

# THE SEVEN WONDERS OF CANADA

## Introduction

### Focus

In this *News in Review* story, we investigate the results of the recent CBC-inspired contest to select the Seven Wonders of Canada.

### Definition

The notation *CE* stands for Common Era and reflects the time period that began with the birth of Jesus Christ. The notation *BCE* stands for Before the Common Era.

In the summer of 2007, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) organized a contest to determine the Seven Wonders of Canada. Canadians were encouraged to nominate any natural or human-made wonder in the nation. Millions of Canadians participated. The final selections were made by a panel of respected judges. Only two of the final seven selections on the judges' list were from the top seven list nominated by Canadians. This caused quite an outpouring of sentiment. Many Canadians felt the final seven wonders did not reflect the opinions of "average" Canadians who had taken the time to vote. The judges, however, had to consider factors other than just popularity in their final selections. Regardless of the outcome, the Seven Wonders of Canada competition was a huge success at getting Canadians talking about the nation and in generating excitement about our heritage.

Although the CBC's Seven Wonders of Canada competition was a first for Canada, seven wonders lists are not

new. The original Seven Wonders of the World appeared on a list created around 300 BCE. This "Ancient Wonders" list, as it is commonly called, was used as a benchmark for all future wonders lists. And it contains some of the most amazing feats of engineering in human history.

Over the past 20 years, a number of locations and sites have been designated as "Modern Wonders." But the lists differ depending on the criteria used to define "wonderfulness." One of the lists focuses on engineering wonders (those created by humans), while another refers to natural wonders. The most recent list, released in July 2007, is the result of worldwide online voting.

In this *News in Review* story you will review the controversy associated with the Seven Wonders of Canada competition. You will also learn about the Ancient and Modern Wonders, and you will have the opportunity to reflect on the concept of "wonderfulness." And finally, you will have the chance to create your own Seven Wonders of Canada list.

## Planning Ahead

If you were to select the Seven Wonders of Canada, what criteria would you choose for determining your list? Could the "Wonders" be both human-made and natural? Would they need to represent all areas of Canada? Should there be a balance of modern and older wonders? Should they be well-known or newly discovered?

# THE SEVEN WONDERS OF CANADA

## *Video Review*

Respond to the following questions while viewing the accompanying video.

1. How many wonders of Canada were nominated for voting purposes?

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2. Describe the nomination made by Anne Warr's Grade 2 class in Newfoundland.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you think this nomination should have been selected as one of the Seven Wonders of Canada? Why?

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4. Why was Number 5 Road in Richmond, British Columbia, nominated? Do you agree with this nomination? Why?

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5. What is the significance of Pier 21?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What was the "tastiest" nomination on the list? Was this a worthy nomination? Why?

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7. How did the judges' list differ from the list that resulted from the online voting? How do you feel about this difference?

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\_\_\_\_\_



# THE SEVEN WONDERS OF CANADA

## Ancient Seven Wonders of the World

Although the summer of 2007 was the first time Canadians compiled a list of their country's seven wonders, people have been compiling lists of wonders for thousands of years. The list of the Ancient Seven Wonders that we know today is from the Middle Ages. Since the list came mostly from ancient Greek writings, only sites known and visited by the Greeks were included.

**Focus question:** *What do you think amazed the Greeks about each of the Ancient Wonders?*

### Task

Create an organizer that records specific information about each of the Ancient Wonders. Your organizer should include the following columns: Name, Features, Location, Date Built, Date Destroyed, and Cause of Destruction.

#### 1. The Great Pyramid of Giza

The Great Pyramid is the only surviving Ancient Wonder. It is also the oldest. The pyramid was built near the city of Giza, which today is part of Greater Cairo in Egypt. The pyramid was built by the Egyptian pharaoh Khufu, around 2560 BCE, to serve as a tomb when he died.

It is believed that the pyramid was built over a 20-year period. The structure consists of about two million blocks of stone, each weighing more than two tonnes. The pyramid is about 137 metres high and was the tallest structure in the world for more than 43 centuries. Each side of the pyramid aligns with one of the cardinal points of the compass: north, south, east, and west. The maximum error between side lengths is less than 0.1 per cent. A number of corridors led to the inner sanctum, the pharaoh's burial chamber.

#### History Mystery

People continue to debate how the pyramid was built. One theory is that a straight or spiral ramp, raised as construction proceeded, moved the blocks into place. How do you think two million blocks of stone weighing two tonnes each could be moved without heavy construction equipment?

#### 2. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The Hanging Gardens were an architectural masterpiece because they flourished in the middle of a desert. It is believed that Nebuchadnezzar II had the Hanging Gardens built for his wife Amytis, who was homesick for the lush and green landscape of her home, Media.

Built around 600 BCE, the multi-levelled gardens reached up to 22 metres in height. Plants and trees were planted in each level of the terrace and were watered by irrigation streams that flowed like waterfalls from terrace to terrace. It is reported that large trees even grew on the roof of the palace.

The Hanging Gardens are believed to have been located on the east bank of the Euphrates River, about 50 kilometres south of Baghdad, Iraq. They were destroyed by an earthquake after the first century BCE.

#### History Mystery

Are the Hanging Gardens a myth? Historians today continue to debate whether the Hanging Gardens actually existed or if they were simply a Greek legend. The reason some historians doubt their existence is that many written records from the time period do

not make any reference to the gardens. However, more recent excavations at the ancient city of Babylon in Iraq have uncovered what may be the foundation of the palace.

### **3. The Statue of Zeus at Olympia**

According to the Greeks, Zeus was the king of gods. The statue at Olympia, about 150 kilometres west of Athens, was built to honour the greatness of Zeus. Olympia was picked as the location because this is where the Ancient Olympic Games were held to honour Zeus.

Built around 450 BCE, the statue was huge. It measured about 6.5 metres wide at the base and was over 13 metres high—the equivalent of a four-storey modern building. It is believed that the sculptor, Pheidias, created the statue by carving different pieces of it while standing on a large wooden frame. Sheets of metal and ivory were used to provide the outer covering of the statue. The pieces of the sculpture were then assembled inside the temple at Olympia.

Historical records indicate the statue was moved to a palace in Constantinople after the Olympic Games were banned in 391 CE by the emperor Theodosius. It is believed that the statue was destroyed by either a fire or an earthquake around the fifth century CE.

#### **History Mystery**

Did the sculptor make a mistake? When the statue was completed, it barely fit in the temple, and Zeus's head almost touched the ceiling. Some critics have argued that the sculptor made an error when calculating the size of the statue. Others believe that the size was deliberate since it creates the impression that if Zeus stood up he could “unroof” the temple. This would serve as a reflection of his power.

### **4. The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus**

According to the written records of those who visited the site, the Temple of Artemis was the most beautiful structure on Earth. It was built in honour of Artemis, the Greek goddess of hunting, wild nature, and fertility. Artemis was a popular god, and excavations of the site have revealed many gifts from pilgrims, including statuettes made of gold and ivory, earrings, bracelets, and other artifacts from as far away as Persia and India.

Located in the ancient city of Ephesus, about 50 kilometres south of Izmir (Smyrna) in Turkey, the temple took over 100 years to build, around 550 BCE. The temple was rectangular in form, but unlike other temples at the time, the building was made of marble and included 127 columns, each about 20 metres high.

In July of 356 BCE, a man named Herostratus burned the temple to the ground. Although many attempts have been made to rebuild the temple, to date these attempts have been unsuccessful.

### **5. The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus**

The Mausoleum was the burial place of King Maussollos. The Mausoleum is famous, not for its size, but for its beauty. The structure, built around 350 BCE, was rectangular and reached a total height of 45 metres. The outside of the mausoleum was decorated with hundreds of statues of people and animals. A statue of a chariot pulled by four horses decorated the top of the tomb.

The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus was located on the Aegean Sea in southwest Turkey. In the early 15th century, invading crusaders built a massive castle, and stones from the Mausoleum were used as part of the building materials. The crusader castle remains at the city

**Did you know . . .**

The sites on this list were actually called *theamata* rather than "wonders" by the Greeks? *Theamata* translates into "must-sees."

of Bodrum, and the polished stone and marble blocks of the Mausoleum can be seen within the walls of the structure.

## 6. The Colossus of Rhodes

Although it only existed for about 50 years, the Colossus earned a place on the list of Ancient Wonders because of its size and because it symbolized the unity of the people who inhabited the island of Rhodes. Built to honour the sun god, Helios, the statue of the god took over 10 years to build and was completed in 282 BCE.

The statue was built at the entrance of the harbour of the island Rhodes, in Greece. Reaching a height of 33 metres, it is believed that an earthen ramp was built during construction of the highest points. The base of the statue was made of white marble, and the body and head of Helios were made of bronze. The statue stood until a strong earthquake hit the area in 226 BCE. The statue broke at the knee and toppled to the ground. The citizens of Rhodes considered restoring the statue, but an oracle was consulted and forbade the reconstruction.

## 7. Lighthouse of Alexandria

Of the six Ancient Wonders that have been destroyed, the Lighthouse of Alexandria was the last to disappear. It was the tallest building on Earth for centuries, and it contained a large mirror that reflected sun rays during the day and a fire at night. The reflections from the mirror could be seen more than 50 kilometres from shore.

Built in the third century BCE, the lighthouse was built on the ancient island of Pharos, which is now part of the city of Alexandria in Egypt. The island was connected to the mainland by a dike. The lighthouse was necessary to help sailors navigate the double harbour. At its highest point, the lighthouse measured 117 metres, which is about the height of a 40-storey building. The main tower was covered in white marble, and the centre core of the lighthouse was used to transport fuel to the top to keep the fire burning.

The Lighthouse at Alexandria stood for centuries but suffered damage from a number of earthquakes. In 1480, a medieval fort was built at the site, using fallen stone and marble from the lighthouse.

## Follow-Up Activities

1. Work with a partner to complete your Ancient Seven Wonders organizer.
2. With your partner, discuss the following two questions and record your responses in your notebooks. Be prepared to share your answers in class.
  - What made each of the Ancient Wonders so "wonderful." Was it their size, the difficulty of construction, their beauty?
  - Which Wonder is your favourite? Why?

## Extension Activity

Locate illustrations or pictures of the Ancient Wonders on the Internet or in your school library. Which of the Ancient Wonders is the most visually impressive? Why? Does this new information change which one is your favourite?

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## *The Modern Seven Wonders*

### Further Research

American Society of Civil Engineers wonders: [www.asce.org/history/seven\\_wonders.cfm](http://www.asce.org/history/seven_wonders.cfm)

CNN wonders: [www.cnn.com/TRAVEL/DESTINATIONS/9711/natural.wonders](http://www.cnn.com/TRAVEL/DESTINATIONS/9711/natural.wonders)

New Open World Foundation wonders: [www.new7wonders.com/index.php?id=633&L=0](http://www.new7wonders.com/index.php?id=633&L=0)

There have been a number of Modern Seven Wonders lists compiled in the last 50 years. It seems that the lists of wonders change depending on the criteria used to determine “wonderfulness.” For example, if one of the criteria for selection is that the structure must be human-made, then the resulting list will be quite different from a list that focuses on natural wonders.

Below you will find information about three lists of wonders. How many of these wonders do you know?

### Engineering Wonders

In 1994, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) compiled a list of seven wonders to pay tribute to the greatest engineering achievements of the 20th century. ASCE selected the seven wonders from nominations submitted from around the globe. ASCE believes that its selections demonstrate “modern society’s ability to achieve the unachievable, [and] reach unreachable heights.”

- Channel Tunnel – connecting England with continental Europe
- CN Tower – Toronto
- Empire State Building – New York
- Golden Gate Bridge – San Francisco
- Itaipu Dam – Brazil-Paraguay border
- North Sea Protection Works – Netherlands
- Panama Canal – Panama

### Natural Wonders

This list of natural wonders was compiled in 1997 by the Cable News Network (CNN) in the U.S. on its Seven Wonders Web site. CNN quotes U.S. writer Henry David Thoreau, who

said: “We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and decaying trees, the thunder cloud, and the rains that last three weeks . . .”

- Grand Canyon – Arizona
- The Great Barrier Reef – Australia
- The Harbour at Rio de Janeiro – Brazil
- Mt. Everest – Nepal
- Northern Lights – Northern Canada
- Paricutin Volcano – Mexico
- Victoria Falls – Eastern Africa

### The “Newest” Seven Wonders of the World

On July 7, 2007, a not-for-profit organization called the New Seven Wonders Foundation announced a new set of Seven Wonders based on online voting from around the world. The Foundation was established in 2001 by the Swiss-born Canadian filmmaker and author Bernard Weber to contribute to the appreciation and protection of the world’s human-built and natural heritage.

According to the foundation, the Seven Wonders list was compiled from more than 100 million votes cast online. Twenty-one finalists were selected by a panel of experts, and then online voting determined the final seven.

- Chichen Itza (Mayan City) – Mexico
- Christ the Redeemer Statue – Brazil
- The Great Wall – China
- Machu Picchu – Peru
- Petra (Ancient City) – Jordan
- The Roman Colosseum – Italy
- The Taj Mahal – India

## Activities

1. Locate one of the Ancient or Modern Wonders on the Internet. Use the pictures and information you locate to create a tourism brochure about the site and its surrounding area.
2. Create a timeline to plot the Modern and Ancient Wonders. Hint: Begin your timeline with the Great Pyramid of Giza.
3. List three of the wonders listed above that you would most like to visit and briefly explain why.
4. Identify any of the above wonders that you have seen and briefly note your impressions.

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## What Makes It a Wonder?

### Further Research

To explore the CBC program that selected Canada's Seven Wonders go to [www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders](http://www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders).

### Opening Task

1. In your notebook, define the word *wonderful*. Include any qualities you associate with the word. For example, "special."
2. Now think about a physical or geographic wonder. What elements does a particular area/region/landscape have to possess to be considered wonderful?
3. When you are finished, form a small group with two or three classmates and compare your answers. Then come up with a common list of five qualities that determine "wonderfulness."

### The CBC Criteria

When the CBC began its Seven Wonders of Canada contest it had to establish a set of criteria to judge "wonderfulness." After much discussion and debate, the CBC decided that to be considered a wonder, each selection would have to contain the following elements:

- Essential "Canadian-ness" — historically significant, character-filled, valued
- Originality/uniqueness of the pitch (how it was presented or "pitched") and place
- Spectacular physical site or amazing human creation
- Ability to inspire
- Range within the final seven — diversity of location, type of wonder

In addition to these five criteria, the judges also had to consider the results of the online vote when making their final selections.

### Ancient Seven Wonders

When the Ancient Seven Wonders were selected, different criteria were used. Professor Alaa K. Ashmawy, of the University of South Florida, explains that in ancient times, buildings and monuments were considered wonders if they did the following:

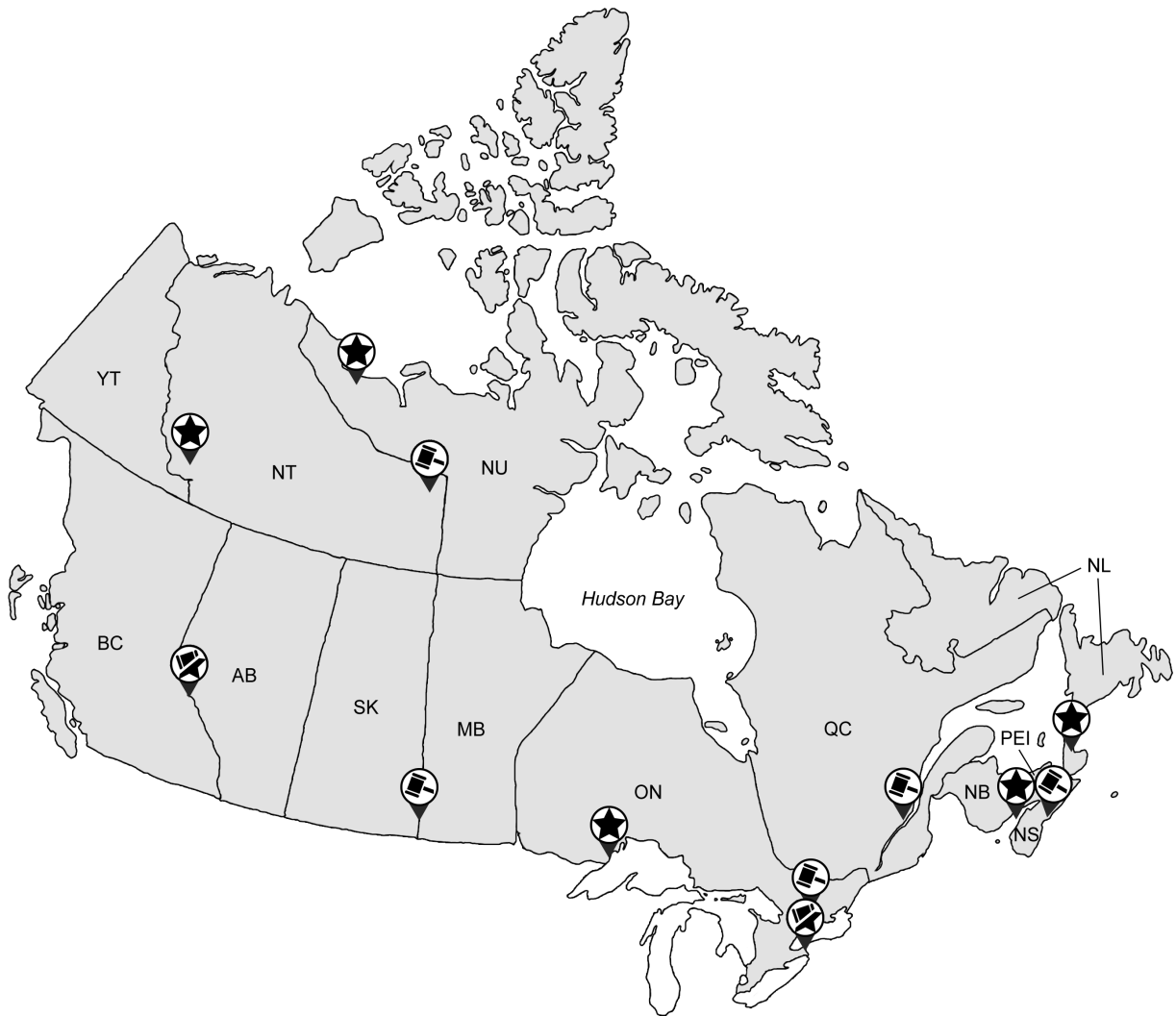
- Celebrated religion and mythology
- Demonstrated artistic expression
- Reflected power over the surrounding landscape
- Demonstrated understanding of science

### Analysis

1. Compare your list of criteria with those used to determine Canada's Seven Wonders and the Ancient Seven Wonders. Look for similarities and differences in the lists.
2. What does this tell you about the nature of "wonderfulness"? Would you say it is a fixed or a fluctuating concept?
3. Do you believe the CBC did a good job of determining "wonderfulness"? Explain.




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## *Canada's Seven Wonders: Map of Canada*



### Seven Wonders of Canada

An interactive version of this map can be found at [www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/map.html](http://www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/map.html).

Legend	
	Selections made by judges
	Selections made by online voters
	Selections made by judges and online voters

# THE SEVEN WONDERS OF CANADA

## **Activity: Your Wonders**

When the Seven Wonders of Canada were announced by the CBC, there was a great outcry from Canadians over the final selections. Many Canadians felt strongly that the wonders they had personally nominated and voted for were better than those selected by the judges. Although the results of the online vote were one of the factors considered by the judges, the other five criteria (“Canadian-ness,” originality, ability to inspire, “spectacularness,” and range of the final choices) carried more weight.

This is the way the judges’ selections compared with the results of the online vote (see map on page 27 for locations).

### **Seven Wonders of Canada — as determined by the judges**

- The canoe
- Niagara Falls, ON
- Pier 21, Halifax, NS
- The igloo
- The Rockies
- Old Quebec City, QC
- Prairie skies

### **Seven Wonders of Canada — as determined by the online vote**

- Sleeping Giant, Thunder Bay, ON (177 305 votes)
- Niagara Falls, ON (81 818 votes)
- Bay of Fundy, NB and NS (67 670 votes)
- Nahanni National Park, NT (64 920)
- Northern Lights, Northern Canada (61 417 votes)
- The Rockies, BC and AB (55 630 votes)
- Cabot Trail, NS (44 073 votes)

From these lists you can see that there was not a great deal of agreement regarding Canada’s Seven Wonders. Only two of the final selections were the same.

## **Your Turn**

Now it is your chance to select the Seven Wonders of Canada.

1. In a group of four or five students, create a list of seven places or “things” that you believe to be wonders of Canada. Don’t be afraid to include a wonder from your own community/region/province. Prepare reasons to explain your choices, as you will have to defend your selections to a panel of judges.
2. Make a brief presentation to your class about your choices.
3. Your teacher and a small group of students will act as judges.
4. Once the Seven Wonders have been selected, compare the list generated by your class with the results presented by the CBC. How many similarities are there? How do you explain the differences?