

### Pause and Reflect

1. Make a list of three ways in which demography can be useful. Think of two more to add to the list.
2. Summarize three economic and three social characteristics typical of Generation X.
3. Give an example of how the size of the baby boom generation might have had an impact on the psyche of individual members of Generation X.
4. As a retailer, brainstorm a list of six products that might be popular with the average Gen-X consumer. Explain your choices.
5. Suppose that you had the opportunity to take a part-time job conducting consumer surveys of shoppers at a nearby shopping mall. Would you be interested in this type of work? How is this market-research job connected to the ideas discussed in this section?

## Section 5.2 Causes of the Baby Boom

### World War II and the Baby Boom

Between 1939 and 1945, Canada was a member of the Allied Powers fighting against the Axis countries, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Population increased slowly during these war years. "Total war" required the population to focus on defeating the Axis Powers, and as a result, a million Canadians went overseas with the armed forces. On the home front, just as many Canadians worked long hours at farm and factory jobs to produce food and weapons for the war effort. Government propaganda and news reports made war a grim reality in which many people put their plans for the future on hold. Marriage rates were also low during World War II, so during this time, Canada's population increased at a rate of just over 1 per cent per year. But, in 1945, Allied victory over the Nazis and the Japanese unleashed a pent-up demand for normal life in North America and elsewhere.

Anthropologists have studied the impacts of these returning soldiers on their communities and on Canada as a whole. They noted that many soldiers didn't wait long to resume their lives. About one

Canadian bachelor in five serving overseas came home with a European war bride and, in many cases, with children born abroad. Almost 50 000 women and their children followed servicemen back to Canada in 1945 and 1946. Other veterans returned to rekindle relationships that had been put on hold for several years. In both cases there was often disappointment and breakup caused by too much distance or too much time apart.

Often, Canadian wives and girlfriends found that soldiers had been psychologically and socially marked by their wartime experiences. To ease the transition into peacetime life, war vets were given first priority by those hiring for government jobs. Laws were also passed to allow veterans to return to their pre-war jobs, with military service counted toward their workplace seniority. Furthermore, veterans qualified for low-cost home mortgages and loans to upgrade their education.

Demobilization of the armed forces moved slowly, and often young men continued in the services until 1946 or 1947. They looked gallant in their decorated uniforms, an envied advantage when it came to meeting

### Key Concepts

war bride  
birth rate  
immigration  
population pyramid  
cohort



**Figure 5.4** The young Canadian woman in this photograph was married shortly after the war. "I was a government secretary in Ottawa. In the winter of 1945-46, my friends and I were enjoying a hay-ride, when Bob and some of his Air Force pals jumped onto the wagon. I was with somebody else that night, but that's how I met him. I was 18 years old, and he had just come back from Europe where he'd been a radio operator. We married in October 1946, and had our son the following summer and our daughter in 1950."

young women. Courtships were often short, resulting in marriage rates in Canada in 1946 that were almost double those of the pre-war era and still remain the highest in Canadian history. Fifty years later, in 1996, the social pages of newspapers across Canada were

filled with photographs of people celebrating their Golden Anniversary, including the woman in Figure 5.4.

Sociologists and psychologists have identified strong social forces that were at work in the post-war era. Marriage was considered the norm, and the young adults of the 1940s were "the most domestically oriented generation of the twentieth century" (Owram, 1996, p. 12). Some psychologists and sociologists reinforced the notion that marriage and family offered the best route to respectability and contentment. In fact, anyone who did not marry was considered suspect. Henry Bowman, author of many marriage manuals popular in the US and Canada at the time, claimed that failure to marry proved a range of personality problems such as immaturity, parental fixation, inferiority complex, or narcissism (being extremely self-centred).

In addition, sex outside marriage was socially condemned in this era; therefore, marriage was seen as a moral necessity. Marriage confirmed one's sexual identity, and society routinely saw the failure to marry as a confirmation of homosexuality (Owram, 1996, p. 15). Marriage, family, and home were the main personal goals of most young adults after World War II.

**Birth Rates and Births in Canada, 1921-1971**

Year	Birth Rate*	Live Births	Year	Birth Rate	Live Births
1921	29.3	265 000	1946	27.2	344 000
1926	24.7	240 000	1951	27.2	381 000
1931	23.2	247 000	1956	28.0	451 000
1936	20.3	227 000	1961	26.1	476 000
1941	22.4	263 000	1966	19.4	388 000
			1971	16.8	362 000

\*average number of births per 1000 people (both sexes, all ages) in the nation

**Figure 5.5** What effect did World War I (1914-1919) and World War II (1939-1945) have on the birth rate and Canada's population?

## Immigration and the Baby Boom

The end of World War II had a second important effect on demography. It marked the beginning of a rising tide of immigration to Canada, most of it from war-torn Europe. More than two million people came to start a new life in Canada between 1945 and 1960. At that time, Canadian immigration policy gave top priority to applicants from Britain and the Commonwealth.

Europeans and Americans were welcome too, continuing policies from the early twentieth century, which held that such people would be compatible with the prevailing climate and culture of Canada. Large numbers of immigrants came to Canada from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, and Ukraine. Most took work in Canada's booming mining frontier, on Prairie and Ontario farms, or in big-city construction and manufacturing jobs. Immigration policy in Canada was racist at this time. For example, in 1957, the peak immigration year, only about 2 per cent of all immigrants were accepted from Asia, Africa, and South America.

Immigration accelerated the baby boom in Canada. Crossing the ocean to begin a new life in a foreign country is generally more appealing to the young than to the old. Young people have less attachment to the "old world," particularly when they have seen it ravaged by war. In addition, there were few opportunities for young people in the Europe of 1945, but in Canada there was the promise of work, land, and a chance to build a life. Thus, the majority of post-war immigrants were less than 35 years of age—in the prime of their lives. Marriage, family, and a home were as important to them as to returning Canadian war veterans. Consequently, the average age of marriage in Canada fell steadily between 1941 and 1956. For women it dropped from 23.2 years in 1941 to 21.6 in 1956, while for men it went from 26.4 years

### Immigration to Canada, 1945-1960

Year	Immigrants	Year	Immigrants
1945	22 722	1953	168 868
1946	71 719	1954	154 227
1947	64 127	1955	109 946
1948	125 414	1956	164 857
1949	95 217	1957	282 164
1950	73 912	1958	124 851
1951	194 391	1959	106 928
1952	164 498	1960	104 111

Source: Statistics Canada, 1983. *Historical Statistics of Canada*.

Figure 5.6 Plot these data on a scattergraph and identify the general trend you see.

to 24.5. By marrying earlier, people tended to have more children since the women were married for a greater portion of their prime child-bearing years.

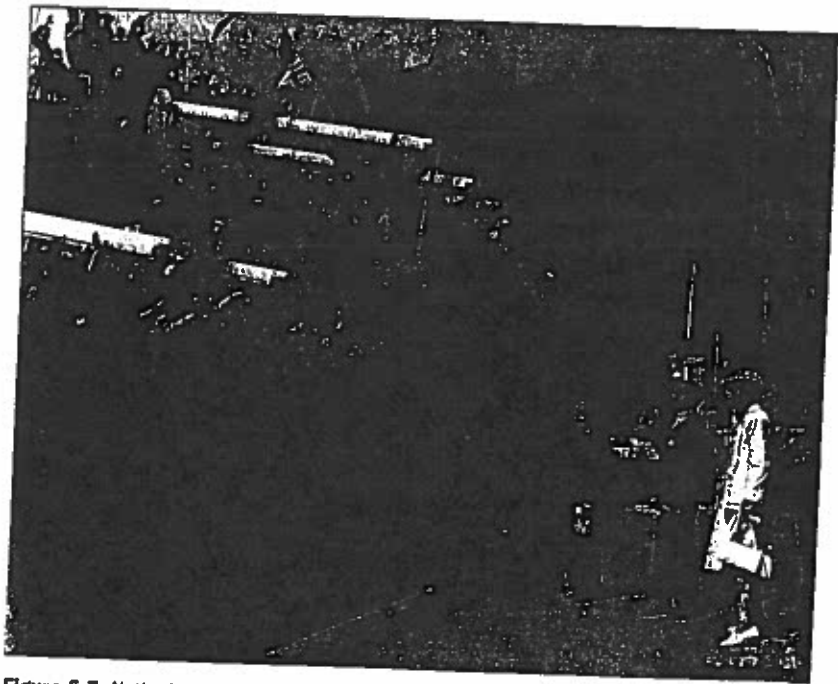


Figure 5.7 Netherlands Ambassador Dr. J. H. van Roijin and Mrs. van Roijin greet Dutch immigrants arriving by ship in Montreal in 1947.

[www.statcan.ca/english/kits/animat/pyone.html](http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/animat/pyone.html)

### WEB LINK

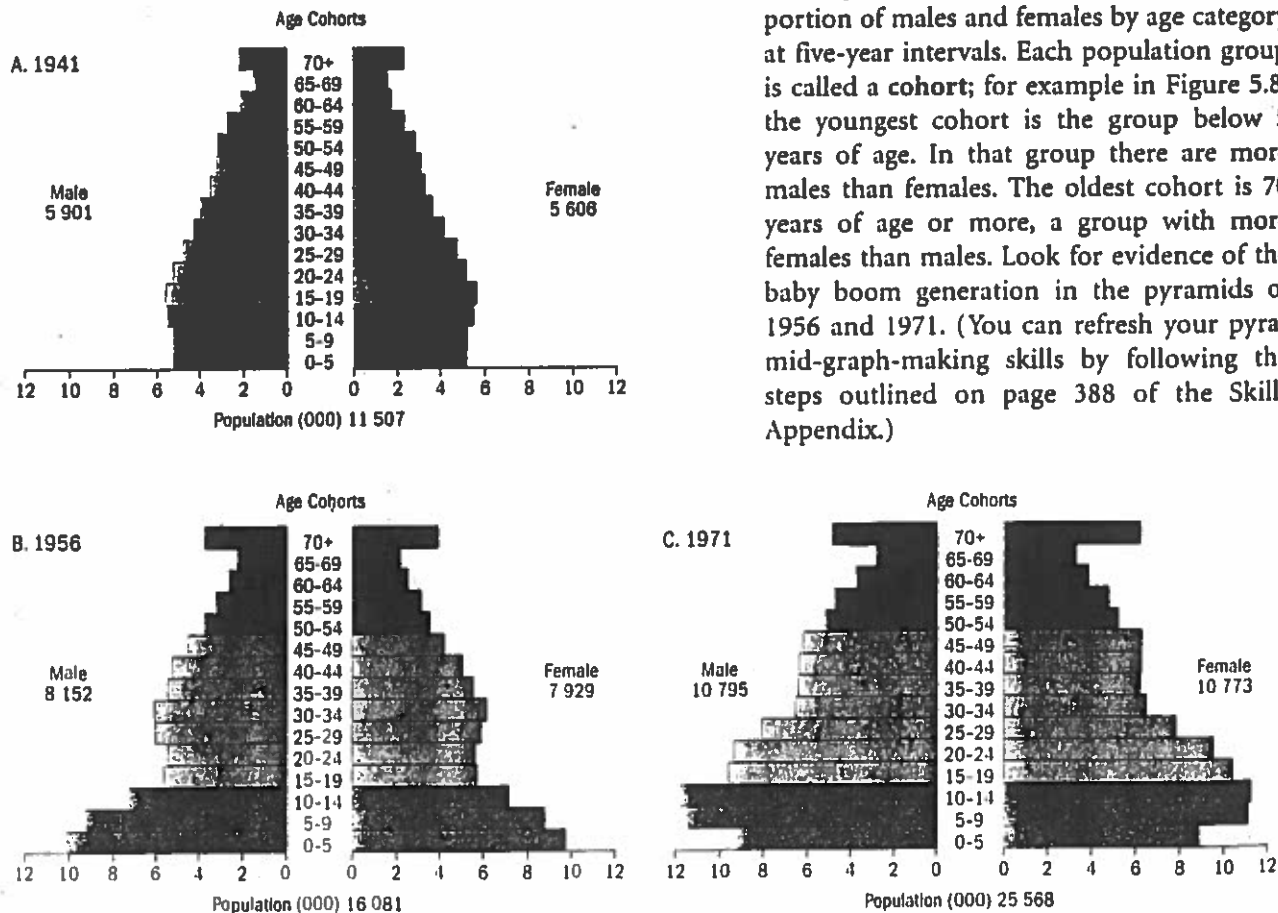
This excellent Statistics Canada Web site provides animated population pyramids for Canada and for every province and territory for the period 1971 to 2004 (projected). This will allow you to compare the baby boom and echo boom in different years and different regions of Canada. If the Web address does not connect you with the site, do a Web search using "Government of Canada" as a search string. Then follow the links to Statistics Canada.

## Population Pyramids

Photographs or videotape allow you to look back and see what you were like at different times in your life. You can see certain things about yourself that have changed and other characteristics that remain the same. Demographers use a special type of graph called a population pyramid to illustrate population patterns by age and sex. Examining a series of these pyramids from different years provides demographers with "snapshots" of the changing character of Canada's population.

Population pyramids compare the proportion of males and females by age category at five-year intervals. Each population group is called a cohort; for example in Figure 5.8, the youngest cohort is the group below 5 years of age. In that group there are more males than females. The oldest cohort is 70 years of age or more, a group with more females than males. Look for evidence of the baby boom generation in the pyramids of 1956 and 1971. (You can refresh your pyramid-graph-making skills by following the steps outlined on page 388 of the Skills Appendix.)

Population by Age and Sex, Canada



Source: Leacy, F.H. ed. 1983. *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Second Edition. Statistics Canada. Series A78-93.

**Figure 5.8** Population pyramids give us snapshots that show the growth and development of the post-war baby boom in Canada. The 1941 population graph looks like a triangular spruce tree, but by 1956, the tree has grown very wide in the bottom three cohorts. Fifteen years later, the end of the baby boom is signalled by the narrower base of the tree.

### Pause and Reflect

1. Suggest three difficulties war veterans would have had in readjusting to civilian life. How did Canada try to ease this transition?
2. Why were marriage rates high after World War II? How did this affect demography?
3. Explain how both immigration and societal values accelerated the baby boom.
4. Compare the population pyramids of 1941, 1956, and 1971 by identifying similarities and differences among them. Point out the following cohorts: pre-boomers, early boomers, Generation X.
5. A great many Canadian marriages from the 1940s and 1950s lasted for a long time. Develop a list of five good reasons that could be used to account for this.

## Section 5.3 Nurturing the Baby Boom

### Bringing Up the Boomers

Great changes in Canada after World War II affected how children were raised. Canada had become a vitally important source of natural resources and manufactured goods during the war, triggering an economic boom, which continued in peacetime. American companies invested almost \$12 billion in Canada between 1945 and 1960. The northern mining frontier expanded and Alberta oil wells gushed. New manufacturing plants and the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway created jobs in southern Ontario and Quebec. Canadians enjoyed greater prosperity than they had ever known. This prosperity changed not only the way babies were delivered and nurtured, but also the way the family functioned. The effects of economic factors in changing a society reflects the Cultural Materialist school of thought in anthropology, pioneered by Marvin Harris. (See page 14.)

#### Suburban Culture

The rapid population growth of the baby boom era contributed to a new suburban culture in Canada and the United States. There

had been very limited construction of new housing during both the Great Depression of the 1930s and wartime. As a result, there was a severe shortage of accommodation in the immediate post-war years, and many newly married couples had to live with their parents or in-laws for a time. Demand for housing triggered a tremendous construction boom, the evidence of which can be seen in most Canadian cities. Most of these new homes were built beyond the existing built-up or urban area, which explains the terms "suburban" and "suburbia."

Entire neighbourhoods were constructed quickly using a few basic floor plans for five- or six-room single-family bungalows and "storey-and-a-half" houses. Some suburbs reflected the latest principles of good urban planning, with curved streets to slow down traffic, and land set aside for central parks and schools. Others grew helter-skelter, with little provision for adequate services. For example, in the Toronto area there was so little co-ordination of police services between the city and its suburbs that, from 1949 to 1952, police could not catch the well-armed Boyd Gang, who fearlessly robbed at least 10 banks there.

#### Key Concepts

suburbia  
infant mortality rate  
nuclear family  
national debt  
authoritarian education  
progressive education

### Boomers' upbringing compared to previous generations'

- About four out of five front-end boomers were delivered in the hospital, compared to only one out of five of their parents. For late boomers, the ratio of hospital-born babies increased to nine out of ten. Medically assisted delivery helped to lower Canada's infant mortality rate.
- Baby formula and small prepared bottles of baby food often replaced the breast-feeding and mashed "adult food" of the previous generation. These commercial foods for babies and toddlers were advertised as the modern way to bring up happy, healthy children.
- Family Allowance benefits introduced across Canada in 1944 by the federal government provided families with a monthly "baby bonus" to help feed and clothe each child. This allowance helped to nurture the healthiest generation of children Canada had known.
- Some parents consulted books written by child-care specialists, such as American pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock, for advice on raising their children, instead of relying on the advice of relatives and friends as their own parents had done. The baby boom generation was often raised more permissively than their parents had been.
- Popular television programs, such as *Leave it to Beaver*, presented a stereotypical view of the happy, suburban, father-led family of the 1950s. While these programs did reflect the lifestyles of some middle-class families, they helped to shape the roles played by fathers, mothers, and children in many other homes.

## GROUNDBREAKERS

DR. BENJAMIN SPOCK, 1903-1998

Dr. Spock was a leading member of the Behaviourist school of thought in psychology, praised by many as the most influential child-care expert of the century, but condemned by others as "the father of permissiveness." His best-known book, *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1946), and its sequels, sold 50 million copies in 25 different languages. In this book, Spock urged parents to trust themselves, and not to constantly worry about spoiling their children. His critics claim that this advice backfired and created a self-centred generation. In fact, in the early 1970s, US Vice President Spiro Agnew accused Dr. Spock of corrupting the youth of America!

Dr. Spock's basic philosophy was to "respect children because they're human beings who deserve respect—they'll grow up to be better people." His books advised parents to let children develop and grow at their own pace, rather than according to the strict schedules and rules advocated by an earlier psychologist, Dr. John B. Watson. Today, most of Spock's advice seems perfectly



Figure 5.9 Dr. Benjamin Spock

reasonable; for example, babies should be fed when they're hungry, and they should not be toilet trained until they are toddlers, when they are developed enough to control their bodily functions. Children should be kissed and hugged by their parents. He believed that this sort of parental behaviour would nurture well-adjusted adults.

Later editions of his books emphasized that children must also respect their parents, and should not be allowed to be unco-operative and impolite. But, according to his critics, the damage had already been done. In his own defence, Dr. Spock claimed that it was the shift in societal values, not his advice, that was responsible

for any disrespect for elders and authority evident among some of the baby boomers and youth of today.

#### Questions

1. How was Dr. Spock's advice different from that of earlier psychologist John B. Watson?
2. Why have some critics opposed Dr. Spock's views? What is your opinion on the issue?

For some Canadians, owning a suburban home completed the security triangle, which they sought by early marriage and a growing family. Each suburban home was built with a driveway because the suburbs were at, or even beyond, the edge of the city, making the car a necessity for most families. This soon led to the development of the familiar features of suburban car-culture: fast-food restaurants, shopping plazas, and the now-obsolete drive-in movie theatres.

Since the suburbs contained so many young families, certain social patterns usually developed within them. After their work was done, women often met at one another's homes for coffee while their kids were at school and their husbands were at work. Some evenings there were adult card parties or bowling, and on the weekends there were organized sports for the kids. Such social organizations as Brownies and Guides were as popular for girls as Cubs and Scouts were for boys. Each weekend, 60 per cent of all Canadians attended religious services, and on Sunday, many frequently engaged in family visits or social activities, since provincial laws forbade shopping and most other commercial activity.

### A Child-Centred Universe

While many enjoyed the stability of suburban culture, others were critical. The words of a popular folk song written by American social activist Malvina Reynolds summarizes the distaste some had for suburban life. The song goes on to describe the sameness of the people who lived in these little boxes.

#### Little Boxes

*Little boxes on the hillside,  
Little boxes made of ticky-tacky  
Little boxes on the hillside,  
Little boxes all the same.  
There's a green one and a pink one  
And a blue one and a yellow one,  
And they're all made out of ticky-tacky,  
And they all look just the same.*

Source: Reynolds, Malvina. 1962.

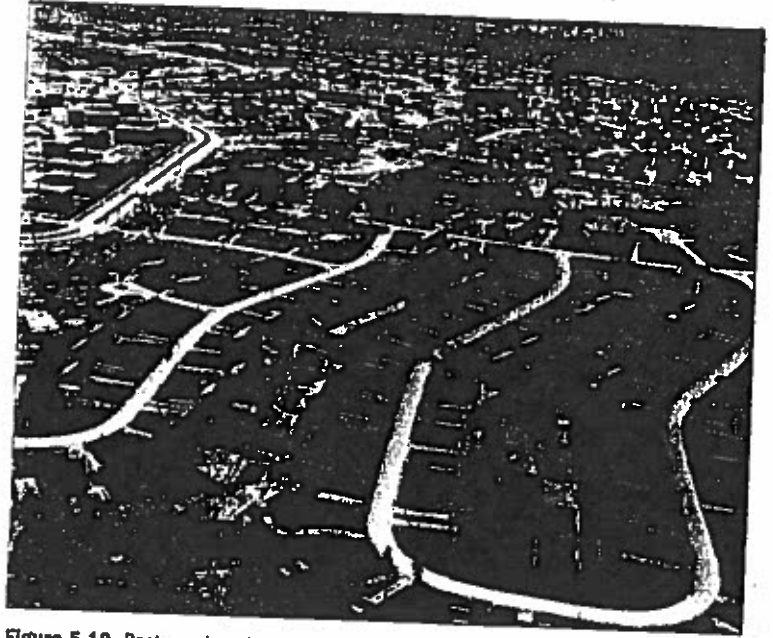


Figure 5.10 Post-war housing suburb. In your opinion what would be some of the advantages and disadvantages of growing up in such a community?

Two age groups did dominate the post-war suburb: children under 15, and young adults aged 25 to 44. In the 1961 Census of Canada, nearly half the population of some suburbs comprised children under 15 years of age, and in only a few suburbs was the over-55 population greater than 10 per cent. There weren't many teenagers yet, and grandparents lived somewhere else; generally, only the nuclear family of two parents and young children lived together. Author Doug Owsram describes the suburbs as an environment completely focused on children.

*What is most important is that the baby boomers lived in a world of children.... Their parents had moved into the suburbs in large part for the sake of the kids. There, as the baby boomers moved from the toddler years to childhood, they discovered a vast peer group. The absence of generational continuity only sharpened this sense of a child-centered universe.*

(Owsram, 1996, pp. 82-83)

## The Baby Boom Goes to School

It is fortunate that the Canadian economy was growing rapidly at the same time as its population, because the baby boom put great pressure on public institutions. New hospitals were built, or the delivery rooms and nursery wards of existing hospitals expanded to keep pace with the exploding population. During the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II, very few new schools had been built. But by 1952 and 1953, the first wave of the early boomers had arrived at school and the number of students increased every year. A boom in elementary-school construction began, followed by new secondary-school projects in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Then, by the mid- to late 1960s, universities were bursting at the seams. Ontario responded in three ways: by enlarging existing universities; by constructing new ones, such as Trent, York, and Brock; and by developing a province-wide system of community colleges. All levels of government borrowed heavily for these building projects. Today, Canadians are left with a sizeable **national debt**, which began to grow in the era after the war. The cost of borrowing to educate the baby boom generation is a part of that debt.

Not all the early boomers had the advantage of new schools; in fact, many endured very crowded older buildings, and, in some cases, a split school day with two different sets of students using the same schoolrooms. But most of the baby boom generation was educated quite differently than their parents and grandparents had been. Earlier generations had usually learned under a teacher-centred **authoritarian education**, in which they were expected to master a standard school program that was strongly focused on the "3 Rs": reading, writing, and arithmetic. Students were seen as empty vessels to be filled, all the while following a fairly strict code of behaviour.

However, by the 1950s, most Canadian schools outside of Quebec were applying the **progressive education** ideas of American philosopher and educator John Dewey, whose basic principles are still applied today. The new schooling was more child-centred, and teacher training emphasized that students were naturally eager to learn. The important thing was to develop lessons and activities that would keep them interested. Baby boomers were the first large group of students to experience an education system which, like the family of the day, focused on them.

### Pause and Reflect

1. What effects did each of the following have on the upbringing of many baby boomers?
  - a) television
  - b) Dr. Spock
  - c) government in Canada
  - d) the education system
2. Make a chart to summarize the best and the worst aspects of suburbia in the 1950s and 1960s.
3. How did the education of the baby boomers differ from that of previous generations?
4. Explain the following quote from this section: "...the baby boomers lived in a world of children...a child-centered universe."



## Section 5.4 Baby Boomers Transform Society

### Key Concepts

counterculture  
political activism  
Just Society  
sexual revolution  
the Pill  
materialism  
economic inflation  
recession

### The 1960s Counterculture

By the mid- to late 1960s, the front wave of this demographic group had reached their late-teenage years and had become not only very visible, but also highly vocal. To many, their manners were considered rude and their music too loud. Some people thought that their suburban parents had turned them into spoiled brats. Others believed that their Benjamin Spock–John Dewey upbringing had made the boomers into a self-centred crowd of long-haired rebels. Adults often worried about the attitude of a generation that didn't seem to follow the rules, or care much about people older than themselves. Certain popular songs of the day expressed this attitude quite clearly:

#### My Generation

- I. *People try to put us down  
Just because we get around.  
Things they do look awful cold.  
Hope I die before I get old.  
This is my generation.  
This is my generation, baby.*
- II. *Why don't you all fade away  
And don't try and dig what we all say.  
I'm not tryin' to cause a big sensation,  
Talkin' about my generation.  
This is my generation.  
This is my generation, baby.*

Words and music by Peter Townsend. © 1965  
(Renewed) Fabulous Music Ltd. London, England.

You weren't alive in the 1960s, but you probably have some images of it in your mind. People often think of hippies, drugs, The Beatles, Vietnam, "sit-in" demonstrations, peace symbols, and other pictures of this colourful era between 1964 and 1972. Half the people of Canada were not yet legally adults,

and they were strongly influenced by television and the music industry. They were fully aware of events in the United States; for example, television showed the magical world of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury hippie district, while radio delivered its music: Jim Morrison and the Doors, the Grateful Dead, and Joni Mitchell. In 1969, half a million people gathered in upstate New York to be part of Woodstock, a rock concert immortalized in a movie that millions of other baby boomers flocked to see.

Much of the music of the era focused on protest and rebellion against authority in general, and the Vietnam war in particular. Freer attitudes toward sex and drugs were also important themes. The media projected images of a new counterculture, in which many young people expressed values and behaviours that conflicted with society's norms. Members of this counterculture revelled in the shock value of pushing personal freedoms well beyond societal boundaries.

The appearance of a counterculture exaggerated the actual extent of the real thing. While some Canadian baby boomers did travel to Haight-Ashbury, Woodstock, and to the large anti-Vietnam war protests, most simply adopted the look and the sound of the times. There were campus demonstrations and "sit-ins" at some Canadian universities, and small communities of hippies in major cities. Sexual promiscuity and the use of illegal drugs certainly did increase. But it would be wrong to directly link more than a minority of young Canadians with this lifestyle. The following quote from an early Canadian boomer suggests that some were adventurous, but still rather conventional, in spite of their clothing, long hair, and musical tastes:

*A lot of Canadian kids went to Montreal*

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that summer of 1967 to see Expo—the world's fair. It was Canada's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party and it seemed like the whole country was celebrating. I went by train with three of my friends. We felt "free," enjoying the city, the Exposition, and the lower drinking age in Quebec. We met some girls there from Toronto and stayed in the city until we ran out of money. So we sold our return tickets and hitch-hiked home. That's one thing I remember when I think about the '60s.

Some young Canadians actively participated in more positive aspects of the counter-culture by working to change society through political activism. Besides student anti-war and anti-nuclear protests, activism focused on environmental issues and on the rights of women and Aboriginal people. For example, in 1968, 23-year-old Harold Cardinal was elected to lead the Indian Association of Alberta, a position he held for almost a decade. Cardinal initiated many programs to affirm Aboriginal culture, traditions, and religion, and he wrote two important books that attacked the policies of the Canadian government. At the same time, thousands of young people volunteered for low-paid service with the ambitious federal-government-sponsored project, the Company of Young Canadians (CYC). Established in 1966, the CYC aimed to develop social and economic programs in poor neighbourhoods and communities across the country. It gave idealistic young people in the late 1960s a chance to work for change. Equally popular was CUSO, Canadian University Students Overseas, a program of volunteer international service that was active in many developing nations.

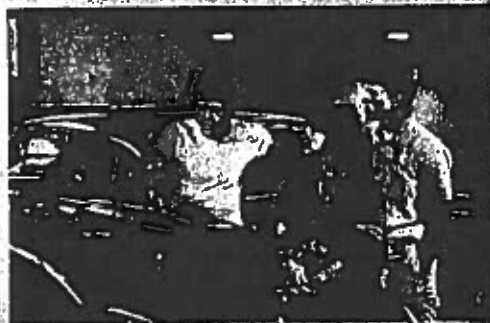
**Figure 5.17** As justice minister, Trudeau had showed that he favoured reform by introducing changes to old laws concerning divorce, abortion, and homosexuality. As prime minister, he promoted what he called the "Just Society," in which individual freedoms were very important.

## FILM SOCIETY

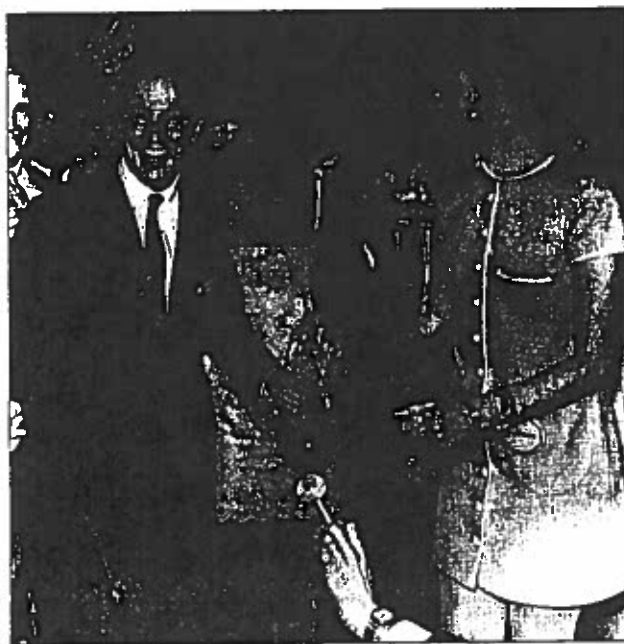
Title: *American Graffiti* (1973)

Rating: PG

Director: George Lucas



This film has become a video classic that illustrates adolescence in the later period of the baby boom. Lighthearted entertainment with an excellent rock 'n' roll soundtrack, *American Graffiti* is set in the California "car culture" of the early 1960s. The cast includes Ron Howard, Richard Dreyfuss, and Peter Onorati.



### The Sexual Revolution

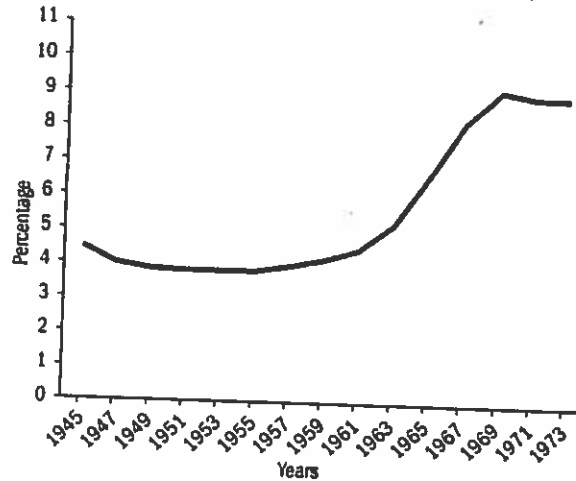
The 1960s brought with it the sexual revolution, a time during which behaviour and morals in North America began to change quite dramatically. For example, graph 5.18 of children born to all unmarried mothers, at that time called "illegitimate births," shows a sharp rise throughout the decade. This could be interpreted in two different ways: either more couples were living together instead of becoming legally married, or more people were engaging in premarital sex. The answer is probably a combination of both explanations. Figure 5.19 indicates a steady rise in Canadian marriage rates from the mid-1960s onward, representing the weddings of the front-end boomers. But a comparison of the two graphs indicates that births outside of marriage were increasing at a faster rate. Canadians were influenced by the growing emphasis on personal and sexual freedom that was an important part of the baby boom era.

Technology played an important part in the sexual revolution through the development of the birth control pill ("the Pill"), which was made widely available at a relatively low price, through doctor's prescription. Although contraceptive devices had long been available at drugstore counters without a prescription, the birth control pill was very successful after its introduction in 1961. In fact, it is part of the reason for the collapse of the baby boom.

Although there was a surge in the number of front-end boomers either marrying or living together between 1965 and 1975, the overall birth rate sagged sharply during these years. For one thing, female boomers were the best-educated Canadian women up to that time, and more and more young women chose to continue their careers after marriage. In addition, the birth control pill was the most popular means used by front-end boomers to delay child-bearing so that women could work outside the home. Young married

women, baby boomers aged 15 to 24 in 1971, were having far fewer children than married women the same age had had 10 years earlier. The baby boom was over. The next generation, called the echo boom, wouldn't appear on demographic graphs until about 1980, when a great number of baby boomers began to have their own families.

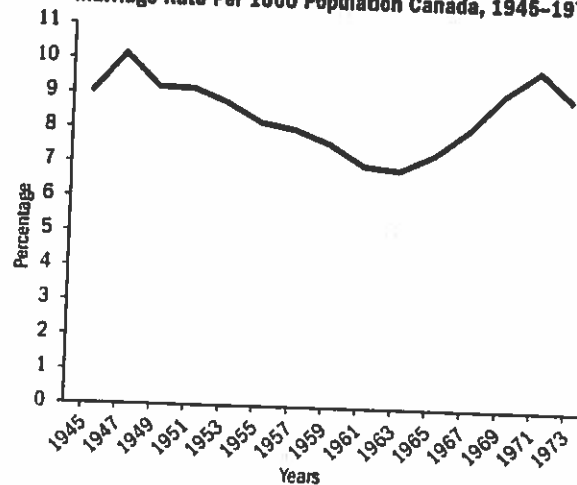
Percentage of Live Births Termed "Illegitimate," Canada, 1945-1973



Source: Historical Statistics of Canada, 1983, Series B1-B14.

Figure 5.18 Identify the period called the "Sexual Revolution."

Marriage Rate Per 1000 Population Canada, 1946-1973



Source: Historical Statistics of Canada, 1983, Series B75-B1.

Figure 5.19 Identify the point on the graph that represents the leading edge of the baby boomers reaching the age of marriage.

### Pause and Reflect

1. What is a counterculture? How important were the media in spreading the 1960s counterculture? Give examples.
2. Explain this line from the chapter: "The *appearance* of a counterculture exaggerated the actual extent of the real thing."
3. Draw two important conclusions from Figure 5.18. Relate them to the "sexual revolution" of the late 1960s and early 1970s.
4. Brainstorm a list of factors that caused the collapse of the baby boom. Then, use your own judgment to rank them in order downward from the most important. Explain reasons for your two top rankings.

## Section 5.5 The Echo Boom (1980–1995)

### Key Concepts

echo boom

Generation Y

millennium kids

Generation Z

"six-pocket"  
phenomenon

reality television

### The Echo Effect

The baby boom generation has had a great social and economic impact on the second half of the twentieth century. But their biggest effect of all will probably be the generation that follows them—their children. There were so many baby boomers born between 1946 and 1966 that they created a demographic echo that will remain long after the baby boom is gone. The so-called **echo boom** can be explained using the analogy of waves in water. Imagine that you are canoeing along a river with a steep, rocky shore. A passing powerboat will rock you with small waves stirred up by its motor—waves that will shake you once again as they bounce off the shoreline and move back across the river. The second set of waves is an echo of the first, but is a separate force to be reckoned with by you, the canoeist. In the same way, the **echo boom** reflects the original baby boom, but has become a separate social and economic influence in its own right.

Recent population pyramids are a useful way to identify the development of the echo boom in Canada. The pyramid in Figure 5.20

shows more width in the 10- to 19-year-old cohorts [2001] than in the 0- to 9-year-olds at the base. These teenagers are the echo boom, that is, the offspring of the baby boomers, born between about 1980 and 1995. The tapering in of this population pyramid at the base shows that the echo (sometimes called **Generation Y**) has come to an end. This cohort at the base (the **millennium kids**, or **Generation Z**) will be a smaller demographic group because there are fewer of their Twentysomething parents (from the baby bust era) than there were baby boomers. In this way, each generation can leave an echo of itself in the demographic record.

### Regional Differences in the Echo Boom

Because of variations in birth rates and migration patterns, not every Canadian province or territory has a population pyramid the same as Ontario's. Figure 5.21 shows that the echo boom is strong in the northern territories and Saskatchewan, reflecting the high birth rates of areas with large Aboriginal populations. Popular migration destinations such as Ontario and the West have also experienced the echo boom. But most Atlantic provinces

haven't, because they have not attracted many young immigrants. Furthermore, many young people have left the region for jobs in the provinces with strong economic growth. As a result, their population pyramids don't show the distinctive bulges of boom and echo seen elsewhere.

These differences are very important to demographers, because they show that some regions will have to prepare for the needs of the echo kids, while others won't. For example, areas with large Aboriginal populations must provide more services for children and adolescents because Aboriginal family sizes now rival those of Canada's original baby boom. Therefore, the need for improved housing, education, recreation, health, and other family services is proportionally greater in these communities than elsewhere. In October 2001, Matthew Coon-Come, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, asked the House of Commons Finance Committee for \$4.2 billion over five years for construction and social pro-

grams in Aboriginal communities. He told the committee, "First Nations...want to deal with bread-and-butter issues of health, education,

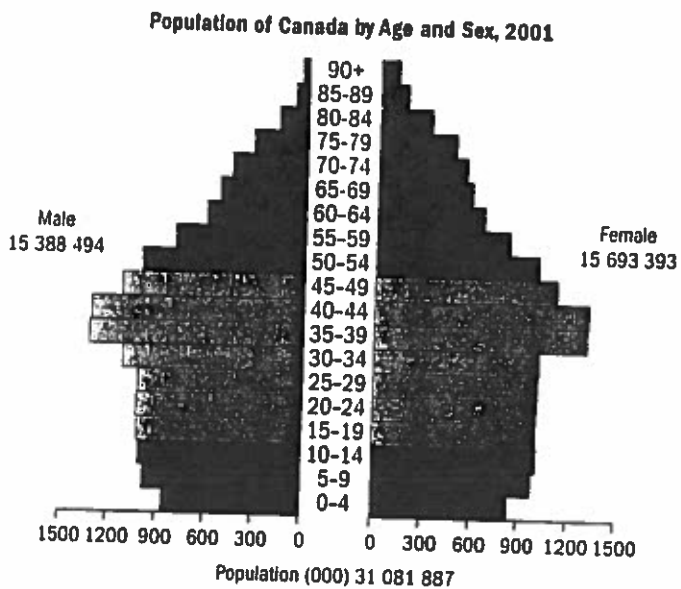


Figure 5.20

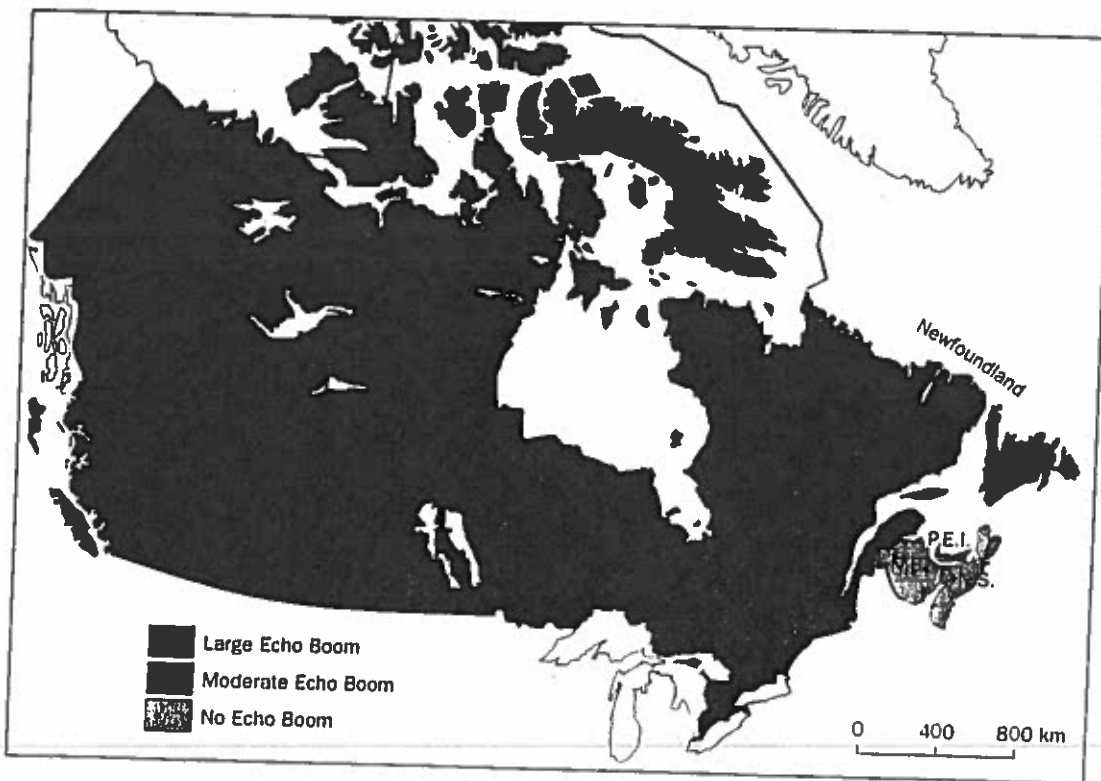


Figure 5.21 This map shows where in Canada the Echo Boom has its greatest presence. Explain why the Maritime provinces are shown as having "No Echo Boom."

eradicating poverty, land claims and treaty rights" (*Sarnia Observer*, 2001, p. B10). High Aboriginal birth rates across Canada necessitate more funding to improve the present lives and future prospects of echo kids in Aboriginal communities.

Meanwhile, Ontario projections call for about 80 000 extra university students by 2010, a problem accelerated by the "double cohort," beginning in September 2002. For the first time, two graduating classes (Grade 12 and OAC—Ontario Academic Credits) will be eligible to enter university together. But, even with the double cohort aside, the echo boom requires that every university in the province lay plans now for the near future. The Atlantic region faces a different type of problem. Demographers wonder if there will be enough young people in these provinces to take over labour, business, and professional fields as the baby boomers reach retirement age.

You may be wondering why your generation, the echo boom, is not as large as your parents' generation on the 2001 population pyramid. The answer is simple. The average number of children born to each Canadian woman dropped from about 3.5 in 1960 down to 1.5 in 1980. For a generation to replace itself, each couple must have at least two children. Your grandparents' generation was more than replacing itself, but your parents' generation was not. The rise of two-income families and the availability of the Pill saw to that. However, your generation is still large in number (almost 7 million, a bit short of one-quarter of Canada's population) because of the sheer size of the baby boom itself.



### Impact of the Echo Kids

Although you are not yet full-time wage earners, your generation, the echo boom, has already had important effects upon Canadian society. Since your group is large, it put a strain on both the elementary and secondary

school systems. Some of you benefited from this by attending new schools built to accommodate your numbers; however, many echo kids have had to make do with portable classrooms and overcrowded conditions instead. Your post-secondary impact will be the same, as colleges and universities brace themselves for your arrival. But you can expect this further education to be of tremendous benefit to you, because you will step into the jobs and careers that the front-end baby boomers are leaving. For example, half of the teachers in Ontario will retire over the next 10 years, and the situation is similar in many other professional careers across Canada. You will not have to "wait your turn" behind the leading edge of the baby boom, as both Generation X and the Twentysomethings had to do.

Already, your generation has had a strong impact upon the Canadian economy because, as a group, you have buying power. Large numbers of secondary-school students work at part-time jobs during the school year, averaging about 10 hours per week, although some work many more. And, as demographer David Foot explains, others get spending money from their parents and grandparents, usually more than their parents received when they were young:

*When the boomers were young, they had to compete for their parents' money with two or three siblings because, at the peak of the boom, the average Canadian woman was producing four children. The boomers themselves, however, produced only 1.7 children per family; that means that two-income boomer households have more money to lavish on each.*

*...What some marketers call the "six-pocket" phenomenon—kids getting cash from two parents and four grandparents—explains why many echo boomers can afford to spend \$50 for a Nike sweatshirt when a similar garment without the trademark can be had for only \$15.*

*The brand name is increasingly important. Echo kids have been saturated in television since birth and, as a result, they are the most brand-conscious cohort in the history of the planet. (Foot, 1998)*

Of course, Foot is writing in very general terms, because not all echo kids have jobs or parents and grandparents who can afford to give them spending money. Nor do all echo kids want to spend \$50 on name brand sweat-shirts. But, overall, some market analysts believe that the economic impact of the echo kids will be as large as that of the original baby boom because, on average, they have more money to spend. A good indicator is the strong shift of radio and television programming to youth markets just as programs shaped themselves around the baby boomers in the past. Youth market stations attract advertisers for a wide range of goods and services, including electronics, music and video products, live entertainment, convenience foods, clothing, and other fashion services. A strong dimension in youth programming and marketing is the focus on "experience"; examples include reality television (such as the hit program *Survivor*) and extreme sports, from mountain biking to paintball games. One popular slogan of the new millennium sums up this view of the world: "If you aren't living on the edge, then you're taking up too much space."

It is unfair to talk about the impact of your generation solely in economic terms. For example, some young Canadians have already shown themselves to be very concerned with community and global issues. Many thousands of elementary and secondary school students across Canada participate enthusiastically each year in raising money for cancer research through the Terry Fox Run. Others actively join environmental clubs to clean up local streams and trails or purchase hectares of tropical rain forest to protect it from destruction. One Ontario

[freethechildren.com](http://freethechildren.com)

This site describes Free the Children as "an international network of children helping children through representation, leadership and action." Explore the history and purpose of this organization on this site and go to the "You Can Help" page to find out if you might be interested in getting involved in this cause.

If the Web address does not connect you with the site, do a Web search using "free the children" as a search string.

**WEB LINK**

echo kid, Craig Kielburger, organized a "Free the Children" group at his school to draw attention to the issue of child labour in developing nations. His efforts were supported by labour unions and other concerned groups. In 1996 he travelled to India and Pakistan where he organized a press conference with child labourers to urge Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to raise the issue in his economic trade talks with Asian leaders. "Free the Children" has added its voice to other national and international organizations, making an impact on an important human rights issue.

### Talking About Your Generation

Refer back to the article at the beginning of this chapter. In it, student Darrell Tan states that Generation Y is the victim of negative stereotypes. "There is hardly a young person today who has completely escaped the stereotype of the 'obnoxious teenager'—the word 'youth' seems forever linked with suspicion and disrespect," he writes. Some people believe that the media sensationalize stories about incidents of youth crime, resulting in an inaccurate picture of today's teenagers. However, there are other people who believe that picture is accurate—and worrisome, as a result. The following Competing Perspectives feature explores this issue.

