

# Young Canadians

## What do Teenagers think?

93% of Canadian teenagers think that Canada is the best country in the world.

78% of Canadian teenagers support immigration.

71% of Canadian teenagers believe in God.

57% of Canadian teens are against making marijuana legal.

87% of Canadian teenagers think sex before marriage is all right.

(Source: *Reader's Digest Canada*)



*Skiing.*

**M**ost Canadian teenagers probably live lives that are very similar to yours. They go to school, do their homework, hang out with their friends, listen to music, watch TV, eat junk food, go to sports, and spend money shopping. Because Canada's climate is so different from yours, the sports they play and the places where they hang out might be very different from the ones you know. Since Canadian winters get very cold, winter sports like hockey and ice-skating are common. Many Canadian cities are near mountains and hills, so skiing is another popular sport.

**M**alls are popular with all teenagers. Because of the cold winters, Canadian malls can be gigantic. When it's -20 C. outside and windy, you don't feel like strolling down a pedestrian street and sitting at an outdoor café – you want to be indoors. That is why Canada has the biggest malls in the world. Some malls have hundreds of stores and dozens of movie theatres. The biggest ones even have roller coasters and other rides. In some Canadian cities, the malls are connected to each other by underground passages and shopping centres and form underground cities. This can be very convenient when there are two metres of snow outside.

**T**he lifestyles of young Canadians resemble those of teenagers just south of the border in the USA. They go to the same sort of malls, see the same movies, and eat the same junk food. They even play baseball, and Canadian football is very similar to the American game. One difference is that Canadian teenagers are allowed to drink when they are younger. You can buy

alcohol when you are 18 in Quebec and 19 in most of the other provinces. In the US, you have to be 21; so a little trip to Quebec is popular among many American teenagers in nearby states.

**E**ven though Canadian teenagers probably see many of the same American produced TV shows that you watch, they do see shows of their own. One popular French-Canadian TV series is *Watatatow*. *Watatatow* is based on the true experiences of 1,500 Canadian teens. The series follows four families whose lifestyles mirror modern Canadian family life. There is a traditional family with two parents, families where the parents are divorced or separated, and even families where the children have been placed in foster care. We see the teenagers at school, youth clubs, and at fast food places. *Watatatow* reflects the hopes and worries of teenagers everywhere: friendship, love, family problems, gaining independence, and doubts about the future.



A Cadillac from Quebec.



*Young man working at a fairground.*

**S**ome kinds of junk food are uniquely Canadian. In the province of Quebec, there is something called *poutine*. *Poutine* consists of French fries with melted cheese curds and gravy on top. Sounds yummy, doesn't it? *Poutine* is so popular that it is even served in many Canadian *Burger King* restaurants.

**C**anadian teenagers work a lot. More than half of all teens aged 15 to 19 work full-time or part-time while going to school. Other teens get summer jobs. Why? Well, like all teenagers, they want to buy their own clothes and CDs, but there are other reasons, too. Universities and colleges are not free in Canada. They can cost thousands of dollars each year. This means that young people have to save up their money if they want to study after high

school. Since Canada is such a big place and public transportation is not always convenient, many teenagers have their own cars. This means that they have work to pay for gasoline and repairs.

**T**hough Canada is a rich country with a high standard of living, not all Canadians are rich. In fact, one out of five Canadian children lives in poverty. Some parts of Canada have high unemployment. Newfoundland's main industry is fishing. However, because of overfishing, the government has banned cod fishing since the 1990s, and other catches are much smaller. This means that many people in Newfoundland are out of work. Today, one out of three children and teenagers in Newfoundland is officially poor.