Background information:

A **Permanent Resident** in [Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) is someone who is not a [Canadian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) [citizen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_nationality_law) but who has been granted permission to live and work in Canada without any time limit on his or her stay. A permanent resident must live in Canada for two years out of every five or risk losing that status.

A Permanent Resident holds many of the same rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen, among others the right to work for any enterprise as well as for the federal or provincial government (under restriction of access rights to certain regulated professions). The main differences are that residents cannot:

* [vote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_vote) in federal, provincial or municipal [elections in Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Canada)
* run for elected office,
* hold Canadian passports, nor
* join Canada's [armed forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_forces)

Permanent residents also risk deportation for serious crimes committed while resident in Canada. Permanent residents may apply for Canadian citizenship after three years in Canada, however this is not mandatory.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_resident_(Canada)#cite_note-0)

After 1947 domestic immigration law went through many major changes, most notably with the [Immigration Act, 1976](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_Act,_1976), and the current [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_and_Refugee_Protection_Act) from 2002.

In Canada there are three categories of immigrants: family class (closely related persons of Canadian residents), independent immigrants (admitted on the basis of a point system that account for age, health and labour-market skills required for cost effectively inducting the immigrants into Canada's white-collar or blue-collar labour market) and refugees seeking protection by applying to remain in Canada. In 2008, there were 65,567 immigrants in the family class, 21,860 refugees, and 149,072 economic immigrants amongst the 247,243 total immigrants to the country. Approximately 41% of people currently living in Canada are first or second generation immigrants.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Canada#cite_note-imigrantclass-0)

Currently Canada is known as a country with a broad immigration policy which is reflected in Canada's [ethnic diversity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism). According to the 2001 census by [Statistics Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statistics_Canada), Canada has 34 ethnic groups with at least one hundred thousand members each, of which 10 have over 1,000,000 people and numerous others represented in smaller amounts. 16.2% of the population belonged to [visible minorities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visible_minorities): most numerous among these are [South Asian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadians_of_Asian_ancestry) (4.0% of the population), [Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Canadian) (3.9%), [African](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Canadian) (2.5%), and [Filipino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filipino_Canadian) (1.1%). Outstripping visible minorities in proportion, however, were (non-British, Irish or French) invisible minorities, the largest of which were [German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) (10.18%), and [Italian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) (4.63%), with 3.87% being [Ukrainian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine) , 3.87% being [Dutch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands), and 3.15% being [Polish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland). ("North American Indians", a group which may include migrants of indigenous origin from the United States and Mexico but which for the most part are not considered immigrants, comprise 4.01% of the national population.) Other non-visible minority ethnic origins include [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) (1.60%), [Norwegian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway) (1.38%), [Portuguese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal) (1.32%), and [Swedish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden) (1.07%).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Canada#cite_note-census-proportion-1)

In 2006, Canada received 236,756 immigrants. The top ten source countries were [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Republic_of_China) (28,896), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) (28,520), the [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines) (19,718), [Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan) (9,808), the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) (8,750), the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) (7,324), [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) (7,195), [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea) (5,909), [Colombia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombia) (5,382), and [Sri Lanka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) (4,068).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Canada#cite_note-2) These countries were followed closely by [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) (4,026), and [Morocco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco) (4,025), with [Romania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania), [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), and [Algeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria). each contributing over 3,500 immigrants.[[4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Canada#cite_note-3)

Canadian citizenship was originally created under the Immigration Act, 1910, to designate those British subjects who were domiciled in Canada. All other British subjects required permission to land. A separate status of "Canadian national" was created under the Canadian Nationals Act, 1921, which was defined as being a Canadian citizen as defined above, their wives, and any children (fathered by such citizens) that had not yet landed in Canada. After the passage of the [Statute of Westminster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statute_of_Westminster_1931) in 1931, the monarchy thus ceased to be an exclusively British institution. Because of this Canadians, and others living in countries that became known as [Commonwealth realms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_realm), were known as *subjects of the Crown*. However in legal documents the term "British subject" continued to be used.

Canada was the first nation in the then [British Commonwealth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations) to establish its own nationality law in 1946, with the enactment of the [Canadian Citizenship Act 1946](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Citizenship_Act_1946). This took effect on 1 January 1947. In order to acquire Canadian citizenship on 1 January 1947 one generally had to be a British subject on that date, an Indian or Eskimo, or had been admitted to Canada as landed immigrants before that date. The phrase *British subject* refers in general to anyone from the United Kingdom, its colonies at the time, or a Commonwealth country. Acquisition and loss of British subject status before 1947 was determined by United Kingdom law (see [History of British nationality law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_British_nationality_law)).

On 15 February 1977, Canada removed restrictions on dual citizenship. Many of the provisions to acquire or lose Canadian citizenship that existed under the 1946 legislation were repealed. Canadian citizens are in general no longer subject to involuntary loss of citizenship, barring revocation on the grounds of immigration fraud.