

Chatterbox #59 - Canada

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone! This is Harp.

Maura: And Maura!

Harp: And we're here at Culips English learning podcast bringing you another

fantastic episode.

Maura: Right. Don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And

there, you can check out this episode and all of our previous episodes. You can also become a member. And when you become a member, you'll have our transcripts, you'll have more detailed explanations of the expressions

that we use in our episodes, and even a guiz.

Harp: And check out our Facebook page. There is a lot of activity going on on that

page right now.

Maura: And that's where we love to talk to you. So you can send us a message and

we'll be sure to be chatting with you soon.

Harp: Yes, and Jessie's always answering all the English questions you leave

there, so...

Maura: Yeah, she's right **on top of it**. So, today's episode is a Chatterbox episode,

and that's where Harp and I chit chat about all kinds of different topics that we wanna talk to you about and we want you to know expressions about.

Harp: And today we're doing a very exciting episode that we've talked about doing

for a long time.

Maura: I'm pretty darn excited for this episode today.

Harp: Yeah, Maura, you have been talking about doing this for a long time.

Maura: And today's episode is about Canada!

Harp: Woo hoo! Canada!



Maura:

It's funny, actually, because a couple of my good friends who live in Montreal but are actually from Europe, they always joke around with me and say that I'm always telling them what Canadian things are because I think so many things are not known to be Canadian. And different celebrities, or music, it gets mixed in with North American music and people think it's American, so I always like to point out to people, "Did you know that that's Canadian?." I think it's an important thing to know.

Harp: I like it. And that's why today we're gonna talk about Canada. We're gonna

start by talking about famous Canadian people you might know.

Maura: Yes. And then we're going to talk about some famous Canadian inventions.

Harp: There are a lot of Canadian inventions, but we're gonna talk about the most

famous ones.

Maura: And then we're also gonna talk about different things that Canada, as a

country, is famous for, what it's known for.

Harp: All right. Let's get started, Maura.

Maura: So first of all, like I just said, Canadians are often confused with Americans,

mostly because the really famous Canadians, the ones who are

internationally famous, they work in the US. So I'm talking about actors and

musicians, they get all mixed up together.

Harp: So let's talk about one of the most famous Canadians. I'm sure you've all

heard of her. Celine Dion.

Maura: Yes, **Celine Dion**. And she is definitely a Canadian. She's actually from the

province we're in right now, Quebec. She's Francophone, French-speaking, and she has a really wonderful, amazing voice and has sang many different

popular songs.

Harp: Yeah. You might remember her from the *Titanic*. She sang the theme song,

My Heart Will Go On. She's very well recognized. I'm sure you know her.

Maura: Oh yeah, definitely. But I think she might be one of those famous people that

we might know is Canadian, because she's French-speaking and she has a bit of an accent when she speaks English, so she might be one that people

know is Canadian.

Harp: Yeah, I think so. I think that most people know that **Celine Dion** is from

Canada.



Maura: So let's talk about another really big Hollywood actor who is actually

Canadian and from a city not very far from Toronto.

Harp: And who is this famous man that you're talking about?

Maura: **Jim Carrey**.

Harp: **Jim Carrey**, awesome. He's super funny.

Maura: Yeah, he grew up in Ontario, like me, and was a super-funny, comedic guy, I

think his whole life, and then moved down to the States to get into TV and

acting and all of that stuff.

Harp: Yeah. So he did the *Ace Ventura* movies and he's been in a lot of funny

movies.

Maura: A lot of funny movies. After *Ace Ventura*, he did *The Mask*. Those were his

first couple big movies and now he's done tons and tons of movies.

Harp: There are a lot of famous Canadians who are funny. We're known to have a

lot of comedians come from Canada.

Maura: Yeah. There are some old classics like Chevy Chase and Martin Short, those

guys are a bit older, more comedians from the 80s or 90s. But you're right,

there are comedians who are originally from Canada.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: Who else do we got, Harp?

Harp: Well, we have one that you might know, because he's very famous right now.

Maura: Oh yeah, very famous right now, especially with teenage girls.

Harp: Yes. **Justin Bieber**.

Maura: Oh yeah, **Bieber** Fever. He's actually from Stratford, Ontario, which is where

some of my family lives, so I've been there quite a lot.

Harp: He's so popular with the young girls right now.

Maura: Yeah. It's really crazy how a kid in Stratford, which is a small city, was able to

get discovered on YouTube and then became such a huge, a huge, huge

star.

Harp: Yeah, there's definitely some **Bieber** Fever with the young kids. And the hair.

He has that haircut, that... I don't know if it's called the Bieber haircut, but so

many young boys have that haircut now. So he's very famous right now.

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Maura: Yeah, yeah. For sure. Let's talk about one more. There are actually so many

other ones we could talk about, but one classic Canadian, who's been

around for a while, is **Michael J. Fox**.

Harp: Yes, **Michael J. Fox** from the *Back to the Future* movies.

Maura: Yeah. So, he became really popular from those movies. And those movies, I

love those movies.

Harp: I watch them now and I think they're great.

Maura: Me too, for sure. He also had a television show, *Family Ties*, and went on to

do other shows, and...

Harp: Yeah, very famous guy.

Maura: Yeah. Hey, I just thought of another one.

Harp: Who?

Maura: Well, did you know that Tom Cruise actually lived in Ottawa, Ontario for a

little while?

Harp: Oh, Tom Cruise lived in Canada?

Maura: Yeah. He's not really Canadian, and obviously he's known as a big American

star, but when I lived in Ottawa, I remember that he had lived there and

everyone knew the school that he had gone to.

Harp: OK, that's interesting.

Maura: We have lots of connections, anyways.

Harp: Yes. Lots of famous people from Canada.

Maura: So, those were some popular Canadians that are really famous right now,

but let's talk about Canadian inventions. So this is going back to the past.

Harp: All right. Let's start with the most famous one that I don't know if everyone

knows is a Canadian invention.

Maura: Yeah, I don't know if they know either, but the **telephone** is a Canadian

invention. Well, we claim it to be Canadian.

Harp: Yes. So Alexander Graham Bell, who invented the **telephone**, invented it in

Canada.

Maura: Yes. He invented it... Actually this is kind of funny. He invented it in a place

that's now called Brantford. And that's actually Wayne Gretzky's hometown.

Harp: Oh, really? That's really interesting.

Maura: It's kind of funny. But the interesting thing about Alexander Graham Bell is

that he wasn't born in Canada, like so many Canadians. He was actually born in Scotland and came to Canada and it was here that he invented the

telephone.

Harp: That's really a Canadian story, though, because that's what, really, Canada

is. We're a country full of immigrants. So he wasn't born here, but he's

Canadian.

Maura: Something else that is interesting that most people think of when they think

of Canada is basketball.

Harp: Yes. Because **basketball** is so popular in the US, people assume that it's an

American invention.

Maura: But...

Harp: It was invented by a Canadian.

Maura: Yeah. In Canada, we have these funny television commercials, and they

show little stories about our history. And many people know them. They're

really cute and funny and you can even joke around with people and

memorize lines from them and there's one television commercial that shows

the story of how Joseph Naismith invented basketball.

Harp: Yes. I remember those commercials. And yeah, **basketball** was invented by

a Canadian.

Maura: Yes. So basketball is Canadian. So, we have the telephone, basketball,

what's another one, Harp?

Harp: **Standard Time**.

Maura: Mmhmm. So, Sir Sandford Fleming, who was also originally from Scotland,

was working on the railroad. And in order to make the railroad run more smoothly, it was easier to have a specific time when people knew they had to

be there to take the train, and it would be a lot more organized. So he created a standard time, which means that he created a time that everyone

could follow. And so everyone knew when it was 3:00 and 4:00.

Harp: Yes. That's very interesting.



Maura: That's a pretty big deal, I think.

Harp: Very big deal. Did you know that it was a Canadian invention?

Maura: I didn't.

Harp: Me neither.

Maura: So, let's look at one last one.

Harp: This one's a very fun one, and I didn't know it was Canadian until very

recently.

Maura: Yeah, it's pretty cute. What is it?

Harp: The **zipper**.

Maura: The **zipper! Zippers** are all over the world.

Harp: It's on your pants, on your jacket, on your shirt.

Maura: Yup, on your bag. On your shoes, sometimes.

Harp: **Zippers**. They're so smart, such a smart invention.

Maura: And actually, when I was reading about this, I found out that at first when

zippers were created, initially people didn't want to use them. They didn't think that they would be a good idea; they didn't think they would be popular.

So it took quite a few years before they actually starting being put on

clothing.

Harp: That's funny, because now they're just everywhere.

Maura: Yup. I got a **zipper** right now on my pants.

Harp: Me too. All right, Maura, let's move on to our third topic, which is stuff that

Canada is famous for.

Maura: So, things that people around the world know about Canada. And you know

what, Harp? I feel like many people outside of Canada don't know that much about us. Unless they've had direct contact, I feel like there's not that much

that people know about us.

Harp: Yeah. Most people know that we play **hockey** or that a lot of people play

hockey in Canada and that it's our national sport.



Maura: I agree. I think that's one of the first things that people think of. And it's true

that on our money we actually have some hockey players.

Harp: It's a big sport in Canada.

Maura: It is; it's really popular. Most boys, growing up, play **hockey**.

Harp: Yeah, and now it's even girls growing up that play a lot of **hockey**.

Maura: Yup, it's very popular. It's very, very popular.

Harp: I have to make a confession.

Maura: Yes, Harp?

Harp: I don't really like **hockey**.

Maura: Me neither!

Harp: You have to be cold when you're sitting in the stadium and it's really fast.

And I get it, but I don't love it.

Maura: Yeah. When I was a teenager, we had a **hockey** league in my hometown, so

sometimes I went to hockey games, but it was really just to hang out with my

friends and chat.

Harp: So we don't love **hockey**, but Canada is definitely famous for **hockey** and

people here love it! They go crazy. People at work are always talking about **hockey**. They follow the teams, they know about the players. It's crazy.

Maura: But I think that's true for any country, even when there's one thing that most

people are crazy about, there are definitely a good number of people who aren't that interested in it. And Harp and I just happen to be people who don't

like **hockey** that much.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: So, when we play **hockey**, like you said, it's usually cold, if you're playing

outside. And you have to play on ice. And so, of course, another thing that

Canada is known for is its snow.

Harp: Yup, people think of Canada and they think of cold winters and lots of snow.

Maura: And that is true, it does get quite cold here, especially compared to other

countries. And it does get snowy, but we do have an excellent summer and

we have fall and spring, too.



Harp: Yeah. You know, I remember going to California and meeting some young

kids. I was maybe 9 or 10, and they thought we lived in igloos.

Maura: That's crazy.

Harp: They thought it was cold all year and we lived in an igloo.

Maura: Yup, some people do. But it is true, if you live in a really warm climate and

you come here in January or February, you'll have a pretty big shock, 'cause

there's snow everywhere and it's freezing.

Harp: Yeah. My friends who came from Uganda, when I was studying in university,

I met them, and I remember two or three of them telling me that the first time they saw it snowing, they thought it was dust. They didn't realize it was snow.

Maura: It's really hard to imagine what that would be like, eh?

Harp: Yeah, it's pretty spectacular to see winter for the first time, I'm sure.

Maura: That's another thing that we're known for, too, is just the amount of nature

and space that we have. So again, that is true; we have a lot of open space. We have the Rockies, we have the prairies, we have the Maritimes, too. We have a lot of space. Most Canadians actually live very south, close to the American border. So northern Canada is pretty undeveloped and open.

Harp: Yeah, definitely. It's pretty spectacular to go drive through Saskatchewan

and just see the large amount of space and all the farmland or to drive

through the Rockies. Canada is quite a beautiful country.

Maura: It always **blows my mind** when I think of these countries that are

geographically so small and they have huge populations, and then Canada being the second biggest country in the world with such a small population.

It's really interesting.

Harp: It is very interesting. And like you said, most people in Canada live close to

the American border, so there's a lot of empty space in Canada.

Maura: There is. So if you're bored, come on over. We've got room for you. What's

one other tasty, delicious thing we're known for?

Harp: **Maple syrup**.

Maura: Yes, **maple syrup**. And again, this one is true. We do like **maple syrup**, and

we use it a lot.

Harp: Yeah, **maple syrup** is very much a Canadian treat that we love.



Maura: I remember when I was living in England and it was **Shrove Tuesday**, or

Pancake Tuesday, and so we were having pancakes. And they had this thing called golden syrup, which was just this sugar-based syrup. And for me, it was so strange, because I've never seen it. Pancakes in Canada

always are served with maple syrup.

Harp: Always, yeah. I love **maple syrup**.

Maura: It's very good. And you know, there's all different kinds of **maple syrup**.

Some of it's lighter in colour or darker, thinner and thicker, there's all different

kinds of variations.

Harp: Yeah, I wrote a blog post about **maple syrup** and how it's made and there's

some pictures from a maple farm. So check it out.

Maura: And one last thing that people often think of when they think of Canada is its

multiculturalism.

Harp: Yup. Like we mentioned before, Canada is very much a country of

immigrants. We're super **multicultural**. If you walk down the streets of all the big cities, there are a lot of immigrants. In the smaller towns, in the rural areas, there's not so many, but we're such a country of immigrants, people

from all over the world.

Maura: Yeah. I was scouring the Internet to try to see which country was the most

multicultural, if they could say. But it was too hard to say for sure, because

they have to take all these different criteria into consideration, like the amount of people that live there and then where they're coming from, because they could have a lot of immigrants, but only from one place. So it was too hard to say, but I definitely agree that **as far as multicultural**

countries go, we're pretty good.

Harp: Yeah, exactly. You can walk down the street and hear people speaking so

many different languages. It's awesome.

Maura: Yeah, it's good. And I think most people also know about our free health

care.

Harp: Yup. Something that we're known for is our free medical care.

Maura: And I think that Canadians, even though we might complain about long line-

ups or having to wait for different things, are really happy that we have it and

really do appreciate it.

Harp: Definitely. I know I appreciate it.



Maura: Again, because we grew up that way, it's hard to imagine not being able to

go to the doctor if you're sick.

Harp: Yeah, I really can't imagine it.

Maura: So let's do one more thing that we're known for, which is that we're very

polite.

Harp: Almost to the point that we're boring.

Maura: Yes. But very polite and not necessarily arrogant or aggressive, but a quieter

kind of people, I think.

Harp: Yeah, that's definitely the image we have; we're peaceful, polite. That's what

a lot of people think of when they think of Canada.

Maura: And it's so nice, but it is; it sounds so boring, Harp.

Harp: It does. But in another way, I think it sounds nice.

Maura: I really noticed it when I was living in Japan and I was working with so many

different English-speaking people from different countries, like from Scotland and England and Australia and America. And I did notice that Canadians tended to say *sorry* a little bit more, and kind of move out of the way for other

people more, which is sweet, but yeah, meh.

Harp: Yup. We're known generally to be nice, peaceful people.

Maura: This conversation's already getting boring, isn't it?

Harp: I think it was a very exciting, interesting conversation, personally.

Maura: I'll agree with you to be polite.

Harp: All right, let's wrap this up.

Maura: OK. So, we wanted to give you a little bit of a taste of Canada and maybe let

you in on some Canadian things that you didn't even know were Canadian.

Harp: Yes. And so we started with talking about famous Canadian people.

Maura: And we listed off a couple hot ones for you, but there are tons more.

Harp: Definitely. And then we talked about famous Canadian inventions.

Maura: Right. And then we talked about different things that Canada is known for,

and that maybe you already know about Canada.

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Harp: Yes. So remember, check out our website, Culips.com, that's

C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there you can become a member and get access

to the learning materials.

Maura: Thanks for listening. We're glad you're listening. And keep on listening!

Harp: Check us out on Facebook.

Maura: And come to Canada and visit.

Harp: Definitely.

Maura: We'll see you later. Bye!

Harp: Bye everyone!



Detailed Explanation

To be on top of it

The expression *to be on top of it* means to work hard to always complete things on time. We use this expression to describe someone who is working hard on something and everything is on or ahead of schedule. It can also mean that they know that they're good at what they do and that everything is going well.

Here's an example using the expression to be on top of it.

Steve: I know that whenever I give a project to Karen, she'll get it done the same day. Michelle: Yeah, she's really **on top of it**.

Celine Dion

Celine Dion is a famous Canadian singer who comes from Charlemagne, Quebec. Her most famous song is probably *My Heart Will Go On* from the movie *Titanic*. She now sings mostly in English, but she also sings in French. **Celine Dion** is very popular all around the world and most people know that she's Canadian.

Jim Carrey

Jim Carrey is a famous Canadian actor who grew up in the Toronto area. **Jim Carrey** is known for his "rubber face," which means that he can stretch his face almost like rubber and makes funny expressions. He is probably most famous for funny movies like *The Mask*, *Dumb and Dumber*, and *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*.

Justin Bieber

Justin Bieber is a young Canadian singer who became famous by posting videos of himself singing on Youtube. He is very popular with teenage girls, and his hairstyle has been imitated by many teenage boys. When teenage girls really like **Justin Bieber**, we say that they have **Bieber** Fever. He was born and raised in Stratford, Ontario.

Michael J. Fox

Michael J. Fox is a Canadian actor who is probably most famous for his role in the *Back* to the Future movies, and for his role in the TV show Family Ties. He was very popular in the 1980s.

Michael J. Fox now has Parkinson's disease, and does a lot of work to make people aware of the disease and to help find a cure. He hasn't been in a movie in a long time, but people still know him now because of the work that he does for Parkinson's disease.



The telephone

Alexander Graham Bell grew up in Scotland, and invented the **telephone** in Canada. The first **telephone** call ever made was between Alexander Graham Bell and his assistant, Thomas Watson.

Basketball

The game of **basketball** was invented by a Canadian who was teaching at a school in Massachusetts, USA. He needed a sport for students to play inside during the winter and invented **basketball**. Originally, it was played with a soccer ball and two peach baskets. Now, of course, it is a very popular sport, especially in the United States.

Standard Time

Standard Time refers to the practice of synchronizing all the clocks in different places within the same time zone. Before Standard Time and time zones, each individual town and city would set its own time, and this could get very confusing when travelling! The concept of **Standard Time** was invented in Canada. Without **Standard Time**, we wouldn't know when our favourite TV shows are on! This was invented by Sir Sandford Fleming, who wanted to better organize train travel by having departure times that everyone could understand.

The zipper

The **zipper** is another Canadian invention. **Zippers** are very important to us now. They can be found on most pairs of pants. We also use *to zip* as a verb. We *zip up* or *unzip* our pants, for example. Gideon Sundback invented the modern **zipper** in Canada in the early 1900s.

Here's an example using to zip up:

Keith: I realized after I left the house this morning that I had forgotten to zip up my pants!

Richard: Oops! Did anybody notice?

Keith: I hope not!

On a pair of pants, the area where the **zipper** is is called *the fly*. If someone says that your fly is undone, it means that your **zipper** is open and you should fix it!

Here's an example using fly:

Jenn: Remember to zip up your fly before you do your presentation today. Jeremy: Believe me, I'll remember now, after that embarrassing incident the other day!

We have a previous Culips episode about embarrassing moments, including having your fly undone. Type "embarrassing moments" into the search field at Culips.com to check it out!



<u>Hockey</u>

Hockey is very popular in Canada, and many people play **hockey**, but even more people watch **hockey**. A very popular TV program is *Hockey Night in Canada*, which shows a **hockey** game every Saturday night during the **hockey** season.

Hockey is very important to Canadian culture, because it is a very social game. People often watch **hockey** or play **hockey**, or even talk about **hockey** with friends.

The weather

As we hear in this episode, people know that the **weather** in Canada is often cold and snowy. In most parts of Canada, we have very cold **weather** and a lot of snow during the winter.

In many parts of Canada, there are very big snowstorms in the winter, and we have to walk through high piles of snow.

On the West Coast of Canada, in British Columbia, there usually isn't much snow, and it doesn't get as cold. Usually in British Columbia, there's a lot of rain in the winter, and very little sun.

In the summer, we can have very warm **weather**. Many parts of Canada have temperatures between 20°C and 30°C in the summer.

To blow someone's mind

The expression *to blow someone's mind* means to be so impressive or interesting as to astonish or amaze someone. The way Maura uses the expression in this episode is to mean that she finds something interesting.

Here's an example using the expression *to blow someone's mind* to describe something impressive:

Mary: How was the concert last night?

Mike: So great. The guitarists were awesome, and every song was amazing. It really **blew** my mind!

Maple syrup

Canada is well known for its great **maple syrup**. Quebec produces the most **maple syrup** in Canada because of the climate and the large number of maple trees. Tourists always make sure to try it when they come here!



Maple syrup is not only poured on top of things like pancakes; it's also used in cooking and baking. **Maple syrup** can often be used instead of sugar. Maple cookies are popular in Canada. In Quebec, people like to cook baked beans in **maple syrup**.

Pancake Tuesday

Pancake Tuesday, or **Shrove Tuesday**, happens on the last Tuesday before the Christian holiday of Lent. During Lent, people who are Christian are not supposed to eat certain foods, because they are supposed to be making a sacrifice. So before Lent, people like to eat as much as possible of their favourite fatty, sugary foods, and it's traditional to eat pancakes.

Nowadays, **Pancake Tuesday** is less popular, but some people still eat pancakes on this day. It's often more of a traditional activity though, and not connected to its religious origins.

As we hear in this episode, in Canada, pancakes are normally eaten with maple syrup. When we eat pancakes, it's usually for breakfast, and usually on the weekend.

Multiculturalism

Canada is a **multicultural** country, which means that people from several different cultures live together. Canada is very proud of its **multiculturalism**. Toronto, Canada's biggest city, is known as one of the most **multicultural** cities in the world. It's even more **multicultural** than New York City! In 2006, 49.9% of Toronto's population came from outside of Canada.

As far as something goes

This is an expression used to mean the same thing as the word *regarding*. We use it when we want to discuss or introduce a certain topic. We replace the word *something* between as and *goes* (or *go* if the subject is plural) with whatever subject we're talking about. In this episode, Maura says, "as far as multicultural countries go, we're pretty good." She means that regarding multicultural countries, we are very multicultural.

Here's an example using the expression *as far as something goes*:

Maya: How are things with you?

Caitlyn: As far as school goes, everything's good, but as far as work goes, not so much.



Free health care

Canada is also known for its **free health care**, which is sometimes (unofficially) called *Medicare*. When we go to the doctor, we don't have to pay, and we also don't have to pay when we stay in a hospital. This system is publicly funded by the taxes that everyone pays. Canada has had this system since the 1960s, and many Canadians feel lucky to have it. Sometimes, because **health care** is free, it means we have to wait longer for doctors' appointments or surgeries, but most people are willing to wait. We do like to complain about it though!

Meh

This is a word that means that something is boring, or OK, but not great. If you ask someone how they are and they say **meh** in response, you know they're not in a very good mood! If something is described as **meh**, then you know it was not very good. It wasn't terrible, but it wasn't great or interesting either.

Here's an example using the word *meh*:

Laurie: So? How was your date last night?

Karla: **Meh**. Laurie: Why?

Karla: Well, the guy was a little boring and we didn't have much to talk about.



Quiz

1. Jeanne is on top of her schoolwork.

What does this mean?

- a) She is working hard and she's on schedule.
- b) She is not working hard and she's behind schedule.
- c) She has a lot of work to do.
- d) She does not have a lot of work to do.

2. Who is NOT Canadian?

- a) Jim Carrey
- b) Justin Bieber
- c) Celine Dion
- d) Brad Pitt

3. Which was NOT invented in Canada?

- a) the telephone
- b) the button
- c) the zipper
- d) Standard Time

4. Which of the following is commonly considered Canada's most beloved sport?

- a) hockey
- b) basketball
- c) soccer
- d) baseball

5. Kevin: I loved the movie I saw last night. It was even better than I expected. It

Please fill in the blank.

- a) drew on me
- b) blew my mind
- c) blow dried my hair
- d) blew the wind

6. Pancake Tuesday is also known as what?

- a) Maple Syrup Tuesday
- b) Crepe Tuesday
- c) Shrove Tuesday
- d) Yummy Tuesday

7.	As far as	go, your cats are pretty n	ice.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) cats
- b) dogs
- c) people
- d) houses

8. If someone responds to a question with meh, what does that mean?

- a) It is boring or uninteresting.
- b) It is amazing.
- c) It is horrible.
- d) The person does not know how to answer the question.

9. What kind of people are Canadians known to be?

- a) polite and kind
- b) rude and aggressive
- c) warm and caring
- d) party animals

Answers: 1.a 2.d 3.b 4.a 5.b 6.c 7.a 8.a 9.a