

Objectives:

- To explore Canada's diverse landscape through the country's national parks
- To discover how Parks Canada protects Canada's natural spaces

Materials:

- National park cards (47)
- Hand-held legends (4)
- Fun facts card (1)
- Scavenger hunt cards (10)
- Activity badges (31)
- Pylons (20)

Getting started

Give participants time to explore the map. Ask them to focus on the different colours and textures they see on the map. Have everyone stand along the border, and ask volunteers to explain what each of the different colours on the map represents. For example, ask one volunteer to stand on an area of Canada where there is a forest (green areas on the map). Use the hand-held legends to highlight all the different coloured areas, having participants identify each as you go. Have participants think of descriptive words for each type of land cover that they see. If you are working with a group whose first language is not English or French, think of a list of helpful descriptive words before the group arrives, such as big, small, cold, green, blue, round or long, or come up with actions your participants can do in each landform area.

Activity

Have a volunteer place a pylon where they live. Ask another volunteer to use the legend to identify how national parks are shown on the map. Ask: what is the name of the nearest national park?

Use the fun facts card to highlight interesting information about Canada and some of its national parks. Explain that Canada has 46 national parks, all of which help protect and preserve Canada's unique landscape. Distribute the national parks cards, and work as a group to place all national parks cards on their matching park. Have everyone stand on the border of the map and walk around the perimeter of it, paying attention to the location of Canada's national parks. If you are working with people who are not from Canada, ask your group to share information about their country's landscape. Have them use the map to identify areas that may be similar to their country and areas that may be different.

Conclusion

Now that your group has learned the meaning of the map's colours and examined pictures of Canada's national parks, ask each participant to locate a national park that interests them and stand next to it. Ask your group to determine what kind of activities visitors can do in the national parks they have chosen to stand next to, and select three activity badges to match their thinking. For example, can they hike? camp? swim? Remind participants that the symbols displayed on the icons can represent more than one activity. If you are working with a group whose first language is not English or French, go over as a group what the symbols on the badges represent. After an explanation of each badge has been given, give them out and then have participants locate a national park where they think they can do the activity on their badge.

Conclude by using the scavenger hunt cards provided to play a scavenger hunt game. As the instructor, read the clues on the card one by one and allow time for participants to find the answer. If you are working with a more advanced group, randomly distribute the cards and allow the participants to read the clues.

Exploring Canada off the map

Encourage participants to find one of Canada's national parks that is of particular interest to them and then to research the activities, animals and other interesting features in that park. Have them plan a road trip to visit this national park.



Objectives:

- To familiarize participants with Canada's population distribution
- To locate and identify Canada's provinces, territories and capital cities
- To learn about the creation of the national parks system
- To discover nearby Parks Canada places that participants can visit

Materials:

- Exploring Canada checklist cards (10)
- National parks information card (1)
- Canadian, provincial and territorial flag cards (14)
- Hand-held legends (4)
- Chains (16)
- Pylons (20)

Getting started

Allow time for participants to explore on the map. Encourage them to identify where they are and to find key physical features such as the Great Lakes, the Arctic, oceans and any other places they may be familiar with. Distribute the exploring Canada checklist to assist with their explanation. If you are working with a group whose first language is not English or French, go through the checklist one by one as a group and highlight these features together.

Have the group stand on the border of the map and ask a volunteer to place a red pylon on your location. Review the cardinal directions (north, east, south, west) by asking four volunteers to stand on Canada's most northern, southern, eastern and western points. Test participants' knowledge by having the group do an action in each direction. For example, have participants swim like a salmon to the West Coast of Canada.

Activity

Bring attention to the map's legend and review the key features such as national parks, historic sites, marine conservation areas, roads and railways. Have a participant read each feature out loud using the legend on the map or the hand-held legends, and have the rest of the group find these on the giant map and stand on them.

Have the group highlight Canada's international borders using chains from the trunk. Ask: who are Canada's neighbours? Bring attention to the political borders inside Canada. Explain that Canada has 10 provinces and three territories. Distribute the 14 flag cards to pairs or small groups, and have each group find the province or territory that matches the name on their card. Explain that each province and territory has its own capital city and that these capital cities are labelled on the map with a star. Have participants place the national, provincial and territorial flag cards on the matching capital city.

Next, focus your attention to the national parks shown on the map. Ask each group to count the number of national parks in their province or territory. Which province or territory has the most national parks? Which has the least? Ask your group which national park is closest to where they live. Why does Canada have national parks? Explain that Canada developed its system of national parks as a way to preserve its unique and beautiful landscape.





Conclusion

As a group highlight various national parks in Canada. Use the national parks information card provided to help the group explore Canada and its national park locations. If you are working with a group whose homeland is not Canada, go through the questions one by one. Conclude the activity by reviewing what they learned through a game of I Spy.

Exploring Canada off the map

Use the map to locate the nearest national park and continue to explore Canada by planning a day trip to go visit it.





Objectives:

- To discover Canada's unique history and culture by exploring Parks Canada's national historic sites
- To learn how national historic sites contribute to Canadians' sense of time, identity, values and place in the world

Materials:

- Pylons (20)
- Canada symbol cards (22)
- National historic site fact cards (13)
- National historic site information card (1)
- Hand-held legends (4)

Getting started

Once your group has explored the giant floor map, gather everyone on the map's border. Using a pylon from the trunk, ask one volunteer to place a pylon where they live. Do a basic review of Canada's geography by asking your group which province or territory their home is in, what their provincial or territorial capital city is, which bodies of water they are nearest to and how many national parks are in their province or territory.

Using a hand-held legend, review the symbols on the map by calling them out and having participants stand on them. For example, call "highway" and have your group stand on any highway on the map. Repeat this until all symbols have been located, but save the national historic site symbol for last. Explain that the beaver symbol represents Parks Canada's national historic sites and that these sites are important to Canada because they identify important locations, figures, events and cultural traditions that help make Canada unique. There are 168 national historic sites of Canada. Have participants locate them.

Activity

Ask your group which parts of Canada have a lot of national historic sites? Why do some areas have more than others? Bring attention back to the pylon identifying where your group lives. Ask your group which national historic sites are in their province or territory. Use the national historic site fact card to match the number on the map to the number on the card and identify which sites are close to their home town.

Explain to your group that they will be exploring national historic sites in Canada and learning about Canada's unique history and culture. Distribute one national historic site fact card to each participant and ask them to read the information on the card and match the card number to the number on the giant floor map. Once all cards have been placed on the map, ask for volunteers to share what they learned about their national historic site. If you are working with a group whose first language is not English or French, do this activity as a group, taking time to show where each site is, identify which province or territory it is in and share the fun fact provided on the card.





Conclusion

Like the symbols used on the map, explain that Canada has its own symbols. These symbols are used in Canada and abroad to share information about Canada and its diverse culture. Distribute the Canadian symbol cards to your group. One at a time, have participants from your group share their symbol, and then discuss as a group where this symbol may be best placed on the map. If you are working with a group of people who are not from Canada, take time to explain what these symbols mean and how they are connected to Canada. Ask volunteers from your group to share which country they are from and what symbols they use in their country.

Exploring Canada off the map

Encourage participants to find a national historic site near them and plan a day trip to visit it. Refer participants to the Parks Canada website (pc.gc.ca) to learn more and help plan their trip.

