

What criteria does Canada use when accepting immigrants and refugees?

WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION

In this section, you will read about the criteria the government uses to accept immigrants into Canada. You will find:

- Types of immigration legislation related to immigrants and refugees.
- A comic illustrating Canada's point system.
- Factors influencing immigration policies.

What are you looking for?

As you read the section, look for:

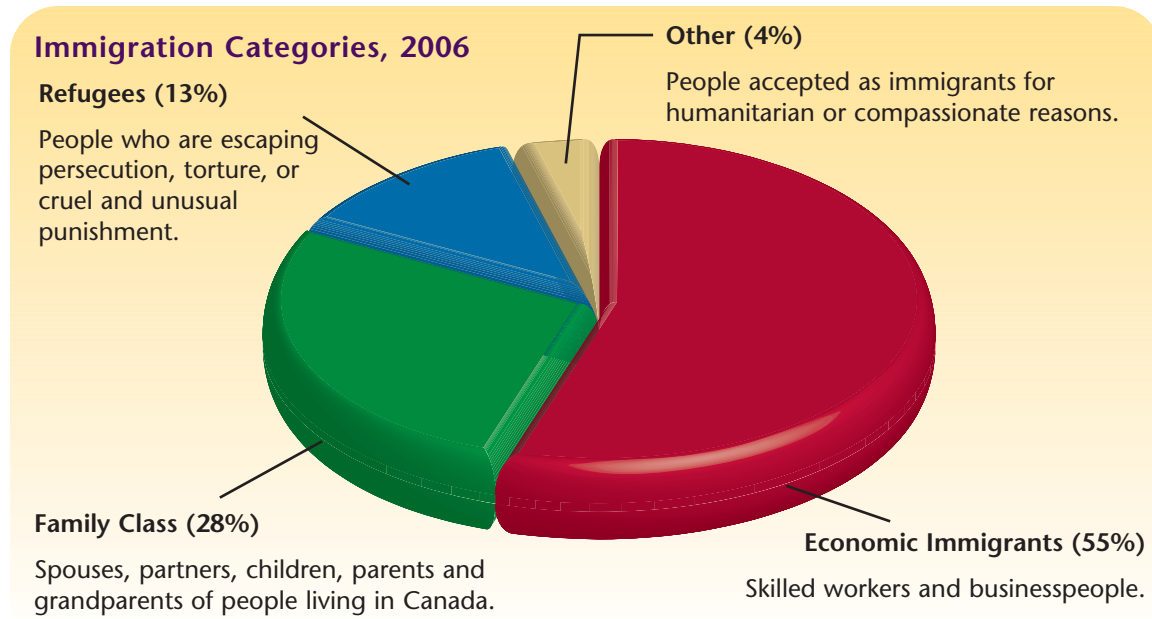
- The criteria Canada has used and still uses when accepting immigrants and refugees into the country.
- Advantages and disadvantages of Canada's point system.
- Issues related to immigration legislation.

When you become a citizen of Canada, you swear to be faithful to Canada's monarch, to observe the laws of Canada, and to fulfill your duties as a citizen. You gain the right to vote. This photo demonstrates two kinds of decisions: the decision of these people to become citizens of Canada, and the decision of Canada to accept them as immigrants. **Think critically: What factors may have influenced these decisions?**



What is the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act?

- The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act dates from 2002. It is the most recent of many laws Canada has had about immigration since it became a country in 1867.
- It establishes categories of who can come to Canada from other countries to make permanent homes here.
- It lays out the objectives of those categories.



Some Objectives of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, 2002

Objectives for immigration:

- Pursue social, cultural and economic benefits for all Canadians.
- Respect the bilingual and multicultural character of Canada.
- Support the development of minority official language communities in Canada.
- Share the benefits of immigration and support a prosperous economy across all regions of Canada.
- Reunite families in Canada.
- Promote the successful integration of immigrants into Canadian society, recognizing that integration involves mutual obligations for new immigrants and Canadian society.

For the objectives of the act regarding refugees, see page 177.



What are the underlying values reflected in the objectives of the act? What do they mean for citizenship and identity in Canada?

How does immigration aim to meet Canada’s workforce needs?

demographic: to do with the characteristics of populations

labour force growth: the growth of the “labour force,” or the number of people who can work

The following statement comes from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which is the federal department responsible for putting Canada’s immigration legislation into action. It comes from a document that describes the government’s plans for immigration in the future.

What benefits of immigration does this source identify for Canada?



What issues affecting immigration are illustrated in the plan?



In what ways does the plan attempt to meet the needs of Canadians?

2006–2007 Plans and Priorities
Immigration has largely defined what Canada is today and has been a sustaining feature of Canada’s history. Waves of immigration have built and transformed the population while making significant contributions to the development of our economy, our society and our culture.

Immigration will continue to play a key role in building the Canada of tomorrow and in supporting our economic growth. Like many other industrialized countries, Canada is facing significant **demographic** changes. According to Statistics Canada, sometime between 2025 and 2030, the number of births to Canadian parents will equal the number of deaths. If Canada’s population is to continue to grow, immigration will be the source of this growth, unless birth and death rates change.

These demographic factors are also slowing Canada’s labour force growth. **Labour force growth** is key to ensuring economic growth. Sometime between 2011 and 2016, the number of Canadians entering the labour force will equal the number of people retiring. Without immigration, Canada’s labour force will shrink.

— Adapted from *2006–2007 Report on Plans and Priorities*, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, p. 5.



CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE

In 2007, Canada accepted more than 250 000 immigrants — one of the highest numbers in the last 50 years. What might be the reason for this policy?

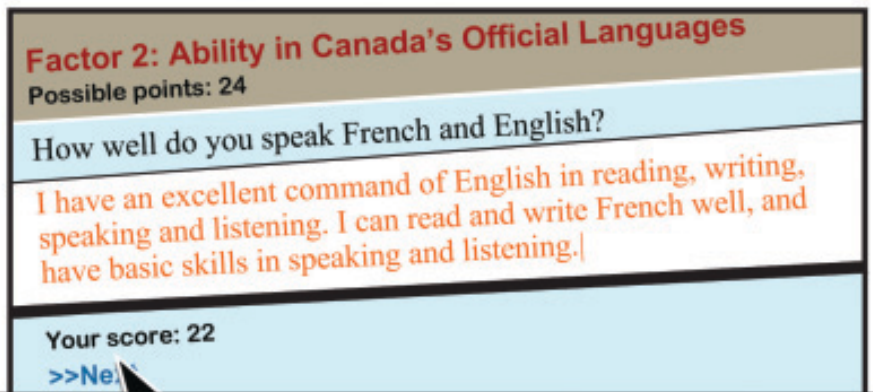
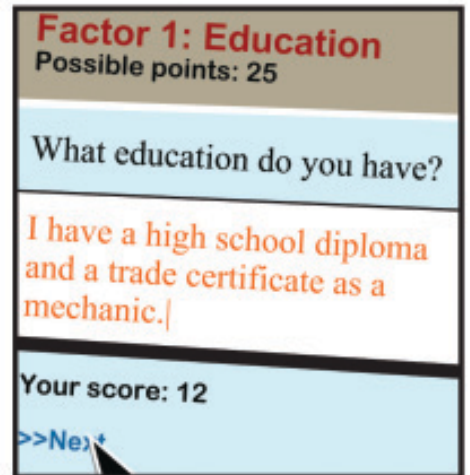
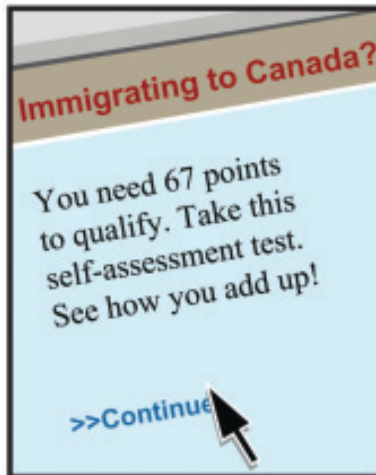
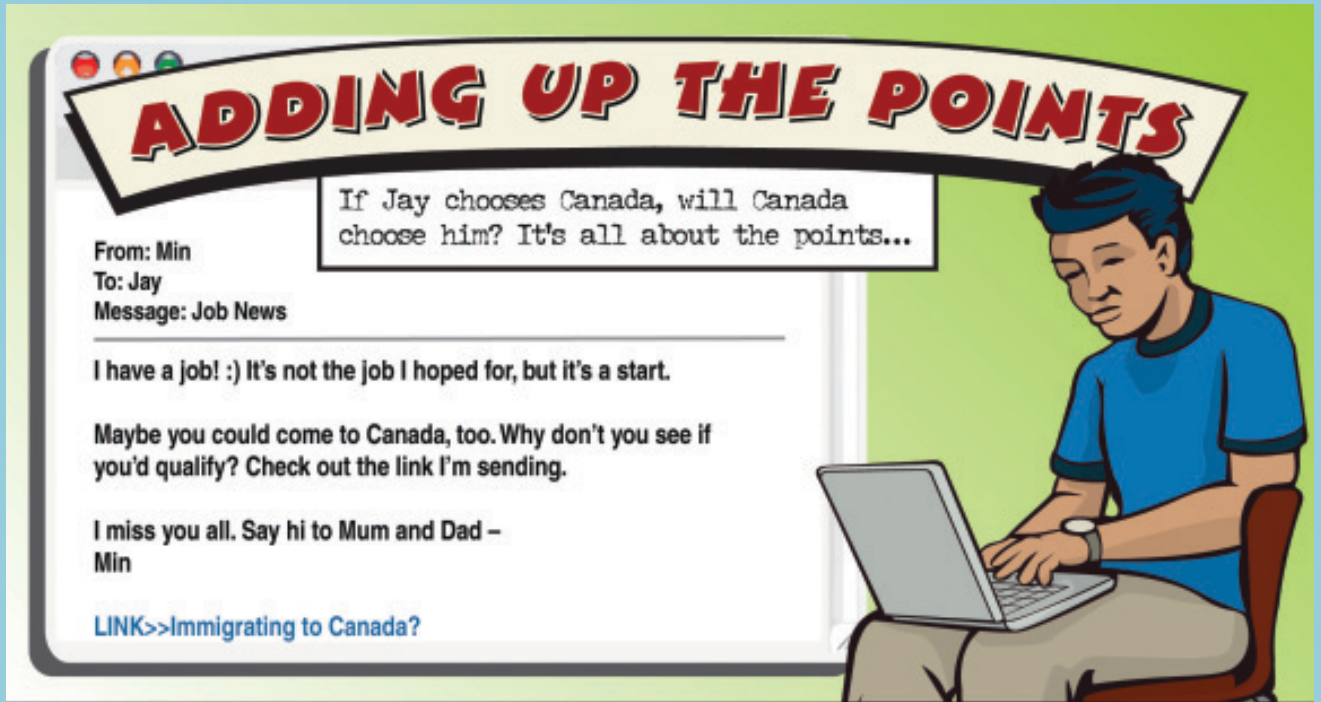
WHAT’S A LAW VERSUS A POLICY?

Governments create laws, and they also create policies. A law describes principles or conditions that must be followed. A policy describes objectives of the government, within the law.

Example: Immigration

- Immigration *law* says who is allowed into Canada.
- Immigration *policy* sets the procedures for evaluating immigrants and says how many people are allowed into Canada from year to year.

For another example of law versus policy, see page 131.



Factor 3: Work Experience
Possible points: 21

What work experience do you have?

I have worked as a heavy equipment operator for almost four years.

Your score: 19

>>Next

Factor 4: Age
Possible points: 10

How old are you?

I am 24 years old.

Your score: 10

>>Next

Finally! Full points!

Factor 5: Arranged Employment
Possible points: 10

Has an employer in Canada already offered you a job?

Yes _ No X

Your score: 0

>>Next

Factor 6: Adaptability
Possible points: 10

What factors in your background will help you adapt to life in Canada?

I have a sister living in Canada, but I have never worked or studied there.

Your score: 5

>>Click here for your total score

Here goes!

Your total score: 68
Total points possible: 100

YOU QUALIFY!

>>Click here for next steps

Min? I qualify. What do you think I should do?

Next Steps
To emigrate to Canada, you need to:

- Complete a formal application and submit it to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- Pay an application fee.
- Pass a medical exam that shows you do not have any illnesses that could endanger Canadians or strain Canada's health care system.
- Pass a security check that shows you have no criminal record and are not a security risk to Canada.

Based on a self-assessment test for potential immigrants, available online from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007.

Go online and check out the self-assessment test yourself. How do the points add up for you?

Why do you think immigration criteria exist? Why might Canadians have different views and perspectives on these criteria?



connect to the big ideas

1. How does the comic "Adding Up the Points" demonstrate that economics is a factor that influences who Canada accepts as immigrants? Identify points in the story where this factor comes into play. What other factors — political factors, and health and security — can you identify in the comic?
2. How might decisions about immigration based on economics affect your quality of life?
3. Consider the information about the photo below, then answer this question:
What issues arise from immigration based on economic factors?



Alla Andrusiv, in the green sweater, celebrates Canada Day in 2007 with other recent immigrants. She is a doctor from Ukraine, who arrived in Canada in 2006. "My qualifications aren't recognized here and I would have to start again... I'm like many professionals. We gave up good jobs and came here to work as cleaners or in restaurants. It's extremely frustrating. But I hope to return to medicine, perhaps as a nurse."

What is the point system for accepting immigrants?

The comic you read in the previous section explores Canada's point system. The point system is part of the criteria Canada uses to decide who to accept as immigrants.

- The point system dates from 1967.
- It applies only to economic immigrants (skilled workers and professionals). Refugees and family-class immigrants do not have to qualify under the point system.
- If a person is not a refugee or a family-class immigrant, they must qualify under Canada's point system to enter Canada as an immigrant.
- Economic immigrants make up the biggest group of immigrants to Canada (see page 167).



CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE

How might assessing the health, background and experience of immigrants connect to Canadians' right to "security of the person" under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

How does health factor into qualifying as an immigrant?

Every potential economic immigrant to Canada must provide proof that they are in good health. A person may be refused entry to Canada if:

- Their health could put the health of Canadians at risk — for example, they have tuberculosis.
- They have a condition that could endanger public safety — for example, a mental disorder.
- Their health could put an "excessive demand" on Canada's health services — for example, HIV/AIDS.

None of these health requirements apply to people entering Canada as refugees or as family-class immigrants.

connect to the big ideas

1. What are some advantages and disadvantages of Canada's point system? Create a chart organizing your ideas. Compare ideas with a partner.
2. Working with a group of two or three, develop criteria for accepting new immigrants into the country. Think about what's important — for example, what Canadians need, what is fair to applicants. Share your criteria with the class. Be prepared to explain the reasons for your criteria.
3. Over the next few weeks, scan your local newspaper for articles about immigration. What current issues are being debated? Create a media collage of the articles you find. Work with a partner to share your information and your opinions.

How are Canada's immigration laws today different than in the past?

- No one today is excluded from Canada because of their race or country of origin. The point system, for example, evaluates people based on their skills and education.
- In the past, Canada favoured immigrants of British ancestry and restricted immigration from Asian countries, such as China and India.



This photo from 1914 shows people from India protesting Canada's immigration policies. They arrived in Vancouver on a Japanese ship called the *Komagata Maru*. At the time, Canada's government allowed people from India to enter Canada only if they sailed directly from India without stopping anywhere. Since no shipping line offered this service, Canada's policy excluded immigrants from India. Canadian officials did not let the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* off the ship. Supporters of the protest challenged this decision in court, but lost the case. After two months, the ship was forced to return to Asia.



Debbie Yam of Toronto displays the head-tax certificate of her Chinese grandfather. Between 1885 and 1923, Canada discouraged immigration from China by requiring every Chinese immigrant to pay a fixed fee, known as a head tax. This was one of several laws that restricted immigration from Asia. Today, and for more than a decade, people from Asia have made up the largest group of immigrants to Canada. In 2006, Canada's government formally apologized to Canada's Chinese citizens for the head tax.

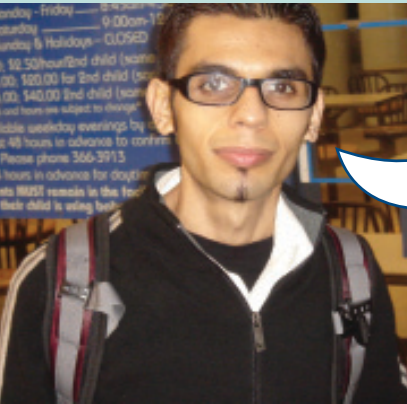
 **CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE**

Why do you think Canada's immigration policies have changed over time? How do you think they might change in the future?



Volunteering a Welcome

Fahd Mirza volunteers with the Calgary Bridge Foundation, an organization that offers services to help immigrants and refugees adjust to life in Canada. He is 19 years old and an immigrant himself.



Fahd Mirza came to Canada fourteen months ago with his parents. He feels a responsibility to give back to Canada, because of the opportunities Canada has given him. **Think critically:** How do his actions reflect active citizenship?

We came to Canada because my parents wanted a better quality of life than in Pakistan. There's so much stress in terms of survival in Karachi — the city I'm from. Crime is one of the major problems. You don't know if you're going to get home safe or not.

Canadian society has helped me in every single way. The most important part is welcoming me and integrating me without any concerns. It has provided me with opportunities for education and work. The government of Canada makes sure that our rights and freedoms are protected.

I found out about the Calgary Bridge Foundation last year at school. Our teacher invited the Foundation to talk about the Homework Club, where immigrant kids from Grades 1 through 12 get mentors, like me, to assist them with schoolwork. I help kids in Grades 5, 6 and 9 — especially with math and science because I'm really good at math and science.

Being a volunteer gives me so much personal satisfaction. It helps me so much, just a few hours in the whole week. I've learned a lot about different cultures and traditions. The kids I work with come from Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. We learn from each other. The most important lesson is how to live together.

The big reason I volunteer is that I want to pay back Canadian society for all the things that it has done for me. For welcoming me. Not every country does that.

connect to the big ideas


The Calgary Bridge Foundation is one of several organizations in Alberta that offers assistance to immigrants and refugees. Check the yellow pages of your phone book under "associations." Or check online. What organizations are in your community? How could you or your class volunteer?

Steps to Researching an Issue


In this chapter, you have been learning about factors that affect Canada's immigration laws. **In your opinion, which factors should influence Canada's immigration policies most: economic, political, health or security?** To find out more, do some in-depth research on one of the four factors. Research can help you develop an informed position on issues. It relates to the steps for **Spot and Respond to the Issue** on pages 12 and 13. See the next page for details.



WHAT'S INVOLVED IN RESEARCHING AN ISSUE?

A young boy with glasses, wearing a light green t-shirt and blue shorts, stands with his arms crossed and his hand on his chin, appearing to be in deep thought.

Research starts with questions and ends with conclusions. It sounds like a straight line, but it's really more like a circle. Sometimes you have to change your questions as you learn more about a topic. You have to loop back and adjust your starting point. It's important to keep an open mind.

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a green t-shirt and grey pants, stands with her hands slightly raised as if speaking or gesturing.

I like to make a diagram that shows how I think information might be connected. Then I see how well the information and the diagram match up. I change the diagram to fit what the information tells me, and I then use it to record information. Sometimes I find out I need more information on something.

Try this!

Use these steps to help you research, gather and summarize ideas for your storyboard and complete your project. The numbers down the side of this chart show how this process fits with the steps of **Spot and Respond to the Issue** on pages 12 and 13.

2
4
5

Steps	Notes								
Choose an Issue	What issue do you want to inquire into? <i>To what extent do security issues affect immigration?</i>								
Planning	<p>A plan helps you get started. Begin by writing some questions you would like to investigate on the issue. Then, find out where you will get the information.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Questions</th> <th>Information Sources</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>What security concerns do Canadian officials have?</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>How many people are turned away from Canada because of security concerns?</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>What groups in Canada have a perspective on the issue?</i></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Questions	Information Sources	<i>What security concerns do Canadian officials have?</i>		<i>How many people are turned away from Canada because of security concerns?</i>		<i>What groups in Canada have a perspective on the issue?</i>	
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Gathering	<p>Locate information from a variety of sources such as the Internet, books, and newspapers. Decide what sources contain the most useful information.</p> <p><i>My checklist for useful information:</i> <i>related to my questions</i> <i>not biased</i> <i>from informed people and organizations</i></p>								
Analyzing	<p>Record key information that helps you know more about your issue, find patterns and draw conclusions. <i>Look for connections among these ideas:</i></p>								
Organizing	<p>Organize the information persuasively. Use your skills of persuasive communication.</p> <p><i>When did we do those steps on persuasive communication? Note: look that up again.</i></p>								
Creating	<p>Create a product that effectively communicates your ideas.</p> <p><i>For my storyboard, I think I'll explain my ideas in a voice-over instead of in writing.</i></p>								
Sharing	<p>Share your research with others.</p> <p><i>My storyboard needs to showcase my research and ideas. Note: be prepared to explain storyboard in class.</i></p>								

I may need to make changes here

as I make changes here

as I learn more here

I may need more information

I may need new connections

What is Canada's policy towards refugees?

Refugees are one of the categories of immigrants established under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Here is some background on how Canada's position on refugees evolved:

- Canada signed the U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951.
- During the 1950s and 1960s, Canada offered to shelter refugees in response to specific world crises.
- In 1976, Canada made refugees one of its immigration categories. The change meant that Canada accepted refugees steadily, instead of crisis by crisis.

refugee: a person who seeks refuge in another country because of danger or persecution in their home country

What does the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act say about refugees?

SOME OBJECTIVES OF THE IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT, 2002

Objectives for Canada's refugee program:

- Save lives and offer protection to people who are displaced and persecuted.
- Fulfill and affirm Canada's international commitments to protect refugees.
- Grant fair consideration to people who claim to be persecuted, as an expression of Canada's humanitarian ideals.
- Offer refuge to people facing persecution because of race, religion, political opinion or membership in a social group, and to people who face torture, or cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.



This photo shows Hungarian refugees boarding a flight to Vancouver in 1956. Canada accepted 37 000 refugees from Hungary who opposed the government of their home country — a government that did not tolerate opposition.



CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE What issues might arise from accepting refugees into Canada?