



## Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada

### > Section A) What is a Government?

Before we learn about different types of government, first we must ask – what is a government and why does every country need one?

A government determines the way in which a country, province, city, or town is run. It makes and enforces the laws that citizens must obey, and helps shape the daily life of people in the community. Every government needs a leader, or group of leaders to create and carry out the rules for the community.

1. Your school is a community, and your principal and teachers are a group of leaders governing it. Imagine your school without principals and teachers for a day. What would happen? Describe a day at school where students make and enforce the rules. Who would teach classes? Who would decide when recess or your math lesson would be? Would you get any work done? Who would resolve conflicts between students? Who would have to help clean up? And who would make that decision?

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2. Read your answer to the class. As you compare stories, you'll probably notice that your classmates have very different ideas about how they think the school should be run. Just as there are many ways to run a school, every country has its own type of government. The government of Canada is defined as a democratic government. With the help of a dictionary, encyclopedia or the Internet, describe the meaning of democracy:

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3. Who chooses the leader of a democratic country?

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4. How is voting an important part of democracy?

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> **Section B) The Government of Canada**

1. There are three levels of government in Canada:

**Municipal**

The municipal government is made up of people from your community. The head of the municipal government is called a mayor (or chief), who is elected by the people in your community.

**Provincial**

The provincial government is made up of people from your province or territory. The head of the provincial government is called a premier (in provinces) or a government leader (in territories), and is elected by the people in your province or territory.

**Federal**

The federal government is made up of people from all over Canada. The head of the federal government is called the Prime Minister, who is elected by the people of Canada.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do some research and circle which level of government is responsible for the following issues:

i) Removing snow from the local streets:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

ii) Curriculum or lesson plans for schools:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

iii) Working with other countries:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

iv) Organizing the army:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

v) Collecting the garbage in your community:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

vi) Criminal law:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

vii) Libraries:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

viii) The postal service:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

ix) The health care system:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

x) Natural resources:

*Municipal*

*Provincial*

*Federal*

**Canon**





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ii) Rights are things that each Canadian citizen can expect, and include things that every Canadian is free to do. Our rights and freedoms are defended by the law. Responsibilities are things that each Canadian is expected to do as part of his or her citizenship.

**Some of our rights as Canadians:**

- The right to life, liberty, and security
- The right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty by a court of law
- The right to vote (if of legal age)
- The right to run for government (if of legal age)

**Some of our freedoms as Canadians:**

- Freedom of the press
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of belief

**Some of our responsibilities:**

- To obey Canada's laws
- To respect the rights and freedoms of others
- To care for our heritage and the environment
- To help others in the community
- To vote (if of legal age)





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

iii) How would life change for Canadians if we did not have the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty?

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iv) How would life change for Canadians if we did not have freedom of the press?

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v) Do you think that Canadians are living up to their responsibility to take care of the environment? As a class, create a mural to remind Canadians that we have this responsibility, according to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Include some suggestions as to how Canadians can be more environmentally responsible.





> **Section C) The Governments of Cuba and Canada**

1. Like Canada, Cuba was a European colony for hundreds of years before it became a country. The Spanish ruled Cuba for almost 400 years. In the late 19th century, the Cuban people began their struggle to become an independent nation. Rebellion broke out and in 1902, Cuba gained independence with the help of the American troops.

Independence did not bring peace to Cuba. Unrest continued in the form of infighting between groups who had different ideas about how Cuba should be governed. The United States continued to be involved in Cuban affairs for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century before a group of local revolutionaries took over. Led by Cuba's current president, Fidel Castro, the new government was established in 1959, cutting ties with the United States to achieve greater independence.

Castro established Cuba as a socialist republic with only one national political party: the Communist Party.

i) Name three political parties in Canada:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Understanding communism and socialism

Communists believe that no one person in a nation can own farmland, or property of any kind. Ideally, in a communist society, there are no rich people and no poor people. Everyone shares and is the same. In order for communism to work, it places a great deal of responsibility on the government to decide how to give out money, food, and other goods fairly.

In Cuba, the national political party controls most property and wealth on behalf of the people. Castro, the leader of the party, and his government, must distribute goods and wealth with the society's best interests in mind. Each citizen is paid a yearly salary from the government to support them. This system is called socialism.

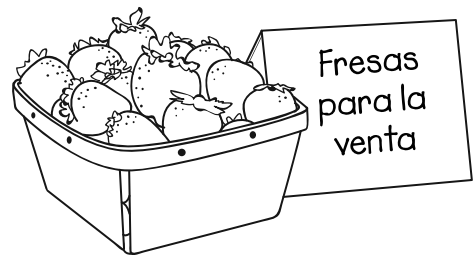
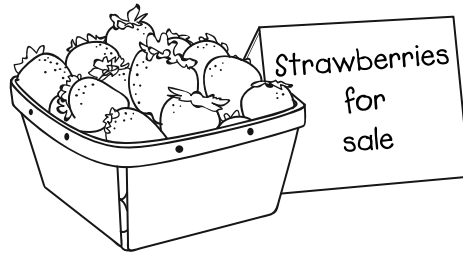
This differs from a citizen's rights in Canada where goods and property can be privately owned, and bought and sold for profit, and only a percentage of the profit is given to the government as tax to fund programs that benefit all citizens.

**Canon**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

To understand the difference, let's compare a strawberry farmer in Canada and a strawberry farmer in Cuba:



i) After the harvest, what would a Canadian farmer do with profits from her strawberries?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ii) Could she keep as many strawberries as she wanted, or give them to her friends? How would this affect her business?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

iii) What would the Canadian strawberry farmer do if she needed new farm equipment?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

iv) What would a Cuban strawberry farmer do with profits from his strawberries?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

v) Could he keep as many strawberries as he wanted, or give them to his friends?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

vi) What would the Cuban strawberry farmer do if he needed new farm equipment?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name one benefit and one drawback of living in a socialist country.

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4. Name one benefit and one drawback of living in a democratic country.

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> **Section D) Forest Preservation in Canada and Cuba**

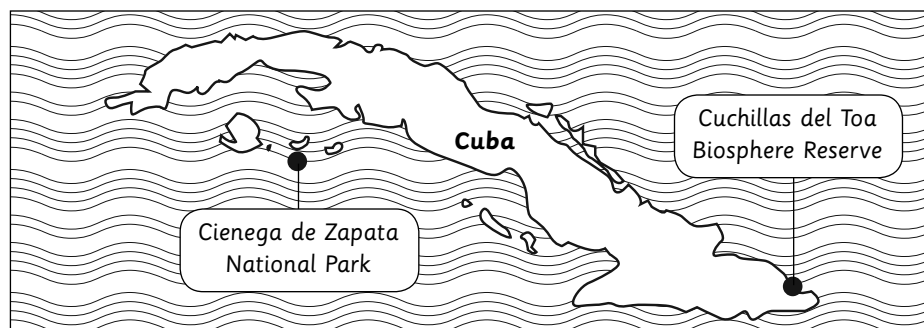
1. Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve, Cuba

Before the Spanish arrived, Cuba was almost entirely covered in forests. But by 1960, farms, cities, towns, roads and other human developments had reduced its forests to just 14 percent of the island.

Although it is a low-income country, the government of Cuba is working on improving the state of its forests. Cuba's government has added a section about environmental protection into the country's constitution. By using better sustainable forestry practices, Cuba has since increased its forested area by more than 4 percent.

Sustainable forestry means that nothing is taken from the forest that cannot grow back. Foresters are learning that it's often better to take some trees from different areas of the forest, rather than cutting down all the trees in one area. This leaves some habitat for other plants and animals that depend on the forest. Another part of sustainable forestry is replanting trees that have been cut down.

Protected forests have also been established in Cuba. They include the Zapata wetlands made up of mangrove swamps and woodlands, and the Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve. This reserve is home to the largest tropical moist forest remaining in the Caribbean. These areas are protected by the government with support from WWF-Canada and, in the case of the Cuchillas del Toa, the United Nations.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Over half of the Cuban population has been involved in community tree-planting projects, planting trees alongside highways or on school grounds to help Cuba regain some of its former tree coverage. However, because Cuba is such a small island with limited resources, it's sometimes difficult to choose conservation over forestry and development.

i) Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve contains some amazing trees. Do some research about one of the Cuban trees listed below and draw it on a large piece of Bristol board. Colour and cut out your tree. On the leaves, trunk or branches in your drawing, list some of the features of this tree: Does it grow flowers or seedpods? If so, include these in your drawing. What is the tree's habitat, and what other living creatures depend on it? Create a model of the forest by posting all of your class's trees on one bulletin board.

- Red mangrove tree (*Rhizophora mangle*)
- Red Cuban royal palm (*Roystonea regia*)
- Cuban pine (*Pinus cubensis*)
- Kapok tree (*Ceiba pentandra*)

ii) There are many endangered species in the Cucillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve. Do some research about one of the endangered species listed below and draw it on a piece of construction paper. Then, on your drawing, list some facts about this plant or animal: What is its habitat? What does it need to survive? Why is it threatened? Post it on your forest bulletin board alongside the trees it depends on for survival.

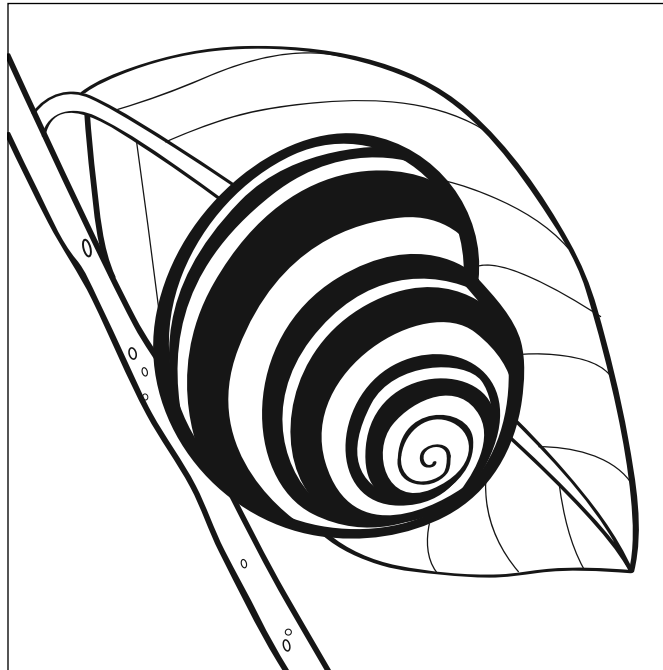
- Cuban solenodon (*Solenodon cubanus*)
- Cuban kite (*Chondrohierax wilsonii*)
- Monte Iberia eleuth (*Eleutherodactylus iberia*)

**Canon**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

iii) Make your own handicraft: Create a Cuban land snail out of a mismatched pair of recycled socks.



Land snails of the genus *Polymita* are found only in Cuba, but have become endangered due to the loss of forest habitat. They have beautiful, brightly coloured shells that, unfortunately, have made them a favourite souvenir for many tourists. However, there is now a local conservation program in Cuba that is helping to teach locals and tourists about the importance of protecting *Polymita* land snails.

When you go on vacation, it's important to ask questions before purchasing a souvenir made of bone, shell, coral, wood or any other natural material. You could be supporting a souvenir trade that is endangering local plants and animals. If you aren't sure, it's best to pass over these items, and buy something else. Textiles and crafts made by locals are often a good option that helps to support the local community.

**Canon**



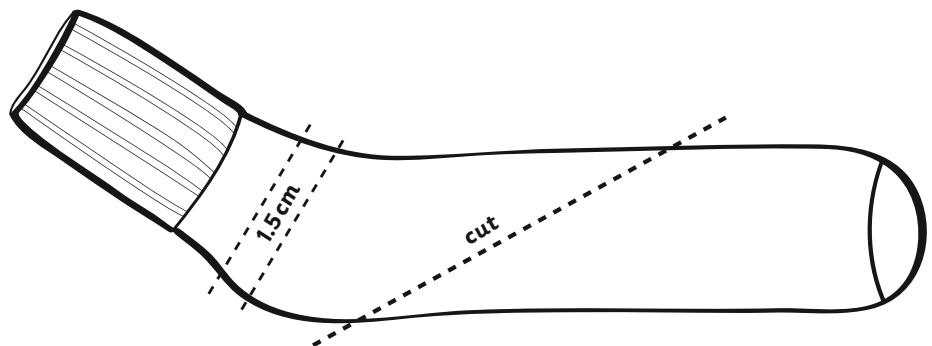
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To make your own handcrafted snail, you will need:

- 2 clean knee-socks (they need to be nice and long). At least one of them should be very colourful, since land snails have very colourful shells. Land snails have brownish-green bodies, but you can make your snail any colour you like!
- Scraps of recycled fabric to use as stuffing.
- Two googly eyes or buttons.
- Scissors, glue, and a needle and thread.

1. Use the first sock to create your snail's head, body and tentacles. Cut the sock diagonally (as shown below) to create the snail's head and body.

Then, cut one narrow strip (about 1.5 cm wide) from the leftover scrap of sock (as shown below) that will become the snail's tentacles.

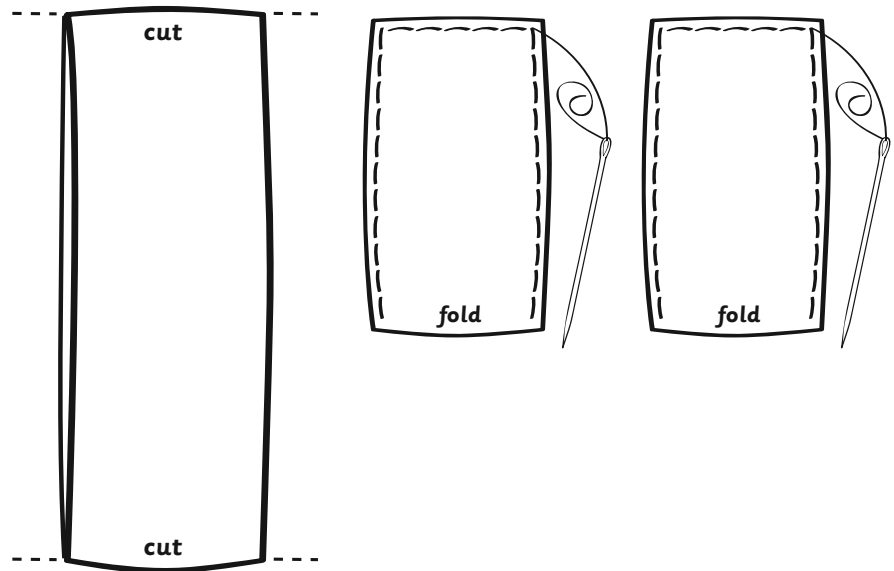


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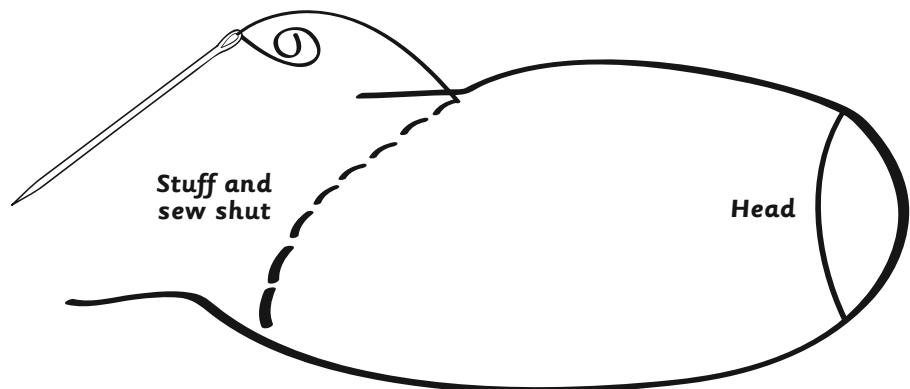


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2. Cut the cylindrical strip into 2 pieces. Fold each one in half lengthwise, stuff with a small scrap of fabric and sew the edges shut. Careful with the needle!



3. Glue a googly eye on the end of each tentacle (or you can use buttons and sew them on).
4. Next, stuff the toe of the sock with scraps of fabric and sew the edge shut.



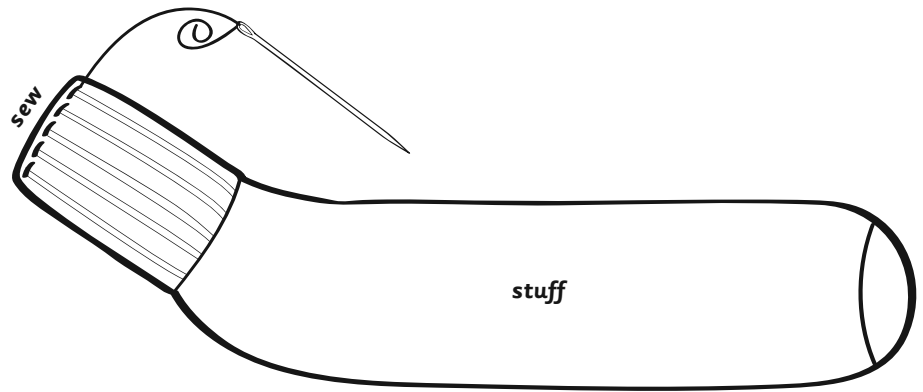
5. Sew a tentacle to each side of your snail's head.

**Canon**

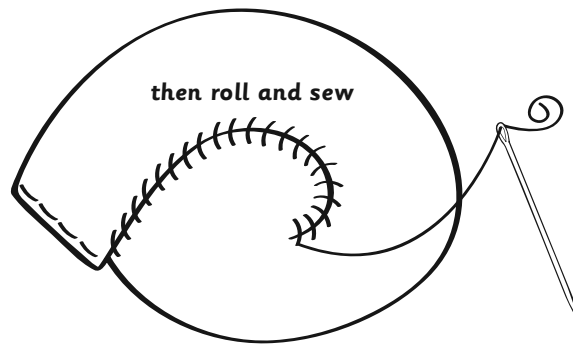


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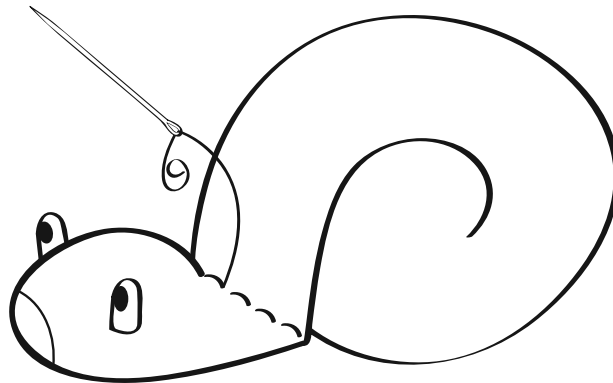
6. Use the second sock to create the snail's colourful shell. Stuff it loosely with scraps of fabric, and sew the end shut. Roll the sock into a spiral, and secure by sewing along the edges on both sides (as shown below).



Then roll and sew:



7. Sew the snail's body to the shell, as shown below:



**Canon**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. The Boreal Forest, Canada

Canada is home to more than a tenth of the world's forests, and more than a third of the world's boreal forests. However, Canada also exports more timber than any other country in the world. And only about eight percent of our forests are fully protected. About one-half of our annual wood harvest comes from the boreal forest, which stretches across the length of Canada. With the exception of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, our boreal forest can be found in every province and territory.

Although some areas of Canada practise sustainable forestry, many of our forests are still damaged by over-harvesting. Boreal forests have fragile soils and are slow-growing, which makes them very vulnerable to changes. They contain some of the world's largest remaining populations of woodland caribou, wolves, and bears. They're also a rich habitat for migratory birds – more than 75 percent of North America's waterfowl rely on Canada's boreal forest.

Protected areas are in small pockets spread across the country to preserve a diverse mix of species and habitats. However, preserving small pockets of forest also leaves small populations of species vulnerable to fires, disease, hunting, and predators.

Perhaps because Canada has such a wealth of rich forests, we think it's okay to take them for granted. However, where unsustainable forestry is practised, we risk losing not only our most precious resources, but also some of the plants and animals that depend on our boreal forests. We must support groups like WWF-Canada who raise awareness and funds to help protect our boreal forests.

**Canon**





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Protecting Areas of the World that Need Conservation

As you have learned by comparing Cuba and Canada, each country is unique, with its own interests, style of government, culture, and resources. Not all governments have the funding or interest to support local conservation. This is one reason why we need independent groups that address conservation issues on a global scale.

International groups can help identify areas of the world that need protection, and come up with plans to help. Groups like WWF-Canada help to educate and encourage governments to make changes. Some groups, like WWF-Canada, can even help raise funding for countries like Cuba that can't always afford to run local programs to raise awareness and protect critical habitats.

- i) To raise awareness, you have to get people's attention.  
Divide the class into two groups.

**Group one:** Create a TV commercial that teaches Canadians about the importance of the boreal forest and why we need to protect it. Be sure to include information about local conservation programs, and suggestions for getting involved.

**Group two:** Create a TV commercial to educate Canadians about the need to support conservation efforts in Cuba. Be sure to include information about species and areas that need protection, and suggestions for getting involved.

Take turns acting out your commercials in front of the class.





# Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada

## Section A) What is a Government?

1. Open
2. Open – Should include:
  - A form of government ruled by the people.
3. Open – Should include:
  - Citizens who vote choose the leader of a democratic country.
4. Open – Should include:
  - Voting is the method that the people use to make decisions.
  - Leaders are chosen, and decisions are made by the majority, meaning that the person or decision supported by the greatest number of people is the one that is chosen.

## Section B) The Government of Canada

2.
  - i) Municipal
  - ii) Provincial
  - iii) Federal
  - iv) Federal
  - v) Municipal
  - vi) Federal
  - vii) Municipal
  - viii) Federal
  - ix) Provincial
  - x) Provincial

3.
  - i) Open – Should include:
    - A bill of rights added to the Constitution of Canada.
    - It guarantees certain rights and freedoms to Canadians, and outlines responsibilities that each citizen should uphold.
    - We need it to ensure a standard of human rights in Canada.
    - Enacted as part of the Canada Act in 1982.
    - Signed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.
  - iii) Open – Some ideas to consider:
    - You could be accused of a crime with no evidence.

**Canon**



## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

- You could be punished for crimes you didn't commit with fines or jail-time. We wouldn't have a fair system of justice that treats all Canadians equally.
- Leads to overcrowded prisons and greater financial burden for taxpayers.

### iv) Open – Some ideas to consider:

- The government could prevent the media from covering certain stories or scandals that it wants covered up.
- Big businesses could put pressure on media to prevent them from reporting on certain stories that they want covered up.
- We wouldn't be able to trust our newspapers and other forms of news as a valid source of information.
- Information we received could contain certain biases, meaning that they might only reflect one side of an issue.
- Our views and thoughts would be manipulated as a result of controlled information.
- Media would be unable to express their opinions freely.

### v) Open – Possible suggestions:

- Reduce energy use at home and at school by using less heat, turning off lights when they are not needed, and unplugging appliances when they are not in use.
- Use energy efficient appliances at home.
- Switch to energy efficient, fluorescent light bulbs.
- Reduce water consumption at home by taking shorter showers, turning on the washing machine and the dishwasher only when there is a full load, and watering the lawn in the evening when the evaporation rate is low and only when needed.
- Reduce use of pesticides and eliminate their use where possible.
- Buy locally grown and produced food less transport results in less fuel being used and fewer greenhouse gases being emitted. (This is important in the fight against climate change.)
- Ride your bike, rollerblade, skateboard, take public transit, or walk, instead of driving.

**Canon**



# Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

- Write or e-mail your local MP and let him or her know that environmental issues are a priority for you.
- Learn more about conservation groups and projects in your area, and support them.
- Reduce the amount of garbage you produce, and recycle when you can.
- When you go shopping, bring your own bags and give preference to products with less packaging.
- Organize a cleanup in your local area, e.g. schoolyard, park or shoreline.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle.
- Educate those around you about the importance of the environment and what they can do to help.

## Section C) The Government of Cuba

1.
  - i) Open – Some possible answers:
    - New Democratic Party (NDP)
    - Liberal Party of Canada
    - Conservative Party of Canada (PC)
    - Bloc Quebecois
    - Green Party of Canada
    - Communist Party of Canada
    - Progressive Canadian Party
    - Western Block Party
  2.
    - i) Open – She would keep them, or invest them back into her business (giving only the tax amounts to the government).
    - ii) Open – She could keep as many strawberries as she wanted, or give them to friends but this would affect the profit of her business.
    - iii) Open – She would have to pay for it from her profits (student may or may not be aware that some tax money might contribute to subsidies for the farmer).

**Canon**



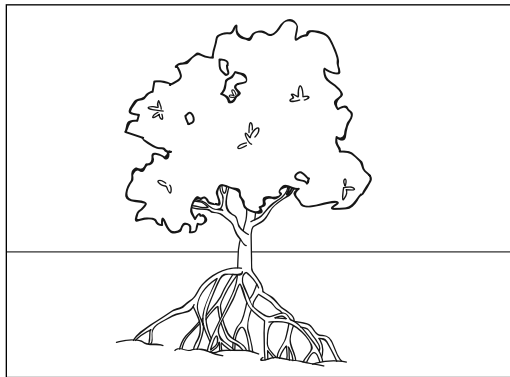
## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

- iv) Open – Profits would be given to the government because the strawberries belong to all of Cuba. The farmer would get a government salary for growing and selling them.
- v) Open – No, the farmer does not own them, so he can't keep them or give them away.
- vi) Open – The government would pay for the new equipment.

### Section D) Forest Preservation in Canada and Cuba

1. Open – Some possible answers:

#### Red mangrove tree:



- Can survive in very wet, briny soil (although they still need fresh water to survive).
- Unlike other trees, can exclude some salt at the roots, and can tolerate more salt in their tissue than most other plants. They can also secrete excess salt from their leaves or in sap.
- Some of their above-ground roots can actually absorb air from their surroundings to avoid suffocating in the mud.
- Because the conditions are harsh for juvenile plants, seeds often begin to grow while still in the fruit attached to the tree.
- When the seed drops, it can drift for long periods in the sea. When it reaches land, it pulls itself upright by attaching its roots. Seedlings can survive completely underwater for one to two years.
- Small creatures such as crabs and snails use their roots as a safe haven from predators. Underwater roots also shelter many creatures. Including algae and shellfish, and provide attachments for barnacles and sponges.

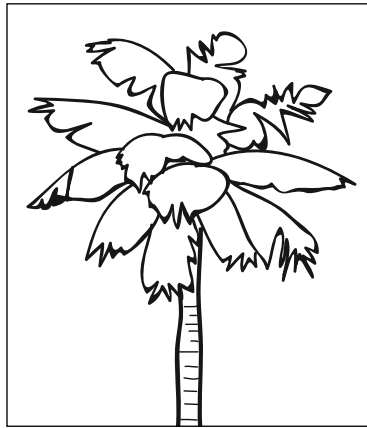
**Canon**



## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

- Branches provide shelter for monkeys, birds, and insects.
- Leaves provide food to insects and other animals. Leaves that drop into the water are an important source of nutrients for crabs, larvae, and are broken down and become nutrients for corals.
- Dense roots prevent mud and soil from eroding into the ocean, and protect the shoreline from storms.

### Cuban royal palm:



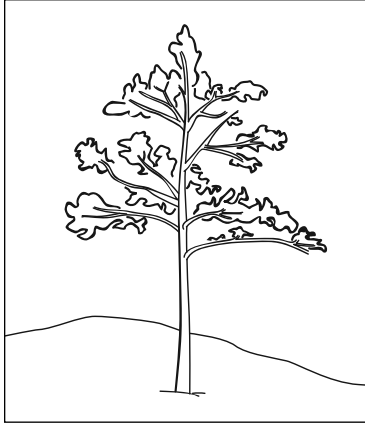
- Can grow 10-30 metres tall.
- Cuba's national emblem.
- Leaves can grow to three to seven metres long.
- They grow small, globe-shaped fruit approximately one to two cm long.
- They've adapted to high winds by easily shedding leaves and growing them back.
- The palm survives hurricanes and similar strong winds because of the flexibility of its trunk, which allows it to bend almost 60 degrees.
- These palms need moist soil, humidity and lots of sun to survive.
- Parrots and other birds eat their fruit and sit in the foliage.
- Many insects feed on their trunks.
- Fallen leaves add nutrients to the soil and are eaten by rodents and insects.

**Canon**



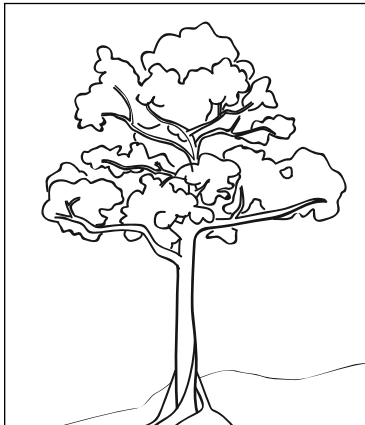
## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

### Cuban pine:



- Grow in a variety of climates from hot and dry to wet, mountain areas.
- Pine forests in Cuba are also home to colourful ants of the genus *Leptothorax* that come in a range of colours including black, yellow, red and even blue-green. They forage for food in the low, woody vegetation.
- Many types of parrots also use pine branches for habitat.
- Has long, dense needles and a long, slender trunk.

### Kapok tree:



- Can grow to almost 50 metres tall (although most Cuban kapok trees are a little smaller), towering over the other trees in the tropical forest.
- The base of the trunk grows outward to form buttresses (supports) to stabilize the height.

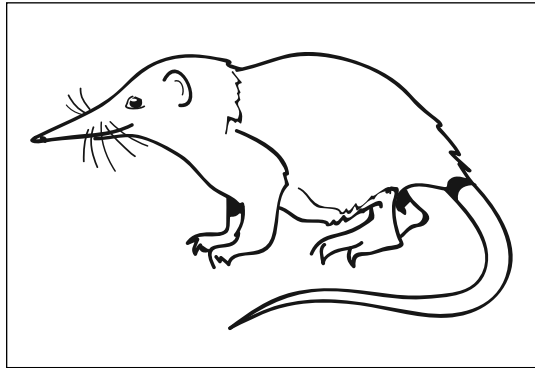
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## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

- Smooth, grey trunks can reach a diameter of over two metres, and are spiked with large thorns to discourage damage by animals.
- Birds nest in the high branches, while monkeys use them to swing from tree to tree.
- Pink or white flowers grow on new branches.
- These flowers are pollinated by bats.
- Brown seeds resemble peas and are contained in large, woody pods that hang from the tree.
- These pods burst open while still on the tree. The seeds are wrapped in a cotton-like fibre that is caught up in the breeze and carries the seeds away.
- Wide, leafy canopy provides a shady, sheltered habitat below.
- Birds of prey hunt monkeys in the high branches.

### Cuban solenodon:



**ICUN Red List Status:  
Endangered**

- Was once believed to be extinct but the Cuban solenodon has recently been spotted in Cuba.
- They are very shy, nocturnal insectivores.
- They hunt for worms, millipedes, ground beetles and snails, mostly underground.
- This small insectivore is a victim of deforestation in Cuba that has wiped out most of its habitat.
- They are also threatened by dogs, which are not indigenous to Cuba but were brought there by settlers.
- It burrows for food and lives mostly underground.

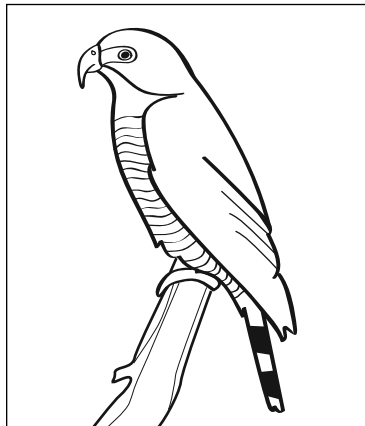
**Canon**



## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

- They are about 50-55 centimetres long and resemble a large rat with an elongated snout.
- For protection, Cuban solenodons are one of the very few mammals that have venom. It's present in their saliva, produced by glands located at the base of their lower incisors.
- Found in woody, brushy areas.
- Its limbs have claws for digging.
- Not much is known about their biology and habits because they are rarely seen.

### **Cuban kite:**



### **IUCN Red List Status: Critically Endangered**

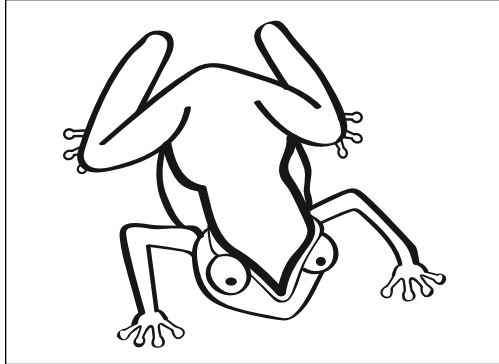
- Bird of prey, similar to other raptors, like eagles.
- It is so critically endangered that it is possibly close to extinction.
- Much of its habitat has been lost to deforestation.
- The Cuban kite is thought to feed mostly on snails.
- Like all kites, they have weak legs and long wings. They spend much of their time soaring in the sky.

**Canon**



## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

### Monte Iberia eleuth:



**IUCN Red List Status:  
Critically Endangered**

- Primarily nocturnal.
- An eleuth is a tiny frog. In fact, this species is the tiniest frog in the Northern Hemisphere, and shares the title of smallest frog with a Brazilian species.
- It's less than 10 mm long.
- It lays only one egg onto the forest ground litter, which hatches directly into a frog rather than a tadpole.
- This species was only recently discovered, and it's critically endangered because of the continued loss of its habitat.
- Very little is known about this tiny frog.

**Canon**



## Answers: Comparing Governments: Cuba and Canada (continued)

2. i) Open – Will depend on community.

### Canada's Boreal Forest Region

