

# Welcome

Dear Educator,

Thank you for involving your students in the Student Vote program for the 2025 Canadian federal election.

We recognize the many competing priorities you face, and we're grateful for your commitment to empowering the next generation of informed voters.

Evaluations of the Student Vote program have consistently shown that it positively impacts students by increasing their knowledge of government and elections, enhancing their sense of civic responsibility, and building their confidence to participate in the voting process.

Moreover, the program encourages students to share what they've learned at home, sparking conversations about the election within their families and expanding the learning experience to the broader community.

The lessons are designed to teach students about the foundations of democracy, their rights and responsibilities as citizens, how government and elections work in Canada, how to critically evaluate political information, and how to participate meaningfully in the democratic process.

The activities also incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies, helping students develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The whole experience can foster a sense of belonging by helping students learn about themselves and understand others. This resource emphasizes the importance of developing constructive dialogue skills among students.

Within the front matter, you will find guiding principles for classroom discussion and activities for co-creating classroom norms with students. Developing classroom norms with your students is a great way to ensure a safe and caring classroom environment and encourage respectful, meaningful discussion.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact our team at [hello@civix.ca](mailto:hello@civix.ca).

Please be sure to visit the 2025 federal election website for videos, slide decks, digital activity sheets and more: [www.studentvote.ca/canada](http://www.studentvote.ca/canada)

Wishing you and your students a memorable and engaging experience!

The CIVIX Team

# Acknowledgements

CIVIX is a non-partisan, national charity dedicated to building the habits of active and informed citizenship among school-aged youth. Student Vote is the flagship program of CIVIX.



Student Vote Canada is presented by CIVIX in collaboration with Elections Canada—our national electoral agency.



We would like to thank the countless educators who, over the years, have contributed their ideas and feedback to the development of this resource.

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# Table of Contents

- 4 How to Use This Resource**
- 5 Lesson Pathways**
- 6 Suggestions for Wider Engagement**
- 7 Guiding Principles for Classroom Discussion**
- 8 Creating a Discussion-Friendly Classroom**
- 14 Lesson 1: Democracy**
- 23 Lesson 2: Levels of Government**
- 30 Lesson 3: Political Ideologies**
- 37 Lesson 4: Political Persuasion**
- 42 Lesson 5: Federal Elections**
- 50 Lesson 6: The Leaders' Debate**
- 58 Lesson 7: The Voting Process**
- 67 Lesson 8: Post-Election Analysis**

# How to Use This Resource

This resource is intended to improve civic literacy, introduce the concepts of democracy and elections, increase awareness about government, and teach students how to effectively participate as responsible citizens in their communities.

The lessons build upon each other, but they can also be used as stand-alone activities depending on the needs of your classroom and schedule. Consider consulting the *Lesson Pathways* on the following page to condense the learning into 2 or 4 classes/periods.

Below is a brief description of the components of each lesson.

## Guiding Questions

These critical queries bring a clear focus to the lesson and direct student learning. Share these questions with students at the beginning of the lesson to support an awareness of the overarching Learning Goals and to enhance engagement.

## Overview

The lesson overview outlines the big idea and provides a brief summary of the learning and activities of the lesson.

## Learning Goals

Concrete knowledge and competencies that students are expected to have acquired or are working towards based on the instruction and activities completed in each lesson.

## Strategies

Each lesson has been broken down into two parts with several strategies. You are encouraged to pick and choose from the strategies and related support tools based on the needs of your classroom and available time.

- **Starter:** Suggested opening activity, meant to pique interest in the topic and/or assess previous knowledge.
- **Activities:** A series of key activities that help students understand and apply the essential concepts and develop key competencies.
- **Consolidation:** Concluding questions and tasks to summarize and reflect on what was learned throughout the lesson.

## Adaptations and Supports

A few reminders and suggestions for language learners, culturally responsive pedagogy and accessibility as well as accommodation considerations.

## Background Information for Teachers

This backgrounder provides contextual information related to the lesson theme. The purpose is to enhance teacher knowledge and understanding. Not all terms and concepts are covered in the lesson.

# Lesson Pathways

## 2 LESSON PATHWAY

1

- Lesson 3: Political Ideologies - Starter
- Lesson 3: Political Ideologies - Activities
- Lesson 5: Federal Elections - Starter

2

- Lesson 5: Federal Elections - Activities
- Have students research the candidates and parties (use media websites, Pollenize, Party Leader Q&A videos)
- Lesson 5: Federal Elections - Consolidation

## 4 LESSON PATHWAY

1

- Lesson 3: Political Ideologies - Starter
- Lesson 3: Political Ideologies - Activities
- Lesson 3: Political Ideologies - Consolidation

2

- Lesson 4: Political Persuasion - Starter
- Lesson 4: Political Persuasion - Activities (focus on current examples of political ads)
- Lesson 4: Political Persuasion - Consolidation

3

- Lesson 5: Federal Elections - Starter
- Lesson 5: Federal Elections - Activities
- Have students research the candidates and parties (use media websites, Pollenize, Party Leader Q&A videos)

4

- Party/candidate presentations (if applicable)
- Lesson 7: The Voting Process - Starter
- Lesson 7: The Voting Process - Activities, Step 1
- Lesson 5: Federal Elections - Consolidation

# Suggestions for Wider Engagement

The Student Vote program can be organized for your class, several classes, or your entire school.

If you choose to engage more than your own class, there are great ways to involve your students in the implementation of the program and provide them with an opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

You can divide students into groups and assign each 'team' a specific responsibility (see examples below). Choose the number of teams and focus areas that make sense for the size of your school.

## Communications Team

Responsible for advertising the Student Vote program and encouraging participation.

- Develop key messaging (slogans) and create outreach materials in different formats (e.g., posters, videos, signage)
- Design and implement a schedule for your communications and announcements, including the who, what, when, where, and how (e.g., morning announcements, classroom presentations, lobby displays, Google Classroom)
- Ask your school administrator to publicize Student Vote Canada electronically and on school signage
- Use promotional activities such as a voting mascot or themed music over the PA system in the week leading up to Student Vote Day

## Education Team

Responsible for educating students about the parties, candidates and election issues.

- Develop an education plan about what students should know (e.g., federal government responsibilities, key election issues, the candidates, and party platforms)
- Share the videos and tools from the Student Vote Canada website
- Disseminate literature and activities to classes throughout the school (e.g., bulletins, posters, multi-media presentations, learning activities)
- Create fun and excitement through trivia games, music, and small prizes (e.g., school swag)

## Events Team

Responsible for organizing events during the campaign period in coordination with the other teams.

- Design a special event to build excitement around the election and improve voter turnout, such as a school-wide or grade-wide assembly
- Coordinate a visit from the candidates over lunch or organize an all-candidates meeting
- Invite a guest speaker to discuss public service or the role of the media in elections (e.g., former elected representative, public servant, journalist)
- Assign the roles and manage the event(s)

## Student Vote Day Team

Responsible for organizing the election.

- Determine which voting method will work best for your school on Student Vote Day (e.g., stationary voting or mobile voting). Refer to the *Election Manual* for options
- Train election officials for their duties (e.g., election workers, candidate representatives)
- Compile a voters list and determine ID requirements (if desirable)
- Decide on options for early voting for students who may be away on Student Vote Day
- Create an information session, poster, or skit about how to fill out a ballot
- Ensure all materials are ready for Student Vote Day (ballots, ballot boxes, voting screens, tally sheets, voters list)

## Media and Community Relations Team

Responsible for engaging with local media and the greater community.

- Invite media to attend your campaign events or Student Vote Day (check with your school policy)
- Write an opinion piece or letter to the editor of the local paper about the election
- Interview students and/or take photos of your Student Vote Day to share on your school's website, newsletter, or social media
- Plan ways to engage parents and families in the election (e.g., organize an information session for parents, host a viewing party of the leaders' debate at the school)

# Guiding Principles for Classroom Discussion

While discussion can occur in all kinds of settings, formal and informal, the classroom allows educators to approach it in a structured and intentional way. This is not to say that spontaneous or unstructured discussion is not valuable—some of your best classroom discussions may be spontaneous.

However, with intention, preparation, and practice, educators can help students systematically build constructive discussion habits regardless of context.

Students often want to discuss thorny or controversial questions, and school is a place where this can happen effectively.

Here are some guiding principles you may want to consider within classroom discussion.

## Build Community

Students will be more likely to contribute to a discussion if they feel like they are in a safe and comfortable environment. Use activities that allow students to share their interests and backgrounds and co-create a set of classroom norms.

## Let Students Lead

Teachers are often used to doing most of the talking in a classroom. Discussion can often look like a lighthouse, with the educator at the centre engaging sequentially with students, often the most vocal in the class. However, the best discussions often occur when students engage with each other, and the teacher is acting as a facilitator.

## Embrace Structure

Student discussion can yield better outcomes when implemented with intention and structure. Using discussion protocols can help build more equitable conversations and ensure more voices are heard.

## Recognize Different Discussion Styles

Some students will be outgoing and chatty, while others are reserved and quiet. Many will be somewhere in-between. Some students formulate their thoughts by talking, and others need to think for a bit before they feel comfortable contributing. Considering these different discussion styles and using various discussion protocols will help you get the most out of these exchanges.

## Start Small

Students may initially feel more comfortable voicing their opinions in smaller groups. For any discussion, consider starting with groups of two or three before moving to a larger discussion. Consider trying different combinations with small groups, such as mixing reserved and outspoken students, or keeping students with similar discussion styles together. Both strategies can be helpful for student learning at different times.

For more best practices and a description of different discussion protocols, please refer to CIVIX's *Constructive Discussions Guide* at [www.politalks.ca](http://www.politalks.ca).



# Creating a Discussion-Friendly Classroom

## Establishing Classroom Norms

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Creating a class contract or norms of agreement helps establish clear guidelines about behaviour and expectations, enables students to feel safe expressing their opinions, increases the range of voices heard in the classroom, and can help reduce instances of incivility.

Creating an agreement that is meaningful to your students requires giving them ownership of what goes in it. Co-creating this agreement will help students feel that their voices matter and encourage them to hold each other accountable when norms are violated.

Once established, it is helpful to revisit the agreement before and after your first few classroom discussions, and update it as needed. Afterward, reviewing the agreement monthly is a good strategy to promote commitment.

Please use or adapt the activities below as you see fit. You may want to split up the activities over multiple days.

## 1 Reflection on Discussion: Hopes and Concerns (20-25 minutes)

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This activity allows students to understand the purpose of discussion, reflect on past experiences, and identify positive and negative characteristics associated with classroom discussion. It is designed to promote a group commitment to creating an environment in which students feel comfortable and confident participating.

- a) Begin with an introductory conversation about discussion. Have students discuss in pairs for a few minutes and then discuss as a whole class.

Guiding questions:

- What is the goal of discussion?
- How can we learn from discussion?
- Why is discussion important?

- b) As a class, create a working definition of discussion based on responses from the previous step, or provide the following definition: “the act of exchanging ideas with others through focused conversation on a specific problem, question, or issue.” Emphasize that discussion is different from debate, where the focus is on winning an argument, or pointing out weaknesses in your opponent’s argument. The purpose of discussion is to exchange ideas and deepen our understanding of a topic.

For an extended activity, ask students to work in pairs to complete a graphic organizer to further refine their understanding of discussion.

- c) Next, collect student feedback about their concerns about classroom discussion. Post the following prompts on chart paper or as headings on the board.
- Classroom discussion doesn't work very well when...
  - A reason I might not want to speak in class is...

Give students a few sticky notes to write their ideas for each prompt privately. Ask students to add their sticky notes to the chart paper for each prompt. Afterward, review the answers as a class, ensuring anonymity.

Alternatively, you could use Google/Microsoft Forms for this activity to ensure students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions.

- d) Repeat the process above using the following prompts related to effective classroom discussion:
- I feel comfortable participating in discussion when...
  - Classroom discussion works well when...
- e) As a transition into the next part of the activity, let students know that the responses will provide a starting point for creating class norms.

## 2 Understand the Purpose of Norms (15 minutes)

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- a) Review the concept of norms. Classroom norms inform us of our responsibilities and how we are expected to behave towards each other.

Ask students to discuss the following questions using a 'Think-Pair-Share' protocol.

- Why is it important to have a shared understanding of norms and expectations?
- What could happen if we did not have a set of norms?
- Should students be part of establishing classroom norms or should the teacher provide a list? Why?

- b) Draw on student responses from Activity 1 (Reflection on Discussion) to anticipate scenarios or problem areas, and brainstorm ways in which students or the teacher can respond in those situations. Some examples might include:

- A teacher wants to hear the opinions of all students before determining the topic of an assignment
- A classmate says something other students consider offensive
- Some students dominate classroom discussions
- Some students do not feel comfortable speaking in front of others
- Students want to share ideas with their teacher to improve the classroom environment
- A student uses their phone during a peer's presentation

### 3 Co-Create Norms (35 minutes)

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Once students understand the purpose of establishing classroom norms, you can give them the opportunity to consider what they want these norms to include individually, in small groups, then as a whole class.

1. Through a 'Placemat' activity, have students propose norms they believe are important in the classroom. This cooperative learning strategy allows students to individually think about, record, and share their ideas in groups and then reach a consensus on the most important norms.
  - a) Divide students into groups of four or five. You can provide each group with one large sheet of paper divided into sections (one for each student and a centre block for the final group list). Alternatively, the activity could be conducted with an online app.
  - b) Ask students to individually write down their proposed norms in their allotted space (suggested minimum of 3 norms per student).
  - c) Provide time for each student to share their recorded responses with the rest of their group without discussion from the other students.
  - d) Next, have each group decide, collectively, on the five most important norms and record them in the centre of the placemat. It is essential that all group members agree with the group list.
2. As a class, create norms of agreement for the classroom. As each statement is agreed upon, include a discussion about the reasons for it and/or possible examples and characteristics. Consider using a T-Chart with the norms on the left and reasons on the right (e.g. left column: "Raise our hands when we speak," right column: "To ensure one person is speaking at a time and to show respect").

### Sample Norms

- Listen actively (e.g., be attentive, check your body language).
- Show empathy.
- Respond with curiosity instead of judgement.
- Make comments using "I" statements.
- Critique ideas, not individuals.
- Give everyone the opportunity to speak.
- Avoid making assumptions or generalizations about others.
- If you don't understand something, ask a question.
- Do not ask people to speak for their social/ethnic group.
- If someone shares an idea or opinion that helps your own learning, show appreciation.
- The right to pass (for the chance for speaking).
- If you say something that offends someone, apologize, even if the offence was not intended.
- Always presume good intentions of those involved in the discussion.
- Strive for equitable participation from all members in the discussion.

## **4 Practice and reflection (25 minutes)**

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Practice these norms by having a discussion on a low-stakes topic, such as 'cats are better than dogs.' Start with the discussion in small groups and then move to a whole-class discussion. Afterward, debrief with the class:

- What went well and why?
- Did the class uphold the norms and expectations?
- Is there anything that can be improved?
- Revise the list as necessary

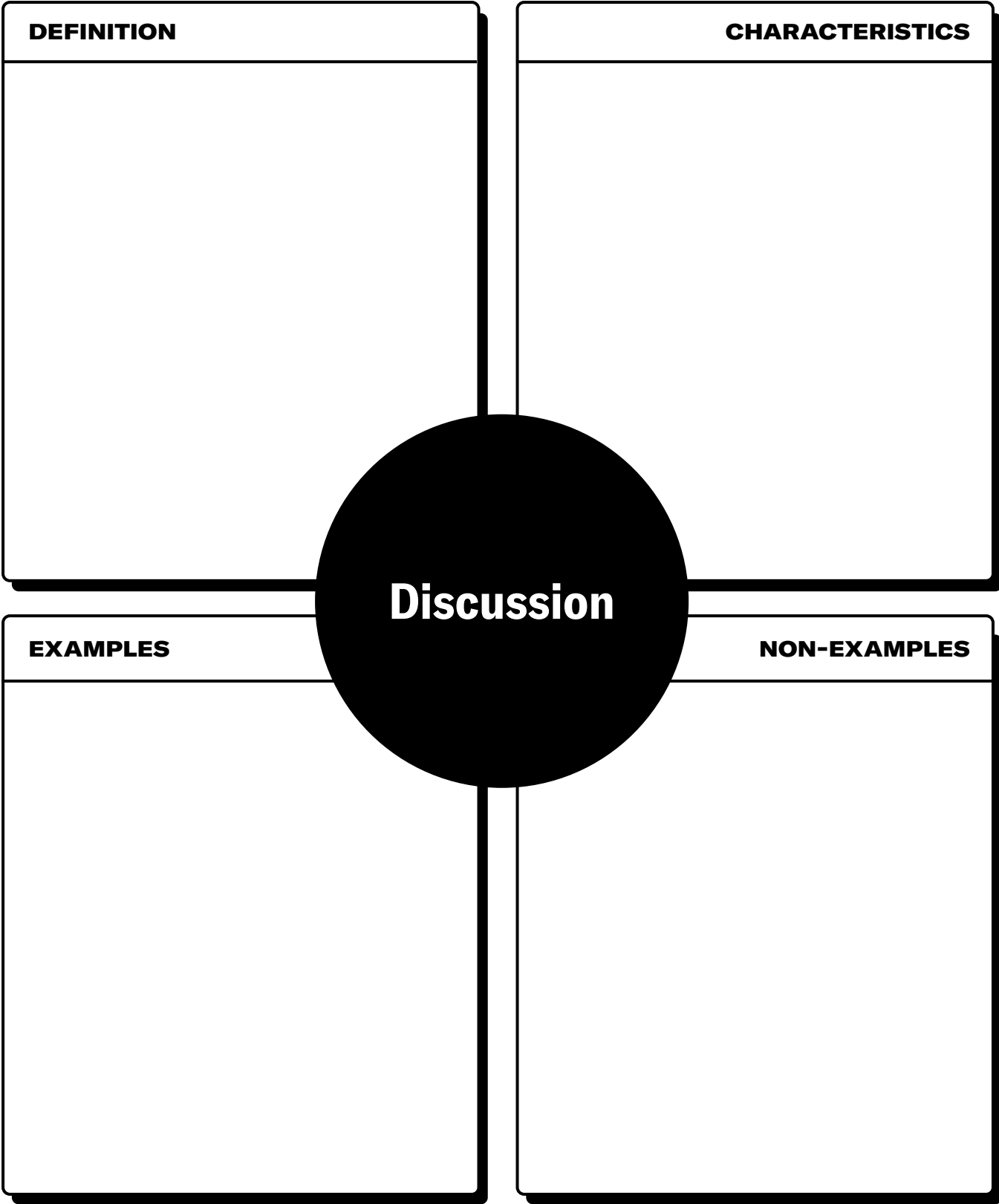
## **5 Assessment (10 minutes)**

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Provide students with a 1-1-1 Exit Card:

- One norm that was easy for you to practice
- One norm you know that you have to work on
- One topic you would like to discuss as a class in the future

# Fayer Model: What is Discussion?



## 1-1-1 Exit Card: Norms of Agreement

<b>1-1-1 EXIT CARD</b>	
<b>1</b>	One norm that was easy for you to practice:
<b>1</b>	One norm you know that you have to work on:
<b>1</b>	One topic you would like to discuss as a class in the future:

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<b>1-1-1 EXIT CARD</b>	
<b>1</b>	One norm that was easy for you to practice:
<b>1</b>	One norm you know that you have to work on:
<b>1</b>	One topic you would like to discuss as a class in the future:

# Lesson 1: Democracy



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What does it mean to live in a democracy?**
- 2 Why are democratic principles essential for a fair and inclusive society?**
- 3 How can individuals actively participate in and support democracy?**

## OVERVIEW

There are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy, such as fundamental freedoms, fair elections, citizen participation and the rule of law. Citizens have a responsibility to uphold and support these principles.

This lesson introduces students to the values of democracy through a word association activity. Through video content, discussion, and real-world scenario analysis, students will deepen their understanding of democratic principles and their role as active citizens. To conclude the lesson, students identify which democratic principle they believe is the most important and explain their reasoning. They also outline one concrete action they can take to actively support democracy in their community.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- identify and explain key democratic principles;
- analyze real-world scenarios to understand how democratic principles function in society;
- engage in discussion and provide examples of responsible citizenship; and,
- describe ways young people can actively participate in and support democracy.

## Starter

Engage students in thinking about key values connected to democracy through a quick word association, discussion, and voting activity.

1. Display the following words on the board:

**Freedom | Equality | Inclusivity | Accountability  
| Fairness | Diversity**

Read each word aloud and ask students to quickly write the first word, phrase, or image that comes to mind for each.

2. Have students vote on the word they feel most connected to by raising their hands or using an online poll. Identify and share the top two or three words with the most votes.
3. Facilitate a brief whole-class discussion:
  - Why do you think these words stood out to most people?
  - Can you think of a real-world example related to one of these words?
  - How might these words be connected?
4. Ask students to predict today's lesson topic based on their discussion. Emphasize that democracy is built on freedom, equality, inclusivity, accountability, fairness, and diversity.

## Activities

1. Review the idea of living in a democracy using the "Democratic Principles" video and Handout 1.1.
  - Democracy by definition is "rule by the people," where a majority of the people are included in political decision-making.
  - A democratic society favours equal rights, freedom of speech, rule of law and political tolerance.
  - A healthy democracy requires responsible citizens who value the system of government and actively participate in society.
2. Divide students into small groups and have them explore real-world examples of democratic principles from Activity 1.2. Have them read the scenario and respond to the related questions.
3. Review each scenario and ask students to share the responses from their group discussions. Afterward, discuss as a class:
  - What did you learn about democracy through these scenarios?
  - How can young people contribute to democracy before they can vote?

## Consolidation

Ask students to fill out Activity 1.4. This reflection encourages personal connection to democratic principles and reinforces the role of active citizenship.

- Which principle do you think is the most important and why?
- What is one action you can take this year to support democracy?

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., freedom, equality, inclusivity, accountability, fairness, diversity, elections, rule of law, transparency).</li><li>• Distribute copies of Handout 1.1 before watching the video.</li><li>• Ensure that subtitles are on during the video and consider playing the video more than once.</li><li>• Support students' understanding of democratic principles with visuals of real-world examples.</li></ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compare democracy to other forms of governance representing different countries and cultures that have meaning for your students.</li><li>• Students will come from different backgrounds and may have different opinions about democracy. Ensure a safe place for respectful discussion.</li><li>• Review democratic principles in various social settings, inclusive of Indigenous Peoples, and diverse cultural groups.</li><li>• Discuss the systemic barriers to equality faced by Indigenous Peoples, and other diverse cultural groups.</li></ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If working in pairs or small groups is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.</li></ul>

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS**

**Democracy** means rule by the people, and it is built on several guiding principles that form its foundation. In a democracy, citizens have both rights and responsibilities—including the responsibility to uphold and support these core principles.

The following is an overview of key principles that guide democracies around the world. While the way these principles are applied can vary from country to country, they reflect the shared values that help ensure governments are fair, accountable, and representative.

### **Equality and Human Rights:**

All individuals are valued equally and have the same rights and opportunities. Discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability is not allowed. Fundamental rights—such as freedom of thought, opinion, and assembly—are protected.

### **Economic Freedom:**

In a democracy, the government allows private ownership of property and businesses. People have the right to choose their own work and to join labour unions. Most democracies also embrace the idea of a free market, where the government does not excessively control the economy.

**Protected Rights:** Democratic countries formally outline the rights and freedoms of all citizens in a constitution, charter, or similar document. This protects individuals from government overreach and ensures that everyone's freedoms are clearly defined and upheld.

**Rule of Law:** In a democracy, everyone is equal under the law. All citizens are entitled to equal protection, and no one—not even government officials—is above the law.

### **Control of the Abuse of Power:**

To guard against corruption and misuse of power, democratic governments put limits on the authority of government officials and public servants. Systems of checks and balances ensure that power is shared and monitored.

**Free and Fair Elections:** Democratic governments are chosen through regular, free, and fair elections. All adult citizens have the right to vote and run for office, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or economic status.

**Multi-Party Systems:** A healthy democracy includes multiple political parties, giving voters a choice of candidates, ideas, and policies. Competing parties bring different perspectives to public debate and government decision-making.

**Political Tolerance:** Democracies value political tolerance, ensuring that people from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds—including minorities and marginalized groups—have the right to express their views and participate fully in the political process. Even those who disagree with the government or who are not in power must have the freedom to organize, speak out, and contribute to public debate.

**Citizen Participation:** A strong democracy depends on active citizen participation. This can include voting, running for office, staying informed, debating issues, attending community meetings, paying taxes, serving on juries, and participating in peaceful protests.

### **Accountability and Transparency:**

Elected and appointed officials must be accountable to the people for their actions. A transparent government holds public meetings, welcomes citizens to observe decision-making, and keeps the media and public informed.






**Independent Judiciary:** Democratic courts must be fair and impartial. Judges should make decisions based on the law, free from influence by the government, businesses, or political groups. An independent judiciary ensures that justice is applied equally.

### **Accepting the Results of Elections:**




In a democracy, the peaceful transfer of power is essential. After free and fair elections, all sides—including those who lose—must accept the results. Respecting election outcomes helps maintain trust in the democratic process.




# HANDOUT 1.2: The Principles of Democracy

There are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy.

PRINCIPLE	EXPLANATION
<p><b>FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All people living in a democracy have guaranteed rights, such as freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion, and the right to gather with others in public or private.</li> <li>• In Canada, our fundamental freedoms and equality rights are protected by the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>, part of Canada's Constitution.</li> <li>• The Charter also guarantees equality rights. You may not be discriminated against because of race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender or sexual orientation. Other grounds can be added as society changes.</li> <li>• In most democracies, individuals are valued equally according to their own laws.</li> </ul>
<p><b>FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult citizens have the opportunity to run for political office.</li> <li>• Adult citizens also have the right to vote in elections to choose their representatives.</li> <li>• Elections are conducted regularly in an honest manner without influence or intimidation.</li> <li>• All candidates and parties have an equal chance to share their ideas and compete for support and the results accurately reflect the will of the people.</li> <li>• In Canada, there must be elections to choose a federal government every five years or less.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACCOUNTABILITY &amp; TRANSPARENCY</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected representatives are accountable for their actions. They must perform their duties according to the wishes of those they represent, not for themselves or other interests.</li> <li>• In Canada, elected representatives participate in activities like Question Period to be held to account for their actions and respond to questions from the opposition parties, and engage in meetings with the public.</li> <li>• In a democracy, the media holds the government to account and aims to keep citizens informed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>THE RULE OF LAW</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws are enforced equally, fairly and consistently, and no one is above the law.</li> <li>• This means that everyone, including government officials, must obey the law.</li> <li>• It also means that governments cannot punish people unless they have broken the law.</li> <li>• All Canadians have a responsibility to respect the laws of the land, even if they disagree with them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CITIZEN PARTICIPATION</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democracy demands citizen involvement.</li> <li>• This includes participating in elections, being an informed citizen, debating issues, attending community meetings, paying taxes, serving on a jury and protesting.</li> <li>• All citizens in a democracy have a responsibility to uphold and support these principles, because without them, we are not a democracy.</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITY 1: Democracy in Action: Real-World Examples

SCENARIO	REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
<p><b>Scenario 1: Fundamental Freedom</b></p> 	<p>A high school has a policy that allows students to wear shirts with slogans, as long as they are respectful. A student wears a shirt with a political message that some disagree with. Some teachers demand the student be forced to remove it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> protect the student's right to wear the shirt?</li> <li>• Are there any limits to freedom of expression?</li> <li>• What role do citizens play in ensuring freedom of expression is protected?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scenario 2: Fair Elections</b></p> 	<p>During a federal election, reports surface that one candidate is spreading false information about their opponent. Social media is flooded with misleading posts and AI-generated images and videos that distort the opponent's statements. Some voters believe these false claims and decide not to vote because they feel frustrated and unsure about what to believe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important that elections are free and fair?</li> <li>• How can false information and AI-generated content impact the fairness of an election?</li> <li>• What actions can citizens take to identify and counter the spread of false information?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scenario 3: Accountability &amp; Transparency</b></p> 	<p>A federal cabinet minister is accused of spending taxpayer money on personal vacations. During Question Period in Parliament, opposition members demand answers, but the minister avoids responding. The media covers the story, and citizens express frustration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is accountability and transparency important in a democracy?</li> <li>• What role do journalists and the media play in holding politicians accountable?</li> <li>• How can citizens help ensure politicians act in the public's best interest?</li> </ul>

SCENARIO	REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
<p><b>Scenario 4: Rule of Law</b></p> 	<p>A group of climate activists blocks a highway to protest Canada’s expansion of oil pipelines. Police warn them to leave, saying that blocking roads is illegal. Some people support the protesters’ cause, while others believe they should protest legally without disrupting traffic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the rule of law apply to protests?</li> <li>• Is it ever okay for citizens to break the law in protest of an issue they believe in? Why or why not?</li> <li>• What are other effective ways to protest and create change?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scenario 5: Citizen Participation</b></p> 	<p>The municipal council is considering closing the nearby public library due to budget cuts. Many students, seniors, and newcomers rely on the library for free access to books, computers, and community programs. The municipal council is holding a public meeting to discuss the decision, but few young people plan to attend.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is community participation important, even for young people?</li> <li>• What democratic actions could young people take to make their voices heard?</li> <li>• What are other ways people can participate in democracy beyond voting?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scenario 6: Fundamental Freedoms</b></p> 	<p>A school board bans certain books from its school libraries because some parents find them controversial. The books discuss diverse histories, LGBTQ+ rights, and Indigenous perspectives. Some students and teachers argue that banning books is censorship, while others believe schools should remove content that makes some people uncomfortable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should schools or school boards have the power to ban books? Why or why not?</li> <li>• How do fundamental freedoms apply to books in schools?</li> <li>• How can community members respond if they disagree with a school board’s decision?</li> </ul>

# TEACHER GUIDE 1.3: Discussion Notes (Democracy in Action)

## Scenario 1: Fundamental Freedoms

- The Charter protects freedom of expression, meaning people can express opinions, even if others disagree. However, schools may limit expression if it promotes hate or disrupts learning.
- Expression that causes violence, spreads hate or endangers the safety of others can be restricted. In schools, administrators may have rules about dress codes, but these must be fair and not discriminate against viewpoints.
- People can challenge unfair restrictions, speak up when freedoms are at risk, and support media and groups that defend free speech.

## Scenario 2: Fair Elections

- When elections are free, anyone who is eligible can vote without fear, pressure, or interference. When they are fair, all candidates and parties have an equal chance to share their ideas and compete for support, and the results accurately reflect the will of the people.
- If false information spreads unchecked, democracy is weakened because people may base their decisions on false information.
- Do not share unverified or false information, even if it seems shocking. Instead, check the facts, share accurate sources, and engage in respectful discussions, both online and offline, to counter false claims.

## Scenario 3: Accountability & Transparency

- Leaders must answer to the public. Without accountability, politicians could act in their own interests or certain groups, rather than representing citizens.
- The media investigates government actions, reports corruption, and informs citizens about government decisions. Without a free press, politicians could hide information.
- People can ensure politicians act in good faith by asking questions, voting, writing to representatives, and supporting journalism. People can also protest or petition when leaders act unfairly.

## Scenario 4: Rule of Law

- The rule of law ensures that everyone, including protesters, must follow established legal guidelines. Peaceful protest is protected, but breaking laws can lead to legal consequences.
- Some people believe civil disobedience is necessary to force government action.
- Alternatives: contacting representatives, organizing petitions and legal demonstrations, media campaigns, and lobbying politicians.

## Scenario 5: Citizen Participation

- Democracy is not just about voting—it's about speaking up on issues that affect your community. If people don't participate, decisions may not reflect the needs of all citizens.
- Students can engage in conversations with friends and family, start a petition, attend public meetings, write letters to city council, organize a social media campaign, or work with other affected groups to advocate for keeping the library open.
- People can advocate for issues, join community groups, join political parties, stay informed, volunteer, and engage with their elected representatives.

## Scenario 6: Fundamental Freedoms

- In a democracy, different perspectives should be heard and respected, not censored.
- Libraries and schools play a role in providing diverse and inclusive materials.
- Citizens can challenge bans through inquiring with authorities, engaging in public discourse to build support, and organizing petitions or town halls.

## ACTIVITY 1.4: Exit Slip

### EXIT SLIP

Name:

Which principle do you think is the most important and why?

What is one action you can take this year to support democracy?

---

### EXIT SLIP

Name:

Which principle do you think is the most important and why?

What is one action you can take this year to support democracy?

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### EXIT SLIP

Name:

Which principle do you think is the most important and why?

What is one action you can take this year to support democracy?

# Lesson 2: Levels of Government



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do we need government?**
- 2 How is government structured in Canada?**
- 3 How do the different levels of government affect me?**

## OVERVIEW

Canada has different levels of government, each with its own elected representatives and areas of responsibility.

In this lesson, students reflect on the importance of government by imagining a world without it and considering how society would function. Through multimedia tools and an online scavenger hunt, students investigate the three levels of government in Canada (federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal) and their respective roles and responsibilities. The learning concludes with a rapid-fire sharing activity, assessing the impact of government.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain how governments contribute to a functioning society;
- describe the roles and responsibilities of Canada's three levels of government;
- investigate and analyze real-world examples of government actions through an online scavenger hunt; and,
- evaluate the impact of government.

## Starter

Get students thinking about the importance of government and its different levels by imagining a world without it.

- Using a 'Think-Pair-Share' protocol, ask students: What would happen if there was no government?
  - Have students write down 2-3 things they think would change in daily life.
  - Ask students to discuss their ideas with a partner for 2 minutes.
  - Invite students to share their thoughts. Guide the discussion toward:
    - Who would build roads?
    - How would we have schools, hospitals, or emergency services?
    - How would legal disputes be settled?
- Emphasize the following and introduce the theme of today's lesson.
  - Governments exist to provide structure, laws, and services that make society function.
  - Canada has several levels of government that work together to run our country.

## Activities

- Review the structure of government in Canada using the "Levels of Government" video, Slide Deck 2 and/or Handout 2.1. Guiding questions to support the instruction:
  - What kind of government do we have in Canada?
  - What is the title given to the elected representative at each level?
  - What is the title given to the leader at each level? How are they chosen?
  - How are issues or responsibilities divided among the levels of government?
- Distribute or provide access to Activity 2.2. Students will work independently or in pairs to complete an online scavenger hunt related to the levels of government.

To assist students, provide them with the website for the Government of Canada ([canada.ca](http://canada.ca)), your provincial/territorial government and your municipality.

- Debrief on the activity. Invite a few students to share their research findings.
  - What was the most interesting fact you found?
  - What is a key takeaway from each level of government?

## Consolidation

- Quick Brainstorm:** Where do you see evidence of government in your daily life? Ask students to silently think of a few examples and write them down.
- Rapid-Fire Sharing:** Go around the room quickly and ask students to share one example of how the government affects their life. No repeats! If a student's idea has already been said, they must think of a new one.
- Final Question:** Which level of government do you think has the biggest impact on you personally and why? Say each level of government aloud and ask students to stand up when they hear the level they think has the greatest impact on them. Invite some students to share their reasoning. Repeat for all levels.

## Extended Learning

Ask students to identify a real-world issue affecting their community and determine which level(s) of government are responsible for addressing it. Working in pairs or small groups, have students research their chosen issue, explore what actions the government has taken, and consider how citizens can advocate for change or further action. Using official government websites or news sources, ask students to gather evidence to support their findings. Have each group share a brief summary of their research. End with a class discussion on government responsibilities, emphasizing the collaboration between levels of government, and the ways in which citizens—especially young people—can engage in the democratic process.

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., elected representative, government, federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, prime minister, premier, MP, MLA, mayor, councillor).</li><li>• Consider pre-teaching Handout 2.1 to familiarize students with the vocabulary before watching the video.</li><li>• Share the video before class discussions and activities and/or show the video multiple times to support students' understanding.</li><li>• Provide examples or photos for government responsibilities.</li></ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the demographic data of one or more elected bodies and discuss the need for more diversity in politics.</li><li>• Review the governance structure of a nearby Indigenous community you know about.</li></ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.</li></ul>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Canada is a federal state, parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy.

A **federal state** brings together a number of different political communities with a central government (federal) for general purposes and separate local governments (provincial/territorial) for local purposes.

The division of powers is based on the idea that the level of government closest to the issue governs it. The distribution of responsibilities is found in Sections 91-95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

The **federal government** takes responsibility for the whole country and matters of national concern, such as the armed forces, international relations and trade, currency, fisheries and oceans, criminal law and public safety.

**Provincial and territorial governments** are responsible for their own province or territory and include issues such as education, health care, social welfare, transportation and highways.

**Municipal and local governments** receive their powers from their respective provincial or territorial government. These governments handle local matters, such as garbage and recycling, public transit, local parks and recreation.

Most First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities have their own systems of governance. These councils or governments share certain responsibilities with the provincial/territorial or federal government.

For some issues, the different levels of government have to work together and share the responsibility. For example, federal, provincial and municipal governments are concurrently responsible for the environment. The federal government enforces the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and regulates waterways used for fishing and shipping. Provincial governments regulate land use, mining, manufacturing and harmful emissions. Municipal governments are responsible for zoning, garbage disposal, and sewage and water treatment.

Each level of government has elected officials to represent the people (constituents) living in their designated areas (e.g., electoral districts/divisions, wards, municipalities). Elected representatives are responsible for proposing, studying, debating and voting on bills (potential laws), and raising issues put forward by their constituents.

Representatives at the federal level are called **Members of Parliament** (MPs). Representatives at the provincial or territorial level are called **Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) or Members of the House of Assembly (MHAs)**, depending on the province or territory. The elected representative at the municipal level is called a **councillor**.

Most federal and provincial elected representatives belong to a political party. A **political party** is a group of individuals with similar political views whose intention is to achieve power and implement various actions. At the territorial level in Northwest Territories and Nunavut and in most municipalities, there are no political parties.

The leader of the federal government is called the **prime minister**, whereas **premier** is the title given to the leader of each provincial/territorial government. At both levels of government, the leader of the political party with the greatest number of elected representatives in the legislative body usually assumes the role of the leader of that government. Therefore, we do not vote for the position of premier or prime minister directly.

The leader of the municipal government is called a mayor, reeve or chairperson. The leader is typically elected directly by the people.

As a **constitutional monarchy**, Canada's head of state is a hereditary sovereign (queen or king) who reigns in accordance with the Constitution. The sovereign is represented in Canada by the **governor general**, who is appointed by the sovereign on the advice of the prime minister.

In each of the ten provinces, the sovereign is represented by a **lieutenant governor**, who is appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister. Usually, the governor general and lieutenant governors serve five-year terms. There is no sovereign representative at the municipal/local or territorial level.

In Canada's three territories, territorial commissioners serve a similar role to a lieutenant governor. Commissioners do not represent the sovereign, however. They are appointed by and represent the federal government.

## HANDOUT 2.1: Government Responsibilities

In Canada, there are three levels of government: federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal/local. Each level has specific responsibilities, but they also overlap and collaborate to ensure communities function effectively.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT	MUNICIPAL/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT
 Agriculture and food	 Agriculture and farming	 Animal control
 Citizenship	 Children and family supports	 Fire protection
 Criminal law	 Colleges and universities	 Land use planning (Zoning)
 Currency	 Community and social services (Support for seniors, low income, disabled people)	 Local parks
 Environment	 Drivers' licensing and highways	 Police
 Federal taxes	 Emergency management	 Recreation and community facilities
 Fisheries and oceans	 Education	 Road maintenance
 Foreign affairs and international trade	 Hospitals and healthcare	 Property taxes
 Heritage and culture	 Indigenous relations	 Public transportation
 Housing, infrastructure and communities	 Mental health	 Waste management
 National defence	 Municipalities	 Water supply and treatment
 Natural resources	 Natural resources (Mining, forestry)	
 Official languages	 Property and civil rights	
 Postal service	 Provincial law and courts	
 Public safety and risk management	 Provincial taxes	
 Services for Indigenous communities	 Tourism	
 Transport and port authorities		
 Veterans affairs		

## ACTIVITY 2.2: Levels of Government Scavenger Hunt

Write down the website for each level of government. Use the website to find answers to the questions below. Record your answers in the spaces provided. Be prepared to share one interesting fact you learned!

<b>FEDERAL GOVERNMENT</b>	
<b>Website:</b>	
<b>1. Representation:</b> How many Members of Parliament are there in Canada?	
<b>2. Government Actions:</b> Choose one department/agency. Write down two recent actions or announcements it has made.	
<b>3. Laws:</b> Find a bill from the 44 <sup>th</sup> Parliament that interests you. Summarize what the bill is and its current status. (Look under <i>Treaties, laws and regulations</i> )	
<b>4. Government Support:</b> Find and describe one benefits program available to Canadians.	

<b>PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT</b>	
<b>Website:</b>	
<b>5. Representation:</b> How many members are in your provincial/territorial legislature? Who is your elected representative?	
<b>6. Key Ministries:</b> Write down two ministries or departments that you think are most important. Explain why they matter.	

## PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT

### 7. News:

Find a recent provincial/territorial government news announcement that could affect you. Explain how.

### 8. Government Spending:

Find a recent announcement related to government spending or investment. Summarize it and who is impacted.

## MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

### Website:

### 9. Representation:

How many members sit on your council? Who is your mayor or head of council?

### 10. Local News:

Summarize a recent news announcement or public notice from your municipality.

### 11. Community Engagement:

Identify an upcoming event in your community (e.g., meeting, festival, special initiative).

### 12. Well-Being Initiatives:

Write down two ways your municipal government supports physical and mental well-being in the community.

# Lesson 3: Political Ideologies



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How do personal beliefs and values influence political perspectives and opinions on issues?**
- 2 How does the political spectrum help us understand different political ideologies?**
- 3 What role do political parties play in our democracy, and how do they represent different perspectives in Canada?**

## OVERVIEW

In a democratic society, people have different beliefs and values influencing their position on political issues. Political parties bring together people who share similar beliefs and political perspectives.

In this lesson, students explore political perspectives, learn about the political spectrum, and examine the role of political parties in Canada. Through *Vote Compass: Canada Youth Edition*, they reflect on their political views and analyze their position on the political spectrum. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on their political ideology, the influences behind their views, and why respecting diverse opinions is important.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- articulate their opinion on a variety of issues;
- explain the political spectrum and how it helps categorize different political ideologies;
- evaluate their position on the political spectrum compared to other voters; and,
- evaluate the factors shaping their political views and the importance of respecting diverse perspectives.

## Starter

1. Begin by highlighting that different people have different beliefs and values, which can influence their position or opinion on an issue.
2. Play a rapid-fire game of “This or That?”:

Read a series of fun or thought-provoking statements and ask students to move to one side of the classroom for one answer and the other side for the opposite. Alternatively, you can ask students to raise hands if space is limited or if moving is too disruptive.

Sample questions:

- Should we have longer school days but fewer homework assignments **or** shorter school days but more homework?
- Should we ban social media for kids under 16 **or** let parents decide?
- Should we invest more in public transit **or** highways?
- Should we ban single-use plastics **or** let businesses decide?

Keep it fast-paced—no long debates, just quick choices!

3. Conclude the activity by inviting students to share one insight they gained about how personal beliefs influence opinions, emphasizing the value of embracing diverse perspectives.

## Activities

1. Review the concept of political ideologies using Slide Deck 3.
  - The political spectrum provides a way to characterize and distinguish between different political ideologies and policy positions. Economic and social issues are often separated into two distinct dimensions (Handout 3.1).
  - On economic issues, left-leaning people tend to support social services and government intervention in the economy. Right-leaning people tend to support lower taxes, free markets, and less government intervention.
  - On social issues, people who identify as progressive tend to support the improvement of society through change and the promotion of social justice values. People who identify as social conservatives tend to support the preservation of traditions and established values.

2. Discuss the role of **political parties**.
  - A political party is a group of people who share a similar political ideology and goals about society and government.

For the political party to have the chance to work towards its goals, the party tries to win an election and lead the government.

3. Ask students if they can name any of the political parties and party leaders at the federal level. Afterward, review the list of registered parties and those represented in the House of Commons.
4. Introduce students to *Vote Compass: Canada Youth Edition* ([youth.votecompass.com/can](https://youth.votecompass.com/can)). This online tool helps young people reflect on their political views and where they might be on the political spectrum. At the end of the survey, they will be placed on the two-dimensional political spectrum to analyze their position compared to the “average voter” of different political parties in Canada.

**Important Note:** *Vote Compass: Canada Youth Edition* plots students in relation to the average voter of the different parties. It does not plot them in relation to party platforms.

### TEACHER NOTES

- Arrange for computer or internet access so that students can complete the survey. It should take approximately 15–20 min to complete.
- Background information has been included for many questions, along with definitions, to help students better understand the issues and key terms.
- Give students time to analyze their results (their position on the spectrum and how they compare to the average voter of the main political parties).
- If you register your class and have students use the provided class code, you will receive access to the average results for your class, along with a list of the questions where students are most and least aligned. These topics could be used for further discussion.
- To create a class code, select the ‘I am a teacher’ option at [youth.votecompass.com/can](https://youth.votecompass.com/can). You will then be emailed the code to share with students and a unique link to access your class results.

## Consolidation

Through a written reflection, ask students to consider their responses to one or more of the following questions:

- Do you agree with where you were placed on the political spectrum? Why or why not?
- What do you think has shaped your political views most and why?
- Why is it important to listen to and respect others' opinions and perspectives?

## Extended Learning

Use the 'Structured Academic Controversy' discussion protocol (Guide 3.2 and Activity 3.3) to discuss an election issue. This protocol encourages students to gain a deeper understanding of an issue and work toward consensus-building.

You can create your own issue backgrounder or use the case studies on CIVIX's PoliTalks website, which outline the arguments for and against for various topics (<https://politalks.ca/case-studies/>).

## Assessment

Have students write an opinion piece focused on a position they agree or disagree with from *Vote Compass: Canada Youth Edition* ([youth.votecompass.com/can](https://youth.votecompass.com/can)).

Steps to writing an opinion piece:

- i) Decide whether you agree or disagree with the position.
- ii) Think of reasons why you hold that opinion.
- iii) Write an introductory paragraph, clearly stating your position.
- iv) Write at least one body paragraph that gives your reasons for your opinion and how it relates to your life experiences.
- v) Write a concluding paragraph that summarizes your position.

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide students with key terms and definitions in advance (e.g., political issue, perspective, political ideology, political spectrum, political party).</li><li>• Support students' understanding of political positions with real-world examples.</li><li>• Review terminology on <i>Vote Compass: Canada Youth Edition</i> that may be challenging for your students. Consider talking through the questions as students progress through the survey.</li></ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know your learners. Consider the cultural backgrounds of your students and be aware of discussions that may involve sensitive topics and could trigger an uncomfortable or unsafe environment.</li><li>• Sharing opinions is always challenging. Be aware of issues that may be controversial and support students in positive ways if they are uncomfortable sharing their opinions. Offer written or digital alternatives.</li><li>• Ensure a respectful environment remains a focus as students share opinions with which others may disagree.</li></ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you need an alternative to physical movement or prefer digital engagement for the <i>Starter</i> activity, consider using an online poll, such as Google Forms, Kahoot, Mentimeter, or Slido.</li></ul>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A **political issue** is a topic or problem related to how a community or country is governed, the rights and responsibilities of its people, and the decisions made by its government. These issues often spark debate, as people may have different perspectives on how they should be addressed.

A **perspective** is one particular point of view or outlook. Our perspectives are shaped by who we are and our environment or experiences. High school students may have a different perspective about life and priorities than their parents or caregivers. Alternatively, people living in different countries may have different priorities or values in life.

An **opinion** is a personal belief, judgment, or viewpoint about a topic. It is shaped by an individual's values, experiences, and perspective.

The **political spectrum** provides a way to characterize different beliefs and ideologies, and distinguish between actions on political issues and different political parties.

The political spectrum can 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.

Canadians who are **left-leaning on economic issues** tend to support higher taxes and more government spending, more government involvement, and more social services.

Canadians who are **right-leaning on economic issues** tend to support lower taxes and less government spending, less government intervention, and the free market.

Canadians who are **progressive on social issues** tend to support policies that advocate promoting social justice issues by changing established practices and institutions. An example could be a policy that increases hiring opportunities for underrepresented groups, such as Indigenous peoples, racial minorities, or people with disabilities.

Canadians who are **conservative on social issues** tend to support policies that advocate preserving traditional values and established institutions. An example could be preferring to keep statues, street names, and school names honouring historical figures the same rather than renaming them due to modern controversies.

A **political party** is a group of like-minded individuals with similar beliefs and a shared political ideology who intend to elect members to the legislative body.

Political parties are made up of interested members of the general public. Anyone above the required age (usually 14 years old) can be a member of a political party. Party members choose their party's leader and local candidates, and help them get elected.

Many believe society is becoming increasingly polarized or politically divided, causing political debate to become hostile with little room for compromise. We must respect that everyone has different influences and life experiences that shape their values and political perspectives, and that those things impact how they approach different issues.

## HANDOUT 3.1: Views on the Political Spectrum

People on opposite ends of the political spectrum usually have opposing views on various social and economic issues. Below is a general summary of views based on a two-dimensional political spectrum.

You may feel strongly about the views mentioned if you are at either end of the spectrum. People closer to the **centre** may feel less strongly about some issues or only support some views.

### Economic/Fiscal Issues

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Individuals who are **left-leaning** most often believe that:

- The government should play a role in influencing the economy and creating jobs, rather than leaving the responsibility primarily to the private sector and the free market.
- A large gap between the richest and poorest members of society is a negative thing and should be avoided.
- Wealthy individuals and corporations should pay a greater share of taxes than lower-income individuals.
- Government services like education and healthcare provide great value, and higher taxes and government debt may be needed to maintain these essential services.
- Policies, rules and regulations that may be considered inconvenient for businesses but could help fix social or environmental problems can be necessary for the greater good.

Individuals who are **right-leaning** most often believe that:

- The government should avoid direct intervention in the economy and instead support businesses and individuals as much as possible to create jobs, wealth, and innovation.
- Higher taxes for the wealthy is unfair. Financially successful people should be rewarded for their contributions to society.
- Smaller government is the best approach, which means less government influence on the economy and fewer government services.
- Taxes should be as low as possible, and the government should avoid going into debt.
- Regulation on businesses is unnecessary because the free market incentivizes businesses to pursue important social and environmental outcomes.

### Social Issues

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Individuals who are considered **progressive** most often believe that:

- Society should not be bound by tradition.
- Social conditions should change as needed and promptly when necessary.
- It is sometimes necessary to address inequities by making policies to specifically address the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- Active efforts are needed to protect every individual's rights.

Individuals who are considered **conservative** most often believe that:

- Traditions should be respected because they provide society with stability and security.
- Change should be slow and careful when it comes to social conditions.
- Targeted policies for marginalized groups are not necessary; everyone should be treated equally by laws and institutions.
- In making decisions about the country as a whole, it is not always possible to protect everyone's individual rights.

## TEACHER GUIDE 3.2: Structured Academic Controversy

The Structured Academic Controversy protocol is designed to discuss a controversial political issue. Students research and present arguments supporting an assigned position, but unlike in a debate, the focus of the discussion is on collaboration, understanding, and consensus building, as opposed to defeating their opponent.

1. Explain to students that they will discuss a controversial issue (not debate). If you have developed a set of classroom norms, briefly review them with students.
2. Present students with the controversial prompt or question you have chosen during your preparation. Sample prompts and backgrounders are available at: [politalks.ca/case-studies](http://politalks.ca/case-studies)
3. Divide students into small groups (4 or 6) and further divide them into Side A and Side B. Provide students with copies of Activity 3.3 and assign Side A/B with a specific “side” of the controversy. Remind students that they don’t have to agree personally with the position they are assigned. Their goal is to determine the best arguments or evidence for their side.
4. Ask each side to identify the best three arguments in support of their assigned position and prepare a short pitch arguing for their side of the controversy.
5. Side A presents their arguments while Side B listens and takes notes. No interruption is allowed.
6. Side B restates Side A’s positions and asks clarifying questions. These questions should seek to build an understanding of the position.
7. Side B presents their arguments while Side A listens and takes notes. No interruption is allowed.
8. Side A restates Side B’s positions and asks clarifying questions. These questions should seek to build an understanding of the position.
9. Groups come together to see if they can find common ground. Students no longer have to argue the position they were assigned. Groups should identify the strongest and weakest arguments of both sides. If the groups are unable to come to any agreement, they should be able to clearly explain the fundamental differences between the sides.
10. Debrief on the activity as a class. Ask students if they were able to reach any consensus or if they now see the issue in a different way.

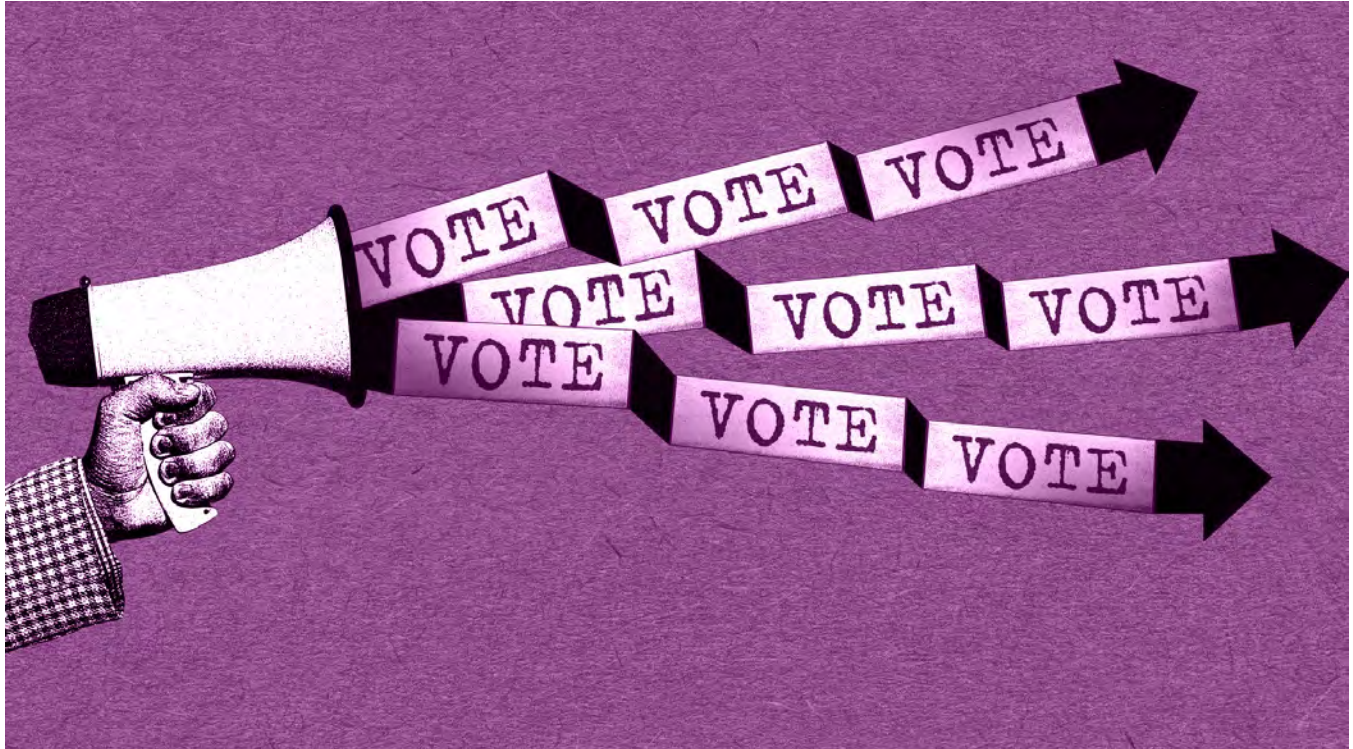
## ACTIVITY 3.3: Structured Academic Controversy

Discussion Prompt: \_\_\_\_\_

Our side is: \_\_\_\_\_

THE BEST ARGUMENTS FOR OUR SIDE ARE:	
<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b>	

# Lesson 4: Political Persuasion



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How do political campaigns win voter support through advertising and communications?**
- 2 What are some common techniques used in political advertising to try to persuade voters?**
- 3 How can we analyze the effectiveness of a political ad?**

## OVERVIEW

Political campaigns use a variety of persuasion techniques to influence public opinion and gain the support of voters.

In this lesson, students learn to recognize common persuasive techniques and analyze their use in political communication. Students identify these techniques by examining real-world political advertisements and analyze their effectiveness.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain the role of persuasion in politics;
- describe common persuasive techniques;
- analyze real-world examples of political messaging and identify the persuasive techniques being used; and,
- evaluate the effectiveness of political messaging.

## Starter

1. Begin with a quick brainstorm: Where do we see persuasive messaging in daily life? (e.g., social media, commercials, advertisements, op-eds, billboards, political speeches, protest signs, online petitions).
2. Have students think of a recent example of persuasive messaging they encountered.
  - What was the message?
  - Where did you see it?
  - What made it persuasive? (e.g., emotional appeal, facts, credibility)

Ask a few students to share their examples.

3. Discuss as a class: How do persuasive messages influence our opinions and behaviours?

Emphasize that persuasion isn't inherently harmful or deceptive. Like any form of communication, it can be used in both positive and negative ways, ethically and unethically.

## Activities

1. Watch the “[CIVIX Explains: Persuasive Sources](#)” video to review the primary purposes of communication and the various groups that use persuasive messaging to influence people.
2. Discuss the role of persuasion in politics using Slide Deck 4.
  - Persuasive messaging in politics is meant to appeal primarily to our emotions in order to influence our opinions or actions, like supporting a particular issue or policy, or voting for a candidate.
  - Political communication focuses on the same objectives that we see in everyday advertising. These techniques try to invoke various emotions, including hope and optimism, fear and anxiety, outrage and anger, patriotism and pride, nostalgia, as well as compassion and empathy.
  - Persuasive messaging doesn't always have to be serious. Humour is a really useful way to get people's attention.

3. Using Slide Deck 4, review some specific persuasive techniques used by looking at examples from advertising. We have provided multiple examples for each technique. Please review them ahead of time before showing them to your class (or provide some of your own examples).

For each example, ask students to consider the following prompts.

- How does the ad make you feel?
- What makes the ad persuasive?
- Is it effective? Did the ad use the technique effectively? Why or why not?

For some examples, you may want to show students the ad and discuss their reactions before revealing the technique. The techniques covered include:

- Using slogans or catchphrases
- Inciting fear
- Instilling a sense of hope or of a better future
- 'Us vs. Them' framing
- Presenting ideas as obvious and beyond debate
- Appeals to nostalgia

4. Distribute or provide access to Activity 4.1. Explain to students that they will analyze how these persuasive techniques can be used in politics by looking at current or historical examples from a range of political parties (historical example bank provided at [studentvote.ca/canada](http://studentvote.ca/canada)). For each example, students will briefly describe the ad, identify the techniques at play, identify the emotions the ad is trying to target, and evaluate the effectiveness of the ad.

### TEACHER NOTES:

- If you provide current election examples, make sure that multiple political parties are represented.
- Emphasize that some examples might use multiple techniques at once and encourage students to write down all the techniques they can identify.

## Consolidation

As a whole class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:

- After analyzing the various ads, what makes a political message effective in your opinion?
- What persuasive technique do you find most effective and why?
- What is the difference between persuasion and lying? Do you think using persuasive techniques can ever be unethical? Why or why not?
- After thinking critically about a persuasive message, how can you decide for yourself whether or not to agree with it? What information would you need to make a well-informed choice?

## Extended Learning

Have students work in groups to create their own persuasive political messaging related to the current federal election. Ask students to accompany their work with a short reflection about the techniques they used and why they think they are effective. Afterward, organize a physical or digital gallery walk where students can see each other's work. As they review each other's work, ask students to make note of the different persuasive techniques used.

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre-teach key vocabulary (e.g., persuasion, bias, opinion, platform, rhetoric).</li><li>• Use visuals or real-world examples of persuasive ads with subtitles or translations if possible.</li><li>• Provide sentence starters for analyzing persuasive messages (e.g., "This message is trying to convince me to..." or "The ad uses ___ to make me feel ___").</li></ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include political messages that reflect a range of cultural perspectives and community concerns.</li><li>• Encourage students to reflect on how persuasive messaging may resonate differently based on cultural values, lived experiences, or identity.</li><li>• Invite comparisons between Canadian political messages and those from students' countries of origin, where applicable.</li></ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide audio versions of persuasive texts or videos with captions.</li><li>• Allow students to work with a partner or small group when analyzing messages.</li><li>• Permit alternative ways to demonstrate understanding (e.g., recording a short audio explanation).</li></ul>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Persuasion plays a key role in democracy and the development of our political system. If you want to improve society, you must persuade others to support your issues, strategies, proposals, and legislation.

This is especially true during elections when political parties or candidates try to campaign for your vote to be elected.

Political ads are specifically designed to appeal to our **emotions** and attempt to connect with the audience on a personal level by triggering various emotions, such as hope, fear, anxiety, outrage, patriotism, and compassion. While many political ads take on a serious tone, persuasive messaging can also effectively use humour to appeal to people who might not typically engage with politics.

By and large, political advertising uses many of the same persuasive techniques as commercial advertising. Some of the most common persuasion techniques used during an election include the following:

- **Using slogans or catchphrases:** Slogans and catchphrases can reduce complex issues or ideas into easily digestible, oversimplified messages that make ideas or arguments more persuasive. These catchphrases help reinforce key ideas in voters' minds, making the candidate or policy easier to remember.
- **Inciting fear:** This technique emphasizes, or sometimes exaggerates, threats and dangers to make it seem like something terrible will happen if we don't change our behaviour. This technique often presents a worst-case scenario of what could happen if a specific candidate or policy is chosen. Ads focusing on threats to national security, economic collapse, or personal safety are often examples of fear-based persuasion.
- **Instilling a sense of hope or optimism:** This technique emphasizes a vision of a better future. These ads inspire optimism and a sense of possibility, encouraging voters to believe in a brighter tomorrow if a particular candidate or party is elected.
- **'Us vs. Them' framing:** This technique divides supporters of a particular candidate or party and an opposing group. Political ads attempt to build solidarity among supporters and demonize the opposition, dividing people into opposing groups to create feelings of loyalty to an "in-group" and feelings of opposition to an "out-group."
- **Presenting ideas as obvious and beyond debate:** This technique frames policies as self-evident, universally acceptable, or beyond debate to discourage critical thinking or opposition.
- **Appeals to nostalgia:** This technique romanticizes the past as a "better" time to persuade voters that returning to these conditions is the solution to current problems. This appeal often taps into idealized images of a simpler, more prosperous time. It can resonate with individuals who feel disconnected from the present or feel that the present is chaotic and in need of change.

## ACTIVITY 4.1: Analyzing Political Ads

<b>BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE POLITICAL AD</b>	<b>WHICH TECHNIQUES WERE USED?</b>	<b>WHAT EMOTIONS DO YOU THINK THE AD WAS TRYING TO MAKE YOU FEEL?</b>	<b>DO YOU FIND THIS AD PERSUASIVE? WHY OR WHY NOT?</b>

# Lesson 5: Federal Elections



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How are candidates elected to the House of Commons?**
- 2 Who are the candidates running in my electoral district?**
- 3 Which party or candidate will best address my priorities and concerns?**

## OVERVIEW

During federal elections, political parties and candidates communicate their ideas and vision for the country to gain public support. Voters need to evaluate the policies and promises critically, and find out which party or candidate best aligns with their political views and priorities.

In this lesson, students become familiar with federal elections in Canada and learn how to become informed voters. After learning about the electoral process, they work in groups to research the candidates and parties running in the election. In the *Consolidation* activity, students evaluate the choices and decide who they support and why.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- describe the federal election process;
- identify their electoral district and determine which candidates are running for election;
- work collaboratively with their peers to learn about the candidates and parties;
- compare how different political parties or candidates will respond to the same political issues; and,
- apply political decision-making skills to evaluate the parties and candidates and justify their choices with reasoned explanations.

## Readiness

A few days before the lesson, ask students to survey at least five family members or friends about which issues they believe are most important in the federal election. This information could be collected informally through discussion or through an online survey, or using Handout 5.1.

Suggested prompts:

- Which issue is most important to you over the next five years?
- Which two issues should the federal government take action on immediately?

## Starter

1. Highlight to students that the federal election presents a chance for citizens to discuss political issues affecting them and their communities, and to debate the future direction of the country.
2. Provide students with the list of current policy issues (Handout 5.1), or create your own based on opinion polls.
3. Have students rank their personal top 5 issues from most to least important. Ask them to write a brief justification for their top choice.
4. Divide students into small groups and have them:
  - Share their rankings
  - Discuss and debate the issues
  - Agree as a group on a top 3 list
5. Ask each group to share their top 3 issues and explain their reasoning to the class. As a class, work together to come to a final consensus on the top 3 issues for the whole class.

If consensus is hard to reach, hold a class vote (Dotmocracy-style) where each student gets 3 dots/stickers to place on the issues they feel are most important, and then tally the results.

## Activities

1. Ask students to fill out the 'before' column in the anticipation guide (Activity 5.2).

2. Review the election process in Canada using the "Federal Elections" video and Slide Deck 5.
  - Federal elections in Canada are usually held every four years—one year before the constitutionally required five-year limit for a parliament. However, the prime minister can request an election earlier if desired.
  - Canada is currently divided into 343 electoral districts (also called ridings), and each district elects one Member of Parliament (MP) to the House of Commons.
  - Candidates from different political parties (or independents) compete for the job of MP by sharing their ideas and convincing voters to choose them.
  - After the election, the party with the most members in the House of Commons usually forms the government, and their leader becomes the prime minister.
3. Demonstrate to students how they can find out which electoral district they live in by visiting the Elections Canada website ([www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)). Go to the 'Voter Information Service' and enter your school's postal code.
4. Review key information about your electoral district and record the list of candidates running for election (nominations close 21 days before election day).
5. Organize students into groups and assign each group a candidate/political party to research, 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 electoral district, including independent candidates.

Co-create a checklist for the research and agree on a format (e.g., slide deck, video, bristol board).

Guiding questions:

- Who is the local candidate? What skills and qualifications do they have?
- Do they belong to a political party? Who is the leader of the party?
- What are the main messages of their campaign advertisements?
- What are the party's main priorities or promises? Who will they impact?
- How will the party address the top 3 issues identified in the *Starter* activity? Are the proposals short-term solutions or will they have long-term benefit?

Suggested sources:

- Candidate/party websites
- Candidate/party social media platforms (Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube)
- Candidate/party campaign literature
- News sources
- *Pollenize* – [pollenize.org/canada](https://pollenize.org/canada) (party platform summaries on various topics)

Have each group present their political party/candidate to the rest of the class, or share their presentations/products through a digital gallery. Students can take notes on each presentation using Graphic Organizer 5.3. Provide as many copies as necessary. Digital and/or virtual presentations could also be shared with classes in the school, to help prepare other students for Student Vote Day.

### Alternative Method

Research into the parties/candidates can also be completed individually or in pairs, where students collect information about all the candidates running in the election using the same suggested resources. Students can use Graphic Organizer 5.3 to help them organize their findings or encourage them to use a digital format that incorporates images and social media posts.

### Consolidation

1. Facilitate a brief closing discussion about the political parties and local candidates. Afterward, have students fill out the *Campaign Reflection* (Activity 5.4).
  - Which party or candidate's priorities or positions align most closely with your values, views and concerns?
  - Which party do you think is best suited to lead the country at this time? Explain your reasoning.
  - Based on what you've learned, which candidate will you choose to vote for and why?
  - Even though you aren't eligible to vote in the actual election yet, do you think the outcome matters to you? Why or why not?

### TEACHER NOTES:

- Some students may jump at the chance to share their opinions and even try to persuade others to adopt their choices. Others may opt for silence and prefer to keep their politics private. As an alternative, you could encourage them to share their thoughts about how to evaluate the parties, platforms and candidates (e.g., what criteria should we use to evaluate the platforms, what skills and characteristics does your ideal MP have).
- Reinforce the choice for privacy and the importance of being respectful towards others with different points of view.

2. Ask students to fill out the 'after' column in Activity 5.2.

### Assessment

Ask students to develop an evaluation rubric for assessing political party platforms. Building on previous learning and activities, have them create descriptors for key criteria such as clarity, level of detail, persuasiveness, feasibility, and relevance to voter concerns. Once the rubric is finalized, students can use it to assess and compare different party platforms, justifying their evaluations with specific examples.

### Extended Learning

Organize an in-person or virtual all-candidates meeting, where students can engage directly with candidates running for office. If an event isn't feasible, invite each candidate to submit a short explaining their reasons for running and outlining their key priorities for the community.

Alternatively, students can work together to develop a set of thoughtful questions and send them to all candidates. Candidates can then respond via email or recorded video messages, allowing students to compare perspectives and analyze responses.

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide key terms in advance (e.g., electoral process, electoral district, candidate, political party, party platform).</li> <li>• Use an AI tool or word cloud generator to simplify political party messages (e.g., ChatGPT, <a href="http://www.wordclouds.com">www.wordclouds.com</a>). We recommend attaching or pasting the information you want to simplify, rather than asking the AI tool to find it for you.</li> </ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss issues or challenges your community is facing.</li> <li>• Analyze the diversity of the candidates running in your electoral district and discuss the need for diversity in politics.</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide digital alternatives for students who may struggle with in-person collaboration (e.g., Google Docs, Padlet).</li> <li>• Offer flexible participation options—students can contribute verbally, in writing, or through multimedia formats for their research projects.</li> </ul>

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The **Office of the Chief Electoral Officer**, commonly known as Elections Canada, is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. Elections Canada is responsible for organizing federal general elections, by-elections and referendums.

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**, commonly known as **First Past the Post (FPTP)**. Under this system, 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; just one more vote than any other candidates. This is called **plurality**.

The country is divided into geographic areas called **electoral districts** (or ridings). Each electoral district is represented by one Member of Parliament in the House of Commons.

The Constitution of Canada requires that federal electoral districts be reviewed after each 10-year census to reflect changes and movements in Canada's population. The most recent redistribution process began in October 2021; it was completed in October 2023. Canada now has 343 electoral districts. This reflects an increase of five electoral districts since the last general election.

The size of electoral districts is determined by factors such as population size, geography 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.

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

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. Regardless of fixed date election legislation, a federal election can be held at any time if the government loses the confidence of the House of Commons or if the governor general were to dissolve Parliament on the advice of the prime minister.

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. The length of a federal election campaign may vary, but it must be between 36 and 50 days.

## HANDOUT 5.1: Current Policy Issues

POLICY ISSUE	EXPLANATION
 <b>Cost of living and affordability</b>	Policies and programs to address the rising cost of housing, groceries, energy, and other essentials.
 <b>Healthcare funding</b>	Investments in healthcare to address issues at the provincial/territorial level, such as doctor shortages, wait times, and improving access to mental health services.
 <b>Economic recovery and job creation</b>	Support for growing different types of industries, encouraging new ideas and businesses, and helping workers find new jobs in response to economic shifts.
 <b>Housing crisis</b>	Measures, policies and programs to address housing affordability and availability.
 <b>Climate change and energy policy</b>	Evaluating environmental commitments alongside economic realities, and reviewing policies for carbon pricing and green energy investments.
 <b>National debt and government spending</b>	Assessing strategies for fiscal management, including government spending and deficit reduction.
 <b>Immigration</b>	Developing policies to align immigration with economic growth needs while ensuring adequate infrastructure, housing, and services for newcomers.
 <b>Public safety and crime prevention</b>	Reviewing approaches to crime prevention, gun regulations, federal police funding, and criminal justice policies.
 <b>Foreign relations and trade</b>	Managing evolving relations with key allies and exploring new markets to enhance trade.
 <b>Indigenous reconciliation</b>	Advancing reconciliation efforts, addressing infrastructure needs, and supporting economic and social development in Indigenous communities.
 <b>Digital regulation and online safety</b>	Reviewing policies on internet governance, data privacy, content moderation, and the role of emerging technologies like AI and social media.
 <b>Democratic institutions</b>	Strengthening transparency and trust in government, and safeguarding against foreign interference in elections.

## ACTIVITY 5.2: What do you know about federal elections?

Answer the following questions, prior to learning about federal elections in Canada. Afterward, respond to the questions again based on any new information you have acquired.

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>AFTER</b>
<b>When is the next federal election?</b>		
<b>Which electoral system do we use for federal elections?</b>		
<b>How many electoral districts are there in Canada?</b>		
<b>What is the name of our school's electoral district?</b>		
<b>What is the title given to elected representatives at the federal level?</b>		
<b>How many candidates can you choose on your ballot?</b>		
<b>Do we vote for the position of prime minister?</b>		

# GRAPHIC ORGANIZER 5.3: Getting to Know the Candidates

Fill out the graphic organizer below with information about the candidates running in your electoral district.

<b>CANDIDATE &amp; POLITICAL PARTY DETAILS</b>	<b>PRIORITIES, PROMISES AND KEY MESSAGES</b>

## **ACTIVITY 5.4: Campaign Reflection**

After researching the parties and candidates, respond to the questions below.

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**1. Which party or candidate's priorities or positions align most closely with your values, views and concerns? Provide specific examples.**

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**2. Which party do you think is best suited to lead the country at this time? Explain your reasoning.**

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**3. Based on what you've learned, which candidate will you choose to vote for and why?**

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**4. Even though you aren't eligible to vote in the actual election yet, do you think the outcome matters to you? Why or why not?**

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# Lesson 6: The Leaders' Debate



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How do leaders' debates help voters learn about parties, policies, and leadership styles?**
- 2 What makes a leader's argument effective and persuasive during a debate?**
- 3 Why is it important for leaders and citizens to engage in respectful and evidence-based political discussions?**

## OVERVIEW

Leaders' debates allow voters to see party leaders directly questioned, challenged, and compared—helping them make informed decisions.

In this lesson, students explore the role of leaders' debates in elections. Students will reflect on what they would ask party leaders, examine the skills and strategies that make a strong debater, and learn how to spot faulty arguments. They then watch one of the leaders' debates and practice identifying the various skills and arguments through a bingo-style activity. Afterward, they evaluate the leaders' performances and share their opinions through a small group roundtable discussion.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain the purpose and significance of leaders' debates in elections;
- identify effective debating techniques and common debate pitfalls;
- recognize and explain common logical fallacies;
- critically evaluate the leaders' performances and the influence of the debate on their own thinking; and,
- reflect on the importance of respectful, informed debate in a democracy.

## Starter

Get students thinking critically about what they would want to know from party leaders if they had the chance to ask them questions.

1. **Pose the Question:** If you could ask the party leaders one question, what would it be and why?
2. **Quick Pair/Share:** Have students share their question with a partner or small group.
3. **Class Brainstorm:** As a class, compile a list of 5–10 key questions students think the public should ask leaders during a debate. Encourage them to think about:
  - issues that matter to young people
  - national and global concerns
  - what makes a leader trustworthy

## Activities

1. Using Slide Deck 6, review the purpose of leaders' debates during elections and discuss the impact on voters.
  - Leaders' debates allow party leaders to present their policy ideas to the public and challenge their opponents' policies and positions.
  - Debates are among the few times leaders are directly questioned by the public and their opponents.
  - These events expose viewers to different political views that may be different from their own or those around them.
  - Debates have produced great moments in political history and have acted as major turning points in election campaigns.
  - Viewers often watch to see if leaders make 'zingers' (funny or clever remarks) or 'gaffes' (mistakes or errors that cause embarrassment).
2. (Optional) Watch the CBC video "Do leaders' debates change how people vote?" to review some notable historical moments, learn how leaders are prepared, and consider whether they influence voters.
3. Brainstorm a list of qualities of an effective debater as a class. Suggested prompts: What skills and techniques are important in debate? Which are not? Afterward, review the lists provided in Slide Deck 6.

**Effective debating skills and techniques:** The ability to speak clearly and confidently, think quickly, clarify arguments, provide examples, use facts, maintain persuasive speech, appeal to emotions, and maintain a professional tone and body language.

**Poor debating habits:** Losing control and expressing anger, poor listening, talking over each other, using faulty arguments, personal attacks, and acting unprofessional.

### TEACHER NOTE:

Consider watching highlight videos from previous election campaigns to help students identify effective debating skills.

- **2021 leaders' debate (highlights)** – [https://youtu.be/V\\_XjPiDQCh8](https://youtu.be/V_XjPiDQCh8)
- **2019 leaders' debate (highlights)** – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm-BsV3\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm-BsV3_M)
- **2011 leaders' debate (highlights)** – [www.cbc.ca/player/play/2045305469](http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2045305469)

4. Watch the "Logical Fallacies" video as a class. Explain to students that one way to analyze the debate is to consider how the leaders construct arguments. Sometimes, individuals use faulty reasoning to make a point. Using Slide Deck 6, review common types of flawed arguments (logical fallacies) and have students write down an example for each type (Activity 6.1).
  - Appeal to Authority (Authoritative Argument)
  - Slippery Slope
  - Appeal to Tradition
  - Personal Attack
  - False Dilemma
  - Strawman Argument

5. Have students watch the leaders' debate at home or watch select video clips in class and complete the leaders' debate "bingo" activity to identify specific skills and types of arguments (Activity 6.2).

#### TEACHER NOTE

- Each leaders' debate may run for 90–120 minutes in its entirety. Afterward, the debate will be edited into several smaller segments, making it easier to watch in the classroom.
- Review the party leaders who will participate in the debate to prepare for the viewing.

6. Organize a small group roundtable to encourage thoughtful reflection and critical analysis of the leaders' debate while keeping the discussion focused and respectful (Activity 6.3).

Discussion prompts for the roundtable:

- "I thought the most persuasive argument was..."
- "A leader who changed my opinion on an issue or policy was..."
- "Watching the debate helped shape my voting decision because..."

Protocol:

- Ask students to write down brief responses to the following reflection questions so everyone has time to gather their thoughts.
- Divide students into small groups.
- Ask each student to share one reflection point (e.g., "I thought the most persuasive argument was..."). Everyone else should hold their comments or feedback at this time.
- After everyone shares once, students can ask follow-up questions or add to each other's points. Encourage students to build on ideas with prompts like:
  - "I agree with that because..."
  - "I had a different reaction because..."
  - "That made me think about..."

## Consolidation

Have a brief closing discussion or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions.

- Why is it essential for leaders and citizens to engage in respectful and evidence-based political discussions?
- Were you able to keep an open mind through the debate, or had you already made up your mind about the leaders?
- Why do you think some people avoid watching debates? How could debates be made more appealing to young voters?

## Extended Learning

News media will report on the leaders' debate, offering accounts of what occurred. There are two main categories of media reports.

- A news story, or **factual account**, will go over the events of the debate. This type of story will be as neutral as possible and include interviews with experts offering interpretations of what occurred. Interview subjects with contrasting views may appear in the same story to provide different perspectives.
- The second category is an **opinion-based piece**, which usually takes the form of a written column. In this case, the journalist is also the expert. A columnist advances a first-person argument based on their opinion. This opinion should be backed up with evidence and existing knowledge of the subject. Some columnists use more facts than others or source their arguments better.

In pairs or small groups, have students analyze a pair of news articles—one written by a news reporter, the other by an opinion columnist, or articles from different publications. Students may use Activity 6.4 to record responses.

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the segments of the debate in different ways to help with the analysis (muted video, audio only).</li> <li>• Use an AI tool or word cloud generator to simplify the leaders' statements (e.g., ChatGPT, <a href="http://www.wordclouds.com">www.wordclouds.com</a>).</li> </ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are selecting segments of the debate to watch, choose questions or issues that interest your students and/or the local community.</li> <li>• Analyze the diversity of the questions asked during the debate. Did the leaders address the concerns of different regional communities or groups? What other questions could have been asked to the leaders?</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students may not have the ability to watch the debate at home. Consider providing time in class to watch the debate so that all students have an opportunity.</li> </ul>

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Debates are a cornerstone of a healthy democracy and can contribute to a well-informed and active citizenry.

During federal elections, leaders' debates are a platform for certain party leaders to present their ideas and policy positions and challenge their opponents' positions in a respectful and open environment.

Debates ensure that citizens are exposed to various political views, including positions that do not always align with their own—which is particularly important in the age of social media. Leaders' debates allow citizens to hear directly from the leaders in an unfiltered way, without manipulation from intermediate sources.

Federal leaders' debates in Canada are organized by an independent commission to avoid partisan influences. The leaders' debate commission is responsible for determining the number of debates that will be held and which political parties are invited to participate.

Debating is about using persuasive arguments and good oratory that appeal not only to our rational side but also to our emotions. It involves reducing complex social and economic issues to simplified stories that are easy to understand and relate to. Promises and claims are often based on facts—data, statistics, and the like—but disagreements can arise regarding the interpretation of facts and which facts are important.

To be an informed voter, citizens should pay attention to what politicians say and have the tools to evaluate their assertions.

A **logical fallacy** is a type of faulty argument. This type of argument may sound convincing in the moment, but if you stop and examine it, it does not stand up to the test of logic. It is very helpful to be able to recognize a logical fallacy and not be persuaded by it.

## ACTIVITY 6.1: Common Logical Fallacies

1 APPEAL TO AUTHORITY	2 SLIPPERY SLOPE	3 APPEAL TO TRADITION
<p>Claiming something to be true just because an authority said it was true, but without any additional evidence.</p> <p><i>I can eat all the chocolate I want because my mom’s scientist friend said so.</i></p>	<p>Believing a small change will lead to a disaster.</p> <p><i>If I let you stay up 10 minutes past your bedtime, you’ll want to stay up an hour later, then 2 hours later, and then you’ll just not sleep.</i></p>	<p>Claiming something is true since it has always been so.</p> <p><i>Fishing is prohibited in my village. This is silly. I fished there all the time growing up. It should still be allowed.</i></p>
<p><b>Your example:</b></p>	<p><b>Your example:</b></p>	<p><b>Your example:</b></p>

4 PERSONAL ATTACK	5 FALSE DILEMMA	6 STRAWMAN ARGUMENT
<p>Attacking a person instead of their arguments.</p> <p><i>Politician 1: “I will fight for the working class.”</i></p> <p><i>Politician 2: “What does he know about the working class? His family has extraordinary wealth, and he’s never had a job outside of politics.”</i></p>	<p>Presenting only two solutions to one problem when other options are also available.</p> <p><i>Vote for me, or live through four more years of higher taxes.</i></p>	<p>Deliberately misrepresenting someone else’s argument to make it easier to attack.</p> <p><i>Politician 1: “I think we should spend less on the military.”</i></p> <p><i>Politician 2: “My opponent wants to leave the country defenceless. We deserve better.”</i></p>
<p><b>Your example:</b></p>	<p><b>Your example:</b></p>	<p><b>Your example:</b></p>

## ACTIVITY 6.2: Leaders' Debate "Bingo"

As you watch the debate, mark off the squares when you see a leader using one of these techniques or committing a debate mistake or fallacy. Write down the leader's name or initials in the box. Try to get five in a row—or fill the whole card!

<b>Appeals to emotions</b>	<b>Speaks confidently and clearly</b>	<b>Personal attack</b>	<b>Uses a fact or statistic</b>	<b>Corrects or fact-checks another leader's statement</b>
<b>Avoids answering a direct question</b>	<b>Tells the story of a young person</b>	<b>Interrupts another leader</b>	<b>Refers to "ordinary Canadians" or "hard-working families"</b>	<b>Brings up a scandal or controversy from another party's past</b>
<b>Makes a 'zinger' (funny or clever remark)</b>	<b>Blames the previous government</b>	<b>Acknowledges a voter or group directly ("I met a farmer in...")</b>	<b>Shows good body language (eye contact, posture)</b>	<b>Uses a personal story to make a point</b>
<b>Talks over the moderator</b>	<b>Uses the phrase "building a better future"</b>	<b>Appeals to authority</b>	<b>Criticizes another party's platform instead of defending their own</b>	<b>Calls for national unity or working together</b>
<b>Admits a past mistake or change of position</b>	<b>Slippery slope argument (exaggerated claim)</b>	<b>Strong closing statement</b>	<b>Uses a strawman argument (misrepresents someone else's argument)</b>	<b>Thanks or compliments another leader</b>

## ACTIVITY 6.3: Roundtable Discussion

As you reflect on the debate, consider how the leaders and arguments influenced your thinking. This activity will help you organize your thoughts, share your opinions, and engage in meaningful discussions with others.

### Instructions:

1. Write down brief responses to the following discussion prompts.
2. Organize into small groups.
3. Take turns sharing one reflection about the debate. Hold any comments or questions until after everyone has had a chance to share.
4. After everyone shares once, ask follow-up questions or add to each other's points.

DISCUSSION PROMPT	RESPONSE	FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS
<p><b>“I thought the most persuasive argument was...”</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What made this argument stand out compared to others?</li> <li>• Did the leader use evidence or emotional appeal to persuade you?</li> </ul>
<p><b>“A leader who changed my opinion on an issue or policy was... because....”</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific points or examples did the leader use that influenced you?</li> <li>• If you could ask one of the leaders a follow-up question, what would it be?</li> </ul>
<p><b>“Watching the debate helped shape my voting decision because...”</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there a particular moment in the debate that influenced your decision the most?</li> <li>• Did any leader's performance surprise you? How?</li> </ul>

### Ways to build on others' viewpoints:

- “I agree with that because...”
- “I had a different reaction because...”
- “That made me think about...”

## ACTIVITY 6.4: Analyzing Articles about the Debate

Summarize the information for each article.

<b>News source</b>	
<b>Headline</b>	
<b>Author</b>	
<b>Describe the type of article.</b> Is it a news article or an opinion column? How do you know?	
<b>Summarize the article.</b> What positive or negative comments were made about the leaders' performances?	
<b>Who won the debate?</b> Does the article declare a winner of the debate? What evidence is offered?	
<b>Describe the image chosen for the article.</b> If your article contains a picture, why do you think this image was chosen? What is it representing?	

# Lesson 7: The Voting Process



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is voting important in a democracy?
- 2 When, where and how do people vote in federal elections?
- 3 How do safeguards protect the integrity and security of federal elections?

## OVERVIEW

Free and fair elections require strong safeguards to uphold integrity and security, while relying on informed and engaged voters to sustain democracy.

In this lesson, students explore why people choose to vote or not vote and discuss the consequences of low voter turnout. They review key aspects of voting in federal elections, including eligibility, voting methods, and procedures that ensure free and fair elections. Afterward, students work in small groups to complete the “Election Escape Room,” solving four challenges related to election integrity and misinformation. In the *Consolidation* activity, students craft a persuasive message to encourage voter participation.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain motivations behind voting and the importance of democratic participation;
- describe the eligibility requirements, voting methods, and procedures that ensure fair and free federal elections in Canada;
- collaborate effectively with their peers to solve challenges that reinforce knowledge of election security measures;
- analyze the importance of election integrity; and,
- create a persuasive message that encourages voter participation.

## Starter

1. Using a 'Think-Pair-Share' protocol, ask students to respond to the question below. Have students write their answers in their notebooks, then pair up with another student and exchange answers.
  - Why do people vote and why do some people choose not to vote?
2. Through a whole class discussion, ask students to respond to the following questions:
  - What are some consequences if large groups of people do not vote?
  - What might influence someone's decision to vote or not vote?
  - How does voter participation impact democracy?

## Activities

1. Review key aspects of voting in federal elections using Slide Deck 7.
  - Who can vote? (eligibility requirements)
  - How do people vote? (by mail, advance voting, on election day)
  - What procedures ensure fairness? (secret ballot, voter ID, independent oversight)
2. Divide students into small groups and explain the "Election Escape Room" game. Introduce the scenario:

"Elections Canada needs your help! A wave of misinformation is spreading, and concerns about election security are rising. Your mission is to support election integrity and stop misinformation before it's too late!"

Share the following instructions:

- There are four challenges in total (Activity 7.1).
- Once the first challenge is completed, each group can request instructions for the next challenge.
- You may consult the Elections Canada website for more information during the challenges.
- You will get points for unlocking the codes and answering the final question in each challenge.
- The winning group will be determined based on the point score and time taken to complete all of the challenges.
- When all the groups are ready, start the clock.

### TEACHER NOTE:

You will manage the release of challenges. Each group should turn in their completed challenge to receive the next one. Refer to the Answer Key 7.2 for the codes.

3. Announce the winning team and discuss the importance of maintaining election integrity and fostering trust in our electoral process.
  - What are the possible consequences of having low trust in our elections?
  - How can we identify and correct false information about elections?

Share each team's final statement about why Canadians should trust the election process and take a vote on the most compelling argument.

## Consolidation

Students will synthesize their learning into a concise, persuasive message encouraging voter participation in the federal election.

1. Tell students to imagine they are speaking to someone who doesn't plan to vote. Ask students to write a short message (1-2 sentences) responding to the following prompt.
  - What is one thing you would say to convince them to participate in the federal election?
2. Ask students to pair up and share their messages. Encourage students to provide feedback. Guiding questions:
  - Was the message persuasive?
  - What could make it stronger?
3. Select a few volunteers to share their messages with the whole class. Summarize the key themes and persuasive techniques used in their messages (e.g., emotional appeal, logic, real-world consequences).

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., secret ballot, voter information card, polling place, election day, advance voting, vote by mail, special ballot).</li><li>• Use visual aids and infographics to explain voting procedures and election security.</li><li>• Offer sentence starters for the persuasive voter message activity.</li><li>• Allow students to discuss key questions in pairs before sharing with the class to build confidence.</li></ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage students to create their voting pitch in their home language to share with family members, promoting civic engagement beyond the classroom.</li><li>• Remind students that some electors, including youth, new Canadians, Indigenous electors, electors with disabilities, and persons who are experiencing homelessness, may face barriers to participating in elections.</li><li>• Keep the focus on ideas to increase access to voting and the benefits our society gets from hearing different voices, not only on the disadvantages these groups face.</li><li>• Encourage students to reflect on how voter participation shapes policies that affect different communities.</li></ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide digital alternatives for students who may struggle with in-person collaboration (e.g., Google Docs, Padlet, or a digital version of the Election Escape Room).</li><li>• Offer flexible participation options—students can contribute verbally, in writing, or through multimedia formats.</li></ul>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

You are eligible to vote in a Canadian federal election if:

- You are a Canadian citizen,
- You are at least 18 years of age on election day.

You must be registered to vote to cast a ballot in the election.

Your contact information will be added to the **National Register of Electors** if you are an eligible elector. The National Register of Electors is used to create the list of electors for each election.

If you have moved, recently become a Canadian citizen, will be voting for the first time, or are a student living away from home, you may not be correctly registered. You can visit the Elections Canada website ([www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)) to check, update, or complete your registration. When you vote, you can also register at your local Elections Canada office or your polling place.

If you are eligible to vote and your name is on the list of electors, you will be sent a **Voter Information Card (VIC)** in the mail. The voter information card tells you when, where and how to vote.

Voters may choose to vote in one of the following ways:

1. On election day
2. On an advance voting day
3. At an Elections Canada office (Returning Office)
4. By mail

To find out specific dates and times for voting, visit the Elections Canada website ([www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)) for up-to-date information.

To vote, you need to prove your identity and address. You have three options:

1. Show one piece of government-issued ID with your photo, name, and address;
2. Show two pieces of ID. Both pieces must have your name, and one must also have your address;
3. If you don't have ID, you can still vote if you declare your identity and address in writing and have someone who knows you and who is assigned to your polling station vouch for you. The voucher must be able to prove their identity and address. A person can vouch for only one person.

Elections Canada is the trusted source of information about the federal electoral process. Our federal electoral process has many safeguards to ensure the integrity and security of federal elections. Some include:

### **Voter Identification and**

**Registration:** Voters must provide proof of identity and address before casting their ballots, ensuring that only eligible individuals vote and that each person votes only once.

**Secure Voting Methods:** Whether voting in person or by mail, there are strict procedures to maintain the security and confidentiality of ballots.

For instance, a special ballot voting kit includes: a special ballot, a plain inner envelope, and an outer envelope for returning the completed ballot.

To protect the secrecy of the vote, the inner envelope containing the ballot is removed and kept separate from the outer envelope. This makes it impossible to link the voter's identity with their vote.

For in-person voting, ballots come in booklets with unique, sequential serial numbers to ensure that only ballots handled by election officers are deposited in the ballot box. The counterfoil with the serial number is then removed from the ballot prior to the ballot being put in the ballot box so that it cannot be traced back to the voter.

### **Transparent Vote Counting:**

Trained election workers count ballots by saying out loud who received the vote for each ballot in front of other election workers and candidates or their representatives. There are also measures to manage the custody of ballots and ballot boxes, ensuring accurate and trustworthy results.

### **Monitoring and Addressing Threats:**

Elections Canada collaborates with security agencies to monitor and address potential threats to protect the electoral process.

### **Regulation of Political Financing**

**and Advertising:** The *Canada Elections Act* sets rules and obligations for political entities regarding financing and advertising, promoting transparency and fairness, and preventing undue influence in elections.

**Emergency Preparedness:** There are measures to deal with emergencies and unforeseen situations that could disrupt voting, ensuring that elections proceed smoothly under various circumstances.

These safeguards collectively work to maintain a fair, transparent, and secure electoral system in Canada.

**Elections Canada** is the official source for all information about federal elections in Canada. Find out more information at [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca).

# ACTIVITY 7.1: Election Escape Room

## Challenge 1: Voting Safeguards

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**Clue:** *Some people claim that anyone can vote, even if they're not eligible. What safeguards are in place to prevent this?*

**Task:** Match voter eligibility criteria with the correct explanations below.

VOTER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	
<b>1</b>	Must register before voting.
<b>2</b>	Must be at least 18 years old.
<b>3</b>	Must be a Canadian citizen.
<b>4</b>	Must provide proof of identity and address.

EXPLANATIONS	
<b>A</b>	Elections Canada verifies citizenship using government records.
<b>B</b>	Electors must confirm their date of birth during voter registration.
<b>C</b>	A government-issued ID with your photo and address or two documents are required (e.g., utility bill + health card).
<b>D</b>	The National Register of Electors is a continuously updated database of Canadians who are eligible to vote.

**Unlock the Code:** Write down the letter for each explanation below.

1: \_\_\_\_\_      2: \_\_\_\_\_      3: \_\_\_\_\_      4: \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Question:** List **three ways** Elections Canada ensures only eligible voters can vote.

1: \_\_\_\_\_

2: \_\_\_\_\_

3: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Challenge 2: Securing the Vote

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**Clue:** Some say people can vote twice or someone else can vote in their name. How is our voting process secure?

**Task:** Arrange the following steps **in the correct order** from arrival at the polling station to casting a vote.

VOTING PROCESS STEPS	
<b>A</b>	The voter drops the ballot into the secure ballot box.
<b>B</b>	The election worker checks the voter list.
<b>C</b>	The election worker verifies the official mark.
<b>D</b>	The voter goes behind the privacy screen and marks the ballot.
<b>E</b>	The voter receives a ballot with an official mark.
<b>F</b>	The voter refolds the ballot and returns it to the election worker.
<b>G</b>	The voter shows identification to election officials.

**Unlock the Code:** Write down the letter for each step in the correct order.

1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_

5: \_\_\_\_\_ 6: \_\_\_\_\_ 7: \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Question:** Identify **two safeguards** that prevent someone from voting twice.

1: \_\_\_\_\_

2: \_\_\_\_\_

## Challenge 3: Election Misinformation

---

**Clue:** False information is spreading about election security. Can you identify the misinformation?

**Task:** Determine whether each statement is true or false.

TRUE OR FALSE?	
1	You must register to vote before election day.
2	All Canadian citizens living abroad can vote by mail, regardless of how long they've been away.
3	Someone can mail in their special ballot and then show up at the polling station to vote again.
4	Using a pencil to vote is not secure because it can be erased or smudged and not counted.
5	Elections Canada sends voter information cards to deceased individuals, allowing others to use them to vote.
6	Canadians can vote by mail, at advance polls, or on election day.
7	Ballots can be traced back to the voter.
8	Elections Canada plans to use new voting technology that allows people to vote online.
9	If you don't receive a voter information card, you can't vote.
10	You can ask for a new ballot if you make a mistake.

**Code to Unlock:** Write down T for true and F for false.

1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

6: \_\_\_\_\_ 7: \_\_\_\_\_ 8: \_\_\_\_\_ 9: \_\_\_\_\_ 10: \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Question:** Who is the trusted source for information about federal elections?

## Challenge 4: Counting the Votes

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**Clue:** Some believe ballots can be tampered with. How can you prove Canada's ballot counting process is secure?

**Task:** Identify the safeguards in place for ballot counting. Sort fact from fiction below.

PROCEDURES	FACT OR FICTION?
<b>A</b> Ballots are counted by trained election workers.	
<b>B</b> Before counting begins, election workers total the number of electors who voted, the number of spoiled ballots, and the number of unused ballots to ensure every ballot is properly tracked.	
<b>C</b> Before the count, election workers close the doors of the voting place. No one is allowed to enter or leave.	
<b>D</b> Only election workers are allowed to watch the counting process.	
<b>E</b> Ballots are secured and stored for 10 years.	
<b>F</b> Election officials throw away any ballots they find to be invalid (rejected).	
<b>G</b> Paper ballots are signed by the DRO before voting and the signature is reviewed during the counting process.	

**Code to Unlock:** Enter the numbers for the five safeguards related to ballot counting (in order from above):

1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Question:** Each group writes a **one-sentence statement** about why Canadians should trust the election process.

*Answer Key 7.2 on next page.*

## 7.2 ANSWER KEY: Election Escape Room

### Challenge 1: Voting Safeguards

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	EXPLANATION
1	D
2	B
3	A
4	C

### Challenge 2: Securing the Vote

VOTING PROCESS STEPS	
1	G
2	B
3	E
4	D
5	F
6	C
7	A

### Challenge 3: Election Misinformation

TRUE OR FALSE?	
1	FALSE
2	TRUE
3	FALSE
4	FALSE
5	FALSE
6	TRUE
7	FALSE
8	FALSE
9	FALSE
10	TRUE

### Challenge 4: Counting the Votes

PROCEDURES	SECURITY MEASURE?
A	Yes
B	Yes
C	Yes
D	No
E	Yes
F	No
G	Yes

Five safeguards: A, B, C, E, G

# Lesson 8: Post-Election Analysis



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What do election results reveal about voter preferences, political trends, and the composition of the new government?**
- 2 Why is it important to analyze election outcomes, and how do they shape the country's future?**
- 3 How has this experience influenced your knowledge, skills and attitudes?**

## OVERVIEW

Elections are important moments in a democracy, and analyzing their outcomes helps us better understand the political landscape and what it means for the future of the country.

In this lesson, students analyze the results of Student Vote Canada and the federal election, examining voter behavior, party performance, and government composition.

Through a collaborative research project, they will explore national, regional, and local election results, and analyze voter turnout, polling trends, and media commentary. Next, students watch and evaluate the Prime Minister's victory speech, reflecting on its alignment with campaign promises and future governance. The lesson concludes with a reflection on key takeaways and the Student Vote experience.

## LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain key concepts such as seat count, popular vote, and voter turnout;
- analyze the Student Vote and general election results on a national, regional, and local level;
- examine media commentary and opinion polling to understand shifts in public perception during the campaign and the outcome;
- evaluate the Prime Minister's victory speech; and,
- reflect on the impact of their experience and future civic engagement.

## Starter

1. Announce the Student Vote results at your school.
  - Which candidate won?
  - What percentage of the vote did the winner receive?
2. Compare your school's results to other schools in your electoral district. Individual school results can be found at [www.studentvote.ca/canada](http://www.studentvote.ca/canada) > *The Results*).
  - How do the results compare? Are there patterns?
  - Why might different schools have voted differently?

## Activities

1. Review key concepts for analyzing election results, including seat count, popular vote, governing party, official opposition and voter turnout using Slide Deck 8.
2. Using the Student Vote Canada website, the Elections Canada website and media coverage, ask students to analyze the results and prepare a briefing for the rest of the class.

Divide students into small groups and have them research one of the following areas:

- **National Results:** Nationwide seat count by party, percentage of seats compared to the popular vote, shifts from the last election.
- **Regional and Local Results:** Province-wide seat count by party, percentage of seats compared to the popular vote, and results for your electoral district.
- **Student Vote Results:** How did the Student Vote results compare? Which party won nationally? Which party won provincially? Which candidate was chosen in your school's electoral district?
- **Composition of Government:** Is it a majority or minority government? What does the election outcome mean for stability and lawmaking? Who is the official opposition? How strong is the opposition, and how might they influence government decisions?

- **Voter Turnout:** What is the estimate for voter turnout? How does it compare to elections over the last 20 years?
- **Opinion Polling vs the Outcome:** Did opinion polling change throughout the campaign? Did any parties gain support from the beginning to the end? How close were the polls in the final days compared to the election outcome?
- **Commentary:** What are columnists and pundits saying about the results? What campaign events and issues shaped the outcome? What are some of the different perspectives about what contributed to the results?

During the briefing presentations, invite students to ask questions to deepen the analysis and increase engagement.

3. In pairs or small groups, have students predict three key messages they think the Prime Minister will include in their victory speech based on the party's campaign. Guiding questions:
  - What do you expect to hear in the Prime Minister's speech?
  - What are the key promises from the winning party's platform?
  - What tone will the speech take (e.g., celebratory, unifying, policy-driven)?
4. Watch the Prime Minister's victory speech (or key excerpts). Encourage students to take notes. Afterward, facilitate a class discussion:
  - Did the speech match your predictions? What surprised you?
  - Did the Prime Minister emphasize certain policies more than others?
  - What tone did the speech take? Was it unifying, optimistic, defensive? Why might this matter?
  - Who was the intended audience? Supporters, opposition parties, the general public?
  - What was left out? Was there something you were hoping to hear?
  - How does this speech set the tone for the next four years?

## Consolidation

To conclude the program, encourage students to reflect on their experience and key takeaways from the Student Vote program.

1. **Whole-Class Discussion:** Facilitate a discussion using the following questions:
  - Why does it matter who gets elected?
  - How can we ensure leaders follow through on their promises?
  - What steps can you take to stay engaged in future elections?
2. **Individual Reflection:** Have students complete Activity 8.1 or write a personal reflection in their learning journal, addressing:
  - Three key insights about federal elections in Canada.
  - Two activities they found most valuable in the Student Vote experience.
  - One way this process has influenced their perspectives or future engagement in democracy.

## Extended Learning

Have students compare news stories from several media websites and regional and/or local newspapers to analyze how they portray the election outcome.

Guiding questions:

- Did the sources report the results similarly? Why or why not?
- How does each source portray the future of Canada?

## Adaptations and Supports

<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., seat count, popular vote, governing party, official opposition, majority government, minority government, voter turnout).</li> <li>• Use visual aids (diagrams, charts) to explain election results and voting trends.</li> <li>• Allow students to discuss key questions in pairs before sharing with the class.</li> </ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the demographics of the newly elected House of Commons. How does its representation compare to Canada’s diverse population?</li> <li>• Discuss youth voter turnout and how different communities engage in elections.</li> <li>• Encourage students to explore how election issues impact different cultural and social groups in Canada.</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer digital alternatives for group activities, such as Google Docs, for students who may struggle with in-person collaboration.</li> <li>• Provide structured graphic organizers to help students break down election results and political speeches.</li> <li>• Allow students to watch the Prime Minister’s victory speech with captions or read a transcript if needed.</li> </ul>

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

After the polls close on election day, election workers count the ballots for their polling place and report them to Elections Canada headquarters, which shares the results publicly. Results are released continuously throughout election night and sometimes the following day.

**Seat count** is the term used to reflect the number of members each party will have in the House of Commons. It represents the number of electoral district races won by each party. Each of the 343 seats is awarded to the candidate in each electoral district who receives the most 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 calculated by dividing the number of votes a party received by the total

number of votes in the election. Under our electoral system (FPTP), the percentage of seats a party wins does not always match the percentage of the popular vote they receive.

The political party with the most seats usually forms the government, and its leader typically becomes the prime minister. If the governing party has more than half of all the seats (172 or more), it will have a **majority government**. If it has half or less (171 or fewer), it will have a **minority government**.

The party with the second-most seats usually becomes the **official opposition**. Any other party is called an opposition party. The opposition parties are responsible for holding the government accountable and questioning its decisions and actions. The official opposition organizes a shadow cabinet to act as expert critics of the portfolios or government ministries managed by each cabinet minister.

In order to pass any **legislation** or budget, bills must have support from more than half of the Members of Parliament. If the governing party has a minority government, it 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.

## ACTIVITY 8.1: Election Reflection

<b>REFLECTION CARD</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Three key insights about federal elections in Canada:</b> 1. 2. 3.
<b>2</b>	<b>Two activities I found most valuable in the Student Vote experience:</b> 1. 2.
<b>1</b>	<b>One way this process has influenced my perspective or future engagement in democracy:</b> 1.

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<b>REFLECTION CARD</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Three key insights about federal elections in Canada:</b> 1. 2. 3.
<b>2</b>	<b>Two activities I found most valuable in the Student Vote experience:</b> 1. 2.
<b>1</b>	<b>One way this process has influenced my perspective or future engagement in democracy:</b> 1.

# Notes