

Lesson 7

Post-Election Analysis



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we analyze election results?
- 2 How can we predict, track and evaluate the actions of the newly elected government?

SUMMARY

Elections are complex events and it is helpful to analyze the outcome to better understand the process and what the results mean for the future.

In this lesson, students will examine the results of the Student Vote Newfoundland and Labrador 2021 program and the 2021 general election. Afterwards, they will review the campaign promises made by the newly elected government and analyze what these actions will mean for stakeholder groups and people across the province. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on the outcome of the election and their Student Vote experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- assess the results of the election;
- analyze how campaign events influenced the outcome of the election;
- predict the newly elected government's priorities and evaluate the potential impact;
- recognize the importance being an active and engaged citizen.

Starter

1. Announce your school's Student Vote results. Which candidate received the most votes? Was it a close race? What percentage of the vote did the winner receive?
2. Compare the results of your school's vote with the results of other schools in your electoral districts. Are the results similar or different? How did the results vary between schools? Individual school results can be found at www.studentvote.ca/nl2021 > Results.

Activities

1. Review some key concepts for analyzing election results, including seat count, popular vote, governing party and official opposition.
 - **Seat count** is the term used to show the number of representatives that each party will have in the legislative assembly. It reflects the number of electoral districts won by each party.
 - **Popular vote** is the term used to show the total support a political party received across the province. 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.
 - The party that has the most seats usually becomes the governing party, and their leader typically becomes the premier. If the governing party has more than half of all seats, they will have a **majority government**. If they have less than half, they will have a **minority government**.
 - The party that has the second-highest number of seats becomes the official opposition. Any other party is called an opposition party.
2. Using the Student Vote Newfoundland and Labrador 2021 website, the Elections NL website and/or media reports, compare the Student Vote and general election results. Guiding questions:
 - Which party won the Student Vote election? Is it a majority or minority government?
 - Which party won the general election? Is it a majority or minority government?
 - Which candidate won in your electoral district in the Student Vote? Did the same candidate win in the general election?
 - Why do you think the results of the Student Vote or general election are similar or different?
 - What factors do you think shaped the outcome of the election?
3. The ballots have been counted and the election is over — but what does it all mean for Newfoundland and Labrador? As a class, review some of the promises made by the newly elected government during the campaign as a preview of what may come in the next several months. You can use each party's website and media websites to find this information.
4. Divide students into pairs or small groups and have them analyze one of the promises using Activity 7.1. Guiding questions:
 - Who will be impacted by the related action or decision?
 - Does it represent a turning point or critical moment for the issue? If so, how?
 - Do the other parties support this decision? Why or why not?
 - How can the government's progress on this commitment or promise be tracked and evaluated?
5. Afterwards, have students share their analysis with the rest of the class.

Consolidation

1. Ask students to produce a final written reflection on one of the following questions:
 - What factors do you think shaped the outcome of the election?
 - What do the election results mean for you and your community? Provide concrete examples of how the newly elected government's policies or commitments will have an impact.
 - How can we hold government to account on their campaign promises?
2. As a culminating activity, have students fill out the *Exit Slip* (Activity 7.2).

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

English Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the demographics of the new legislative body. How does it compare to the population of Newfoundland and Labrador? How does it compare to the previously elected legislative body?
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in small groups is not possible, considering using Google Docs for collaborative activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

After the close of voting on election day, election officers count the ballots for their voting places and report them to Elections NL, who share the results publicly. Results are released on an ongoing basis throughout election night and sometimes the following day.

Seat count is the term used to reflect the number of representatives that each party will have in the House of Assembly. It represents the number of local electoral district races won by each party. The 40 seats contested in this election will be awarded to the candidates in each of the electoral districts who receive the greatest number of votes.

Popular vote is the term used to show the total support a political party received across the province. It is expressed as a percentage and is calculated by dividing the number of votes a party received by the total number of votes in the provincial election. Under our voting system (FPTP), the seat count is not related to the popular vote percentage and therefore has no impact on the election outcome.

The political party with the most seats usually forms the government and their leader typically becomes the premier. If the governing party has more than half of all the seats (21 or more), they will have a **majority government**. If they have less than half (20 or fewer), they will have a **minority government**.

The party that has the second highest number of seats usually becomes the **official opposition**. Any other party is called an opposition party. It is the responsibility of the opposition parties to hold the government to account and to question its actions. The official opposition organizes a shadow cabinet to act as expert critics on the portfolios or government ministries managed by each cabinet minister.

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

Elections are multifaceted events. Counting the ballots and crunching the numbers is essential, but so is looking for answers and meaning behind the process and outcome.