

Glossary

A

Aboriginal: original or earliest known; the earliest known people to inhabit an area

assembly: a gathering of representatives; often this name is given to a gathering of elected representatives who form a legislature or parliament

B

barren lands: often used to identify the tundra or treeless plains of northern Canada, but can be used to describe any dry area with sparse vegetation

C

cabinet: a group of ministers who form a government; commonly each minister is responsible for some area of public business such as defence, education, or health

climate: the composite and generally prevailing weather conditions of a region; includes temperature, air pressure, humidity, sunshine, cloud, precipitation, and wind throughout the year and averaged over a long period of years

coalition: a combination of two or more political parties that temporarily unite to form a government; this is usually done in circumstances where no single party is able to win a majority of seats in the parliament

conservation: the prevention of injury, decay, loss, or waste; often applied to the management of renewable resources

constitutional monarchy: a country which has a monarch (a king or queen) as its head of state, but in which the monarch's powers are limited and set forth in a constitution; like all other citizens, the monarch is subject to the laws passed by an elected legislature; the monarch does not have authority over the day-to-day functioning of government: this authority is commonly in the hands of a prime minister and cabinet

convection: the upward or downward movement of air or water caused by differing temperatures

currency: money, or anything else that is used in commerce as a standard of value or a medium of exchange

D

democracy: a system of government in which government authority resides in the hands of all the people rather than in the hands of one person (an absolute monarchy or a dictatorship), or a few (an oligarchy or an aristocracy)

Dene: a generic name given to various tribes of Athapaskan-speaking peoples in the northwestern part of Canada; the term is used in a similar way that the term "Indians" is used in southern Canada

E

economy: the organized structure under which the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services is carried out

ethnic mix: the distribution of people from different cultures within a pluralistic society

exploiting: developing and using resources for profit

exports: commodities or services that are shipped to other countries for sale or exchange

F

fiord: a long, narrow arm of the sea bordered by steep cliffs; often formed by glacial erosion

foreign policy: a nation's policy with respect to its relations with other countries and its attitude to their various actions

G

geography: a study of the earth's surface considering such elements as climate, elevation, soil, vegetation, population, the distribution of land and water, land use, resources, and the boundaries of nations

geothermal energy: energy derived from water that is heated to significantly high temperatures by the internal heat of the earth; the water comes to the surface in hot springs

greenhouse effect: the earth's atmosphere gets warmer as ever greater amounts of carbon dioxide are produced by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, natural gas, and gasoline

H

hectare: an are is a unit of land measurement, or area, 10 metres by 10 metres, or 100 square metres; a hectare is a unit of land measurement equivalent to 100 ares, or a total of 10 000 square metres

hot spring: a thermal spring having water warmer than 37°C; the water is heated by passing near hot or molten rock beneath the earth's surface

I

imports: commodities or services brought in from foreign countries for use or sale

indigenous: originating in, and natural to, a particular region; the word is sometimes used as an alternative word in the phrase "Aboriginal peoples," but it actually carries a different meaning than "Aboriginal": it implies not merely that a group of people was the first to visit a region, but that it originated there

individualism: the belief that the individual, rather than the group, must have primary consideration

International Date Line: an imaginary line that follows approximately 180° Longitude; since there is no natural starting place for calendar dates on the earth's surface, this line is arbitrarily used to serve as the starting place for each new calendar date; places just west of the line are deemed to be one day further along in the calendar than places just east of it

Inuit: an Aboriginal people, consisting of many distinct groups, inhabiting the arctic coastal areas of eastern Siberia, northern and western Alaska, northern Canada, and Greenland; formerly known incorrectly as "Eskimo"

isotherm: a line on a weather map connecting places that have the same temperature, or on a climatic map connecting places that have the same average temperature at a particular date in the year

K

krill: small, shrimp-like creatures that live near the surface of the open ocean and feed on phytoplankton; they in turn serve as food for certain whales

L

latitude: a location's distance in degrees either north or south of the Equator (which is 0° Latitude); there are

90° of North Latitude and 90° of South Latitude

legislature: an elected assembly whose primary task is the passing of laws for a province, state, or nation

life expectancy: the average life-span of men and women in particular nations, calculated from statistics by averaging the length of lives of all who have previously lived in the nation; in actual fact, some people live longer, and some live shorter lives than this statistical average indicates; life expectancy varies between men and women (women tend to live longer) and between various nations (depending on the quality of health and social services, on whether prosperity or poverty prevails, war or peace, and so on)

M

materialism: the tendency to give undue importance to possessing material things, as opposed to the tendency to pursue other values such as sharing or family life

merchandising: the buying and selling of material goods

metabolism: the sum of all the chemical and physical processes in the body by which the substance of the body is produced, maintained, and destroyed and by which energy is continually made available

Métis: a term used in Canada to describe persons of mixed European and Indian origin; there are significant numbers of Métis in the western part of Canada's Northwest Territories

minister: a cabinet member chosen by a government to be responsible for some aspect of public business such as defense of public works

N

natural resources: a country's natural wealth, consisting of water, fish, land, wildlife, forests, mineral wealth, and so on

negotiate: discussing, bargaining, and compromising in order to reach agreement

non-renewable resource: a natural resource, such as gold or petroleum, that does not replenish itself

Norse: the people and language of ancient Scandinavia; derived from a word for "North," to recognize where these people lived

Northeast Passage: a once-hoped-for easy water pas-

sage from Europe to the Orient north of the Eurasian continent; there is a water passage there, but it is clogged with ice for much of the year

North Pole: 90° North Latitude; the northernmost point on the earth's rotational axis

Northwest Passage: a once-hoped-for easy water passage from Europe to the Orient north of North America; there is a water passage there, but it is clogged with ice for much of the year

O

ozone: ozone occurs naturally in the atmosphere and protects living things from the sun's ultraviolet radiation; it is destroyed by chemicals such as chlorofluorocarbons and nitric oxide that enter the atmosphere as a result of human activity

P

physical environment: the material situation in which living beings find themselves, amidst air, land, water, and living things

plain: a broad expanse of land having little "relief" (ups and downs in elevation) on its surface

plateau: a fairly flat area of land that is quite distinctly elevated above the surrounding area; sometimes called a tableland

political party: an organization established by persons who have a similar social outlook and similar social goals; its primary purpose is to attain political power so its elected members can form a government and thereby determine public policy and law

pollution: the introduction of harmful substances into the environment with the result that some element of nature is damaged

precipitation: any of the products of moisture condensation that fall in the earth's atmosphere: rain, snow, sleet, or hail

president: the chief executive officer of the government of a modern republic; generally attains the position by being elected directly by a majority of all eligible voters in the nation (for example, the American president)

prime minister: the principal cabinet minister and head of government in a parliamentary system of government; generally attains the position by being leader of

the political party that attains most seats in the parliament during an election (for example, the Canadian prime minister)

purse seine net: a fishing net that is used to catch schools of fish near the ocean's surface; it is drawn around the fish and then closed with a heavy drawstring made of cable or rope; when closed, the net forms a purse or pouch from which the fish cannot escape

R

radiation: a process in which energy is emitted from an object in the form of particles or waves; excessive exposure can be harmful to humans

renewable resource: a natural resource, such as fish or trees, that will replenish itself if nature is not thoughtlessly and radically abused; with growing populations of humans, wise management of renewable resources is required to ensure that these resources are able to replenish themselves

representative government: a democratic form of government in which representatives are elected from among the people to make policies and laws to which everyone will be subject

republic: a government that has a president at its head, rather than a monarch

resource: anything that can be used by humans to help satisfy needs or accomplish objectives

rotational axis: the axis is an imaginary line through the centre of earth from the North to the South Pole and the earth rotates around this axis; it takes 24 hours to make one rotation

S

self-pollination: the transfer of pollen from the anther to the stigma of the same flower, or to another flower of the same plant, eventually producing seeds for reproduction

Siberia: a huge part of Russia, extending from the Ural Mountains to the Arctic Ocean in the north, and to the Pacific Ocean in the east; noted for its remoteness from the main centres of Europe and Asia and for its cold climate

social change: the change that occurs in all societies over time; brought about by the introduction of new peo-

ple, new ideas, and new practices; social change is sometimes rapid and revolutionary and sometimes so slow as to seem non-existent, yet it is always occurring

social environment: the social situation in which humans find themselves: that is, among other humans, some of whom are of the same culture and some different, in a democracy or a dictatorship, amidst poverty or plenty, at war or peace, and so on

social organization: the manner in which a society has structured itself to accomplish government, to conduct industry, trade, commerce, and social relations

society: an organized group of persons associated together to further the accomplishment of their mutual aims

T

technology: the sum of the ways in which societies provide themselves with the material objects of their civilization (their tools, weapons, buildings, furnishings, means of transportation, and so on)

topography: the surface features of a land area: plains, valleys, hills, mountains, gorges, plateaus, and so on

treeline: the line encountered, either while climbing a mountain or travelling toward the Arctic, beyond which trees do not grow; the absence of trees is caused largely by sparse precipitation, cold temperatures, and poor soil (or none at all)

tundra: a Sami word meaning “rolling, treeless plain”

U

unemployed: being without a job and wanting one in a social setting where earning income for working is the common practice

utilidor: an above-ground insulated network of pipes and cables used to provide water and other services to communities situated in an area of permafrost

V

veto: a powerful No vote that can stop something from happening

voyageurs: Canadian crewmen on fur-trade canoes; they paddled the canoes and carried cargo at portages

W

weather: the state of the atmosphere with respect to temperature, moisture, air pressure, wind, cloud, and so on