

Canadiana: Migration

In this module you will learn about some of the different factors that have resulted in the migration of people to Canada from all over the world, and particularly from Africa and the Caribbean. Which African and Caribbean countries do you think have the most immigrants in Canada? What years do you think most immigrants have come to Canada from those areas? Why do you think Africans and Caribbeans have immigrated to Canada?

By the end of this module, you should be able to answer these questions.

Here is a list of activities you will work on:

- KWL Chart
- Reading

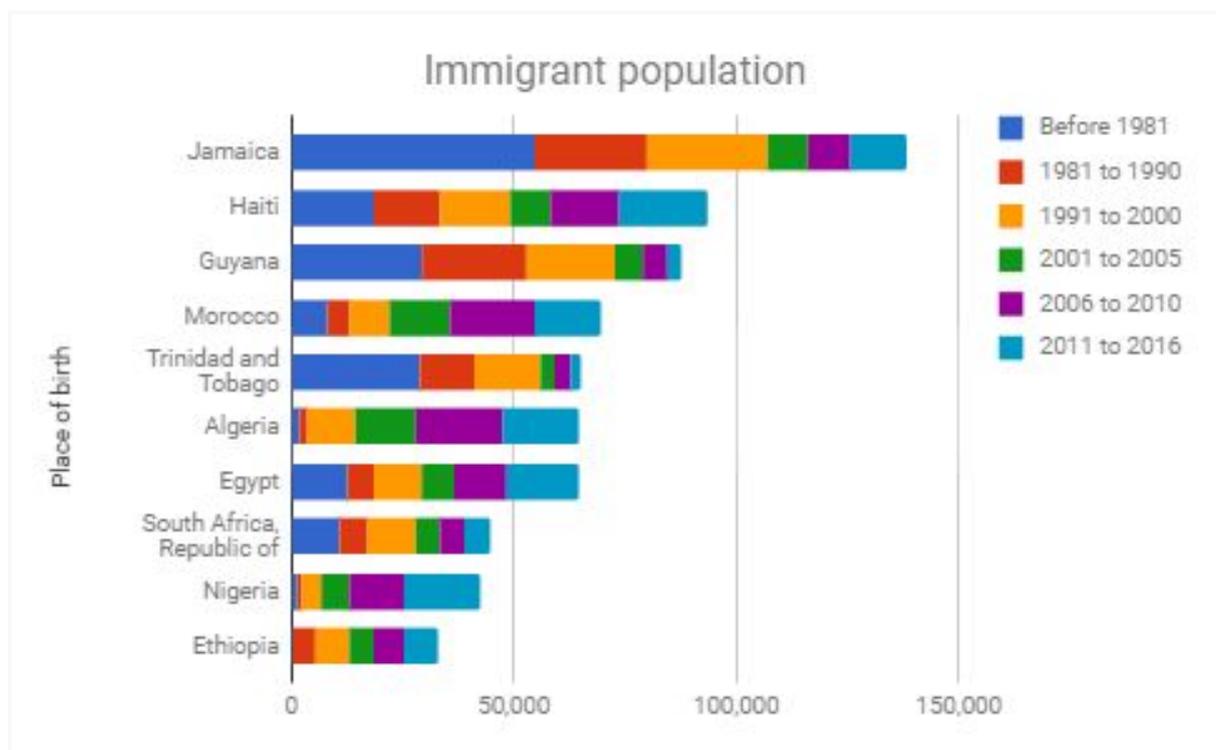
KWL Chart

K	W	L
What I know about African and Caribbean migration to Canada	What I want to know about African and Caribbean migration to Canada	What I learned about African and Caribbean migration to Canada

Reading

Prior to 1970, only a sprinkling of people from African countries had settled in Canada, mainly from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. However since then, the African population in Canada has grown tremendously, at a rate faster than the Canadian population has grown. During the 1990s, about 48% of black immigrants who came to Canada were born in Africa.¹

Take a look at the graph below. It shows the population of immigrants based on their place of birth and the year they migrated to Canada, according to the 2016 census.²



There are many factors over the years that have positively or negatively affected immigration of Africans and Caribbeans to Canada. We will focus on immigration policy and on war, asylum and refugees.

1. Immigration Policy

Citizenship Act: Changes to the citizenship act over the years have made it more or less attractive for people to immigrate to Canada. For example, recent changes in the citizenship act are making it easier for permanent residents to become citizens.

As of October 11, 2017, new changes include:

- Required physical presence in Canada reduced to 3 from 5 years
- Days spent in Canada before becoming a permanent resident count as half days towards physical presence requirements
- Only people 18-54 years old need to do language and knowledge tests.³

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) allows Canadian employers to hire foreign nationals to fill temporary labour and skill shortages when qualified Canadian citizens or permanent residents are not available. Once issued, a work permit includes certain conditions, such as

- where you can work
- who you can work for
- what type of work you can do
- how long you can work in Canada⁴

Anti-black immigration policy in 1911: Order-in-Council P.C. 1324 was approved on 12 August 1911 by the Cabinet of Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The purpose of the order was to ban Black persons from entering Canada for a period of one year. It read: "*For a period of one year from and after the date hereof the landing in Canada shall be and the same is prohibited of any immigrants belonging to the Negro race, which race is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada.*" Though the order never became law, the actions of government officials made it clear that Black immigrants were not wanted in Canada.⁵

2. War, Asylum and Refugees

An immigrant is a person who chooses to settle permanently in another country. Refugees are people who have fled their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution.⁶

History

Here are some common examples Canadian immigration and refugee claimants throughout history ⁷

- **1776:** 3,000 Black Loyalists, among them freemen and slaves, fled the oppression of the American Revolution and came to Canada.
- **1793:** Upper Canada became the first province in the British Empire to abolish slavery. In turn, over the course of the 19th century, thousands of black slaves escaped from the United States and came to Canada with the aid of the Underground Railroad, a Christian anti-slavery network.
- **1950s-1970s:** A significant influx of Middle Eastern and North African Jews fled to Canada
- **1972-1973:** Following Idi Amin's expulsion of Ugandan Asians, 7,000 Ismaili Muslims fled and were brought to Canada. In 1972, with the so-called "Africanization" of Uganda, approximately 50 000 Ugandan Asians were expelled. Approximately 7000 were invited to settle in Canada; however, only a limited number accepted the offer, and the 2006 census reported 3300 people of Ugandan origin in Canada.
- **1976-1977:** 2100 "returnees" (white and coloured Portuguese) from the newly independent territories of Angola and Mozambique were admitted into Canada, even though they did not qualify as genuine refugees since they held Portuguese passports.
- **1996:** the immigrant population from South Africa was 13 950, and by 2006 the population had almost doubled (25 855). South Africans include a large number of English-speaking British and Jewish people, and small groups of Afrikaners (Dutch-French Huguenot), coloureds (mixed descent), Asian Indians and black Africans.
- **2016-2017:** Between January and August, 13,211 asylum seekers have entered Canada through irregular border crossings, the vast majority in Quebec. More than 50,000 victims of Haiti's 2010 earthquake have been living in the U.S. under "temporary protected status" for the past seven years.

Refugee Integration Services

In Alberta there are more than 1,400 programs and services designed to help refugees settle and integrate into their new communities.

Examples of organizations you may have heard of are:

1. *Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers: EMCN provides the supports needed for successful settlement and integration into social, economical, cultural and political life in Canada. Some of the services offered are EMCN offers mental health consultations or referrals for individual, family or couple counselling.*⁸

2. *Catholic Social Services: For more than fifty years, CSS has welcomed immigrants and refugees to Alberta. They clarify forms and applications, connect newcomers with cultural or faith communities, and refer to other programs and services. This service is free and provided one-to-one in multiple languages.*⁹

3. *Edmonton Immigrant Services Association: EISA runs a number of programs for refugees, newcomers and first generation Canadians. They focus on Integration, Settlement, Adaptation and Education. It was founded by a group of five individuals on December 16, 1976.*¹⁰

Refugee Status in Canada

The federal government has two different streams for people to apply for refugee status: the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program and the In-Canada Asylum Program.

Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program

Refugees who come to Canada have left their homes, and in many cases they have had to live in refugee camps for many years. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), along with private sponsors, identifies refugees for resettlement. Private sponsors across the country also help resettle refugees to Canada. Some do this on an ongoing basis. They have signed sponsorship agreements with the Government of Canada to help support refugees. These groups are known as Sponsorship Agreement Holders.

In-Canada Asylum Program

The asylum program works to provide refugee protection to people in Canada who have a well-founded fear of persecution or are at risk of torture, or cruel or unusual punishment, in their home countries.

References

1. (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/africans/>)
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