

## Introduction

Download the LearnEnglish Themes podcast. You'll find more information on this page:  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-themes.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- The article that you can listen to in the podcast
- An optional language activity based on the article
- Links to other activities on the LearnEnglish website on this theme (Canada).

## Read the article

### Great films that aren't really about Canada

by John Kuti

Like most people I suppose, I know the USA from watching American films. I think my view of Canada is nearly the same, the only problem is that you can't see much of Canada in American films. Marilyn Monroe became a star after the 1953 film "Niagara". In it, she visits the falls on her honeymoon and plans to kill her husband. Like in that film, Canada for me is a place that starts somewhere on the other side of that enormous waterfall.

From Toronto you can drive to Niagara Falls in about 2 hours. It lies between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario on the border between The United States and Canada. There are lots of fun things to do there. If you are interested in the waterfall itself you might like to go on "The journey behind the fall" a tunnel in the rock behind the water. The place is also popular with lovers. Actually the tradition of honeymoon journeys was started as a way to promote Niagara Falls as a tourist destination. The spot also attracts crazy people who want to throw themselves over the edge. These days it's not bad if you like casinos. The latest one to open is called Fallsview casino, which, they say, is more luxurious and sophisticated than the Casino Niagara.

I have a two-sided DVD which is my main source of information for this article. There's a film called "Bowling For Columbine" on one side, and on the other "Owning Mahowny".

Bowling for Columbine is a film about the United States. More specifically about a mysterious something that makes it such a violent society. Canada appears for comparison. In Canada

165 people are killed by guns every year, in the United States 11,127.

Is violence caused by unemployment? Well that's higher in Canada.



Is it caused by having lots of guns? In Canada there are about 10 million families and about 7 million guns. They are a nation of hunters.

Guns are easy to buy in The States – but the same seems to be true in Canada too.

The film doesn't exactly solve the mystery, but it seems to have something to do with politics.

Mahowny, the main character in the other film, is Canadian, and the film is based on the real story of the biggest fraud ever committed in Canada. It begins with a very short shot of a huge powerful waterfall, if you watch to the end of the film and still remember those first few seconds you might realise that this is Niagara Falls. Mahowny is being interviewed by a psychotherapist, and the words come up on the screen "Based on real events in Toronto, 1980-

82"... but then we go right back to the beginning of the story. Mahowny works in a bank, and seems to be doing well, but we quickly learn that he has serious problems. He can't stop gambling, and he's getting further and further into debt.

Instead of trying to save and pay back the money, he starts flying to Atlantic City and gambling his bank's money in a casino. Of course this doesn't help. He takes more and more from the bank. It's a sad and painful process to watch. He is unpleasant to everyone, especially his girlfriend. She waits for him at home and he always disappoints her. He takes her for a weekend in Las Vegas and she thinks

they are going to get married – but he spends the whole time in the casino. He doesn't care about anything except the results of his bets.

On Mahoney's last trip to the States he flies with the ladies from the casino. One of them says Niagara Falls looks "just fantastic".

"I've never been" he says, "I guess I don't want to use up all of Canada too soon."

Of course in the end he goes to prison, but there is some hope for the future, if not exactly a happy ending. He takes his girlfriend to Niagara Falls.

## After reading

### Exercise

Choose one of the 7 prepositions from the box to complete each of the sentences:

for	back	up	with	about	into	by
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1. The hero was interviewed ..... a psychotherapist.
2. He was getting further and further ..... debt.
3. He would never be able to pay the money .....
4. Does this film have anything to do ..... Canada?
5. Canada is enormous...you can never use it .....
6. He doesn't seem to care ..... his girlfriend.
7. The film starts at the end of the story, then it goes ..... to the beginning.
8. Maybe violence is caused ..... unemployment
9. The place is popular ..... lovers.
10. A lot of people are killed ..... guns in America.
11. Canada appears ..... comparison.
12. Of course they use their guns ..... hunting.
13. It begins ..... a shot of a waterfall.
14. Words come ..... on the screen

### More activities on this topic

You'll find links to all the following activities connected to the theme of refugees at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-central-themes-canada.htm>

- **Word game: Canadian English.** Match words in Canadian English to their equivalents in British English.
- **Poem: Canada.** Sir Charles George Douglas Roberts was the first Canadian to be knighted for his work as a writer. According to one source: "Those of his poetical compositions that are distinctively Canadian are regarded as being specially excellent".
- **Trivia:** Everything you (n)ever wanted to know about Canada.
- There is also a Canada-related cartoon, a poll, and some carefully selected external links.

### Answers to exercise:

1. by; 2. into; 3. back; 4. with; 5. up; 6. about; 7. back; 8. by; 9. with; 10. by; 11. for; 12. for; 13. with; 14. up