

Lesson 13

Post-Election Analysis



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we analyze election results?
- 2 How can we predict, track and assess the actions of the newly elected government?

PURPOSE

Elections are complex events and it is helpful to analyze the outcome to better understand the process and what the results mean for the future of the country.

In this lesson, students will examine the results of the Student Vote Canada 2019 program and the 2019 federal election. Afterwards, they will analyze the campaign promises made by the newly elected government and assess what these actions will mean for stakeholder groups and Canadians across the country. In the *Consolidation* activity, students have the opportunity to reflect on the outcome of the election.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- Analyze the results of the election;
- Discuss how campaign events influenced the outcome of the election;
- Predict the newly elected government's priorities and assess the potential impact;
- Recognize the importance being an active and engaged citizen.

Starter

1. Announce the results of your school's Student Vote election. Who received the most votes? Was it a close race? What percentage of the vote did the winner receive?
2. Compare the results of your school's vote with the results of other schools in your riding. Are the results similar or different? How did the results vary between schools? (Individual school results can be found at www.studentvote.ca/canada > Results).

Activities

1. Review some key concepts for analyzing election results, including seat count, popular vote, governing party and official opposition.
 - **Seat count** is the term used to show the number of representatives that each party will have in the House of Commons. It reflects the number of ridings won by each party.
 - **Popular vote** is the term used to show the total support a political party received across the country. It is shown as a percentage and is calculated by dividing the number of votes a party received by the total number of votes in the election.
 - The party that has the most seats usually becomes the governing party, and their leader typically becomes prime minister. If the governing party has more than half of all seats, they will have a **majority government**. If they have less than half, they will have a **minority government**.
 - The party that has the second-highest number of seats becomes the official opposition. Any other party is called an opposition party.
2. Using the Student Vote Canada 2019 website, the Elections Canada website and/or media reports, compare the Student Vote and general election results. Guiding questions:
 - Which party won the Student Vote election? Is it a majority or minority government?
 - Which party won the general election? Is it a majority or minority government?
 - Which candidate won in your riding in the Student Vote? Did the same candidate win in the general election?
 - Why do you think the results of the Student Vote or general election were similar or different?
 - What factors do you think shaped the outcome of the election?

3. The ballots have been counted and the election is over — but what does it all mean for Canada? As a class, review some of the promises made by the winning political party during the election as a preview of what may come in the next several months. You can use the party's website, media websites or pollenize.org/canada.
4. Divide students into pairs or small groups and have them analyze one of the promises using Activity 13.1. Guiding questions:
 - Who will be impacted by the related action or decision?
 - Does it represent a turning point or critical moment for the issue? If so, how?
 - Do the other parties support this decision? Why or why not?
 - How can the government's progress on this commitment or promise be tracked?
5. Afterwards, have students share their analysis with the rest of the class.

Consolidation

1. Ask students to produce a final written reflection on one of the following questions:
 - What factors do you think shaped the outcome of the election?
 - Was there a decisive moment or a series of events that led to the eventual results? Explain your reasoning.
 - What do the election results mean for you and your community? Provide concrete examples of how the newly elected government's policies or commitments will have an impact.
 - How can we hold government to account on their campaign promises?
2. As a culminating activity, have students fill out the Election Reflection 'Exit Slip' (Activity 13.2).

Extension Activity

Have students compare news stories from several different media websites and regional and/or local newspapers to analyze the portrayal of the election outcome.

Guiding questions:

- Did the sources report the results in a similar way? Why or why not?
- How is the future of Canada portrayed by each source?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

After the close of voting on election day, election officials count the ballots for their voting places and report them to Elections Canada headquarters, who share the results publicly. Results are released on an ongoing basis throughout election night and sometimes the following day.

Seat count is the term used to reflect the number of representatives that each party will have in the House of Commons. It represents the number of local riding races won by each party. The 338 seats contested in this election will be awarded to the candidates in each of the ridings who receive the greatest number of votes.

Popular vote is the term used to show the total support a political party received across the country. It is

expressed as a percentage and is calculated by dividing the number of votes a party received by the total number of votes in the federal election. Under our electoral system (FPTP), the seat count is not related to the popular vote percentage and therefore has no impact on the election outcome.

The political party with the most seats usually forms the government and their leader typically becomes the prime minister. If the governing party has more than half of all the seats (170 or more), they will have a **majority government**. If they have half or less (169 or fewer), they will have a **minority government**.

The party that has the second-highest number of seats usually becomes the **official opposition**. Any other party is called an opposition party. It is the responsibility of the opposition parties to hold the government to account and

to question its actions. The official opposition organizes a shadow cabinet to act as expert critics on the portfolios or government ministries managed by each cabinet minister.

In order to pass any **legislation** (laws) or budgets, the bills must have support from more than half of the Members of Parliament. If the governing party has a minority government, they will need to gain the support of some of the opposition parties or independent candidates in order to pass any legislation.

Elections are multifaceted events. Counting the ballots and crunching the numbers is essential, but so is looking for answers and meaning behind the process and outcome.