Chapter 1: The Geography of Canada
Regional Geography

- There are six major physical regions in Canada
- Each has its own unique climate and vegetation
- As a result, different regions are better suited for certain economic activities than others
  - Ex. Fishing, farming, mining, logging, etc.
Appalachian Region

• A mountainous region on the east coast of North America

• Topography (shape of the land)
  – Low mountain ranges, rolling hills, river valleys

• Origins
  – Older mountain range worn down by glaciers and erosion
  – Layers of sedimentary rock helped create coal
  – Volcanic activity formed metallic minerals
Appalachian Region

• Vegetation
  – Heavily forested with mixed coniferous and deciduous trees

• Economic Activity
  – Mining
  – Logging
  – Fishing
  – Trade (sea ports)
Canadian Shield

- A very rocky region that stretches from the Arctic to Eastern Canada

- Topography
  - Flat, bare rock (oldest in North America)
  - Some lakes and wetlands

- Origins
  - Volcanic mountain range worn down by glaciers
  - Heat and pressure created many mineral deposits
Canadian Shield

• Vegetation
  – Mostly boreal forests
  – Thin soil makes it unsuitable for agriculture

• Economic Activity
  – Pulp and paper industry
  – Mining
    • copper, gold, lead, diamonds, nickel, platinum, etc.
Arctic

• The plains, lowlands, and mountains in northern Canada

• Topography
  – Very flat near the ocean, with some mountains

• Origins
  – Pressure from the Canadian Shield formed fold mountains
  – Climate change has led to less sea ice, more open water
Arctic

• Vegetation
  – Sparse vegetation
  – Small shrubs, mosses, lichens
  – Trees cannot grow on the tundra

• Economic Activity
  – Mining
  – Oil and natural gas drilling
  – Fishing
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St. Lawrence Lowlands

• Small region along St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes

• Topography
  – Flat plains, rolling hills, deep river valleys
  – Several escarpments (steep cliffs)

• Origins
  – Formed by receding ice sheets after Ice Age
  – Ice sheets pushed soil off Canadian Shield into Lowlands, then melted into lakes
St. Lawrence Lowlands

• Vegetation
  – Fertile soils
  – Mixed deciduous and coniferous forests

• Economic Activity
  – Farming
  – Logging
  – Manufacturing
  – Urban economic activity
Interior Plains

• Vast plains running up the centre of Canada and the United States

• Topography
  – Flat or gently rolling plains at various elevations

• Origins
  – Formed by soils deposited at edges of numerous rivers, turned into horizontal layers of sedimentary rock, helped create fossil fuels
Interior Plains

- Vegetation
  - Mostly prairie grasses
  - Used to have more forests

- Economic Activity
  - Farming (mostly wheat and grains)
  - Mining
  - Oil and natural gas drilling
Western Cordillera

- The parallel ranges of mountains and valleys that run along Western N. America
- Topography
  - Tall, rough mountain ranges divided by valleys
- Origins
  - Plate collision pushed up mountains, pushed down valleys (prone to earthquakes)
  - Glacier erosion left mountains “rocky”
Western Cordillera

• Vegetation
  – Very old and immense evergreens
  – Rain forest
  – Less vegetation higher up in the mountains

• Economic Activity
  – Logging
  – Fishing
  – Mining
  – Farming
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