

# Lesson 2: Politics and Perspectives



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What is politics?
- 2 Why should we respect others' opinions and perspectives?

## OVERVIEW

Politics refers to the actions or activities associated with influencing, achieving, and using power in society. People have different values and beliefs, which influence their views and desired actions on specific issues.

In this lesson, students explore different perspectives in a pitch contest to improve their school. They use their powers of persuasion to try to convince their classmates to agree with their idea. Students are introduced to the concept of politics and the goals and actions of political parties. In the *Consolidation* activity, they reflect on politics and different opinions and viewpoints.

## LEARNING GOALS

We are learning to:

- contribute solutions to meet a need in the community;
- participate in teams by establishing positive and respectful relationships, developing trust and acting cooperatively with integrity;
- use effective communication skills and persuasive language when trying to convince others;
- compare how different people may view and interpret the same issue; and,
- describe the concept of politics and the importance of political tolerance.

## Tips for Teachers

- Please use the activities and combine them in a way that is appropriate for your class.
- This lesson briefly talks about political parties, which is covered in more depth in Lesson 6.

## Supplies/Needs

- Chart paper (optional)
- Internet access (pitch example)
- All digital files, videos and slide decks can be found on the project website

## Starter

*What do you see?*

This activity uses optical illusions to show students that different people may have different perceptions of the same image, but it does not mean someone is right or wrong.

1. Explain to students that you are going to show them three images (Slide Deck 2) and they need to write down what they see first without discussing it with others.
2. Review the images again and invite students to share what they see. Informally poll the class on the options. Encourage students to see the opposite image compared to what they initially saw (Hint: By focusing on different elements of the image, you should be able to see different objects)
3. As a class, have a closing discussion about different perceptions. Questions to prompt discussion:
  - Is there a “correct” way to see the images? Is someone right and someone else wrong?
  - How did you feel towards people that saw the same image versus those who did not?
  - Were you able to see the image differently once it was pointed it out?
  - What is the main takeaway from this activity?

## Activities

1. Introduce a mock scenario. Inform students that their class is applying for a grant (sum of money) to improve the school experience for students. You can keep it broad or present one or more of the following focus areas, such as:

- School yard greening/outdoor learning
- Well-being
- Sports and recreation
- Technology

Ask students to think about how they would spend the money. Provide each student with a sticky note and have them write down their name and one idea.

2. Have students post their sticky notes on a wall and group similar suggestions together so that there are four to six focus areas/ideas.
3. Organize students into small groups based on their ideas. Ask each group to discuss their ideas in more detail and come to a consensus on one final idea. Next, have students record the reasons why their idea should be considered.

Questions to prompt discussion:

- In what way does it solve a problem or improve an issue?
  - How would it help students?
  - How many students would be affected by the idea?
4. Explain to students that since the money available is limited, only one idea will be selected for the grant. Ask each group to put together a pitch about their idea to share with the class. You can model a pitch or show them an example of a good pitch. (Exemplar – "The Drip Drop", *Shark Tank*: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5nmwuu6RXO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5nmwuu6RXO))
  5. Co-create criteria for a ‘good pitch’ with your students. Sample criteria can be found below.
    - One clear idea;
    - A great ‘hook’ to get the audience excited;
    - Short and to the point;
    - Shared with passion and excitement;
    - Explains why it is the best idea or what problem it will solve.
  6. Have each group present their pitch. After the pitches, ask students to vote for the idea they liked the most. You can do this through a show of hands or by secret ballot. Tell students that they cannot pick their own idea for this particular activity or that they have to pick their second favourite idea.

7. Discuss the concept of politics and political parties, and review some of Manitoba's main political parties (Slide Deck 2). Make clear connections between these concepts and the school improvement activity.

- Politics refers to the actions or activities associated with influencing, achieving, and using power in society.
- 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 who share similar beliefs and goals about society and government. In order for the political party to have the chance to work towards its goals, the party tries to win an election and lead the government.
- Democratic societies strive to respect and engage with the voices of different groups. Those who are not in power must be allowed to organize and share their opinions.

## Consolidation

1. Have a brief closing discussion and/or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions:
  - Did any group make you want to re-consider your own choice for improving the school experience? Why or why not?
  - Why do you think different people or groups have different ideas or viewpoints?
  - Why should we respect others' opinions especially if they are different from our own?
  - Why is it important that people can influence their government? Give examples of how people can influence government actions.
  - What questions do you still have? What would you like to learn about political parties? (Post these on a piece of chart paper for reference in future lessons)
2. Ask students to record one 'a-ha' moment from the discussion on a sticky note and attach it to the board.



## ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
<b>Starter</b>	Do students understand that different people may have different perceptions of the same image?
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Can students generate ideas and solutions to improve their school experience?</p> <p>Are students being respectful of each other's ideas?</p> <p>Are students practicing active listening skills?</p> <p>Are student pitches persuasive? Are they using strong vocabulary and targeting their audience?</p>
<b>Consolidation</b>	<p>Do student reflections demonstrate critical thinking and evaluation of the pitches and choices?</p> <p>Do student reflections demonstrate why we should respect the opinions of others?</p> <p>Can students identify examples of how people can influence government actions?</p>

## ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

<b>Individual Education Plans</b>	<p><b>Modifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure you link to prior knowledge and interests.</li> <li>• Use ability grouping to support students.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enrichment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to use their skills to persuade others, orally or in written form.</li> </ul>
<b>Language Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow extra time when needed.</li> <li>• Encourage use of visuals during the presentation.</li> </ul>
<b>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different communities and cultures will have varied approaches and attitudes towards politics.</li> <li>• Emphasize the link between politics and the issues that students care about.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility &amp; Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If this activity is being done in a blended or remote learning setting, consider using a tool such as Flipgrid, and have students record their video pitch.</li> <li>• Consider conducting the vote on the pitches using an online tool, such as Google Forms.</li> </ul>