

LESSON 1:

Government and Democracy

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the concept of democracy and different types of government around the world.

KEY WORDS

government, anarchy, dictatorship, oligarchy, democracy, constitutional monarchy, representative democracy

QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED DURING THIS LESSON

- What are different ways a decision can be made?
- Why are rules important?
- What is the role of government?
- What types of government exist around the world?
- How do other forms of government compare with democracy?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- PowerPoint 1: Government and Democracy
- Video 1: Government and Democracy
- Worksheet 1.1: Survivor Island
- Worksheet 1.2: Let's Eat
- Worksheet 1.3: Who Should Decide?

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 20-25 min

1. Split the class into groups and have them sit together. Explain that each group will explore the need for leadership, organization and rules within a community through the following scenario.

Your class is going on an end-of-year trip across the ocean. Your flight encounters a bad storm, and you become stranded together on a remote island. The teacher and other adults have decided to venture off to find help. It will be several weeks until you are rescued and the class must figure out how everyone will try to live together and survive.

2. Distribute copies of Worksheet 1.1. Each group will answer the questions to figure out how they will work together to survive on the island.

3. Bring the class back to the big group and discuss each group's answers. Emphasize differences between community organization (independent vs. team work/self-serving vs. helping others), the selection of the leader (democratic process vs. virtue or desire) and rules (individual rights vs. common good/freedom vs. control). Offer alternative options for students to consider if the groups do not express different answers.

4. Have a final discussion about the decision-making process involved in the group work. How were decisions made for each question? Did everyone agree with the decisions? Were decisions made quickly? Why or why not?

Teacher Note: Alternatively, you could use Extension A as the Hook activity.

Discussion: 10-15 min

Imagine what your classroom would be like if your teacher had no rules regarding behaviour, habits or homework. What would happen if there were no rules or authority in your community or country?

Imagine what would happen if your classroom or school made rules that were unfair or unnecessarily harsh. What would happen if people in your community or country were under very strict rules (e.g., 6pm nightly curfew for anyone under 18 years of age, no sports or games in the streets)?

Instruction: 10-15 min

Governments are responsible for making rules and decisions for people living within their borders (e.g., education/schools, transportation/roads, healthcare/hospitals). There are different types of governments around the world and they make decisions and rules for their citizens in different ways. You can compare governments by the number of people who have access to power and by the types of rights and freedoms granted to citizens.

Teacher Note: Show Video 1 or PowerPoint 1 to provide examples of the different government types to students.

- a) A dictatorship is a type of government where one person or a ruling group has complete political power. Dictatorships often come to power through a military takeover. Power is then maintained without the consent of the people through a one-party system where political opposition is forbidden. Dictatorships generally restrict individual rights. There is usually a heavy military presence with no independent media.
- b) An oligarchy is a type of government in which political power is kept in the hands of a small group of people, usually the rich. Oligarchs exercise power primarily to serve their own interests. An oligarchy can also be a dictatorship.
- c) A democracy is a type of government where a majority of the people are included in political decision-making. The most common form of democracy is representative democracy, where citizens elect politicians to represent them in assemblies and make decisions on their behalf. Citizens are also free to run for political office. In democratic countries, citizens have protected rights such as freedom of speech and religion, freedom of association, and the right to participate in free and fair elections.

Activity: 10-15 min

Play a game of running dictation using some or all of the key terms in the lesson (e.g., democracy, dictatorship, oligarchy, anarchy). Using the glossary or your own definitions, prepare large print definitions of each term (one per page, multiple copies if necessary).

Instructions:

1. Attach a single term to a wall in the classroom or in the hallway (create numerous locations if helpful). Divide students into pairs with one student acting as the “writer” and one student acting as the “runner.”
2. The runner must run to the wall or board where the key term is displayed, read the text, run back to their partner and repeat what they read.
3. The writer’s job is to listen to the runner and write down what is said. It will likely take a few trips to and from the posting for the runner to

dictate the entire definition to the writer.

4. When most groups are done, the writer can check their work against what is displayed. Roles are then reversed and the next term is used.

Debrief: 10-15 min

Have a brief closing discussion about government and democracy. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection in their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- What is the role of government?
- What are the pros and cons of different types of government?
- Would you prefer to live in a dictatorship or a democracy? Why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- A. Divide students into groups and tell them to imagine they are on a field trip and will be eating lunch at a fast-food chain or restaurant (provide a specific name). To save on costs, they are asked to come up with one order that everyone can agree on. They need to ensure they have one main course, one side, one drink and one dessert. Ask students to fill out Worksheet 1.2. Afterwards, have a class discussion and consider the following questions: How was a final decision made for the lunch order? Did everyone agree with the decision? Was the decision made quickly? Why or why not?
- B. Using Worksheet 1.3, explore the benefits and challenges of decision-making models in various scenarios. Have students form groups and act out one of the scenarios. After each dramatic presentation, discuss which type of decision-making model makes the most sense and why. Alternatively, the groups could act out both decision-making models for a scenario. Debrief as a class afterwards. Which decision-making process was the best for each situation? Why?
- C. Ask students to imagine what would happen if there was a dictator in their own lives for a day or a week. Students can create a comic strip or short story about what would happen.
- D. Ask students to write a story about a fictional country without a government. What would happen if there were no leaders to decide on laws or to create programs to support citizens? There would be no traffic laws or police to enforce any rules. Imagine what would happen to schools, hospitals or community centres. What would life be like?
- E. Divide the class into groups and provide each with a different country, choosing examples from different continents and regions. Ask students to research the system of government used in their designated country and to present their findings to the class.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

What is government?

A government is made up of the people and institutions put in place to run or govern a country, state, province or community. The role of government is to make decisions and enforce laws for the people it is responsible for. The purpose of government is to protect its citizens and provide services.

What types of government exist?

Various types of government exist in the world and they make decisions and rules for their people in different ways. Government types can be distinguished by the number of people who have access to power and by the types of rights and freedoms granted to citizens.

A dictatorship is a type of government where one person or a ruling group has complete political power. In this system of government, the dictator or ruling group exercises power through control of a mass movement, political party or the military. Dictatorships often come to power through a military takeover (also known as a coup d'état). Power is then maintained without the consent of the people through a one-party state where political opposition is forbidden. Dictatorships generally restrict individual civil and political rights. There is usually a heavy military presence with no independent media.

The term authoritarianism is sometimes used to describe dictatorships. Authoritarian governments exercise forceful control over the population, with no particular concern for their preferences or for public opinion. Similarly, an autocracy is a type of government where political power is concentrated in the hands of one person who rules without restriction. An autocracy can be a dictatorship or an absolute monarchy.

An oligarchy is a type of government in which political power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of people, usually the rich. Oligarchs exercise power primarily to serve their own interests. An oligarchy can also be a dictatorship.

A democracy is a type of government where a majority of the population is included in political decision-making. The word 'democracy' is derived from two ancient Greek words: demos ('the people') and kratos ('strength' or 'power'). Many different political systems describe themselves as democratic. The most common form of democracy is representative democracy, where citizens elect politicians to represent them in assemblies and make decisions on their behalf. Citizens are also free to run for political office. In democratic countries, citizens have protected civil and political rights such as freedom of speech and religion, freedom of association, and the right to participate in free and fair elections.

What type of government do we have in Canada?

Canada is a parliamentary democracy, which is a type of representative democracy. It is also a constitutional monarchy; the Queen, our head of state, holds symbolic power.

Every act of government is done in the name of the Queen, but the authority for every act comes from the Canadian people through the Constitution. Most of the powers and responsibilities of the Queen are now exercised by her representative, the Governor General, except when the Queen is in Canada.

The monarch's powers in Canada are limited by the Constitution and the ability to make and pass legislation belongs to an elected parliament. As a system of government, a constitutional monarchy separates the head of state's ceremonial and official duties from partisan politics.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- "Our Country, Our Parliament," *The Library of Parliament* — www.parl.gc.ca
- "Government Type," *CIA World Factbook* — www.cia.gov

LESSON 2:

Democratic Rights and Responsibilities

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the fundamental rights and freedoms that exist in a democracy and the associated responsibilities.

KEY WORDS

democracy, representative democracy, right, freedom, responsibility, election, universal suffrage

QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED DURING THIS LESSON

- What does it mean to live in a democracy?
- What is a right?
- What rights and freedoms do we have in Canada?
- What responsibilities come along with our rights?
- How is voting both a right and a responsibility?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- PowerPoint 2: Rights and Responsibilities in a Democracy
- Video 1: Government and Democracy
- Video 2: The Right to Vote
- Handout 2.1: Highlights from the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- Handout 2.2: History of Voting Rights in Canada
- Worksheet 2.3: Presentation Planning Sheet
- Worksheet 2.4: Our Rights and Responsibilities
- Worksheet 2.5: Voting Rights in Canada
- Worksheet 2.6: The Right to Vote

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 10-15 min

1. Read the following fictional story to your students:

Last year, there was a lot of bullying amongst the students at Harrison Public School. Students were not treating each other with respect. There was fighting, teasing and tears almost every day and it was very disruptive to the school community. Over the summer, parents, teachers, the principal and members of the school community held meetings to find a solution. After lots of discussion, it was decided that students would not be allowed to choose their own friends anymore. Instead, parents would make those decisions and teachers would enforce them.

2. Have a follow-up class discussion:

- Why did the students lose the right to choose their own friends?
- How would you feel if you lost the right to choose your own friends?
- Would a better solution have been reached if students had been involved in the decision-making process?
- How important is it that we are allowed to make our own decisions?
- How important is it that we do so in a responsible manner?

Discussion: 10 min

What is a right? What is a responsibility? What are some of the rights we have in the classroom or at school? What responsibilities come with these rights?

For example, every child has the right to learn, but every child has the responsibility to arrive at school on time and complete their homework. The right to a safe classroom comes with the responsibility to follow the rules.

Teacher Note: Record the examples on a blackboard, chart paper or Smartboard so that students can see their responses.

Instruction: 20-25 min

1. All citizens living in a democracy have guaranteed rights and freedoms. Some of these basic rights include the ability to form your own opinion and express it freely (freedom of thought and expression), the choice to worship in your own way (freedom of religion), and the right to gather and meet with one another, or to protest (freedom of assembly).

2. In 1982, the Canadian government created the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to protect our rights (Handout 2.1). One section is dedicated to our democratic rights, which include the right of every Canadian citizen, 18 years of age and older, to participate or vote in government elections. Elections are the method of how our elected representatives and government are chosen.

3. The right to vote in Canada has changed over time. In the early days, only wealthy men who owned property/land could vote. At that time, women and people of various ethnic backgrounds could not vote. Universal suffrage is the granting of the right to vote to all adult citizens, including the removal of restrictions against women and restrictions against people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds.

See Handout 2.2 and other suggestions listed in the *External Resources* section.

Activity: 20-30 min

1. Explain to students that fewer and fewer people are voting in government elections. Questions to discuss: Is the decrease in voting disrespectful to those who had to fight for their right to vote? What are the responsibilities that go along with the right to vote?

2. In groups or individually, have students design a campaign poster or PowerPoint presentation to encourage people to cast a ballot in the federal election. Students should use images and words to describe why it is important to vote. Worksheet 2.3 can be used as a planning tool. Afterwards, display the posters around the school or ask students to share their work with their families.

Debrief: 5 min

Have a brief closing discussion about rights and responsibilities. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- What does living in a democracy mean to you?
- How important is it that individuals are responsible members of society?
- Will you vote in elections when you turn 18 years old? Why or why not?
- Should voters lose their right to vote if they choose to skip an election?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. Using Handout 2.1, review the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as a class. Individually or in pairs, ask students to consider the responsibilities that go along with each right using Worksheet 2.4.

B. Using Handout 2.2 and other sources, have students review and interpret the history of voting rights in Canada. Using Worksheet 2.5, have students record the date when a particular group received the right to vote and how or why it was granted to them. Afterwards, ask students to create a visual timeline showing when various groups received the right to vote or when access was improved.

C. Ask students to recall a time when they finally received a privilege (e.g., the right to walk to school on their own, have a sleepover, extend their bedtime). Now ask students to imagine they are a member of one of the groups that was granted the right to vote and ask them to write about their feelings and experiences in a diary. Students should write two diary entries: one before being granted the right to vote and one after receiving the right to vote. Use Worksheet 2.6.

D. Investigate countries around the world that are currently fighting for the right to vote. Have students write a summary or article based on their research, including the *who, what, where, when* and *how*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

What is a representative democracy?

Canadians elect representatives to speak on their behalf and to pass laws. An election is the process of choosing individuals from among a group of candidates who will run a government.

What rights and responsibilities do we have in Canada?

A right is a freedom that is protected. The rights and freedoms of citizens are vital to a democratic government.

In Canada, citizens' rights and freedoms are protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Charter contains seven sections that define our rights as Canadians: fundamental rights, democratic rights, mobility rights, legal rights, equality rights, official language rights and minority language education rights.

Democratic rights include the right for every Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election and to be a candidate. They also require governments to hold elections at least every five years and that the elected representatives comprising them meet at least every year.

With all rights come responsibilities. A responsibility is a duty or obligation. It is something you should do in order to respect certain rights or rules.

The right to vote comes with the responsibility to cast a ballot in an informed and purposeful manner.

What is universal suffrage?

Universal suffrage is the extension of the right to vote to all adult citizens, including the removal of restrictions against women, various ethnic and religious groups and property ownership requirements.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- “Voting in Canada: How a Privilege Became a Right,” *CBC Digital Archives* — www.cbc.ca
- “Women’s Right to Vote,” *Telling Times Documentary* — www.cpac.ca
- “Extending the Vote,” *Canada: A People’s History* — www.cbc.ca
- A History of the Vote in Canada, Elections Canada — www.elections.ca
- The Evolution of the Franchise, Elections Canada — www.elections.ca
- The Electoral System of Canada, Elections Canada — www.elections.ca

LESSON 3:

Three Levels of Government

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the roles and responsibilities associated with the three levels of government and understand how government policy and services directly influence their lives.

KEY WORDS

federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, local, Member of Parliament (MP), legislative assembly, parliament, House of Commons, prime minister, premier

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE DURING THIS LESSON

- How is government structured in Canada?
- What roles and responsibilities are associated with each of the three levels of government?
- How is your life affected by government?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- PowerPoint 3: Three Levels of Government
- Video 3: The Levels of Government
- Worksheet 3.1: Government All Around
- Worksheet 3.2: Investigating Government
- Handout 3.3: Government Responsibilities
- Worksheet 3.4: In the News

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 5-10 min

1. Ask students to consider the roles of the following individuals in education: teacher, principal and superintendent/director of education. What is the area or border of their responsibilities (e.g., classroom, school, school board)? Whose responsibilities are the broadest?

2. Similar to the education system, there is a division of responsibility among governments in Canada. Write the words below on the board. Ask students to match the two columns.

Federal Government	___	A ___ Classroom Teacher
Provincial Government	___	B ___ School Principal
Municipal Government	___	C ___ School Division Superintendent

3. Ask students to describe the separation of responsibilities (who does what) at several community places or organizations (e.g., police force, business, hospital, fire department, grocery store).

For example:

Police – Chief of Police, Sergeants, Constables

Fire Department – Fire Chief, Captain, Firefighters

Business – President/Executive Director, Regional Directors, Local Manager, Local Staff

Discussion: 2-3 min

Who is the current prime minister, premier and mayor/reeve/chairperson of your community?

Instruction: 15-20 min

1. Canada is a federal state with three levels of government: federal, provincial/territorial and municipal/local.

- Each level has its own set of responsibilities. Sometimes, more than one level works together on a particular issue but there is still a division of roles.
- The federal government takes responsibility for matters of national and international concern, provincial/territorial governments are responsible for their own province and territory, and municipal/local governments manage their community.

2. In Canada, we vote for people to represent us at each level of government.
- The representative at the federal level is called a Member of Parliament (MP). Canada will elect 338 MPs in the current election, each representing a specific area or riding (also known as an electoral district or constituency).
 - At the provincial/territorial level, representatives are called Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP), Members of the National Assembly (MNA) or Members of the House of Assembly (MHA), depending on the province or territory.
 - The representative at the municipal/local level is often called a councillor or alderman.
3. The representatives gather together to propose, debate and approve laws, discuss concerns facing the country, province or community, and represent people living in their riding.
- MPs meet at the House of Commons within the Parliament buildings in Ottawa.
 - Provincial/territorial representatives meet at the legislature in the capital of their province or territory.
 - Councillors/aldermen meet at the local city or town hall in their community.
4. Each level of government has a leader. At the federal and provincial levels, this person is usually the leader of the political party that has the most members in the legislature or parliament. At the municipal/local level, the leader is usually selected by the people through a vote.
- The leader at the federal level is called a prime minister.
 - The leader at the provincial/territorial level is called a premier.
 - The leader at the municipal/local level is called a mayor, reeve or chairperson.

Teacher Note: Consensus government is used in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. There are no parties, and the territorial legislature selects the speaker, premier and cabinet members from amongst its members.

Activity: 15-20 min and homework

1. Distribute copies of Worksheet 3.1 and ask students, individually or in pairs, to label or identify all the government services in the picture.
2. Take up the worksheet as a class and have a discussion about all the ways government impacts our lives.
3. Assign Worksheet 3.2 for homework. Provide the following links to support research.
 - The Governor General of Canada — www.gg.ca
 - Parliament of Canada — www.parl.gc.ca
 - Elections Canada — www.elections.ca

Debrief: 5-10 min

Have a brief closing discussion about government in Canada. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- What have you learned about the levels of government in Canada?
- How does government affect your life?
- Is government important? Why or why not?
- If you became the prime minister, what would your top three goals be over the next few years?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. Review Handout 3.3 and ask students to identify an area of responsibility they care about at the federal level. In pairs, groups, or individually, ask students to prepare a creative presentation about why it is important. Students can use any form of presentation they choose — it could be a speech, poster, skit, song or rap.

B. Have students find a story related to government in the local newspaper. Ask them to identify whether the story concerns the municipal/local, provincial/territorial or federal government by highlighting the key words that reveal this information. Using Worksheet 3.4, have students answer the following questions and share their findings with the class: What is this news story/article about? What is the issue being discussed? Which level of government does it involve? What are the arguments or supporting points being made? Who is this story important to?

C. Have students draw a community picture or map and label five government services (e.g., school, park, hospital, roads, cars, police officer). The label should include the level of government and the responsibility.

D. Invite an elected representative, past politician or public servant (at any level) to visit the school or class to discuss their role and the responsibilities of their level of government.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

How is government structured in Canada?

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 matters of national importance, and separate provincial/territorial governments for local purposes.

In Canada’s parliamentary democracy, the people elect representatives (members) to the federal parliament and to the provincial and territorial legislatures. 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 party with the most elected representatives in the legislature or parliament usually determines the leader of the government. At the federal level, the leader of the government is called the prime minister. At the provincial or territorial level, the leader of the government is called the premier.

Consensus government is used in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. There are no parties, and the legislature selects the speaker, premier and cabinet members from amongst its members.

With the exception of a few cities in Canada, there are no political parties at the municipal or local level. The elected local representative is usually called a councillor or alderman. The leader of the municipal government is most often called a mayor, reeve or chairperson. The leader is elected 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 the 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.

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.

How are responsibilities divided among the levels of government?

Canada has three levels of government: federal, provincial/territorial and municipal/local. Each level of government has its own structure of elected and appointed representatives as well as a unique set of responsibilities.

The constitutional division of powers is based on the principle of subsidiarity, in which the government closest to the issue governs it. The division of powers is found in Sections 91–95 of the *Constitution Act*.

- The federal government takes responsibility for the whole country and matters of national and international concern, such as our armed forces, relations with other countries, money and currency, fisheries and oceans, and criminal law and public safety.
- Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for their own province or territory and regional

matters including education, healthcare delivery, natural resources and transportation/highways.

- Municipal and local governments take responsibility for their city or town and local matters such as garbage and recycling, libraries, public transit, and local parks and recreation. Municipal and local governments acquire their responsibilities from their province or territory.

Some powers may overlap between jurisdictions. This is called concurrency. For example, federal, provincial and municipal/local 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/local governments are responsible for zoning, garbage disposal, and sewage and water treatment.

How is the federal government structured? What roles exist?

The Canadian government is divided into three branches: legislative, executive and judicial.

The legislative branch creates laws, rules and regulations under federal jurisdiction. The legislative branch is made up of elected representatives called Members of Parliament at the federal level. After the next election, there will be 338 Members of Parliament and each will represent a different geographic area (called a riding or electoral district).

The executive branch implements and enforces laws, rules and regulations. In the executive branch, the Queen is the head of state and is represented by the governor general. The leader of the federal government is called the prime minister. The prime minister appoints several MPs to head the ministries of the executive council (cabinet). Each minister is in charge of one of the federal departments and acts as an advisor to the prime minister and the legislature in their area of expertise.

The judicial branch interprets the law, rules and regulations and punishes those who violate them. The judicial branch of government is headed by the Supreme Court and nine appointed judges. The Canadian court system is responsible for deciding who has broken the law and for dispensing the appropriate punishment for the crime committed.

What do members of the legislative branch do?

When the legislature is sitting, MPs are responsible for proposing, studying, debating and voting on bills (potential laws), and raising issues put forward by their constituents. When the legislature is not sitting, MPs meet with their constituents (people living in the ridings they represent) to discuss the constituents' concerns and to provide guidance and advice relating to government services.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- “How Canadians Govern Themselves” — www.parl.gc.ca
- “Discover Canada” — www.cic.gc.ca
- Parliament of Canada — www.parl.gc.ca
- Government of Canada website — www.gc.ca
- Elections Canada — www.elections.ca

LESSON 4:

Political Parties

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about political perspectives and political parties, and research the parties campaigning in the federal election.

KEY WORDS

political party, political ideology, perspective, political party, party leader, candidate, slogan, party platform, plank, riding

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE DURING THIS LESSON

- What is a political party? What purpose do they serve?
- How do political parties form government?
- Which political parties can you name?
- What is a party platform?
- What is each party's platform or what promises are they making if they get elected?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- PowerPoint 4: Political Parties
- Handout 4.1: 2011 Election Results
- Worksheet 4.2: Getting to Know the Parties
- Worksheet 4.3: Where do you stand?
- Worksheet 4.4: Vote for My Party
- Worksheet 4.5: Watching the Leaders' Debate

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 20-30 min

1. Tell students to imagine that their school has been given a grant or sum of money to improve or expand the schoolyard. Lead a class brainstorming session on the different ways in which the money could be spent. Record ideas on a blackboard, chart paper or Smartboard.

2. Group similar ideas together so that there are four to six main ideas. Help students form groups ('parties') based on their interests. Ask each group to discuss their ideas in more detail and record reasons why their ideas are good ones. Ask each group to put together a one-minute pitch.

3. Give each group one minute to share their pitch with the rest of the class.

Instruction: 10 min

1. When a community or large number of people need to get something done, people with similar interests often form groups and work together to achieve their goals. In politics, these groups are called political parties. A political party is made up of people, called party members, who share similar goals for their province/territory or country. Each party also selects a leader, usually through a leadership contest. In order for the political party to have the chance to work towards its goals, the party must win an election and lead the government.

2. Canada's system of government is based on political parties. In the lead-up to or during an election, a political party will create a platform — a list of ideas or plans that explain the steps to achieve a party's goals. While all parties may agree that education is a priority, they may have different ideas about how to improve the system or which steps to take.

3. A riding (also known as a constituency or electoral district) is a geographical area represented by an elected official. During elections, political parties select individuals to represent them (called candidates) and compete for the job of MP in local races across Canada. Parties can only have one candidate per riding.

4. After the election, the political party that wins the most number of local election races (usually) forms government and the leader becomes the prime minister. Using Handout 4.1, review the results of the 2011 election.

Discussion: 10 min

What ideas and goals do you have for improving the country? If you were a member of a party, what would you want your party's platform to focus on?

Activity: 60+ min (should be conducted over two classes with homework)

1. Review the list of political parties in Canada and identify which have candidates running in your riding. A list of registered political parties can be found at the end of the lesson. A list of candidates can be found using the Voter Information Service on Elections Canada's website (www.elections.ca).

2. Organize students into groups and assign each group a political party that is running a candidate in your school's riding, or allow them to choose one based on their preference. The goal is to ensure that each party with a candidate running in your riding is covered by a group.

Using party websites, online resources and campaign literature, each group should conduct research into the following:

- What does the political party stand for?
- Who is the current leader of the party?
- What are the party's logos, slogans, posters and advertisements? What are the party's key messages?
- Who seems to be the target audience of the party? Who does the party seem to appeal to?
- What are the party's main priorities or ideas (platform)? What is their vision for Canada?

3. Using the information collected, each group will create a presentation about a party and its campaign platform. Students can also produce videos, posters or multi-media works to advertise the political party.

4. Have each group present their political party to the rest of the class. Students can take notes on each presentation using Worksheet 4.2. Afterwards, have students vote on the political party they like best – excluding their own party.

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

Debrief: 5 min

Have a brief closing discussion about political parties with your class. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- What did you learn about political parties?
- Why are political parties important?
- Would you ever join a political party? Why or why not?
- Which political party do you like the most? Why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. A political ideology is a set of ideas and beliefs about how politics and government should work. Play a game of Agree/Disagree with your students. Post two signs in the classroom on either side of the room, one should read "Agree" and the other "Disagree." Alternatively, create four zones with the following options: "Totally agree", "I agree but...", "I don't agree" and "Convince me." Have students move accordingly.

Read out a statement and ask students to vote with their feet by walking to the sign that fits with their opinion. Ask students to explain their choice for each question. After each student defends their response, give the other students the chance to change where they stand, demonstrating that this is what parties try to do with voters during election campaigns.

The statements could include:

- Companies that pollute our air and water should suffer consequences.
- Canada should spend more money on our armed forces.
- People who make more money should pay more in taxes.
- Government should focus on earning money, not helping people.
- Canada should give more money and aid to poorer countries.
- The government should provide free childcare.
- The government should be small and provide limited services, so that we do not have to pay a lot of taxes.
- Tradition is a more important than change in our society.

Alternatively, you could assign Worksheet 4.3 and discuss the responses as a class.

B. Using Worksheet 4.4, ask students to create a comic strip persuading their classmates to vote for one particular political party on Student Vote Day. They should explain what the party stands for, what it is promising to do if it forms the government, and what makes it the best choice to lead Canada.

C. Have students create their own federal political party. The political party should have a name, logo, slogan, key priorities and ideas for helping the people of Canada. Presentations could include posters, campaign literature, speeches and other election paraphernalia.

D. Leaders' debates are opportunities for the leaders of the major political parties to share their platforms, criticize their opponents' ideas and perform in front of the electorate. Plan a viewing of one of the federal

leaders' debates for your class or ask students to watch it with their family and friends. Afterwards, have students evaluate the performance of each leader using Worksheet 4.5.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

What is a political party? What purpose do they serve?
A political party is a group of like-minded individuals with a shared vision and similar political ideals whose intention is to achieve power through an election and create meaningful political change. Political parties compete against each other during election campaigns and appeal to the public for their support and, ultimately, their vote on election day.

What is the political spectrum? How do political parties and the political spectrum relate?
The political spectrum is a means of characterizing beliefs, values and priorities, and provides a conceptual framework in which to view and evaluate political parties and policies. A linear spectrum is represented by a horizontal line, with parties on the left embracing social equality, social services and government intervention in the economy, and parties on the right favouring individual liberty, free markets and lower taxes.

How do political parties form government in Canada?
Canada's federal system of government is based on political parties. Parties are required to register with Elections Canada. During elections, an organized course of action is taken by a political party, its candidates and campaign team, with the intention of spreading their message to secure constituent support and votes.

The political party that elects the most candidates

(usually) forms government and their leader becomes the prime minister. Most candidates belong to a party, unless they are running as an independent or are not associated with any party.

How do political parties work?

Political parties are made up of interested members of the general public. Joining a political party can be an effective way for you to influence the party and the politicians who represent you and your riding. Anyone above the required age can be a member of a political party (for most parties the age is 14). Party members can discuss ideas and propose policy. Many parties also have youth wings.

Party members choose the party leader and local candidates and work together to help them get elected. Local candidates are party members selected through a nomination process by the local riding association. The party selects the person they feel has the greatest chance of success as their candidate.

Candidates campaign during the election, share their party's ideas and aspire to represent its vision in the parliament or legislature. To become an MP, candidates must get the most votes in their riding during an election.

What is a party platform?

A party platform is a series of declared principles and policies on jurisdictional issues that concern the government and the public. Parties share their platforms through announcements, advertising and events. They share their ideas in order to attract support from the electorate and secure votes.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- Elections Canada — www.elections.ca
- Vote Compass — www.votecompass.ca
- Campaign literature (pamphlets, advertisements, articles)

Registered Political Parties (For the most up to date list, visit www.elections.ca)

- Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada — www.environmentvoters.org
- Bloc Québécois — www.blocquebecois.org
- Canadian Action Party — www.canadianactionparty.org
- Christian Heritage Party of Canada — www.chp.ca
- Communist Party of Canada — www.comunist-party.ca
- Conservative Party of Canada — www.conservative.ca
- Forces et Démocratie — www.forcesetdemocratie.org
- Green Party of Canada — www.greenparty.ca
- Liberal Party of Canada — www.liberal.ca
- Libertarian Party of Canada — www.libertarian.ca
- Marijuana Party — www.marijuanaparty.ca
- Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada — www.mlpc.ca
- New Democratic Party — www.ndp.ca
- Party for Accountability, Competency and Transparency — www.onlineparty.ca
- Pirate Party of Canada — www.pirateparty.ca
- Progressive Canadian Party — www.pcparty.org
- Rhinoceros Party — www.neorhino.ca
- The Bridge Party of Canada — www.thebridgeparty.ca
- United Party of Canada — www.unitedpartyofcanada.com

LESSON 5:

Local Candidates and Issues

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about their riding, the candidates and local issues.

KEY WORDS

riding, electoral system, candidate, independent, ballot, incumbent, issue, constituent, First-Past-The-Post

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE DURING THIS LESSON

- What is a riding?
- What is a candidate? How do candidates get elected?
- What is the name of my riding and who are the candidates?
- What are the most important issues in my riding?
- How can I learn about my local candidates?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- PowerPoint 5: Local Candidates and Issues
- Worksheet 5.1: My Riding
- Worksheet 5.2: Election Candidate Profile
- Handout 5.3: A Framework for Planning an All-Candidates Meeting
- Worksheet 5.4: Graphic Organizer

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 10-15 min

1. Explain to students that the country is divided into 338 different areas or ridings. Find your school's riding on the national riding map and write the name of your riding on a blackboard, chart paper or Smartboard. If you don't know your school's riding, use the Voter Information Service on Elections Canada's website (www.elections.ca).

2. Ask students if they notice any differences between their riding and others across their province or across the country (e.g., size, shape). Ask them to consider why there are differences and what those differences might be (e.g., population, geography, landmarks).

3. Show students an individual map of the school's riding on the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca). If your riding has changed since 2011, compare your 2011 riding to your 2015 riding. Answer the following questions:

- What are the boundaries of the school's riding? Have they changed since 2011?
- Where is the school located?
- What major landmarks or attractions are included in the school's riding? What makes it unique?

4. Give students an opportunity to fill out sections of Worksheet 5.1 or assign it for homework.

Instruction: 10-15 min

1. In Canada, there are 338 electoral districts (also known as ridings or constituencies) and each has its own elected representative called a Member of Parliament (MP). The average number of electors per riding is 72,747 and this is why ridings differ in size. For example, ridings will be smaller in big cities (where there is a dense population) while rural areas will have larger ridings (where the population is spread out).

2. During an election, several people in each riding compete against one another for the job of MP. These people are called candidates. Candidates can be associated with a political party or have no association (called an independent).

3. A ballot lists the candidates (and political parties) running for election in the local riding. Each voter is allowed to choose one candidate. The candidate who receives the most votes becomes the MP. This method of electing representatives is called First-Past-The-Post (or Single-Member Plurality).

4. Incumbent is the term given to the candidate who held the position of MP before the election.

Discussion: 10 min

How should you evaluate candidates? What qualities and skills do you expect from an MP? Why are these qualities necessary for the job?

Activity: 20-30 min plus homework

1. List all of the candidates (and their party if applicable) running for election in your school's riding. Show students where they can find this information on the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca). Ask students to write down the information on Worksheet 5.1.

2. Ask students to create profiles by examining candidate websites, social media platforms, campaign literature, or by finding information through newspapers and media websites. For each candidate, students should focus on the following questions to narrow their research:

- What experience and skills does the candidate have? Consider careers, community involvement and volunteer experience.
- Why does the candidate want to be elected? What goals do they want to achieve?
- What do you like or dislike about the candidate and why?
- What question would you like to ask the candidate?

Teacher Note: This activity can be completed independently, in groups or by jigsaw method using Worksheet 5.2. Ensure that all candidates in your riding are researched. Have students share their findings with the class or within their groups.

Debrief: 5 min

Have a closing discussion about local issues and candidates with your class. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- How can a voter learn about the issues and candidates?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate?
- Which candidate would you support and why?
- What does it mean to run as an independent? Why would someone choose to run as an independent?
- Would you ever consider running as a candidate? Why or why not?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. To help students learn more about the candidates, their priorities and their role, have students prepare questions for each of the candidates. Consider the following to guide the development of questions:

- Which election issues have you been following most closely?
- Which issues impact you, your family and friends?
- What do you want to know about the candidates before casting your ballot?

Pose the questions to candidates through Twitter or email, by conducting a phone interview, by arranging candidates to visit your class or by holding an all-candidates' debate in your school (refer to Handout 5.3).

B. Ask students to collect articles related to their riding and the candidates. These could be shared on a daily basis to raise awareness about current events. Using Worksheet 5.4, students should identify the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why* and *how*. Post the articles on a bulletin board for reference.

C. Have students organize and engage in a mock debate to gain a better understanding of the job of a candidate and their team in a local campaign. Divide the class into small groups, making sure every local candidate is represented by a group. Select one student from each group to take on the role of a local candidate (and persona, if possible), and the rest of their group will act as the candidate's campaign team. Using existing arguments taken from media coverage, candidate websites and campaign literature, have each group prepare their candidate for the debate.

D. Have students take on the role of an actual local election candidate and write a campaign speech to attract supporters. Students should focus on three main arguments or points, and use information from the candidate's website and campaign literature to guide their arguments. Alternatively, students could be their own candidate running for election in the riding or they could use a fictional example for their campaign speech (e.g., the schoolyard grant from the *Hook* in Lesson 4). Students can be assessed on their persuasive writing skills.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

What is a riding?

A riding, also known as a constituency or electoral district, is a geographical area with defined boundaries represented by an elected official. In Canada, the elected official is called a Member of Parliament (MP). Each riding has an MP who represents the local needs and interests of their constituents (people living in the riding) in the House of Commons. The MP also addresses issues at the local level.

The number of ridings in Canada has increased over time and this number is established by a formula. The Constitution of Canada requires that federal ridings be reviewed every 10 years to reflect changes and movements in Canada’s population. The most recent federal redistribution process began in February 2012 and was completed in October 2013. The process was led by independent commissions working separately in each province to establish electoral boundaries. The number of ridings has increased by 30 since 2011, and Canadians are electing 338 MPs to the House of Commons in the 2015 election.

What is an electoral system?

An electoral system is the way citizens’ choices, expressed as votes, are translated into legislative seats. All electoral systems have three basic elements:

- District magnitude: The number of members elected per district.
- Ballot type: The way in which choices are presented and voters express their preference(s).
- Electoral formula: The method for determining which candidate gets elected (or wins).

How does First-Past-The-Post/Single-Member Plurality work?

First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) is the electoral system used across Canada. Another name for FPTP is Single-Member Plurality. The district magnitude is single-member districts. Citizens elect one representative per riding. The ballot type is categorical or exclusive ballot. Voters are allowed to choose one candidate on their ballot. The electoral formula is plurality. The successful candidate must receive at least one more vote than any of the other candidates (the most votes).

Example of FPTP: In a riding with 100 ballots cast.

VOTE TOTALS BY CANDIDATE

Leila (Banana Party)	40
Mohamed (Pear Party)	15
Emma (Apple Party)	11
Thomas (Independent)	34

In this case, Leila becomes the elected representative because she has the most votes. Leila wins even though 60 per cent of the voters chose other candidates. Under FPTP, it is not necessary to win more than 50 per cent of the votes — the candidate simply needs to win the most votes.

How does one find out which riding they are in?

You can visit the Elections Canada website and search using your address or postal code to find your riding. During a federal election campaign, Elections Canada also posts a list of candidates running for election in each riding on an ongoing basis. Candidate nominations officially close 21 days before election

day (September 28, 2015) and the final list of candidates is available a few days afterwards.

What are the most important issues facing my riding?

An individual’s political views are personal and highly subjective. They are unique and shaped by their experiences, values, knowledge and feelings. Therefore, each person is responsible for forming their own opinions. These opinions can be formed by listening to other people whose opinions you respect, researching an issue or idea, discussing with your parents and peers, and thinking seriously about what matters to you to come to your own conclusions.

No one can tell you how to vote, although this is the primary objective of all candidates and political parties. It is up to you – the voter – to decide what is most important, who you should listen to and, ultimately, who you will support.

How can I learn about my candidates and the issues they support?

There are many ways to gather information about local candidates. Community groups hold town hall meetings where constituents are invited to listen to candidates speak on issues they and their parties support. Information can also be found on the radio, on television, in newspapers and in magazines. Individuals may also visit local campaign offices, attend campaign events or have a chance to talk to the candidate when they visit homes during door-to-door canvassing. Information is easily found online through party websites, media websites and social media platforms.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- Federal electoral districts and lists of candidates — www.elections.ca
- Candidate information/literature (candidate websites, social media sites, campaign flyers)
- Electoral Systems — www.parl.gc.ca

LESSON 6:

Messages in the Media

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about different types of media and scrutinize multiple examples to determine whether a story is fact- or opinion-based.

KEY WORDS

paid media, earned media, owned media, old media, new media, social media, news media, reporter, columnist, editorial, bias, opinion

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE DURING THIS LESSON

- What are the different types of media?
- How is media used by candidates and political parties?
- What is the role of news media in an election?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- PowerPoint 6: Messages in the Media
- Worksheet 6.1: Analyzing Media
- Worksheet 6.2: Facts vs. Opinions

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 25-30 min

1. Review the concept of media. Media is the communication of information and messages to people.

2. Collect and share one or more examples of paid, earned and owned media related to the election (e.g., newscast summary or news article, candidate's blog, party's campaign ad on TV or in the newspaper, campaign flyer). For each piece, initiate a discussion related to the following:

- Who is the audience?
- Who is the sender?
- Who paid for it?

3. Have a closing discussion: Which type of media did you find to be the most effective and why? Which type of media did you find to be the most credible and why?

Instruction: 10-15 min

1. Media can be divided into three main types: Paid, Earned and Owned.

- Paid Media: Awareness gained through paid advertising, such as TV commercials or newspaper ads.
- Earned Media: Awareness gained through efforts other than advertising, such as news coverage.
- Owned Media: Self-managed promotional platforms, such as a website, blog, Facebook page, YouTube channel and Twitter feed.

2. Media is often defined as Old (or Traditional) or New media.

- Old media includes sources in broadcast (television or radio) or print format (newspaper, magazines and pamphlets/flyers).
- New media includes content that is easily accessible, such as online sources and social media platforms.

3. The news media play an important role in elections. News media reports on the events of an election campaign, provides a way for parties and candidates to get their message out, encourages debate between the parties and candidates, and provides a way for citizens to communicate their concerns and opinions.

Discussion: 5-10 min

Do you read any newspapers or watch the news? What type of news media do you consume and how often?

Activity: 20 min and homework

1. Explain to students that in most cases, the news media provides factual and informational coverage without letting their opinions (biases) interfere. However, the news media also produces articles which are an analysis or reflection of a particular situation, event or person. These are called editorials or opinion pieces because they share opinions.
2. Share an example of a news story and an editorial related to the election. As a class, distinguish between the two examples and help students understand the difference between opinion and fact.
3. For homework or in class, ask students to read through a newspaper and analyze four stories related to the election using Worksheet 6.1.

Debrief: 5-10 min

Have a closing discussion about the role of media in elections. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- What have you learned about the different types of media?
- What is the role of media in election campaigns?
- Why is it important to read multiple sources of news?
- Why is it important to know the difference between opinion and fact?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. Assign Worksheet 6.2 to your class. Ask students to determine which of the ten fictional statements provided could be fact- or opinion-based. Have each student pick a statement and use it as the inspiration to write a short newspaper article. Have students discuss their articles the next day. Did they choose a fact- or opinion-based statement? How was it incorporated into their article?

B. Create a classroom social media account (e.g., Twitter) to track campaign news, the parties and the local candidates running for election in your riding. You can follow CIVIX (@CIVIX_Canada) and Student Vote (@studentvote), Elections Canada (@ElectionsCan_E), major news outlets, and particular journalists or pundits. Each day you can review the news coming through a personalized classroom Twitter feed.

C. As a class, have students analyze a campaign commercial for one or more of the political parties. Ask them to determine whether the advertisement promotes the political party's platform, or whether it attacks another party. They should identify the main message of the ad, what images are shown to support that message, and analyze whether they believe the ad is effective or achieves its goal.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

What are the different types of media?

Media can be divided into three main types: Paid, Earned and Owned.

- Paid Media: Publicity or awareness gained through paid advertising.
- Earned Media: Publicity or awareness gained through efforts other than advertising, such as news coverage or external blogs/websites.
- Owned Media: Internally managed promotional platforms, such as a website, blog, Twitter feed, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

The various types of media can also be defined as Old (or Traditional) or New media.

- Old media encompasses traditional sources in broadcast (television or radio) and print format (newspaper, magazines, flyers). Old media is typically one way communication, delivered at a specific time, has limited jurisdictional reach and strives to maintain journalistic integrity and standards.
- New media refers to content that is easily accessible, such as online sources and social media platforms. New media is typically interactive, user-driven, functions in real-time, borderless and does not always adhere to journalistic standards and ethics.

What is the difference between factual and opinion-based news coverage?

In most cases, the news media provides factual and informational coverage to inform the public without letting their opinions (biases) interfere. Although some argue that the process of choosing which stories will be published or broadcast, and where or when is also a form of bias.

The news media also produces editorials, where news organizations and their columnists or pundits will openly share their opinions or offer their analysis. These pieces are different than traditional news stories.

What is the role of media during elections?

The news media play an important role in elections and in ensuring a well-functioning democracy. Overall the news media are responsible for ensuring accountability and transparency, informing citizens and adhering to journalistic standards.

The key activities undertaken by media during an election include:

- Reporting on the developments of an election campaign
- Providing a platform for parties/candidates to get their message out
- Providing a platform for the public to communicate their concerns and opinions
- Fostering debate between the parties and candidates

- Advertising the logistics of the election process to voters
- Reporting on the results

Most news organizations remain officially neutral during elections. These organizations will balance the amount of coverage given to any party or candidate, so no one gains a real or perceived advantage.

However, some media organizations will endorse a candidate or party and explain why they believe the leader and party should form government in an editorial.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

National and local media websites. Major national examples include:

- The Globe and Mail — www.theglobeandmail.com
- CBC News — www.cbc.ca/news
- CTV News — www.ctvnews.ca
- Global News — www.globalnews.ca
- The National Post — www.nationalpost.com

LESSON 7:

The Voting Process

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the voting process and evaluate the campaign issues, party platforms, leaders and local candidates.

KEY WORDS

ballot, secret ballot, elector, ballot box, voting screen, polling place, polling division, advance voting, valid ballot, rejected ballot, spoiled ballot

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE DURING THIS LESSON

- Why is voting by secret ballot important?
- Who can vote in federal elections in Canada?
- How does the voting process work?
- How do I mark my ballot?
- How do I make my decision about who to vote for?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- PowerPoint 7: The Voting Process
- Video: How to Organize Student Vote Day
- Worksheet 7.1: Preparing to Vote
- Handout 7.2: How to Vote – 6 Easy Steps
- Worksheet 7.3: How to Vote
- Worksheet 7.4: A Trip to the Polling Place
- Worksheet 7.5: Voter’s Checklist

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 10 min

1. Ask students to answer the following questions in their head, or choose other questions that will work better for your class. Consider questions that may not always elicit truthful answers.

- a) What is your favourite TV show?
- b) What is your favourite song?

2. Now ask students the same questions again, but this time ask students to stand up and share their answers aloud in front of the class.

3. Have a follow-up discussion. Did anyone answer the questions differently when they had to share their answers aloud with the class? If so, why?

4. Voting in elections is done by secret ballot. This means that no one except the voter knows the choice that was made. Voters mark their ballot behind a privacy screen and the ballot is put in the ballot box without identifying who the voter is.

Discuss the importance of voting by secret ballot in elections. What are the benefits of voting in private? Emphasize the lack of opportunity for violence and intimidation.

Instruction: 15 min

1. In May 2007, the *Canada Elections Act* was changed to include fixed-date elections. Now, a general election is to be held on the third Monday of October in the fourth calendar year following the previous election. As a result, the federal election will take place on October 19, 2015.

However, elections can still be held earlier if the government loses the confidence of the legislature, and nothing restricts the ability of the governor general to dissolve parliament on the advice of the prime minister.

2. You are qualified 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 can prove your identity and address.

3. In order to cast a ballot in the election, you must be registered to vote. Voters can visit the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca/register) to check, update or complete their registration online or by completing and mailing a form. Voters can also register at the local Elections Canada office in their polling division during the campaign period or at their polling place on election day. In order to register and vote, voters must prove their address and identification. Information on how to do this is available on the Elections Canada website.

4. Each riding is divided into defined geographic areas called polling divisions. Eligible voters living within each polling division vote at the polling place designated for their area. People who are qualified to vote and are on the voters list will be sent a Voter Information Card (VIC) in the mail. The voter information card tells them when, where and how to vote.

5. There are many different opportunities to vote in federal elections: at an Elections Canada office, by mail, on one of four advance voting days, or on election day itself.

6. A ballot lists the names of the candidates (and their political parties) running in your riding. There is a space beside each candidate's name on the ballot to mark your choice. As long as you clearly mark the ballot for one candidate (e.g., checkmark, X, shading in), your choice will be counted (valid ballot).

Teacher Note: Show students what a ballot looks like and how to fill it out correctly. Review the following ballot terms: valid, rejected and spoiled. Use ballot examples (refer to the Student Vote Election Manual).

Activity: 20 min and homework

1. Review the list of candidates (and their parties) that students are able to vote for in the election.

2. Using Worksheet 7.1, have students reflect on the campaign issues, parties, leaders and local candidates.

3. Allow students the opportunity to share their views. Some individuals may jump at the opportunity to share their opinions and even try to convince others to adopt their choices, while others may opt for silence and prefer to keep their politics personal. Remind students that opinions should be respected and accepted.

Teacher Note: This could turn into a fruitful discussion about the privacy of voting decisions.

4. Encourage students to take their worksheets home and start discussions with their families and friends. Have students ask their parents or guardians if they plan to vote and whether they have chosen a candidate to support. Suggest to students that they visit the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca) to find out where and when their parents/guardians can vote, and encourage them to accompany them to the polling place. See Worksheet 7.4, Worksheet 7.5 and/or Extension Activity D.

Debrief: 10 min

Have a brief closing discussion about voting and making your decision. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- Do you feel ready to vote? Why or why not?
- What research or activity has helped you make your decision? Is there more research you would like to do?
- Do you feel that you know more about the election than your parents?
- Why is voting important?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. Using Worksheet 7.3, have students illustrate the steps to voting at the polling place. Handout 7.2 can be used to support the activity. Encourage students to share their worksheet with their family.

Teacher Note: The 'Organizing Student Vote Day' video may be helpful. Elections Canada's website (www.elections.ca) also has several videos and infographics about the registration and voting process.

B. Create a 'pledge to vote' activity for all Student Vote participants. This could include a ceremony or an official "I am a Voter" agreement, whereby students pledge to vote when they turn 18 or agree to be a life-long voter.

C. Allow students to make predictions regarding the Student Vote and/or official election results. Who do you think is going to win locally? Which party do you think will form government? Why do you think this will be the outcome?

D. Sometimes adults can be intimidated by the voting process, so encourage students to "take" their family members to the polls and support them in casting their ballot. Ask students to observe the process while at the polling place and fill out Worksheet 7.4. Worksheet 7.5 can also be used as a voter's checklist to prepare family members.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

When will the election take place?

Canada has fixed-date election legislation and, as required by the *Canada Elections Act*, a general election is to be held on the third Monday of October in the fourth calendar year following the polling day of the preceding general election. As a result, the 42nd Canadian general election will take place on October 19, 2015.

Fixed election dates ensure consistent election timing and reduce the likelihood of a party calling an election earlier than required for political gain. The chief criticism of fixed-date elections is that fixed election dates lead to long periods of campaigning, like those seen in the United States.

However, nothing restricts the royal prerogative of dissolution (the ability of the governor general to dissolve parliament on the advice of the prime minister). This can come at the request of the prime minister seeking a new mandate or if the governing party loses a non-confidence motion, such as a budget bill.

Who can vote?

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 can prove your identity and address.

In order to cast a ballot in the election, you must be registered to vote.

How do I get registered?

If you are an eligible elector, your contact information will be added to the National Register of Electors. The National Register of Electors is used to create the voters list 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, your information may no longer be valid. You can visit the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca) to check, update or complete your registration.

How do I know where to vote?

Each riding is divided into defined geographic areas called polling divisions. Eligible voters residing within each polling division vote at the polling place designated for their area.

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

You can also find out by visiting the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca) or calling 1-800-463-6868.

What are the ways to vote?

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

1. On election day — Your polling place will be open for 12 hours on election day. Start and end times will vary per province. Details can be found on your VIC or at www.elections.ca.
2. On an advance voting day — There are four days of advance voting. You can vote on the 10th, 9th, 8th, and 7th day before election day (October 9-12, 2015) from noon to 8:00pm.
3. At an Elections Canada office (Returning Office) — You can visit your local Elections Canada returning office any day during the election campaign, up until the Tuesday before election day (October 13, 2015).
4. By mail — If you are away from your riding during the election, or if it is more convenient, you can vote by mail. You must fill out an application by 6:00pm on the Tuesday before election day in order to receive a voting kit. The voting kit must be returned to Elections Canada in Ottawa by election day.

What do I need to confirm my identity and address on election day?

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. Show two pieces of ID with your name and have someone who knows you confirm your address. This person must show proof of their identity and address, and be registered in the same polling division and can only attest for one person.

Visit the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca) for a list of the different pieces of ID and proof of address that are accepted.

How does the voting process work?

1. When you enter the polling place, an election worker greets you and shows you to the right table.
2. At your table, show your proof of identity and address.
3. The election worker will initial, fold and hand you a ballot.
4. Go behind the voting screen, mark and refold your ballot to keep it secret.
5. Return your ballot to the worker so they can verify it is an official ballot.
6. Put your ballot in the box.

What is a secret ballot?

Voting across Canada is done by secret ballot. This ensures the privacy of each voter's choice. No one except the voter knows the choice that was made.

How do I mark my ballot?

A ballot lists the names of the candidates running in your riding and their political party affiliation, where applicable. There is a space beside each candidate's name on the ballot to mark your preference. As long as you clearly mark the ballot for one candidate, your ballot is valid. This includes a checkmark, X, shading in or another marking.

What is a rejected ballot?

A rejected ballot is a ballot that cannot be counted due to a deliberate or accidental unrecognizable choice. This can include marking the ballot for more than one candidate even if different symbols are used, ranking the candidates, leaving the ballot blank, writing your name or anything on the ballot.

What is a spoiled ballot?

A spoiled ballot is a ballot that has been kept separate and never placed in the ballot box because it was mistakenly marked or torn and exchanged for a new ballot. The election worker marks the ballot as spoiled and sets it aside.

How do I prepare to vote?

Get informed. Learn about the candidates, the political parties and the issues. When preparing to vote, you can consider reasons to support a local candidate for MP, a political party, a specific issue or a whole party platform. Voting requires that you do your research and devote the time.

How do you know if you are ready to vote?

You feel confident in your ability to make a choice.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- Elections Canada — www.elections.ca
- "My Voter's Guide," *Elections Canada* — www.elections.ca
- Elections Canada's Voter Information Service — www.elections.ca

LESSON 8:

Post-Election Analysis

OBJECTIVE

Students will analyze the results of the official election and Student Vote, and reflect on the outcome and their participation.

KEY WORDS

analyze, seat count, popular vote percentage, governing party, minority government, majority government, official opposition, opposition party

QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED DURING THIS LESSON

- What was the outcome of the Student Vote locally and nationally?
- What was the outcome of the general election locally and nationally?
- What is the difference between a majority and minority government?
- Who will form the next government?
- How did campaign events impact the outcome of the election?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- Handout 4.1: 2011 Election Results

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 5 min

1. Announce the results of your school's Student Vote election. Who received the most votes? Was it a close race?

2. Compare the results of your school's vote with the results of other schools in your riding. Are the results similar or different? How did the results vary between schools? (Individual school results can be found at www.studentvote.ca).

Teacher Note: Remember you must wait until the official polls close in your riding (or province/territory) to share the Student Vote results. Student election workers at your school should be sworn to secrecy.

Instruction: 10 min

1. Seat count is the term used to show the number of representatives that each party will have in parliament. It reflects the number of local election races won by each party.

2. Popular vote is the term used to show the total support a political party received across the country. It is shown as a percentage and is calculated by dividing the number of votes a party received by the total number of votes in the election. Under our electoral system (FPTP), the seat count is not based on popular vote count.

3. The party that has the most seats (usually) forms government. The party that has the second-highest number of seats becomes the official opposition. Any other party is called an opposition party.

4. If the governing party has more than half of all the seats (170), they will have a majority government. If they have half or less (169 or fewer), they will have a minority government.

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

Discussion: 5 min

Which local candidate was elected in your school's riding in the general election? Which party formed the government? Which party will be the official opposition? Is it a minority or a majority government?

Activity: 25-40 min

1. In groups, have students analyze the results of the general election and Student Vote for the current and last election.

Use the following comparisons for group discussion:

- a) Federal seat count comparison (General election vs. Student Vote)
- b) Federal popular vote comparison (General election vs. Student Vote)
- c) Federal seat count comparison (2011 vs. current election)
- d) Federal popular vote comparison (2011 vs. current election)
- e) Local riding results comparison (General election vs. Student Vote)

Teacher Note: Use Handout 4.1 to compare the 2011 results with those of the current election.

2. Have a group discussion after analyzing the results and media reports. Consider the following questions:
- Were there any big surprises in the election results?
 - Which parties gained or lost seats since the last election? Why do you think that happened?
 - Were the Student Vote results similar to the general election results? Why or why not?
 - Which type of graph works best for displaying election results (e.g., pie chart, line graph, bar chart)?

Debrief: 5 min

Have a brief closing discussion about the outcome of the election and participation in the Student Vote program. Alternatively, ask students to write a reflection for their election scrapbook or learning log (see *Assessment Opportunities*).

- Why is it important to analyze the results? What is there to be learned?
- Did the election results turn out as expected? Were there any events that might have influenced the results?
- What did you learn about politics and the election process from your participation in the Student Vote program?
- Did your participation in Student Vote influence anyone in your family to vote? Did it influence the choice they made in who to vote for?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. Once a candidate is elected to the legislature, they must make decisions about how to pursue issues

on behalf of their constituency. Have students write to their newly elected MP regarding an issue they believe should be considered a priority.

B. Choose a local candidate in your riding who received a significant portion of the votes in Student Vote but did not secure a seat in the House of Commons. Invite the candidate into your school for a conversation with your class. Consider asking questions about their campaign experience and the candidate's future plans.

C. Give students a chance to share their election scrapbooks from the campaign. Each student could choose two of their favourite entries to share with the class.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

How do I analyze election results?

Under our electoral system (First-Past-The-Post), election results are analyzed by the number of seats each political party will have in the House of Commons. The 338 seats will be divided among registered political parties and independent candidates.

The number of votes cast for each political party can also be examined. This analysis provides an indication of the level of support across the country and is expressed by a percentage (popular vote percentage). The seat count is not based on popular vote percentage under FPTP.

Who will form government? What kind of government will it be?

The political party with the most seats (usually) forms government and their leader becomes the prime minister.

A minority government is a government in which the governing party has the most seats but less than half the total.

A majority government is a government in which the governing party has an absolute majority of the seats (more than half). In Canada, a political party has to win at least 170 seats to win a majority government.

Which party will form the official opposition?

The political party that receives the second-highest number of seats takes on the role of the official opposition. It is their responsibility to hold the government to account and to question its actions. The official opposition organizes a shadow cabinet to act as expert critics on the files managed by each cabinet minister (which generally correspond to government departments).

Which issues will be forefront on the agenda for the new government?

The Speech from the Throne (also known as the Throne Speech) outlines the government's plans and initiatives. The speech is delivered by the governor general at the beginning of each new session of the House of Commons.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- General election results — www.elections.ca
- Student Vote results — www.studentvote.ca
- Newspaper and media websites