



2020-21

Legislative International Education Study Group

TIMELINE OF KEY DATES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA / CANADA HISTORY

Excerpted from "British Columbia History Timeline," WorldAtlas, "British Columbia Historical Dates," Vancouver Island, and "Canada Profile – Timeline," BBC News

11th Century:

Norse explorers reach North America, establishing the first known European settlement in the Americas on Newfoundland Island.

1583:

Newfoundland becomes England's first overseas colony.

1627:

Company of New France established to govern "New France," France's North American colonies.

1670:

Hudson's Bay Company established by London traders. The company holds trade rights for regions whose rivers drain into the Hudson Bay, in northeastern Canada.

1740s:

Russians begin trading along the British Columbia coastline.

1741:

Danish explorer Vitus Bering explores British Columbia coastline.

1756:

Seven Years' War begins between New France and the larger and economically stronger British colonies.

1763:

Under the Treaty of Paris, Britain acquires all French colonies east of the Mississippi including New France, which becomes the colony of Quebec.

1778:

Captain James Cook of Great Britain reaches British Columbia.

1789:

Spanish build fort in Nootka Sound, on the western coast of Vancouver Island.

1790:

Treaty of Nootka Convention between Spain and Great Britain resolves overlapping claims to portions of the northwestern coast.

1794:

Spain concedes claims of exclusivity in the Pacific.

1846:

Oregon Treaty signed between the U.S. and Great Britain. Britain relinquishes claims to territory south of the 49th parallel.

1849:

Vancouver Island is proclaimed a Crown Colony.

1858:

The colony of British Columbia is formed.

1866:

An Imperial Act unites Vancouver Island and British Columbia, formerly separate colonies, with New Westminster as capital. The Rocky Mountains are designated British Columbia's eastern boundary.

1867:

British North America Act unites Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick in the Dominion of Canada.

1868:

Victoria is named the capital of British Columbia.

1870–1873:

In succession, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island become provinces of Canada.

1898:

Yukon Territory is given separate status.

1903:

Boundary between British Columbia and Alaska is established.

1905:

Alberta and Saskatchewan become provinces of Canada.

1923:

Chinese Immigration Act passed, ending Chinese immigration to Canada.

1931:

Statute of Westminster grants British dominions complete autonomy from Britain.

1947:

Canada is declared to be of equal status with Great Britain within the Commonwealth.

1949:

Canada becomes a founding member of NATO.

Newfoundland, until then a British dominion, becomes a province of Canada.

1980:

A referendum on the separation of Quebec is defeated.

1982:

The UK transfers final legal powers over Canada. The country adopts its new constitution, which includes a charter of rights.

1988:

Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement is signed, removing trade restrictions and increasing cross-border trade.

1991:

Canada, the U.S., and Mexico finalize the terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

1995:

A referendum in Quebec rejects independence by a margin of only 1 percent.

1999:

Territory of Nunavut is created in northern Canada. It is the first Canadian territory to have a majority-Indigenous population.

2008:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is launched as part of the Indigenous Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which aims to compensate survivors of residential schools and pursue a more equitable future for Indigenous people.¹

2016:

Canada signs a free trade agreement with the European Union.

2017:

The government says it will pay compensation to thousands of Indigenous people who were taken from their families as children to be brought up by primarily white middle-class families decades ago.

2018:

Canada, the U.S., and Mexico reach a new trade deal, the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA).

2020:

All Canadian provinces and territories declare states of emergency in response to the global coronavirus pandemic.

¹ <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/truth-and-reconciliation-commission>