



1857's Biggest Decision



Do you ever wonder how Ottawa became the capital of Canada?

In 1857 the politicians in the Canadas, made up of two provinces, Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec), realized that having a capital rotating through four cities wasn't very efficient, but they couldn't decide upon one place to become the capital. They decided to give the decision to Queen Victoria and threw in a wild card city as one of the choices, Ottawa! We now know that Queen Victoria chose Ottawa, but the method she used to choose it is full of rumours and silly stories!

Through this activity we will explore some of the ways she was rumoured to choose Ottawa as the new capital, along with other decision-making techniques. Step into the shoes of Queen Victoria and get ready to make 1857's biggest decision!

What you'll need:

- A printed copy of some of the resources below
- Something small & sticky that can be thrown (we suggest making a sticky tape ball or wetting paper towel)
- A cup, hat or bowl
- Scissors
- Pencil
- A six-sided die

Preparations:

- Print out the Capital City Toss poster, the sheet of city names, Capital City Polling sheet, and the final tally sheet.
- Find or make something sticky that can be thrown on the Capital City Toss poster. Something that leaves another kind of mark also works (i.e. colour, wet paper).
- Cut out each city name and mix them into a cup, hat or bowl.

Instructions:

Follow the instructions below for each of the six activities below to decide which city will become the official and permanent capital for the Provinces of Canada, which now make up Ontario and Quebec. Remember to keep track of which city is the winner of each activity and tally them up at the end. The city with the most wins becomes the new capital! If there is a tie you can decide how to break it, because, you're the Queen after all. Maybe you'll use Rock, Paper Scissors or just pick it yourself!

- 1) Set up the Capital City Toss poster and grab your sticky tape ball. Spin around 5 times and throw the ball at the poster. Whichever the ball lands on or closest is the winner of this round.
- 2) Read the pros and cons for each city becoming the capital. Make an informed decision. You should be able to explain why you chose that city using the information provided.
- 3) Shake the cup filled with the names of cities and pull one out. That city wins this round!
- 4) Look at the beautiful paintings of each of the cities. It is believed that Queen Victoria may have chosen Ottawa because of the beautiful watercolour paintings she had seen of it. Decide which painting of the capitals is your favourite and check the bottom of the page to find out which city you chose.
- 5) Roll a die. Each number has a corresponding city:
 - 1= Kingston
 - 2= Toronto
 - 3= Ottawa
 - 4= Quebec City
 - 5= Montreal
 - 6= Roll again
- 6) Pretend you are polling the citizens of the Canadas to decide on the new capital. Ask your friends and family by asking them which city should be the capital, it's even better if they are from different cities! Be sure to explain that we are back in 1857! Record the results in a tally on the provided sheet, then add them up. The city with the most votes wins this round!

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CAPITAL CITY TOSS



OTTAWA



KINGSTON



MONTREAL



QUEBEC CITY



TORONTO

OTTAWA

Pros

- Far enough from the American border to be defended.
- A city of both French and English speakers.
- Lots of space to develop and build.
- At the center of the Canadas at the time.
- An impressive train system.

Cons

- Not a fully English or French city.
- Will be expensive to build and develop.
- Had a very violent past between its residents due to the language divide.
- Had never been the capital before.



KINGSTON

Pros

- Easy for travel and trade due to location on the Great Lakes.
- Was the original capital of the Province of Canada.
- Good defense from Fort Henry.

Cons

- Close to the American border. The Canadas had been invaded by America in 1812.
- Mainly English speaking city.
- Formerly booming port for lumber and wheat trade is now bypassed due to railways.



TORONTO

Pros

- Easy for travel and trade due to location on the Great Lakes.
- Growing population due to British immigration.
- Railway connecting to New York and Montreal for passengers and trade.

Cons

- Difficult to defend due to its location on water shared with the American border.
- Mainly English speaking city.
- Believed to be located too far east to be a unifying capital.

MONTREAL

Pros

- Had over 44,000 inhabitants.
- Had a merchant class involved in import and export trade.
- The previous capital city the closest to being the most bilingual.

Cons

- Mostly French speaking city.
- Lots of conflict between English and French speaking residents.
- The capital was moved when rioters burned down Montreal's parliament building.

QUEBEC CITY

Pros

- The most recent capital, so the politicians would still be there.
- Good defense from The Citadel.
- Listed as a tourist destination as early as the 1820s.
- Had been the capital twice before.

Cons

- Mostly French speaking city.
- The city was viewed as the example French Canadian culture, which felt threatening or was undesirable to English Canadians.

Kingston	Montreal
Kingston	Montreal
Kingston	Montreal
Kingston	Quebec City
Ottawa	Toronto
Montreal	

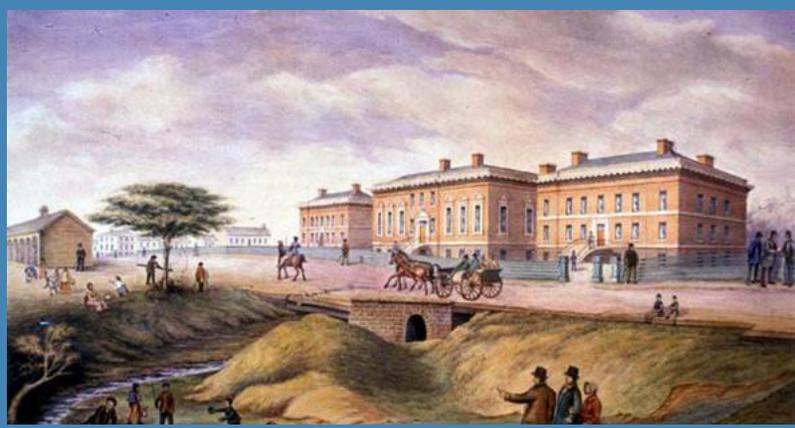


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Watercolour Wars

Look at the watercolour paintings of each city in the running for capital city and choose the one you think is most beautiful!

City of Toronto Culture Services



Bytown Museum Collection



Agnes Etherington Art Centre



Library and Archives Canada



Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. R9266-52 Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana Copyright: Expired



CAPITAL CITY POLLING



CITY OPTIONS

OTTAWA



KINGSTON



TORONTO



MONTREAL



QUEBEC CITY



WINNER



