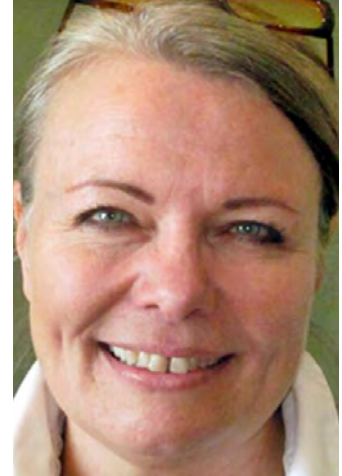


Lesson 6: Political Parties



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How do political parties share their goals and ideas?
- 2 How can I evaluate the political parties?
- 3 Which political party aligns with my views?

OVERVIEW

A political party is a group of individuals with similar political beliefs and goals whose intention is to gain power through an election. The responsibility of citizens is to research and compare the political parties and the actions they plan to take if elected.

In this lesson, students learn about all the different ways that political parties communicate to voters. After reviewing the role of political parties, students work in groups to research one of Manitoba's political parties. Each group prepares information about the party's vision, their leader and platform. Afterwards, students critically analyze the political parties and determine which party they feel most aligned with.

LEARNING GOALS

We are learning to:

- explain our parliamentary system and the role of political parties;
- participate in teams by establishing positive and respectful relationships, developing trust and acting cooperatively; and,
- interpret, synthesize and critically analyze information about the political parties and their leaders.

Tips for Teachers

- Please use the activities and combine them in a way that is appropriate for your class.
- Some individuals may jump at the opportunity to share their opinions and even try to convince others to adopt their choices, while others may prefer to keep their politics personal. Remind students that others' opinions should be respected, even if they differ from their own.
- Consider using a word cloud generator (such as Wordle or Word Art) to help students simplify or summarize political party messages.

Supplies/Needs

- “Introduction to politics and political parties” video
- Slide Deck 6
- Digital access to or copies of Activity 6.1 (or 6.3, alternatively) and 6.2 (three per page)
- Internet access
- All digital files, videos and slide decks can be found on the project website

Starter

1. Through a whole-class discussion, invite students to share all the ways they think political parties and candidates try to communicate with voters and share their message (e.g., advertising, lawn signs, mailings/pamphlets, their website, social media, public events, door-to-door canvassing, news coverage, candidate debates). Write down their responses on a board or chart paper.
2. Ask students if they have noticed any of these efforts for the current election. Who, what, where and when?
3. Discuss as a class: Which methods do you think are most effective in reaching voters and why?

Activities

1. Review some basics about political parties using Slide Deck 6 and the “Introduction to politics and political parties” video.
 - 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.
 - Political parties are made up of members of the community. Anyone above the required age (usually 14-years-old) can join a political party.

- Party members choose their party’s leader and local candidates, and help them get elected.
 - During elections, political parties usually release a **political platform**, which outlines their goals and actions the party will take if they are elected.
2. Review the results from the 2019 provincial election (Slide Deck 6). Reinforce that in our parliamentary system the political party with the greatest representation in the legislature forms the government and its leader becomes premier.
 3. Divide students into groups and assign each a political party that is running a candidate in your electoral division. Ask students to research their political party using campaign literature, party websites and social media channels. Provide copies of Activity 6.1 to support the research.

Guiding questions:

- Who is the party leader?
 - Who is the local candidate?
 - What is the party’s main slogan and/or key messages?
 - What are the party’s major ideas? What actions are they promising to take if they form government?
 - Who seems to be the target audience of the party?
 - What is the party’s vision for the future of Manitoba?
4. Using the information collected, each group will create a physical or digital presentation about their assigned political party.

Co-create a checklist with your students for the presentation. For example:

- The party’s logo
 - One main slogan or message
 - Three social media posts that represent the party’s priorities or vision for the province
 - One image of the party leader
 - One image of the local candidate
 - Summary of three major ideas or planned actions they would take if elected
 - Analysis about who will be impacted by the three major ideas
5. Have each group share their presentation about their party with the rest of the class. You can create a digital gallery or share the presentations on a projector/screen. Consider adding print information and photos to the display wall you may have chosen to create in Lesson 5.

Consolidation

1. Have a closing discussion using the following prompts. Consider using a 'Put Your Two Cents In' strategy to allow students to exchange their views (see description below).
 - Which party's message or vision do I support the most and why?
 - Did your opinion change of any of the political parties after learning about them? If so, how?
 - Which election issue is most important to me? What issues matter to my family? Does the rest of my family have different priorities? Explain.
 - How does each party plan to address the issue that matters to me?
 - Which party's platform do I agree with the most?
 - What else would I like to know? How would I find out more?

'Put Your Two Cents In' strategy

- a) Provide each student with two tokens —this can be a coin or a chip or something else. Let them know that each token represents an opportunity to speak and that they will speak twice in small groups during this activity — once to share their own idea, and once to respond to someone else's. They will need to listen attentively to what others say.
 - b) Divide students into groups of four. Each student takes a turn putting a token into the centre of the table and shares their opinion.
 - c) Once everyone has had a turn, each student puts their second token in the middle of the table, and responds to something someone else has said. These statements may start with phrases such as "I agree with ___ because..." or "I would like to add something to what ___ said..." and so on.
 - d) Debrief the activity (optional). How did you find the experience of listening? Were you able to focus on each speaker? Was it challenging to hold your thoughts until everyone had spoken?
2. Ask students complete the reflection card (Activity 6.2).
"The first thing I will share with my family tonight is..."

Assessment Activity

Election Issue Case Study (Activity 6.3). Ask students to identify one issue that is important to them or their family and have them research and analyze the proposals/promises of the political parties. Afterwards, ask students to evaluate which party's plan they agree with the most and why.

Extended Learning

Have students watch the provincial leaders' debate at home and/or watch clips of the debate in class and complete Activity 6.4. To prepare for the viewing, discuss effective debating skills and review the party leaders that will participating in the debate.

TEACHER NOTE

The entire debate may be 60-90 min. Many news media outlets will offer segments or highlights the following day.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LESSON SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS
Starter	<p>Can students identify different ways political parties or candidates share their messages using concrete examples?</p> <p>Can students analyze the effectiveness of different methods to reach voters?</p>
Activities	<p>Do students understand how political parties function and how they form government?</p> <p>Are students posing questions while they research their party in order to spark new areas of interest?</p> <p>Are students presenting information that is accurate and informative?</p>
Consolidation	<p>Do student reflections demonstrate critical thinking and analysis of the political parties?</p> <p>Are they making connections to their own priorities?</p> <p>Can students communicate newfound knowledge to their family members?</p>

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an application or word cloud generator to simplify political party messages or proposals. • Review key terminology in advance of reviewing party promises, such as ‘economy’ and ‘policy’. <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students review the analysis of the party platforms by one or more media sources.
Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an application or word cloud generator to simplify political party messages. • Review key words in advance and use visuals where appropriate.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of issues or policies that may be controversial. • Support students in positive ways if they are uncomfortable sharing their opinions. Offer written alternatives. • Select issues that matter most to your students or the community in which they live when researching the party’s promises or actions they plan to take.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of using printed campaign literature, rely on materials on the party website and social media channels (digital flyers, videos, etc.). • Opt for a digital presentation if you are in a remote learning setting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A **political party** is a group of like-minded individuals who share a similar political ideology and goals for society whose intention is to achieve power and create meaningful political change.

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

Under our parliamentary system, the party that elects the greatest number of representatives to the **Legislative Assembly** usually forms government and their leader becomes **premier**.

During an election campaign, an organized course of action is taken by a political party, its candidates and campaign teams to develop and to share their party's ideas and vision.

A **political platform** is a series of declared principles, policies and plans on issues concerning government and the public.

Candidates and parties use a communications strategy that incorporates all three types of media (paid, earned, owned), as well as outreach activities and events to spread their message.

Paid media: Publicity that has been purchased to bring a message to an audience. Examples include print, broadcast or social media advertising, or a direct mail campaign.

Owned media: Communications managed by an individual, group or organization through its own platforms, such as websites, blogs or social media channels.

Earned media: Media coverage or mentions reported by third parties such as news organizations, or shared through external social media channels or through word of mouth.

Campaign outreach also includes lawn signs, public events, door-to door canvassing and town halls or debates.

Elections present an opportunity for citizens to explore societal issues and to participate in constructive dialogue about priorities and public policies.

This process includes establishing which issues are most important to you and your community, and the entire province, and evaluating how the different political parties will address them.

As a voter, it is your job to gather, interpret and analyze campaign information, draw conclusions and make your voting decision.