



Your **opinions** are personal, highly subjective and shaped by your experiences, values, knowledge and feelings.

Each individual has a unique **worldview**, which is an overall perspective with which one sees the world and interprets events on a daily basis. Your worldview relates to your **values**, which are your principles or standards of behaviour and priorities in life.

Your perspectives can be formed by listening to other people whose opinions you respect, researching an issue or idea, having discussions with parents/guardians, elders and peers and thinking seriously about what matters most to you in order to come to your own conclusions.

A **political ideology** is a set of shared **ideals** or **beliefs** about how politics and government should function. Like a personal ideology, a political ideology requires one to critically examine their core beliefs and worldview.

Common ideologies include **liberalism**, which favours individual liberty but acknowledges the need for some form of government intervention in the economy, and

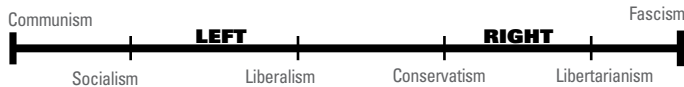
**conservatism**, which advocates for the preservation of society and opposes radical changes. **Socialism** favours a political and economic system in which the means of production, distribution and exchange are owned by the community collectively, usually through the state, while **libertarianism** advocates for minimal state intervention in the lives of citizens.

Other ideologies include **communism**, which promotes the establishment of an egalitarian and classless society based on common ownership and control of the means of production and property, as well as **fascism**, an authoritarian political ideology, usually headed by highly nationalistic or militaristic one-party states.

The **political spectrum** is a means of characterizing beliefs, values and priorities, and provides a conceptual framework to view and evaluate political parties and public policies. People who find themselves on the left or right side of the spectrum usually have opposing views on a range of socio-cultural or economic issues.

## LESSON 5: VALUES, ISSUES & PERSPECTIVES

A linear spectrum is represented by a horizontal line, with parties on the left embracing social equality, social services and government intervention in the economy, and parties on the right favouring individual liberty, free markets and lower taxes.



The political spectrum can also be viewed with two intersecting scales: one for economic/fiscal policies and one for social/personal policies. This creates a quadrant with four areas.

The political spectrum can also be constructed with one or more dimensions, where each dimension represents a distinct set of issues. One common method is to have one dimension (or axis) for economic policies and one dimension (or axis) for social policies, which creates a quadrant.

Individuals who are left-leaning on economic issues tend to support higher taxes and more government spending, more government involvement, and more social services. Individuals who are right-leaning on economic issues tend to support low taxes and less government spending, less government intervention, and the free market.

Individuals who are progressive on social issues tend to support policies that advocate the promotion of social justice issues by changing established practices and institutions. An example of such a policy could be addressing inequities by giving preferential treatment to disadvantaged groups.

Individuals who are conservative on social issues tend to support policies that advocate the preservation of traditional values and established institutions. An example could be ensuring that everyone follows the same established rules and has equal access.

Elections create a political direction for our democracy for the next four years and provide an opportunity for citizens to discuss and debate issues and potential solutions. It is up to you to decide what issues are most important, which parties and candidates align with your priorities and which will be the best at addressing your concerns.

While it is important to question each other's viewpoints, we must also be sure to respect the opinions of others. It is the resulting discussions and debates that form the basis of our democracy.

### BIG IDEA

Politics is rife with controversial issues and opposing arguments and it is important to question each other's viewpoints while also respecting the opinions of others.

### LEARNING INTENTIONS

Upon completion of the lesson, students are expected to know the following:

- The major ideologies and political systems;
- That different worldviews lead to different perspectives and ideas about developments in society; and
- Where they fall on the political spectrum, and its significance.

Students are expected to be able to do the following:

- Identify political ideologies and their impact on the development of public policy;
- Understand issues in provincial politics in British Columbia; and
- Explain how different ideologies and worldviews shape perspectives on the same political issue and information.

### RESOURCES

- Slide Deck 5: Campaign Issues
  - Video: Get Ready to Vote
  - Handout 5.1: Views on the Political Spectrum
  - Activity Sheet 5.2: Evaluating Provincial Issues
  - Activity Sheet 5.3: Understanding the Issues
- (Videos, slide decks and digital versions of the activity sheets can be found at [www.studentvote.ca/bc](http://www.studentvote.ca/bc))

### ACTIVITIES

 **Hook: 15 min**

Using the *Vote Compass* online survey, ask students to discover where they fit in British Columbia's political landscape. *Vote Compass* was developed by political scientists and uses a series of issues-based questions to assess which party is most closely aligned with the views of the user. Have students visit the *Vote Compass* website ([www.votecompass.ca](http://www.votecompass.ca)) during the campaign to take the survey.

*Teacher Note: Due to the complex nature of individuals, the results of a political spectrum survey will not be completely accurate in pinpointing a precise political standing. It is also important to note that people's views may be different depending on the topic. For example, you may be more left-leaning on some issues and right-leaning on others. The goal is to encourage students to reflect on their beliefs and values.*

## LESSON 5: VALUES, ISSUES & PERSPECTIVES



### Essential Concepts: 10-15 min

Use Slide Deck 2 to review the following key terms and concepts: opinions, values, perspectives, political ideology, liberalism, conservatism, libertarianism, political spectrum.



### Discussion: 10 min

Why is it important to respect the opinions of others? Is it important to consider values and perspectives other than those of your friends and family?



### Action: 20-30 min

1. Invite students to share what they see as the top challenges facing British Columbia. You can create the list as a class or ask each student to share one or two issues. As a class, review the challenges listed and come to a consensus around the most important issues.

2. Divide students into groups (one for each chosen issue) and ask them how they would solve their challenge as active citizens. Additionally, ask students how the provincial government would play a role in their proposed solutions. In what way can or should the government be involved in or direct these ideas?

3. Have each group share their ideas with the class.

4. Afterwards, debrief on the activity and reflect on the political process.

- Did each group have several different ideas or did they support one single proposal?
- What is the purpose of elections?
- How will you follow your top issue, and the debate surrounding it, during the campaign?



### Extensions:

A. Ask students to engage family and friends in a conversation about issues of concern at the provincial level. Using Activity Sheet 5.2, students can record the views of their family and friends based on several questions. Alternatively, students could create a short take-home poll with a specific set of questions. Have a follow-up discussion the next day. Do students share the same opinions as their parents? What are the reasons for shared or differing opinions?

B. Organize students into groups and assign each a provincial political issue they believe to be important (e.g., the economy, taxes, natural resources, education, health-care). For the duration of the election campaign, ask students to find news articles to research different public and political opinions on the issue or what policies and/or solutions are being suggested. Students can track the information they find using Activity Sheet 5.3, and share their findings with the class.

C. Have a class discussion about the impact of geography on your perspectives and priorities. Questions to consider: Does someone from Vancouver care about the same issues as someone from Kamloops or Fort St. John? Are people living in rural regions or on reserve dealing with the same issues as people from urban areas? What geographical, cultural or socio-economic differences might there be between these regions? How might these differences affect the values and priorities of the people in these communities?



### Reflection: 5 min

Have a closing discussion about issues and perspectives. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- Did you find yourself solely on one side of the political spectrum? Is it possible to like ideas from both sides of the spectrum?
- Which people and experiences do you think have had the largest impact on your own worldview and why?
- What issue(s) do you want this provincial election to focus on?
- How would you try to convince or persuade someone who had different political opinions than you?

## EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- Newspaper and media websites
- Vote Compass B.C. — [www.votecompass.ca](http://www.votecompass.ca)