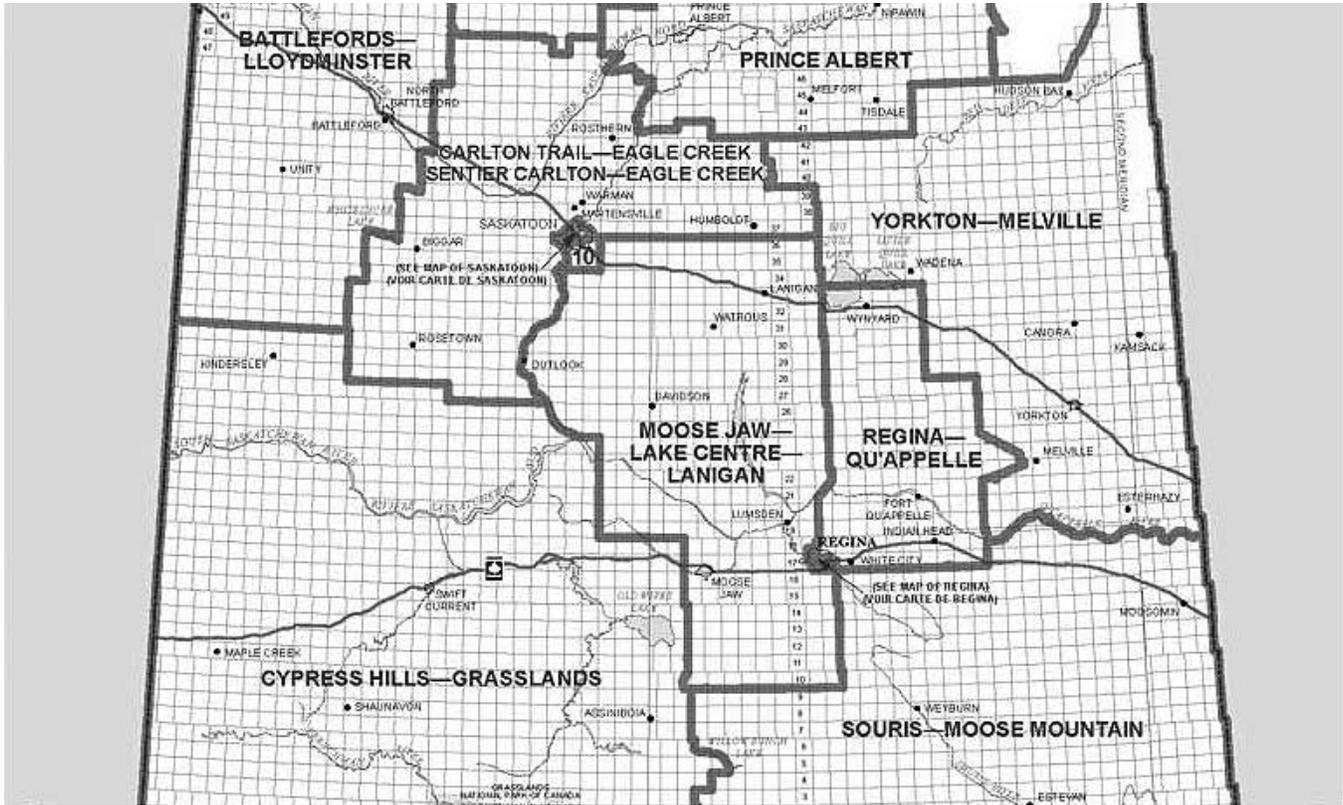


Lesson 10

My Candidates



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Who are the candidates in my federal riding?
- 2 Which party or candidate will best address my interests and concerns for the country?

PURPOSE

During the federal election campaign, political parties and candidates communicate their vision and ideas to try to gain public support. As a voter, you need to evaluate the policies and promises critically, and find out which party or candidate best aligns with your views and priorities.

In this lesson, students learn about the federal election process in Canada. After learning the basics, students work in groups to research a candidate or party running in their school's riding and present this information to the rest of the class. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on the similarities and differences between the candidates and/or parties, and assess which they would support and why.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- describe how to find out which riding they live in and which candidates are running for election;
- collaborate with their peers to learn about the candidates and parties running in the election;
- compare and contrast how different political parties or candidates respond to the same political issue;
- express their own political views and preferences.

Readiness

A few days prior to the lesson, ask students to survey at least five family members or friends about the federal issues they care about the most. Which issues or challenges do they believe should be addressed by the next government?

Starter

1. Using a 'Turn and Talk' strategy, have students discuss which issues they believe are most important in the upcoming federal election. Students should voice their own opinions and those of friends and family collected in the Readiness activity, or recall issues presented in Lesson 9 through the *Vote Compass: Canada Youth Edition* (youth.votecompass.com/can).
2. Afterwards, invite students to share their discussions. As a class, create a list of 10-12 issues or areas of concern.
3. Next, ask students: how would you decide which issues are most important? With students, develop a list of criteria for significance, or use the list of criteria provided below.

Sample criteria: Ask students to respond to the following questions for each issue: 'Definitely not'/'Probably not'/'Probably'/'Definitely'

- Is the impact long lasting?
 - Is the impact extreme – positively or negatively?
 - Are many people affected?
 - Does it directly affect you, your family, friends, and/or your community?
 - How many people are for and/or against it?
 - Are the differences between supporters and opponents substantial?
4. In small groups, have students use the criteria to rank the issues from most to least significant.
 5. Follow up with a class discussion. Teachers can poll each group and ask which issue they ranked first and last. Come to a class consensus regarding the top three or four issues.

Activities

1. Ask students to fill out the 'before' column in the *Anticipation Guide* (Activity 10.1).
2. Review the election process in Canada using the 'Federal Elections' video and Slide Deck 10.

Guiding questions:

- What is an election?
 - What is a candidate?
 - What are ridings? How are riding boundaries determined? How many do we have in Canada?
 - What is an electoral system?
 - Which electoral system do we use in Canadian federal elections? How does it work?
3. Demonstrate to students how they can find out which riding they live in by visiting the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca). Go to the 'Voter Information Service' and enter your school's postal code.
 4. Examine a map of your school's riding and review the boundaries. Point out the location of your school within the riding.
 5. Review the list of candidates running in your school's riding (www.elections.ca).

TEACHER NOTE

The school's riding may be different from where some students call home. Please contact CIVIX if you would like your school to receive Student Vote ballots for multiple ridings, to accommodate students who would like to vote for their local candidates.

6. Have students fill out the 'After' column in the *Anticipation Guide* (Activity 10.1).
7. Organize students into groups and assign each group a candidate (or political party), or allow them to choose one based on their preference. The goal is to ensure that a group covers each candidate/party running in your riding, including independent candidates and those with no party affiliation.

Using online sources ask each group to research their assigned party/candidate and create a presentation and product in a selected format (e.g., slide deck, video, bulletin board, party pamphlet).

Guiding questions:

- Who is the local candidate? Do they belong to a political party?
- If applicable, who is the current leader of the party?
- What are the main messages of their campaign advertisements?
- What are the party's main priorities or promises? Who are the main beneficiaries?
- How will the party address the top issues identified in the *Starter* activity? Do the proposals have long-term benefit?

Suggested sources:

- Candidate/party websites
- Candidate/party social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)
- Candidate/party campaign literature
- News sources
- *Pollenize* – pollenize.org/canada (party platform summaries on a dozen topics)

TEACHER NOTE

Students should outline their information sources on their products or during the presentation. Review Lesson 6 for tips and tricks for source verification.

8. Have each group present their political party to the rest of the class. Students can take notes on each presentation using Graphic Organizer 10.2. Provide as many copies as necessary.

Consolidation

Have a brief closing discussion about the political parties and local candidates with your class, or have students fill out an 'Exit Slip' (Activity 10.3).

- What are the key similarities and differences between the candidates and/or parties?

- What is one thing you will share with your family about the parties and candidates?
- Which candidate/party do you think you will vote for and why?
- What else do you want to know before making your voting decision?

Assessment

Using Activity 10.4, ask students to select an issue that matters most to them and research each party's position or promises on the selected issue. Who are the main beneficiaries? Will the policy have long-term benefit? If so, how? Which party's position or policy do you most agree with and why? The *Pollenize* tool (pollenize.org/canada) can be used to support this research and comparison. Provide enough copies of 10.4 to allow for a write-up on each party running a candidate in your riding.

Extended Learning

Organize a presentation schedule that would allow each group to visit other classes in the school on a rotational basis to help inform and prepare the student electorate for Student Vote Day. A school-wide assembly could also be coordinated.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

An **electoral system** is the way in which we elect our representatives. An electoral system includes set rules for how preferences are recorded and the method for determining which candidates win. There are many different electoral systems used around the world.

Canada uses a system called **Single-Member Plurality or First Past the Post (FPTP)**. The country is divided into geographic areas called ridings (or electoral districts). Canada is currently divided into 338 **federal ridings**.

In our system, each riding is represented by one Member of Parliament. The size of ridings is determined by factors such as population size, geographic features and social considerations, such as culture and language. The most important factor is making sure that the number of people represented is

as equal as possible, so that every vote counts the same.

Urban ridings are often geographically smaller due to dense populations, while rural ridings are often geographically larger with less dense populations.

In FPTP, voters choose a single candidate on the ballot and the candidate with the most votes wins. The successful candidate does not need more than 50 per cent of the vote; they only require one more vote than any of the other candidates. This is called **plurality**.

Under Canada's parliamentary system, the party that elects the greatest number of representatives to the House of Commons usually forms government and their leader becomes the **prime minister**.

Canada has a **fixed-date election** law. This means that federal elections must take place at least every four years, and that the date for that election is set. Canada's 43rd federal general election is scheduled for

October 21, 2019. Though we have fixed-date elections, a prime minister can still request that a federal election be held at any time as long as it is no later than five years after the previous election.

The election campaign period starts when Parliament is dissolved by the governor general, on the advice of the prime minister, and an election is called. The length of a campaign may vary, but it must be between 36 and 50 days. During an election campaign, an organized course of action is taken by a political party and its candidates to share its vision and platform with voters.

A **political platform** is a series of declared principles and policies on jurisdictional issues concerning government and the public. Candidates and parties use a communications strategy that incorporates all three types of media (paid, earned, owned) to share their party platforms through announcements, advertising and events and to gain support from constituents.