



Our home and native land: resources about Canada for young adults

By Anna Bustin

Photos by Kate Bustin

Canada is a diverse and culturally rich country, with a landscape as varied as the people who inhabit it. The following list reflects some of that diversity, while providing readers with stories and people that made our nation what it is today. Tragedy, war, ghosts, and, of course, hockey, these resources help to inspire national pride in the young adults that read them.

Blizzard of Glass: The Halifax Explosion of 1917, by Sally M. Walker (Henry Holt & Co., 2011)
Ages 10-14

On December 6, 1917, two ships collided in the Halifax Harbor, one of which was carrying enough ammunition to destroy the city...which is exactly what happened. Walker follows the stories of several families on the day of the explosion, detailing the events leading up to it, the devastation that followed, and the blizzard that buried the city, using pictures and narration to bring the disaster back to life. This book is just as interesting to those who had not heard of the explosion as it is to

those who grew up in Halifax; it is highly engaging and draws the reader in well.

The First Nations Series for Young Readers: Teacher Resource, by Shawntelle Nesbit (Second Story Press, 2011)
Ages 10-16

Although this guide was designed specifically to go along with *The First Nations Series for Young Adults*, the lessons and activities devised by the guide can be used with any primary source. It gives lessons on holistic living, respect, and community, and encourages research, writing, and reflection. This is a highly useful resource for teachers to use for grades 4-10.

Canadian Geographic (Magazine, since 1930)
Ages 12+

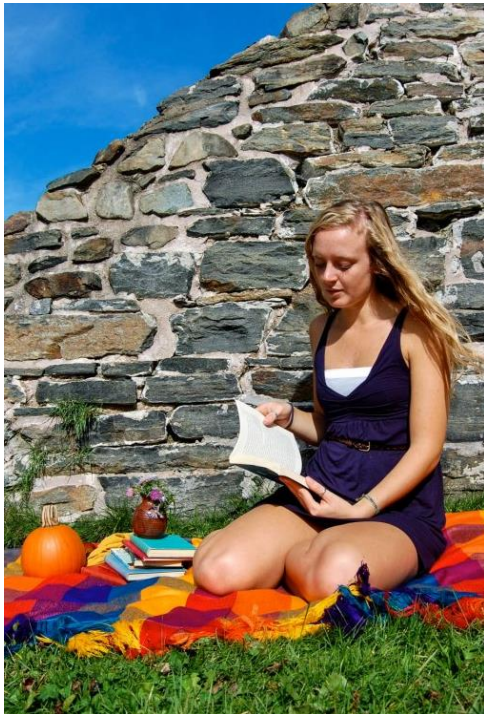
The beauty and breadth of Canada as a nation is celebrated in glorious colour through photos in this magazine. The articles cover a range of topics, including geography, politics, clear-cutting, and pollution. Although some of the articles are for an older audience, the magazine is still a very useful resource for bringing these issues to teenage attention, and the photos can be appreciated by all ages.

I am Canada, by Hugh Brewster & John Wilson, et al. (Book Series: Scholastic Canada, 2011-)
Ages 8+
Historical fiction, these fictionalized first-hand accounts of Canada's past bring events like World War I & II and the Titanic to life again. These books are gripping page-turners, but also depict horrific (though historically accurate) scenes that are not suitable for younger readers – some are recommended for ages 8+, but the age level varies with each book. The series does an

excellent job of engaging the reader in the excitement and danger of Canada's history.

Canada's Wars: An Illustrated History, by Jonathan Webb (Scholastic Canada/Madison Press, 2010)
Ages 13+

Beginning with the Boer War and going right up to Afghanistan, *Canada's Wars* is an in-depth account of Canada's involvement in wars. Webb explains how Canada came to be involved in each war and the role we played in it. The illustrations (both black and white and color) are bountiful yet carefully selected (although it could use some maps), and they will stay with you even if the war stories don't.



Canada: A People's History, by Don Quinlan (Book Series: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 2003)
Ages 13-16

Companions to the CBC series *Canada: A People's History*, these books are an excellent way to expand on the documentaries. Each volume is filled with

illustrations, maps, activities, and web-links. These books are of particular use to teachers using the CBC series as a teaching tool in the classroom. *Rebellions, Explorers and Pathfinders*, and *Confederation* are three examples that Quinlan expands on.

Wayne Gretzky's Ghost: And Other Tales From a Lifetime in Hockey, by Roy MacGregor (Random House Canada, 2011)
Ages 14+

Exciting and gripping true stories from both on and off the ice, this is a collection of Roy MacGregor's best hockey writing. Including stories of hockey's greats from yesterday and today, McGregor's writing is a page-turner in the hands of any true Canadian hockey fan.

The Quest Library, by various award-winning authors (Book Series: XYZ Publishing, 2001)
Ages 15+

The Quest Library is a series of thirty-three biographies, each written by a prominent, award-winning author, about the men and women who left an imprint on Canadian history. William Lyon Mackenzie King, Emily Carr, Samuel de Champlain, John Diefenbaker, and Glen Gould are just a few of the lives examined in this in-depth series. Through the principal character's story, various aspects of Canadian life in their time is explored, including politics and where Canada fit with the rest of the world. Black and white photos and illustrations make the stories more compelling. These books would be of particular interest to teens who enjoy politics, but the variety of figures featured in the series make the biographies appeal towards other interests as well.

Canada's Haunted Coast: True Ghost Stories of the Maritimes, by Vernon Oickle (Lone Pine Publishing, 2008)
Ages 16+

An empty closet in a New Brunswick farmhouse produced thumping noises. A buried treasure in PEI has ghastly guards. An inn in Halifax is haunted by the founding father it was named after. These are just some of the Maritime ghost stories to be found in Vernon Oickle's collection of beloved but disturbing tales that will keep you up at night.