

Sample Synthesis Essay
Reading Time: 15 minutes
Suggested Writing Time: 40 minutes

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources.

This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction

The United States has had a powerful influence on Canadian society since Confederation. But just what is this influence and how has it affected the citizens of each country? Is it a mutual give-and-take, or does one side exert more influence than the other? Is it a relationship in need of analysis and change?

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that the United States has had a positive influence on the Canadian identity.**

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.; titles are included for your convenience.

Source A (Macdougall)

Source B (Molson)

Source C (Hamou)

Source D (Koffel)

Source E (Hood)

Source F (Comic)

Source A

Macdougall, Jane. "Canadians and Americans: We're as Similar as Coke AndÂ Pepsi." *National Post Life Canadians and Americans Were as Similar as Coke AndPepsi Comments*. The National Post, 29 Sept. 2012.

The following passage is excerpted from an article by a Canadian writer describing her experience in the United States.

Several years ago, my kids and I got stuck in a legendary ice storm that closed pretty much all north eastern airports. When we landed at JFK, passengers — Americans — were verbally assaulting the flight crew for their role in the foul weather.

We were connecting through to Toronto. At the gate for this next leg of our flight, there was a politely co-operative group of passengers — largely Canadians — quietly responding to grim flight information updates. It put proof to the joke that a solo Canadian would form an orderly queue of one.

As an expat happily living in the U.S., I was constantly measuring the differences between the countries. I made a point of highlighting to the kids this display of Canadian conduct in the face of adversity. This, I told them, is who you are. Don't forget it.

I'm going to hazard that the U.S. is more regional than Canada. We may have Quebec, but Vermont is a distinct society not easily confused with Nevada. Beyond the currency and football, there is little that all states share. If you go to Utah, don't take a traveller coffee cup. Seattle, however, is probably the most caffeinated place on Earth. A particularly chipper clerk at a Nashville shoe store, upon hearing my accent, remarked, "Y'all not from around here, are you?" and gave me the best personalized service of my life. In New York, while at a checkout desk, mid-purchase, I changed my mind on buying something and the clerk told me there would be a 10% restocking charge. I reminded her that I had yet to actually take possession of the item, that the goods were still in their inventory. I'm pretty sure her hand felt under the counter for the concealed weapon. Yes, there's no way you could confuse Nashville for New York.

But you've got to hand it to Americans when it comes to geography. Excluding the narrow world view that their baseball championship implies, most Americans can tell you the flower and capital of each state. My experience with the bloom of Canadian youth has shown me that most Canadian schoolkids think the capital of Saskatchewan is "S."

Source B

Molson Canadian Beer. "I am Canadian Rant." *Maclaren Lintas and then MacLaren McCann*. ©2000.

The following is a "rant"/poem used in Molson Beer commercials.

Hey,
I'm not a lumber jack
Or a fur trader
And I don't live in an igloo
Or eat blubber
Or own a dog sled
And I don't know
Jimmy, Jally or Suzie from Canada
Although I'm sure they're really really nice
I have a Prime Minister not a President
I speak English and French not American
And I pronounce it about not "a-boot"
I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack I believe in peackkeeping not policing
Diversity not assimilation
And that the beaver is a truley proud and noble animal
A toque is a hat a chesterfield is a couch
And it is prnounced "zed" not "zee" "zed"!
Canada is the 2nd largest landmass!
The 1st nation in hockey!
And the best part of North America!
My name is Joe and I am Canadian!

Source C

Hamou, Pat. "America and Canada: One Helluva Country." *Utne Reader*. The Best of Alternative Press, Sept.-Oct. 2010. Web

The following passage is excerpted from a weekly literary and cultural magazine.

Some things are meant to be united as one, like milk and cookies, or cream pie and the face of a sad clown, or—Canada and the United States? Les Horswill concludes as much in the Canadian culture quarterly *Maisonneuve* (Winter 2009), arguing that the “Canada-U.S. border blinkers our thinking, even when we believe we’re thinking big.” He proposes that Canada form a greater North American federation, with Washington, D.C., as the capital, Canadians eligible to run for office (including president), and congressional representation extended northward.

The border between the two countries, Horswill argues, simply sets artificial limits. “Which is more ambitious,” he asks, “a Canada-wide electricity grid, or one that seamlessly integrates adjoining regions of the entire continent?” Additionally, the Toronto-based author says, the national boundaries separate one natural environment into two artificially distinct ones. How can we legislate well on issues like climate change in North America when there is no such thing as broad-based North American legislation?

Horswill envisions federation as an economic boon to Canada, since the “strength of the American economy and the global trading system it supports, not the Loonie, have been central to the growth of [Canada’s] resource exports.” Money saved by abandoning a meaningless border could also contribute to the Canadian and U.S. economic systems, removing the need for free trade negotiations and reinforcing regional financial ties that already exist. And perhaps Canada’s stance on issues like same-sex marriage and government intervention in health care could nudge North America in a progressive direction.

If none of this sounds particularly radical, perhaps the time has come to swap maple syrup recipes.

Source D

Koffell, Ben. "'It's Canada! It's Not the Same Thing.' | The Cornell Daily Sun." *'It's Canada! It's Not the Same Thing.'* / *The Cornell Daily Sun*. The Cornell Daily Sun, 27 Sept. 2011.

The following passage describes an American's analysis of the difference between Canada and the United States.

When I was about seven years old I visited Ontario and Québec with my family, and I remember asking my parents why it looked the same. It's a different color on the map, there's a different flag, but everything was strangely familiar. I also thought that there would be something very different about Canadian people, but they all talked, drove and acted like everyone else I knew back home. I think I asked my mom something like, "Why don't these people just live in the U.S.?"

I was seven, cut me some slack.

The truth is that objectively, Canada and the U.S. aren't that different. They share the same gigantic landmass, have similar economies, similar levels of development, similar patterns of urbanization and similar literacy rates. Both countries have long histories of immigration (although the Canadians think about that multiculturalism in a different way), both share a British colonial past and both share English as the dominant language. This is all in addition to 5,525 miles of shared land border.

Now all you Canadians out there, don't get your beaver tails in a tussle. Sure, I get it; there are plenty of differences. You're officially bilingual, you have a parliament, the Queen is your sovereign, it's kilometers and not miles, colours and not colors, and the whole socialist-government-free-healthcare-and-no-guns-thing seems to work out well for you guys.

In relative terms they're not *that* different. During the War of 1812 the U.S. Government couldn't even distinguish between the two. The army built a fort in Lake Champlain and then realized they had built it inside of Canada. Measure twice, cut once. The Canadians/British did burn the White House in 1814, though. A bit much, if you ask me. But being Canadian, they probably said sorry.

Source E

Hood, Duncan. "Special Canada Day Report: How Canada Stole the American Dream." Macleans.ca - Canada - Features. *Macleans.ca - Canada - Features*. Macleans Magazine, 25 June 2008. Web.

The following passage is excerpted from the central Canadian magazine.

To be an American is to be the best. Every American believes this. Their sports champions are not U.S. champions, they're world champions. Their corporations aren't the largest in the States, they're the largest on the planet. Their armies don't defend just America, they defend freedom.

Like the perpetual little brother, Canadians have always lived in the shadow of our American neighbours. We mock them for their uncultured ways, their brash talk and their insularity, but it's always been the thin laughter of the insecure. After all, says University of Lethbridge sociologist Reginald Bibby, a leading tracker of social trends, "Americans grow up with the sincere belief that their nation is a nation that is unique and special, literally called by something greater to be blessed and to be a blessing to people around the globe." Canadians can't compete with that.

But it turns out that while they've been out conquering the world, here in Canada we've been quietly working away at building better lives. While they've been pursuing happiness, we've been achieving it.

How do we know? You just have to look at the numbers. For our Canada Day special issue this year, Maclean's compared Canadians and Americans in every facet of our lives. We scoured census reports, polls, surveys, scientific studies, policy papers and consumer databases. We looked at who lives longer, who works more, who spends more time with friends, who travels more and who has more sex. We even found out who eats more vegetables. After digging through the data, here's what we found: the staid, underpaid Canadian is dead. Believe it or not, we now have more wealth than Americans, even though we work shorter hours. We drink more often, but we live longer and have fewer diseases. We have more sex, more sex partners and we're more adventurous in bed, but we have fewer teen pregnancies and fewer sexually transmitted diseases. We spend more time with family and friends, and more time exploring the world. Even in crime we come out ahead: we're just as prone to break the law, but when we do it, we don't get shot. Most of the time, we don't even go to jail.

The data shows that it's the Canadians who are living it up, while Americans toil away, working longer hours to pay their mounting bills.

Source F

Artist, Original. "Free Healthcare Cartoons and Comics." *Free Healthcare Cartoons and Comics*. Cartoon Stock, 2010. Web

The following is a cartoon assessing the nature of health care in Canada and the United States.

