

# Niagara Falls

**Activity 1** - Listen for the first time and complete the activity

What do the following adjectives refer to?

- committed \_\_\_\_\_
- limited \_\_\_\_\_
- outstanding \_\_\_\_\_
- immense \_\_\_\_\_
- spectacular \_\_\_\_\_
- disastrous \_\_\_\_\_
- dangerous \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 2** - Listen again and complete this second activity.

Answer the following questions?

- Where are the largest waterfalls in the world?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How many people are expected to have visited Niagara falls by the end of 2007?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why were visitors to the falls disappointed back in the 1870s?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who or what were the Reservationists?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the problem of erosion at Niagara and what is its effect?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What will happen if you deliberately go over the falls, assuming you survive?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 3 -** Now try to complete the text with the words and numbers from the right column. To check your answers listen again or read the transcript.

Niagara Falls, although not the largest in the world (that honour belongs to Victoria Falls in Africa) are probably the most famous and certainly the most visited. ___ million people are expected to come here in 2007, rising to a forecasted ___ million in just a couple of years. A tourist magnet indeed, but it could have been very different had a committed group of people called the Reservationists not campaigned to save the falls from becoming an industrial centre.	20 28 15 671 2200
Back in 1870 the Niagara river was lined with hotels, factories and shops and visitors to the falls had a very limited view of the natural spectacle. Even then they had to pay. So a group of leading citizens from both Canada and The USA launched a public awareness programme and petitioned politicians to create a national park at Niagara, and ___ years later their dream was realised when New York and Ontario created the reservation. Thanks to their efforts the Falls remain an area of outstanding natural beauty.	52 173 3 10 90
The falls are made up of three cascades, two on the American side, and Horseshoe Falls on the Canadian side, by far the largest of the three. It's ___ metres wide (___ feet) and the water drops over the edge to a total of ___ metres (___ feet). The depth of the river at the edge of the falls is ___ metres (___ feet) and it moves at 20 mph, or just over 30kph. As much as ___ % of all the water that passes over the falls does so on the Canadian side. In fact, almost ___ gallons drop over the edge every second.	700,000 1881 4 six one fifth three quarters 15
Surely there is some way of taking advantage of this immense quantity of water. Well, of course - they already do. For over 200 years people have been using the falls as a source of hydraulic power and in ___ electricity was generated for the first time and used to power the nearby towns. Currently between a half and ___ of the water upstream from the falls is diverted to a hydro-electric generator which produces up to ___ million watts of electricity. This is shared by Canada and The USA.	
Just imagine how spectacular the falls would be if this water wasn't diverted away. However, there is a second very good reason for this diversion. Erosion. Yes, the falls are slowly eating their way backwards, in some cases up to ___ feet per year. This will eventually have the disastrous consequence of completely emptying Lake Erie, one of the five Great Lakes which make up ___ of all the world's fresh water supply.	
Finally a quick word about going over the falls in a barrel. Don't. Not only is it very dangerous but you'll get a fine and a permanent ban from entering Canada too, if you live. Over the years ___ people have tried it and 10 have lived to tell the tale. That's what, a one in three chance of dying? No thanks, I think I'll just take a picture!	

## Transcript

Niagara Falls, although not the largest in the world (that honour belongs to Victoria Falls in Africa) are probably the most famous and certainly the most visited. 20 million people are expected to come here in 2007, rising to a forecasted 28 million in just a couple of years. A tourist magnet indeed, but it could have been very different had a committed group of people called the Reservationists not campaigned to save the falls from becoming an industrial centre.

Back in 1870 the Niagara river was lined with hotels, factories and shops and visitors to the falls had a very limited view of the natural spectacle. Even then they had to pay. So a group of leading citizens from both Canada and The USA launched a public awareness programme and petitioned politicians to create a national park at Niagara, and 15 years later their dream was realised when New York and Ontario created the reservation. Thanks to their efforts the Falls remain an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The falls are made up of three cascades, two on the American side, and Horseshoe Falls on the Canadian side, by far the largest of the three. It's 671 metres wide (2200 feet) and the water drops over the edge to a total of 52 metres (173 feet). The depth of the river at the edge of the falls is 3 metres (10 feet) and it moves at 20 mph, or just over 30kph. As much as 90% of all the water that passes over the falls does so on the Canadian side. In fact, almost 700,000 gallons drop over the edge every second.

Surely there is some way of taking advantage of this immense quantity of water. Well, of course – they already do. For over 200 years people have been using the falls as a source of hydraulic power and in 1881 electricity was generated for the first time and used to power the nearby towns. Currently between a half and three quarters of the water upstream from the falls is diverted to a hydro-electric generator which produces up to 4 million watts of electricity. This is shared by Canada and The USA.

Just imagine how spectacular the falls would be if this water wasn't diverted away. However, there is a second very good reason for this diversion. Erosion. Yes, the falls are slowly eating their way backwards, in some cases up to six feet per year. This will eventually have the disastrous consequence of completely emptying Lake Erie, one of the five Great Lakes which make up one fifth of all the world's fresh water supply.

Finally a quick word about going over the falls in a barrel. Don't. Not only is it very dangerous but you'll get a fine and a permanent ban from entering Canada too, if you live. Over the years 15 people have tried it and 10 have lived to tell the tale. That's what, a one in three chance of dying? No thanks, I think I'll just take a picture!

This student worksheet is free to download and print for use in the classroom or for self-study. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the listening file which is available in mp3 format. However, the transcript can be used not only to check answers but also for reading comprehension and vocabulary