



A spectacular World's Fair is set to welcome visitors to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It opens on October 1 and runs until March 31, 2022. The trade, culture, and science expo will take place in Dubai. That is the country's largest city.

The Dubai fair will be a mix of innovation, arts, and international **cuisine**. It will also showcase the latest in eye-popping technology. Some 190 nations, including Canada, will be represented. They will display their finest accomplishments and promote their best ideas.

### EXPLORING THE FUTURE

The Dubai World Expo is the biggest event ever to be held in the Arab world. It has an intriguing theme – Connecting Minds and Creating the Future. The three sub-topics

### ABOUT THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federation of seven states. It's located on the southeast end of the Arabian Peninsula. It is 83,600 square km in size (about the size of South Carolina) and its neighbours are Saudi Arabia and Oman. Islam is the largest religion (76%). It is governed as an **absolute monarchy**. It has hot summers and warm winters – a so-called 'desert climate'. The terrain consists mainly of desert.

The UAE's population is just under 10 million – but 90 percent are non-citizens who have immigrated there for work. Many take low-paying jobs and are poorly treated, according to human rights groups.

Before the discovery of oil in the 1950s, the economy depended on fishing and the pearl industry. But after oil exports began in 1962, the UAE developed into one of the world's wealthiest states. Today, it has the fourth largest economy in the Middle East.

are Opportunity, Mobility, and Sustainability. Each will have its own districts at the fair.

The expo will be a place to explore many global challenges. These include climate change, world health, inequality, and environmental issues.

### A WONDROUS DOME

All this will happen against a breathtaking 438-hectare backdrop. Al Wasl Plaza, a large, open space, will be its centrepiece. Covering the plaza is a huge **translucent** dome. It is 17 storeys high and about 16 tennis courts wide. Its 360-degree projector will display

### DEFINITIONS

**ABSOLUTE MONARCHY:** a form of monarchy in which the monarch holds supreme autocratic authority

**CUISINE:** a style of cooking

**TRANSLUCENT:** clear enough to allow light to pass through



INTERNATIONAL

# DUBAI INVITES THE WORLD TO EXPO 2020

images visible from both inside and outside the plaza.

## CANADA'S PAVILION

Canada, too, will have a striking presence. Our pavilion has a waffle-like appearance. This circular, wooden, 1390-metre-structure is meant to represent diversity.

The Canadian pavilion's theme is *The Future in Mind*. It will feature our leading-edge work in fields like artificial intelligence (AI), telemedicine, clean technology, and health sciences.

## A SHORT EXPO HISTORY

In 1851 Britain held an expo. It was called *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations*. This impressive display of innovation featured an early fax machine. The fair proved hugely popular, attracting six million visitors. That marked the beginning of the current expo era. Then, in 1928 the *Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)* was set up in Paris. It regulates World's Fairs and decides which nations will hold expos.

Innovation has been a consistent hallmark of World's Fairs. In 1893, Whitcomb Judson showed off his "clasp locker" at the

Chicago expo. Today, we call it a zipper. And Alexander Graham Bell wowed attendees at the 1876 Philadelphia Fair. How? He exhibited his newfangled telephone. X-rays, dishwashers and TVs also debuted at fairs.

For its part, Dubai's fair will feature flying cars. It will also have surgery-performing robots, and building materials made from mushrooms.

## HIGH HOPES IN DUBAI

But World's Fairs aren't what they once were. Today, people can explore the globe on their monitors and phones without worrying about the coronavirus.

And COVID *is* an issue. The plan was to hold the Dubai fair in 2020, until the pandemic postponed the event. Now, adults must be vaccinated or test negative for COVID to attend.

Still, the UAE says the fair is worth it. The event has created about 300,000 jobs and could boost the economy by \$24 billion. The nation expects 25 million people to come.

"We encourage visitors to spend at least three days on-site," said a fair spokeswoman. "The experience is so compelling." ★

## CANADA'S WORLD'S FAIRS

Our nation has hosted two World's Fairs. The first, Expo 67, took place in Montreal during Canada's **centennial** year. Over 50 million visitors attended the event that featured 120 governments in 60 pavilions. The exhibition also introduced modern marvels of architecture. They were the American pavilion's **geodesic dome** and Habitat 67 – a multi-layered housing complex still in use today. Expo 67 was a World Expo – officially an "International Registered Exhibition." The BIE describes World Expos as global gatherings dedicated to finding solutions to a range of pressing challenges. The theme of the event was *Man and His World*.

The second fair, Expo 86, took place in Vancouver in 1986 and drew 22 million visitors. It was a "specialized Expo," themed to respond to a single challenge – in this case, transportation.

The dome on the city's Science World building, the China Gate at the entrance of Chinatown, and the five white sails atop Canada Place were all built for Expo 86. They remain landmarks in the city.

Expo 86 was the last World's Fair held in North America.

## DEFINITIONS

**CENTENNIAL:** the 100th anniversary of something, in this case Canada's nationhood

**GEODESIC DOME:** a dome constructed of short struts on geodesic lines and forming an open framework of triangles or polygons



## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the economy of the United Arab Emirates.

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2. List at least three other important facts about the UAE.

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3. What global event is taking place in Dubai beginning on October 1, 2021?

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4. How long will this event last? How many countries will display exhibits at this event?

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5. How has the pandemic impacted this expo?

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6. Describe the theme and sub-topics of this expo.

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7. Describe the venue for this expo.

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8. What is the theme of Canada's pavilion at the expo and what does it look like?

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9. Explain how the UAE hopes that Expo 2020 will help its economy.

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## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. The BIE (Bureau International des Expositions) regulates World Expos as well as specialized Expos. World Expos, like the one in Dubai, can last up to six months and are dedicated to finding solutions to a range of pressing challenges. Specialized Expos can last up to three months and have one theme to address a single challenge facing humanity. Both draw country pavilions and millions of visitors from around the world.

As you see it, how might participating countries and the world as a whole benefit from these expos? Explain.

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2. The article talks about the two World's Fairs that were held in Canada: Expo '67 in Montreal and Expo '86 in Vancouver. Both of these events saw the building of structures that remain today as landmarks and tourist attractions, namely, the geodesic dome and Habitat 67 in Montreal and the China Gate, Science World dome, and five white sails atop Canada Place in Vancouver.

In your opinion, how do these legacies contribute to the history and culture of Canada? Support your ideas with examples.

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## QUESTIONS FOR ONLINE EXPLORATION

*Note:* The links below are listed at [www.lesplan.com/en/links](http://www.lesplan.com/en/links) for easy access.

1. Visit the official site of the BIE (Bureau International des Expositions) to learn more about the Dubai World Expo:

<https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/2020-dubai>

<https://www.expo2020dubai.com/en/understanding-expo/participants/country-pavilions>

What questions do you have about the expo? Which country's pavilion would you be most interested in visiting? Give examples to support your ideas.

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2. Explore one of the previous World's Fairs listed at <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/all-world-expos>

Identify the year, the site, the theme, an interesting fact, and a significant innovation that was showcased at that fair. Share your findings with your classmates.

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3. Visit the official tourism site of Dubai, United Arab Emirates at <https://www.visitdubai.com/en/>

Have you ever visited Dubai? If so, what would you recommend to someone who was travelling there for the first time? If not, what sites and attractions would you be interested in visiting? Give reasons to support your response.

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4. The next World's Fair will take place in Osaka, Japan in 2025. In 2016, Toronto submitted a proposal to host the 2025 World's Fair. After much consideration, Toronto made the decision not to pursue this application. Visit the submission at:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-97561.pdf>

What did you learn about Toronto's bid to host the 2025 World's Fair? Give examples.

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## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. How many countries are expected to participate in Expo 2020?

- a) 65
- b) 115
- c) 190
- d) 212

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. What is theme of Expo 2020?

- a) Climate Change Challenges
- b) Connecting Minds and Creating the Future
- c) The Future in Mind
- d) Opportunity, Mobility, and Sustainability

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. How many World's Fairs has Canada hosted?

- a) one
- b) two
- c) four
- d) seven

B. Mark the statements T (True) or F (False). If a statement is True, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is False, write the words that make it true on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. **True or False?** The first international expo took place in Mexico in 1911.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True or False?** An estimated 25 million people are expected to attend Expo 2020.

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\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True or False?** Expo 2020 is the largest event ever to be held in the Arab world.

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C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.

7. The UAE economy relies heavily on \_\_\_\_\_ .

8. A centennial celebrates the \_\_\_\_\_ anniversary of something.

9. The UAE hopes Expo 2020 will boost its economy by \$24 \_\_\_\_\_.

D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. *(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)*

10. As you see it, what is the importance of international fairs like the Dubai World Expo? Give reasons to support your response.

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