

Labour Day

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. How many working hours per day are ideal?
2. Do you think workers should have the right to strike?
3. How do you think the working conditions are in Canada compared to other countries?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. labour | a) to begin |
| ___ 2. statutory holiday | b) work |
| ___ 3. cottage | c) a summer home out in the country or near a lake |
| ___ 4. originate | d) the placing of someone in jail |
| ___ 5. union | e) an organized protest by a group of workers or citizens |
| ___ 6. demonstration | f) a paid day off that is designated by the government |
| ___ 7. imprisonment | g) the refusal to work until certain conditions are changed |
| ___ 8. strike | h) the head of the government |
| ___ 9. prime minister | i) employees that work together to ensure good working conditions |



Reading

1. The first Monday of September in Canada is **Labour** Day. This is a **statutory holiday** throughout the country. Labour Day weekend is the last long weekend of the summer, and most Canadians think of it as the one last opportunity to relax at the **cottage** or take a cross-border road trip before the school year begins.
2. Labour Day didn't **originate** as a day of relaxation. It started out as a day to fight for workers' rights. Labour Day celebrates the labour **union** movement, which recommended eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for sleep.
3. In 1872, labour leaders from the Toronto Trades Assembly called for a **demonstration** to improve workers' rights and to protest the **imprisonment** of 24 members of the Toronto Typographical Union. The union leaders had been jailed following an illegal **strike**. They were striking to try to secure a nine-hour workday. During the 1872 demonstration, the Toronto Trades Assembly invited workers to form unions. A similar parade was organized in Ottawa. Shortly thereafter, Canada's **prime minister**, Sir John A. MacDonald, announced that laws against trade unions would be removed. In 1894, Labour Day became an official holiday celebrating the rights of workers to form unions, fight for rights, and have a balanced work life.
4. In the US, Labor Day is held on the first Monday in September as well. (The word "labour" is one of many "ou" English words that is spelled without a "u" in American English.) Other countries celebrate International Workers' Rights Day on May 1.

Comprehension

1. When is Labour Day in Canada?
2. What caused the labour demonstration in 1872?
3. Who made it legal to have unions in Canada?
4. Why does the reading mention American spelling?
5. What day is similar to Labour Day?

Vocabulary Review

A. Spot the Error

Circle the vocabulary error in the sentences below.
Correct the word or phrase that needs fixing.

1. Canadian Labor Day is on the first Monday of September.

2. There was a demonstrate on the streets of Toronto.

3. The protestors were questioning the prison of the union leaders.

4. The leader of Canada is the prime resident.

5. It is legal for workers to go on stroke in Canada.

B. Related Words

Look at the list of words below.
Try to place the words in four
related groupings. Some of the
words form compound nouns.

Word List:

- government
- holiday
- union
- head
- labour
- imprison
- crime
- employees
- statutory
- long
- weekend
- minister
- leader
- off
- jail
- prime
- rights
- day

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Listening

 <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2011/08/31/podcast-labour-day/>

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

1. The first Monday of September in Canada is Labour Day. This is a statutory holiday throughout the country. Labour Day weekend is the last long weekend of the summer, and most Canadians think of it as the one last opportunity to relax at the _____ or take a cross-border _____ before the school year begins.
2. Labour Day didn't _____ as a day of relaxation. It started out as a day to fight for workers' rights. Labour Day celebrates the labour _____ movement, which recommended eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for sleep.
3. In 1872, labour leaders from the Toronto Trades Assembly called for a _____ to improve workers' rights and to protest the imprisonment of 24 members of the Toronto Typographical Union. The union leaders had been jailed following an _____ strike. They were striking to try to _____ a nine-hour workday. During the 1872 demonstration, the Toronto Trades Assembly invited workers to form unions. A similar parade was organized in Ottawa. Shortly thereafter, Canada's prime minister, Sir John A. MacDonal*d*, announced that laws against trade unions would be removed. In 1894, Labour Day became an _____ holiday celebrating the rights of workers to form unions, fight for rights, and have a balanced work life.
4. In the US, Labor Day is held on the first Monday in September as well. (The word "labour" is one of many "ou" English words that is spelled without a "u" in American English.) Other countries celebrate _____ Workers' Rights Day on May 1.