Lesson 8
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?

3 What did I learn through the Student Vote program??

OVERVIEW

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 program and the federal election. Afterwards, they will analyze the campaign promises made by the newly elected government and assess what these actions will mean for 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; and,
- Reflect on the importance being an active and engaged citizen.

Starter

1. Announce the results of your school's Student Vote election. Which candidate 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 studentvote.ca/canada > *The 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 percentage of total votes that each party received. It is shown as a percentage and is calculated by dividing the number of votes that a party received by the total number of votes in the election.
   - The party with 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 most number of seats becomes the **official opposition**. Any other party is called an opposition party.
   - To pass a law, the government must have support from more than half of the members of the House of Commons. If there is a minority government, the governing party will need to gain the support of other parties or independent candidates in order to pass any laws.

2. Using the Student Vote Canada 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 8.1. 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 and evaluated?

5. Afterwards, have students share their analysis with the rest of the class.

Consolidation

As a culminating activity, have students fill out the Election Reflection 'Exit Slip' (Activity 8.2) or answer the questions through a written reflection in their learning journal.

- Three things I learned about federal elections in Canada.
- Two activities I enjoyed the most during the Student Vote.
- One way that this experience has changed me or developed my opinions.

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?

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., seat count, popular vote, governing party, official opposition, majority government, minority government).
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	• Analyze the demographics of the newly elected House of Commons. How does it compare to the population of Canada? How does it compare to the previously elected House of Commons?
Accommodations	• If working in small groups is not possible, considering using Google Docs for collaborative activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

After the polls close on election day, election workers count the ballots for their polling 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 most 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** 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.