time.com/6281242/pfas-forever-chemicals-home-beauty-body-products/**

Based on this image, do you think it is possible to avoid PFAS completely? Explain.

2. Find out more about what Canada is doing about “forever chemicals”:  
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAQBdCxP03U** [2:02]

What are some actions the Canadian government has taken to limit PFAS?

3. Find out which food packaging products contain PFAS and which ones don’t:   
**https://www.ecocenter.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/CEH%20PFAS%20in%20Foodware%20Infographic.pdf**

Name 3 materials that are PFAS free.

4. Are compostable food packaging products better for the environment? Find out if these “environmentally friendly” options contain PFAS: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWkBsWq0pyA**

What did you learn?

5. Learn about what University of British Columbia researchers are developing to remove PFAS from the water supply: **https://globalnews.ca/video/9572316/ubc-develops-water-treatment-system-to-remove-forever-chemicals**

Why are researchers hopeful about this technology?

6. Check out this list of 10 simple things your family can do to reduce your exposure to PFAS:  
**https://cleanwater.org/10-things-you-can-do-about-toxic-pfas-chemicals**

Which tip(s) could be helpful for your family? Explain.

**Putting It All Together**

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

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. **PFAS are called “**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **chemicals**”  
 a) forbidden b) permanent  
 c) durable d) forever  
 e) reliable

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. **When did manufacturing companies begin to use PFAS chemicals?**  
 a) 1920s b) 1940s  
 c) 1950s d) 1960s  
 e) 1980s

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. **A unit of mass equal to one billionth of a gram used to measure very tiny amounts of substances is called a:** a) centigram b) nanogram  
 c) milligram d) microgram  
 e) mammogram

**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?** The provinces are responsible for regulating PFAS chemicals.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True** or **False?** PFAS chemicals can impact a baby before it is born.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True** or **False?** All PFAS substances have been added to an official toxic substances list.

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

7. The first PFAS product was the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ frying pan made by Dupont.

8. Carbon-fluorine bonds are some of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ bonds in chemistry.

9. There are various methods used to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ drinking water to avoid PFAS chemicals.

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

10. What steps would you recommend that someone who was concerned about PFAS chemicals take to reduce their exposure to these substances? Give reasons to support your response.

**Assessment Rubric**

This rubric may be helpful in providing students with formative, strength-based feedback and/or assessing students’ responses holistically. This easy-to-modify activity is included in the doc file which you can download from:   
**www.lesplan.com/subscribers**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Proficient** | **Extending** |
| **Supports thinking** | Answers or reflections are brief and include obvious facts/details/ evidence. | Answers or reflections are general and supported with some relevant facts/details/evidence. | Answers or reflections are clearly supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence. | Answers or reflections are insightful and supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence. |
| **Shows understanding** | Responses show a basic understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are thoughtful and show a general understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are thoughtful and show a complete understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are insightful and show a deep understanding the text, topic, issue or message. May synthesize ideas or explain the ‘so what’. |
| **Thinks  critically** | Makes straightforward connections or inferences. Focuses on retelling. | Makes logical connections to self (T:S) and/or background knowledge (T:S). Inferences are logical | Makes meaningful connections to self. Considers ideas between texts (T:T).  Inferences are plausible. | Makes powerful connections that go between texts and/or beyond the text (T:W).  Inferences are plausible and insightful. |

