

OPINION

SHOULD THE U.S. & CANADA MERGE?

JOURNALIST
DIANE FRANCIS
ARGUES THAT IT
WOULD CREATE
AN UNSTOPPABLE
NORTH AMERICAN
SUPERPOWER!

INTRODUCING
CAPTAIN
AMERI-CAN!





Unprotected: Canada has 126,000 miles of coastline and just 33 ships in its navy. The U.S. could help defend it.

Unquenched: The U.S. is prone to droughts and Canada has 20 percent of the world's water.

HAWAII
Hawaii is not drawn to scale or placed in its proper geographic position.

Ameri-Canada?
If Canada and the U.S. merged, the resulting mega-nation— at 7.6 million square miles— would be the biggest on earth, larger than Russia by a million square miles.

Undeveloped: Much of Canada is virtually untouched by humans. The U.S. could provide money and workers to develop the land, creating millions of jobs.

When Canadians travel, they often pin maple-leaf flags to their backpacks so they won't be mistaken for Americans.

Americans, on the other hand, are often shocked to learn that many of their favorite "American" celebrities—Justin Bieber, Ryan Gosling, and Avril Lavigne, to name just a few—are actually Canadian.

Perhaps we seem so alike because we get along so well. We're both multicultural and live in nations based on the same principles of democracy, free enterprise, and the rule of law. No two countries in the world are as integrated, economically and socially, as the U.S. and Canada. We share geography, values, and the longest unprotected border—5,525 miles long—in the world. So why not share a government?

Merging Canada and the U.S. into one massive country wouldn't just create the greatest Olympic hockey team in history. It would solve the biggest problems that each nation faces: America's declining living standards and Canada's difficulty developing and protecting its huge landmass—a problem that stems from not having enough workers, capital, technology, and military might.

It may sound radical. It would indeed be the boldest redrawing of the North American map since Thomas Jefferson purchased the

Louisiana Territory from Napoleon in 1803 and doubled the size of the young United States. But considering the threats both nations will confront if they continue on separately, radical may be the best solution.

The U.S. and Canada face problems that have been brewing for decades, but two recent events were especially damaging: the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S. and the 2008 financial crisis, both of which hurt the economies of both countries. Emerging nations like China and India, however, didn't skip a beat, and their economies, driven by their huge populations, are increasingly threatening America's economic supremacy.

We already share values, economics, and a 5,525-mile-long border.

Canada Loves the Super Bowl

Nations in distress must behave like businesses and think outside the box. The best option for the U.S. and Canada to survive the new economic reality would be to become one nation. It would be the Merger of the Century.

If you think about the extent to which the two countries have been economically and culturally integrating for years, the idea isn't as crazy as it first sounds.

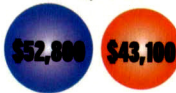
In a 2010 poll, Americans named Celine Dion as America's greatest singer, even though she's Canadian. In 2012, the biggest television-viewing event in

U.S. & Canada

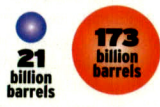
Population



Per Capita GDP



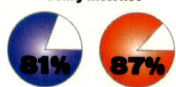
Crude Oil Reserves



Size of Military



Percentage of Households Using Internet



SOURCES: THE WORLD FACTBOOK 2014 (C.I.A.), GLOBAL FIREPOWER, AND BLOOMBERG

ILLUSTRATION BY EDDIE GUY MAP: JIM MCKINNON

Download a timeline of U.S.-Canada relations at www.upfrontmagazine.com

CANADIAN OR AMERICAN?



Ryan Reynolds

AGE: 38
FAMOUS FOR:
Playing the comic book
superhero in *Green Lantern*

 **OR** 



Leonardo DiCaprio

AGE: 40
FAMOUS FOR:
Starring in *Titanic*

 **OR** 

Rachel McAdams

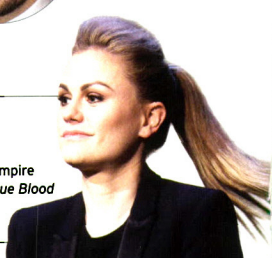
AGE: 35
FAMOUS FOR:
Leading role in the hit
romance *The Notebook*

 **OR** 

Anna Paquin

AGE: 32
FAMOUS FOR:
Falling in love with a vampire
on the HBO hit show *True Blood*

 **OR** 



Canada was the Super Bowl. More than 3 million Canadians—about 10 percent of the population—live full- or part-time in the U.S. and 1 million Americans live in Canada.

The two countries are already each other's biggest customers. In 2012, almost 74 percent of Canada's exports went to the U.S., and 19 percent of U.S. exports were sold to Canadians. Canada is the biggest export customer for 36 of the 50 states.

Border traffic has become enormous. In 2009, Canadians made more than 39 million trips to the U.S. and Americans made more than 20 million trips to Canada.

But the border is no longer working properly for either nation, and that can be traced to the 9/11 attacks. Since then, increased security has created bottlenecks at land-crossing points, as long lines of trucks wait to get goods to their destinations. The only foolproof way to fix the border is to eliminate it altogether.

There are many other reasons why a merger would be a good idea, starting with demographics. Economic success, says Canadian demographer David Foot, can be predicted based on the age of a country's population. The U.S., thanks to a higher birthrate and lots of immigrants,

has enough young people to sustain future growth, but Canada is aging rapidly. For Canada, that means a future of slow growth, labor shortages, and higher healthcare costs.

Likewise, the United States needs to recalibrate. The U.S. is the world's largest economy, and since World War II, the nation has prospered like no other, thanks to its plentiful resources and little competition. But those days may be over. The U.S. has been damaged by the 2008 financial crisis, a \$17.5 trillion national debt, and political gridlock in Washington.

The China Threat

Then there's the issue of China's growing influence in Canada, which threatens not just Canada's long-term security, but America's too. In 2012, Beijing pulled off its biggest foreign takeover anywhere in the world when Canada allowed the \$15 billion Chinese purchase of a large Canadian oil company.

China has targeted Canada for years because of its enormous deposits of oil sands (a mix of clay, sand, water, and

oil), its undeveloped resources, its access to the Arctic, and its vast landmass capable of supporting millions more people.

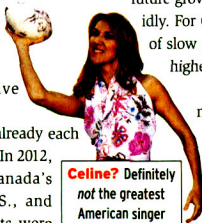
"Canada has been referred to in just as the 51st state due to its reliance on the U.S. as a key export market," says Philip Colmar of Macro Research Board, a consulting firm in Montreal. "However, it is becoming more accurate to regard Canada as another province of China."

If China succeeds in capturing control over much of Canada's resources and its Arctic region, the relationship between the U.S. and Canada would be disrupted, as would oil shipments.

Meanwhile, Canada has very little military strength with which to discourage interference or patrol its vast borders. Canada's active military personnel totals 68,250, or roughly the seating capacity of Candlestick Park in San Francisco, where the 49ers played football until last year.

So how would becoming one nation solve the problems that the U.S. and Canada face?

The merged nation would be an energy and economic powerhouse. It would have a larger economy than the European Union or the economies of Japan, China, Germany, and France



Celine? Definitely not the greatest American singer

The only foolproof way to fix the border is to eliminate it altogether.

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OPINION PAGES 8-11

Lexile level: 1185L

Should the U.S. & Canada Merge?

A journalist makes a case for the merger of the U.S. and Canada—a move that would create a nation with a colossal economy and vast resources.

Additional Resources www.upfrontmagazine.com

Print or project:

- Article Quiz (also on p. 9 of this Teacher's Guide)
- Neighboring Nations (also on p. 12 of this Teacher's Guide)

Download: A timeline of U.S.-Canada relations



Analyze the Article

1 Read: Have students read the article, marking the text to note key ideas or questions.

2 Discuss: Ask students to answer the following critical-thinking questions, citing evidence from the text:

- ▶ **According to the author, what problems might a merger help the United States and Canada solve?** (*America's declining living standards and difficulty creating jobs following the 2008 financial crisis, and Canada's untapped natural resources and inadequate military defenses*)
- ▶ **Why do you think the author says that it's increasingly accurate to view Canada as "another province of China"?** (*China has had its eye on Canada because of Canada's proximity to the Arctic, resources, oil sands,*

and vast landmass. China already purchased one large Canadian oil company in 2012.)

- ▶ **List some possible advantages of a U.S.-Canada union.** (*Such a union would be geographically massive and have a much larger economy than any other country. It would have enough natural resources to be self-sufficient and greater military might to defend itself.*)

3 Core Skill Practice
Noting similarities and differences between the U.S. and Canada can help students form their own views on the creation of a North American "supercountry." Print or project **Neighboring Nations** (on p. 12 of this Teacher's Guide) and have students complete the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two countries.

Extend & Assess

4 Writing Prompt
What do you think the author means when she writes that a nation in distress should "behave like a business"? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

5 Classroom Debate
Defend your view: Would you support a European Union-like merger between the U.S. and Canada? Why or why not?

6 Download
Explore the timeline of U.S.-Canada relations and discuss why the two nations have become so integrated.

Should the U.S. & Canada Merge?

Choose the best answer for each of the following questions.

- Which of these is NOT cited in the article as something the U.S. and Canada have in common?
 - many shared values
 - an economy based on free enterprise
 - a strong military force
 - a government built on democratic principles
- According to the author, nations in distress should
 - focus only on internal societal problems.
 - enlist the help of China and other emerging economies.
 - beef up border security.
 - behave like businesses.
- Which is true of Canada's population?
 - It is homogeneous, unlike the multicultural U.S. population.
 - It is one of the fastest-growing populations in the world.
 - It is aging rapidly.
 - none of the above
- What problem is occurring at the U.S.-Canada border, according to the article?
 - There is little security to reduce the risk of terrorism.
 - Canada is refusing to accept imports of most U.S.-made goods.
 - Illegal immigration from Canada to the U.S. is rampant.
 - An increase in border traffic has created bottlenecks.
- Which of these is NOT a reason that China has been seeking influence in Canada?
 - Canada's enormous labor force
 - Canada's access to the Arctic
 - Canada's undeveloped resources
 - Canada's oil sands
- The author of the article argues that Canada needs U.S. investment and expertise to
 - make its land suitable for farming.
 - tap into its mineral wealth.
 - recover from a prolonged drought.
 - reduce its skyrocketing unemployment rate.

IN-DEPTH QUESTIONS

- Why do you think much of Canada has been unexplored by humans?

- How do you think China's growing involvement in Canada could affect the U.S.?

Neighboring Nations

Use information from the article "Should the U.S. & Canada Merge?" to compare and contrast the two nations in the organizer below. Include facts about trade, their economies, demographics, resources, challenges, and more.

UNITED STATES

BOTH

CANADA

SYNTHESIZE: Based on your notes above, write a short essay arguing whether the U.S. and Canada are more alike or different.

QUIZ ► PAGE TG 8

- [b] frogs and toads
- [c] It was developed as a scientific concept in the early 1800s.
- [b] periods of rapid change on Earth
- [d] five
- [a] captive-breeding programs
- [b] Rhinos and pandas may exist only in zoos.

QUIZ ► PAGE TG 9

- [c] a strong military force
- [d] behave like businesses.
- [c] It is aging rapidly.
- [d] An increase in border traffic has created bottlenecks.
- [a] Canada's enormous labor force
- [b] tap into its mineral wealth.

QUIZ ► PAGE TG 10

- [c] a secular monarchy.
- [b] stable
- [c] students in Qom took to the streets to protest against the Shah.
- [a] Ruhollah Khomeini
- [c] admission of the Shah into the U.S.
- [b] ISIS is Sunni Muslim, while Iran is Shiite Muslim.

GRAPH EXERCISE

► PAGE TG 11

- [a] mammals and birds
- [c] 360
- [b] birds
- [d] vulnerable fish
- [b] the number of vulnerable species

CORRECTION:

In the Oct. 27 Teacher's Guide, the answer for question 3 of the Almanac quiz should have listed the Netherlands, instead of Germany, as one of the three European nations with the highest HDI.

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