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Justin Trudeau

prime minister of Canada

Alternate titles: Justin Pierre James Trudeau

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By [Jeff Wallenfeldt](#) • [Edit History](#)



Justin Trudeau

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Born: December 25, 1971 (age 50) • [Ottawa](#) • [Canada](#)

Title / Office: [prime minister \(2015-\)](#), [Canada](#)

Political Affiliation: [Liberal Party of Canada](#)

Notable Family Members: [father Pierre Elliott Trudeau](#)

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Justin Trudeau, in full **Justin Pierre James Trudeau**, (born



December 25, 1971, Ottawa, [Ontario](#), Canada), Canadian politician, [prime minister](#) of Canada (2015–), leader of the [Liberal Party](#) (2013–), and son of four-term prime minister of [Canada Pierre Trudeau](#).

Early life and start in politics

Justin Trudeau's [Christmas](#)-night birth to Canada's first couple was the opening act in a life lived largely in the public eye. When Trudeau was six years old, his parents divorced, and his mother, Margaret (29 years younger than her husband, daughter of Liberal MP James Sinclair, and target of rumours that she had had romances with rock stars and other celebrities), moved out. As a result, Trudeau and his two younger brothers were raised by a single father who also led his [country](#) for 15 years (1968–79; 1980–84). After studying at Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf, the same private French-language [Jesuit](#) school in [Montreal](#) that his father had attended, Trudeau earned a B.A. in English from [McGill University](#) (1994). He then worked as a [snowboard](#) instructor while earning a degree in education from the [University of British Columbia](#) (B.Ed., 1998). Thereafter he taught high-school [French](#) and elementary-school [math](#) in [Vancouver](#). In 2000, at age 28, he delivered an [eloquent](#), moving eulogy at his father's funeral that thrust him again into the national spotlight.



BRITANNICA QUIZ

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After returning to [Quebec](#) in 2002, Trudeau began and then abandoned [engineering studies](#) at the [University of Montreal](#). He also pursued but did not complete an M.A. in environmental geography at McGill. In the meantime, he worked at a Montreal [radio](#) station, for which he covered the [2004 Olympic Games in Athens](#), had a role in the [television](#) miniseries *The Great War* (2007), and was an unpaid spokesman for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Perhaps most significantly, he served as the chairman of the board of directors of Katimavik (2002–06), the national youth volunteer organization established by his father in 1977.

Soon after Trudeau delivered his father's eulogy, Canadian Prime Minister [Jean Chrétien](#) let it be known that there was a place for him in the Liberal Party. After being courted to stand for Parliament by Liberal leader [Stéphane Dion](#), in 2008 Trudeau ran for and won the seat representing Papineau, an ethnically [diverse](#) riding in Montreal that Trudeau had chosen over a safer seat to prove he could win an uphill battle rather than coasting on his father's name. In 2011, even as the Liberals flopped—falling from the official opposition to the third party, with only 34 seats—Trudeau was reelected. He acted as party spokesman on youth and multiculturalism, [citizenship](#) and [immigration](#), and amateur [sports](#), among other areas. Handsome, youthful, and [charismatic](#), Trudeau was seen by many as the Liberals' best hope to lead them back to prominence. In 2013, after mounting an exhaustive campaign, he won the party leadership, trouncing a crowded field in an online and phone-in vote in which Trudeau captured nearly 80 percent of the more than 100,000 votes cast. Almost immediately, [Conservatives](#) sought to define him as an [intellectual](#) lightweight with a pretty face and a famous name who was ill prepared to lead Canada. Yet Trudeau appeared to be preparing for the 2015 general election fight with the same scrappy determination that brought him an unexpected underdog



victory in a high-profile charity boxing match against [Conservative](#) Sen. Patrick Brazeau in March 2012.



Justin Trudeau

Justin Trudeau, 2013.

Image: Chris Wattie—Reuters/Landov

The Liberal leader Trudeau [traversed](#) a slippery slope in May 2015 during the debate and voting on Bill C-51, which was aimed at strengthening existing antiterrorism legislation and expanding the surveillance powers of Canadian security forces in the wake of the separate terrorist attacks in October 2014, in which soldiers were attacked in a Quebec parking lot and at the National War Memorial in [Ottawa](#). Opponents of the bill said that it violated [civil liberties](#). Trudeau drew [criticism](#) from some corners for saying that he opposed the bill even as he voted for it so that a “no” vote could not be used against him later politically by Conservative Prime Minister [Stephen Harper](#).

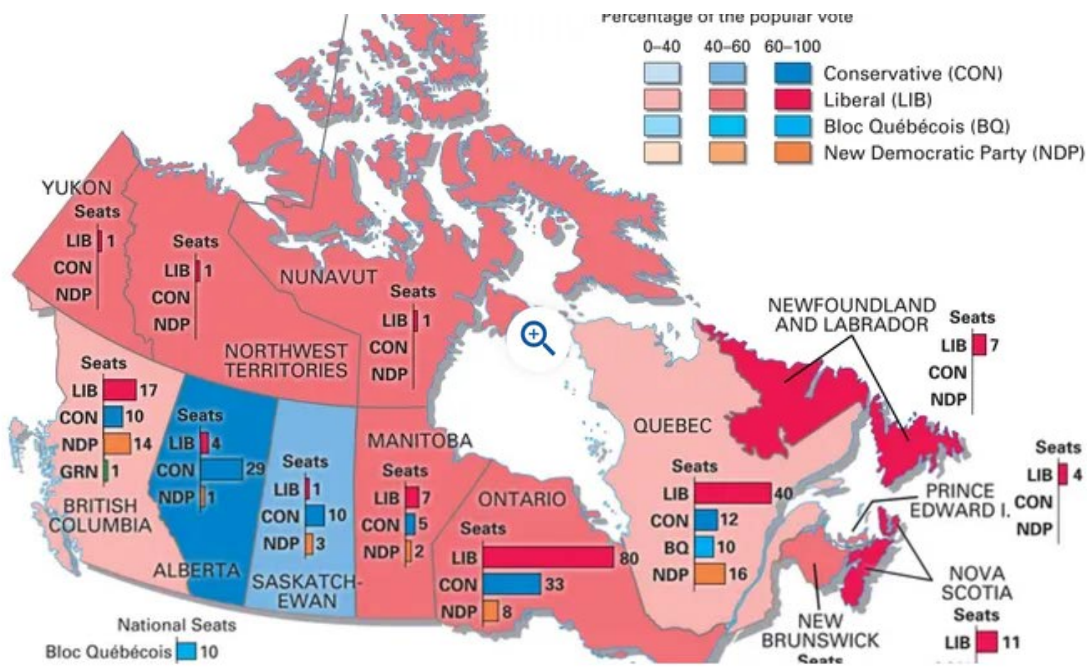
From the very start of the [2015 federal election](#) campaign in early August, Harper sought to portray Trudeau as “not ready” to lead the country. Trudeau was chided early in the campaign by some for empty sloganeering when he suggested that the economy should be grown not



from the top down but “from the heart outwards.” However, Trudeau deftly positioned himself to the left of [Thomas Mulcair](#), the leader of the traditionally leftist [New Democratic Party](#) (NDP), by arguing that three years of deficit spending would be necessary to finance spending on [infrastructure](#) improvements for the good of society and the economy, whereas Mulcair occupied the more-centrist position of saying that any expansion to social programs would be dependent on achieving a balanced budget.

At one time or another all three major parties held the lead in opinion polling, with the NDP on top early in a close three-way race that shifted into a duel between the Conservatives and the Liberals. In the final weeks of the campaign, several polls showed the Liberals with a widening lead that reflected the electorate’s warming to the charismatic Trudeau, who had run a rock-solid campaign and performed well in the debates. Indeed, as the enthusiasm swelled at campaign gatherings, some pundits began to talk about the advent of “Trudeaumania,” which [manifested](#) itself as a surprising landslide victory for the Liberals. Not only had Trudeau led the party to a win and back to relevance, but he had also secured a 184-seat majority in the process, as the Liberals took 39.5 percent of the total vote against about 32 percent for the Conservatives and about 20 percent for the NDP.





2015 Canadian federal election results

Canada's 2015 federal election results.

Image: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

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