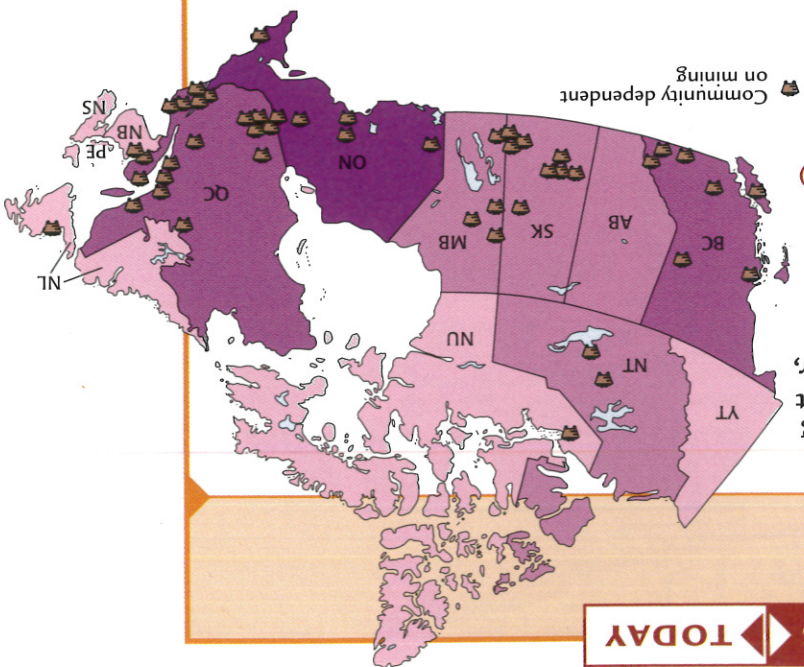
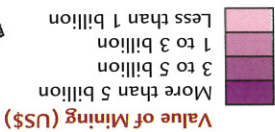


ISSUES TODAY

How does mining affect the economy?

Canada produces more than 70 minerals and metals. Its petroleum industry is growing rapidly. The mining industry makes important contributions to Canada's economy. However, do the economic benefits of mining outweigh its toll on the environment? There are many perspectives on this issue. Here are two of them.

MINING IN CANADA



The benefits of mining outweigh its costs.

- The mining and mineral processing industries are major employers in Canada. These industries employ about 369,000 full-time workers.
- The minerals and metals industry pay some of the highest wages in the Canadian economy, averaging over US\$880 per week. In comparison, the average weekly wages in Canada are about US\$620.
- The thriving mining industry has helped push Canada's unemployment rate to record lows. Oil-rich Alberta and British Columbia recently accounted for almost half of all job gains in Canada.
- Mining yields a host of minerals that are essential in many other industries. For example, the energy industry uses 29 different minerals to generate and deliver the energy we depend on every day.

Mining causes profound damage to the environment.

- Mining is very disruptive to the environment. Roughly 125 tons of ore are excavated to extract just one ton of copper.
- Mining not only affects the environment at the site of the mine, but also harms the surrounding area. For example, an open-pit mine near Jasper National Park in Alberta has threatened the habitat of grizzly bears and contaminated the park's ground water.
- Canada has over 10,000 abandoned mines. The government must pay for their rehabilitation to minimize their impact on the environment.
- The mining and processing of resources pollute more than just the land and water. Processing oil sands in Canada produces three times the greenhouse gas emissions of conventional oil production.



In 1950 there was nothing at this Quebec site but forest. A town soon grew up around a copper mine. When the mine closed in 1999, it left hundreds of unemployed workers and a huge hole in the ground.

GDP BY SECTOR

