

There is no gravity.  
Earth sucks.

Fleece on Earth.  
Good Will to Ewe.

How many lives per gallon  
does it cost?

## Introduction:

*Why do so many People in the U.S. and Canada  
Love Bumper Stickers?*

It is very strange that we North Americans like to put bumper stickers on our cars for anyone and everyone to see. As a general rule, we keep our opinions to ourselves. Some of us boast loudly of our accomplishments and like to argue our opinions with anyone who will listen, but most of us don't. We generally try to avoid saying anything provocative in public. We try to get along even when we disagree. However, ironically, we delight in boasting and expressing opinions of all sorts on the outside of our cars. The sayings we paste on our cars, called bumper stickers, are usually very brief and often witty, clever and funny.

Expressing ourselves with bumper stickers goes in and out of fashion. Sometimes they are super popular in Colorado, sometimes in Calgary, sometimes in Connecticut. During political campaigns, we see lots of bumper stickers, usually with a politician's name and the office she or he is running for – they sometimes use only their first name or their family name. These stickers are sometimes simple – the driver is saying, I want “Marco Rubio for President.” You will notice that often the sticker doesn't say which political party the candidate belongs to. Sometimes the wording or the design of the sticker is clever. On one witty example, Bernie Sanders says he is running “for us,” all the people of his state, and “for the U.S. Senate.” It says simply:

**BERNIE** for US  
SENATE

We use bumper stickers to make many different kinds of statements in public. Travelers often decorate their cars with stickers showing what cities, states/provinces they have visited; sometimes they use stickers to say where they come from. “Not only am I perfect, I'm Canadian!” Internationally cars often have small oval decals/stickers indicating what country they come from with either an abbreviation of the country name or a symbol – “D” for Germany or a maple leaf for Canada. In the U.S. we use the state abbreviations – “CA” for California. Sometimes we use these ovals for other messages – “VPR” for Vermont Public Radio. Other travelers' stickers have slogans like “Virginia is for Lovers,” or “I ♥ NY.” Travelers also like to announce where they're going – “Disney World or Bust,” or where they have been “I Climbed Mt. Wachusett,” “The Paddlewheeler CREOLE QUEEN, Port of New Orleans,” “Remember the Alamo,” and “We won't forget Wounded Knee.”

Stickers promoting favorite bands, events, restaurants, resorts, etc., are often colorful and fun: “*South by Southwest* in Austin,” “The Grateful Dead Forever,” “Willie Nelson Live at *Grand Ole Opry*, Nashville,” “Adele at Royal Oak,” “Herbie’s Crab Shack,” “Ghirardelli Chocolate on the Embarcadero, San Francisco,” “Blue Water Cafe and Raw Bar, Vancouver, BC,” “Wisconsin Dells,” “Graceland,” “Ben & Jerry’s Factory Tour,” “Don’t Miss Niagara Falls,” and “Grand Canyon Dreamin’!”

Another type of bumper sticker uses pictures rather than words. The picture may show a specific breed of cat or dog. A circle with a bar through it means that the driver opposes what is pictured in the circle; it might be an automatic weapon or the mushroom cloud of an atomic explosion. Other symbols show the drivers interest in specific sports and products.



Sometime stickers use symbols and words. A sticker with a flag or shield may say, “U.S. Marine - Retired” or “Support Our Troops.” A sticker with a picture of a snowflake may say, “Think Snow!” A picture of a loop of colored ribbon means “remember.” There are many kinds of issues we are not to forget: the search for a cure for breast cancer and for HIV, or our troops overseas, or MIAs (missing in action).

Collecting all kinds of bumper stickers is a fun way to “explore” North American geography and culture. Ask questions about your stickers. Ask anyone. Ask lots of people, young and old, friends and strangers. Find out where the stickers come from and what they mean, and you’ll get conflicting opinions. Google. You will learn a lot about North American geography, history, and culture.

Part of the fun in collecting is to imagine what kind of person put the stickers on their car and why. Explain to someone else what you think the driver might be like, and ask their opinion. Talk about both the driver and the stickers. You’ll find your friends will have lots of different ideas and insights to share.

The stickers in this book are not about politicians. They are not about interesting places to visit. This is a collection of bumper stickers that express people’s opinions on a great variety of subjects from religion to politics to the environment to the “battle of the sexes.” Most use humor and witty language. Both the bumper stickers and this book are meant to prompt you to think and talk. “What could this mean?” “Could this possibly be true?” “Who would put such a bumper sticker on their car, and why?”

How is the book organized? When you go collecting bumper stickers as I have, you find them higgledy-piggledy, all mixed up. That is part of the fun. Sometimes on the same car there are very different kinds of sayings. So that is how this book is organized, all higgledy-piggledy, full of fun surprises. Enjoy my collection.