

Welcome

Dear Educator,

Thank you for leading the Student Vote program for the municipal and school board elections, happening throughout Ontario this October.

We know the beginning of the school year is a busy time, and we appreciate the time you are dedicating to the program.

The Student Vote program can be used to engage students through social and emotional learning strategies (SEL) to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making.

The whole experience can foster a sense of belonging by helping students learn about themselves and understand others. This can be achieved through collaborative problem solving, exploring multiple perspectives, and setting and achieving personal and class goals.

This resource supports the vision and goals of the Ontario Canadian and World Studies curriculum, with specific linkages to Civics/Politics, History, Law, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies. The lessons have integrated key pedagogical approaches, such as inquiry-based learning, concepts of thinking, the Citizenship Education Framework.

Numerous Student Vote program evaluations have found that participating in the program has a positive impact on students' knowledge and understanding of government and elections, on their sense of civic responsibility and confidence in participating in the electoral process.

The program also provides an opportunity for students to take their newfound knowledge home and engage in conversations about the election with their family.

As part of CIVIX's priorities for the current school year, you will see an emphasis on building constructive dialogue skills among students.

Heightened social tensions, and the erosion of democratic norms around the world, only underscore the need for constructive dialogue skills. Democracy requires bridges between different perspectives.

On the following pages, you will find guiding principles for classroom discussion and activities for co-creating a 'norms of agreement' with students. Developing classroom norms with your students is a great way to ensure a safe and caring classroom environment, and encourage respectful discussion.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact our team at hello@civix.ca.

Please be sure to visit the project website for videos, slide decks, digital activity sheets and more:
www.studentvote.ca/onmuni2022

Wishing you and your students a great election,

The CIVIX Team

Acknowledgements

CIVIX is a non-partisan, national registered charity dedicated to building the skills and habits of active and informed citizenship among young people.



The Student Vote program for the 2022 Ontario municipal and school board elections is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education, Government of Canada, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Your Canada Your Constitution and several private foundations.



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

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How to Use This Resource

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

The lessons build upon each other, but they can also be used as stand-alone activities depending on the needs of your classroom and schedule.

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

Guiding Questions:

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

Overview:

Provides a brief summary of the learning and activities of the lesson.

Learning Goals:

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

Success Criteria:

Describes in specific terms what successful attainment of the learning goals looks like.

Strategies:

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

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

Adaptations and Supports:

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

Background Information for Teachers:

This information covers key terms and concepts related to the theme of the lesson. The purpose is to enhance teacher knowledge and understanding. Not all terms and concepts are covered in the lesson.

Guiding Principles for Classroom Discussion

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

However, with intention, preparation, and practice, educators can help students systematically build constructive discussion habits regardless of context. Here are some guiding principles you may want to consider within the context of classroom discussion.

Build Community

Students will be more likely to contribute to a discussion if they feel like they are in a safe and comfortable environment. Begin the year with activities that allow students to share their interests and backgrounds, and co-create a set of classroom norms (page 6).

De-centre Yourself

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

Embrace Structure

While interesting conversations may occur spontaneously in the classroom, student discussion can produce better outcomes when implemented with intention and structure, particularly at the beginning of the year. Using discussion protocols takes a bit more planning and effort but they can help build more equitable conversations and ensure more voices are heard.

Start Slow

When it comes to teaching discussion skills, don't feel like you have to jump into the deep end with your topics. Practicing with lower-stakes issues can help build skills and prepare for weightier discussions. Is Thor better than Captain Marvel? Should schools provide free lunches to students? Emotions can get high no matter the topic, but starting slow can help lay the foundation.

Recognize Different Discussion Approaches

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

Go Small, Before Big

Students may initially feel more comfortable voicing their opinions in smaller groups. For any discussion, consider starting with groups of two or three before moving to larger or full class discussion. Consider trying different combinations with small groups, such as mixing reserved and outspoken students, or keeping students with similar discussion styles together. Both strategies have their pros and cons.

For more best practices and a description of different discussion protocols, please refer to CIVIX's *Constructive Discussions Guide* at www.politalks.ca

Norms of Agreement

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

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

Once established, it is helpful to revisit the agreement in advance of and following your first few classroom discussions, and updating it as needed. Afterwards, reviewing the agreement monthly is a good strategy to promote commitment,

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

1 Reflection on Discussion (20-25 minutes)

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

Guiding questions:

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

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

For an extended activity, ask students to work in pairs to complete a Frayer Model to further refine their understanding of discussion. A graphic organizer is provided on page 9.

- c) Next, collect student feedback related to their concerns about classroom discussion.

Post the following prompts on chart paper or as headings on the board.

- "Classroom discussion doesn't work very well when .. "
- "A reason I might not want to speak in class is ... "

Provide students with a few sticky notes to write their ideas for each prompt privately. Ask students to add their sticky notes to the chart paper for each prompt and sit back down. Afterwards, review the answers as a class, ensuring anonymity.

Alternatively, you could use Google Form for this activity to ensure students feel comfortable sharing their views.

- d) Repeat the process above using the following prompts related to effective classroom discussion:

- "I feel comfortable participating in discussion when ... "
- "What I like about a good class discussion is "

- e) As a transition into the next part of the activity, let students know that the responses will provide a starting point for creating class norms and agreements.

2 Understand the Purpose of Norms (15 Minutes)

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

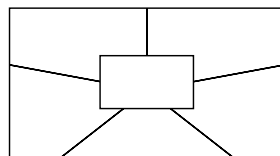
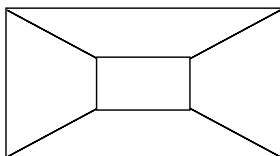
Ask students to discuss the following questions using a Think-Pair-Share protocol (see page 10).

- Why is it important to have a shared understanding of a set of norms and expectations?
 - What could happen if we did not have a set of norms?
 - Should students be part of establishing classroom norms or should the teacher provide a list? Why?
- b) Draw on student responses from Activity 1 (Reflection on Discussion) to anticipate scenarios or problem areas, and brainstorm ways in which students and/or the teacher can respond in those situations. Some examples might include:
- A teacher wants to hear the opinions of all students before determining the focus topic of an assignment
 - A classmate says something other students consider offensive
 - Some students dominate classroom discussions
 - Some students may not feel comfortable speaking in front of others
 - Students want to share ideas with their teacher to improve the classroom environment
 - A student uses their phone during a peer's presentation

3 Co-creating Norms (35 minutes)

Once students have understood the purpose of establishing classroom norms, you can give them the opportunity to consider what they want these norms to include as individuals, in small groups, then as part of the class.

- a) Through a 'Placemat' activity, have students propose norms they believe are important in the classroom. This cooperative learning strategy allows students to individually think about, record, and share their ideas in groups and then reach a consensus on the most important norms.
- Divide students into groups of four or five. You can provide each group with one large sheet of paper divided into sections (one for each student and a centre block for the final group list). Alternatively, the activity could also be conducted with an online app, such as a Google doc or Jamboard.
 - Ask students to individually write down their proposed norms in their allotted space (suggested minimum of 3 norms per student).
 - Provide time for each student to share their recorded responses with the rest of their group without discussion from the other students.
 - Next, have each group decide, collectively, on the five most important norms and record them in the centre of the placemat - it is essential that all group members agree with the group list.



- b) As a class, create norms of agreement for the classroom. As each statement is agreed upon, include a discussion about the reasons for it and/or possible examples and characteristics. Consider using a T-Chart with the norms on the left and reasons on the right. (e.g. left column: "Raise our hands when we speak," right column: "To ensure one person is speaking at a time, and to show respect").

Sample norms:

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

4 Practice and Reflection (25 Minutes)

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

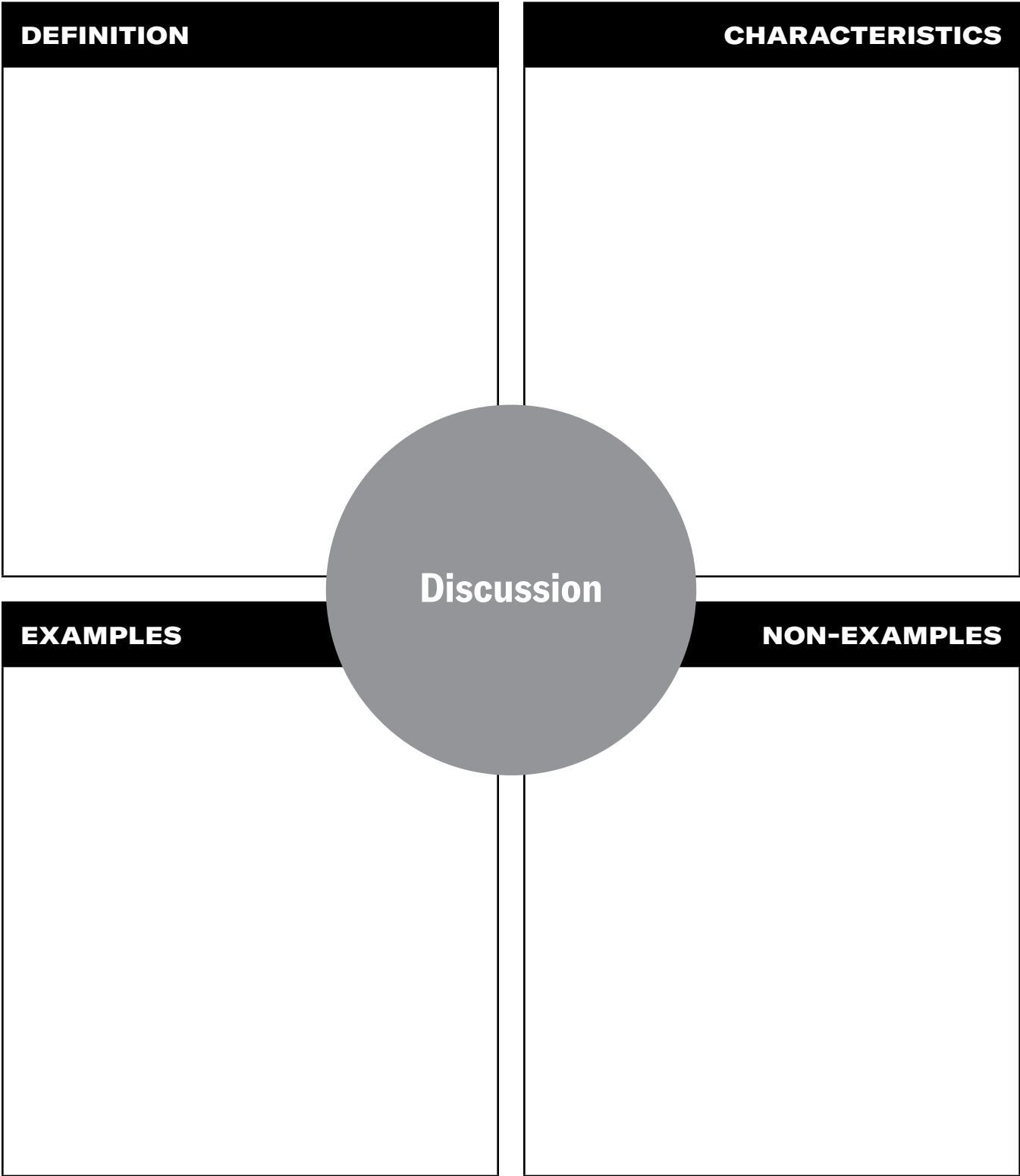
- What went well and why?
- Did the class uphold the norms and expectations?
- Is there anything that can be improved?
- Revise the list as necessary

5 Assessment (10 minutes)

Provide students with a 1-1-1 Exit Card (page 11):

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

What is Discussion?



Think-Pair-Share

This foundational protocol is well-suited for discussion that starts with a specific prompt or text, and as a way to jumpstart small group or classroom discussion.

1. Provide students with a question or prompt.
2. Ask students to think about the prompt individually.
3. Divide students into pairs and ask them to exchange their thoughts and ideas.
4. After students have shared with their partner, expand the sharing into a whole class discussion
5. Optional: Ask students to reflect on the activity and to write down what they learned or how their thinking changed or expanded based on the conversation with peers.

VARIATIONS

- “Think-Ink-Pair-Share” adds a written step, for practice articulating thoughts in writing.
- “Snowball” – instead of rejoining the class group from pairs, pairs join with each other to form a group of four to debrief anew. The process repeats until the class is one group.

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- Choose open-ended questions that are likely to get a variety of answers from students. For ex-ample: “What is the most important problem facing Canadians today?” or “What can schools do to improve the mental health of students?”
- Present students with a quote, image, or short piece of text that warrants reflection and inter-pretation.

***Note: we have not provided suggested timings for the activities to keep them flexible, but we suggest adding your own, and assigning a student timekeeper in each group.**

1-1-1 Exit Card: Classroom Norms

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

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

Lesson 1

Democracy



GUIDING QUESTIONS

1 What does it mean to live in a democracy?

2 How can we support and maintain our democracy?

OVERVIEW

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

In this lesson, students reflect on and discuss the values they believe are important in society. Next, students explore the underlying principles of democracy, connecting them back to values that are important to them and looking at real-world examples. Afterwards, students discuss the obligation of citizens to stand by these principles and exercise their rights in a responsible manner.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- describe how political institutions affect their lives (Citizenship Education Framework - Structures);
- explore issues related to personal and societal rights and responsibilities (Citizenship Education Framework - Structures);
- apply the concepts of political thinking when analyzing current events and issues (Political Significance).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- evaluate the values I believe are important in society independently and collaboratively with my peers;
- identify the principles of democracy in action and how they shape our lives;
- analyze the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS - CHV20

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education (A2.3)

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one's position on civic issues (B1.2, B1.4)

B3. Rights and Responsibilities: analyse key rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, in both the Canadian and global context, and some ways in which these rights are protected or may be infringed upon (B3.1, B3.2, B3.3, B3.4)

C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally (C1.2)

POLITICS - CPC30

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.2, A2.3)

B1. Factors Affecting Political Engagement: analyse how various factors can contribute to, and present a barrier to, their own and others' political engagement (B1.2, B1.4)

C3. Political Change in Democratic Societies: demonstrate an understanding of factors that facilitate and present challenges to democratic political change (C3.1, C3.2)

FNMI STUDIES - NAC20

F1. Social, Economic, and Political Context: describe some key social, economic, and political issues, trends, and developments that have affected Indigenous peoples in Canada from 1969 to the present, and analyse their impact (F1.1, F1.3)

FNMI STUDIES - NDG4M

C2. Constitutional/Charter Rights: demonstrate an understanding of the impact that the Constitution Act, 1982 and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have had on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit rights in Canada (C2.1, C2.2)

HISTORY - CHC2D/CHC2P

D.1 Social, Economic, and Political Context:

describe some key social, economic, and political events, trends, and developments in Canada between 1945 and 1982, and assess their significance for different individuals, groups, and/or communities in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities (D1.5)

LAW - CLU3M/CLU3E

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through the study of law, and identify careers in which a background in law might be an asset (A2.2, A2.3)

C1. Human Rights: explain the legal significance of the Canadian Bill of Rights, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the Charter), and the Canadian Human Rights Act (C1.1)

LAW - CLN4U

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through the study of law, and identify careers in which a background in law might be an asset (A2.2, A2.3)

C1. Legal Principles of Human Rights Law: explain the principles underpinning human rights law and the legal significance of those laws, in Canada and internationally (C1.2)

Starter

1. Review the photos in Slide Deck 1 and ask students what words or concepts come to mind.
2. Through a 'Placemat' activity, have students answer the question: What values are important in society? (e.g., justice, freedom, respect, community, fairness)

The Placemat Activity is a cooperative learning strategy that allows each student in a group to record their own ideas on a topic or question, before working with the rest of their group to reach a consensus on a response.

- a) Divide students into groups of four or five.
- b) Provide each group with one large sheet of paper divided into sections (one for each student and a centre block for the final group response). Alternatively, you can use a digital template, such as a Google Doc, to complete the activity.
- c) Ask students to respond individually to the question within their allotted space.

- d) Provide time for each student to share their recorded responses with the rest of their group without discussion or debate from the other students.
- e) Next, have each group decide, collectively, on the five most important values and record them in the centre of the placemat.
- f) Have each group write their five most important values on sticky notes and post them on a wall or blackboard.
- g) Afterwards, order the sticky notes to see which were most common and create a final class list.

- 3. Using Slide Deck 1 as a starting point, analyze examples of democratic principles in practice and the different ways they shape our lives. Ask students to share their own real-world examples with each slide.
- 4. Using a Think-Pair-Share protocol, have a closing discussion with the following prompts.
 - Is it important for citizens to support and uphold these principles? What would happen if no one cared?
 - Do our rights come with responsibilities? Explain using concrete examples. For example, the right to protest comes with the responsibility to do so peacefully and without violence.

Activities

1. Review the idea of living in a democracy and the foundational principles using the “Democratic Principles” video and Handout 1.2.
 - Democracy by definition is “rule by the people,” where a majority of the people are included in political decision-making.
 - A democratic society favours equal rights, freedom of speech, rule of law and political tolerance.
 - A healthy democracy requires responsible citizens who value the system of government and actively participate in society.
2. Through a class discussion, make connections between the democratic principles and the student responses from the *Starter* activity. Consider writing out the democratic principles and adding the sticky notes from the *Starter* activity underneath each principle. Some values may be connected to multiple principles.

Consolidation

Option 1: Which concepts from this lesson about democratic principles are most important to remember? Use the exit card (Activity 1.2) to create four hashtags to describe what you learned from the lesson.

Option 2: Which principle is most important to you? Create a poster or digital artwork that reflects this principle and what it means to you.

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance. • Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities. • Ensure that subtitles are on during videos. • Support students’ understanding of democratic principles with additional real-world examples.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare democracy to other forms of governance representing different countries and cultures that have meaning for your students. • Students will come from different backgrounds and may have different opinions on democracy. Ensuring a safe place for respectful discussion is encouraged. • Review democratic principles in various social settings, inclusive of Indigenous peoples, and diverse cultural groups. • Discuss the systemic barriers to equality faced by Indigenous peoples, and other diverse cultural groups.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Democracy means rule by the people. There are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy. Citizens have a responsibility to uphold and support these principles.

Equality and Human Rights:

All individuals are valued equally, have equal opportunities and may not be discriminated against because of their race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender or sexual orientation. Fundamental rights include freedom of thought, opinion and assembly.

Economic Freedom: The government allows some private ownership of property and businesses. People are allowed to choose their own work and join labour unions. It is generally accepted that a free market should exist in a democracy and that government should not control the economy.

Protected Rights: In a democracy, there is a formal declaration of citizens' rights and freedoms. This document limits the powers of government, explains the freedoms that are guaranteed to all people and protects people from a government that might abuse its powers.

The Rule of Law: All are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law without discrimination. No one is above the law – this includes elected officials, the police and members of the military.

Control of the Abuse of Power:

To protect corruption and abuses of power, democratic governments are often structured to limit the powers of government offices and those who work for them.

Free and Fair Elections: Elected officials are chosen every few years by the people in a free and fair manner. Adult citizens have the right to vote and run for office regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or economic status.

Multi-Party Systems: Multiple party systems provide the government with different viewpoints on issues and voters are given a choice of candidates, parties and policies to support.

Citizen Participation: Participation can take the form of running for office, voting in elections, becoming an informed citizen, debating issues, attending community meetings, paying taxes, serving on a jury and protesting. Citizen participation builds a stronger democracy.

Accountability and Transparency:

Elected and appointed officials are responsible for their actions and are accountable to the people. A transparent government holds public meetings and allows citizens to attend. The press and the public are kept informed regarding decisions being made.

Independent Judiciary:

Courts and the judicial system are impartial. Judges and the judicial branch are free to act without influence or control from the executive and legislative branches of government. They should also not be corrupted or influenced by other individuals, businesses or political groups.

Political Tolerance: People who belong to different socioeconomic and ethnic groups, all hold unique and valued political views. Democratic societies strive to be politically tolerant, and the rights of minorities and other groups are protected. Those who are not in power must be allowed to organize and share their opinions.

Accepting the Results of Elections:

Free and fair elections have both winners and losers. The losers and their supporters must accept that they have lost an election as democracy depends on the peaceful transfer of power from one party to the next.

HANDOUT 1.1: The Principles of Democracy

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



- All people living in a democracy have guaranteed rights, such as freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion, and the right to organize and take part in peaceful protests.
 - In most democracies, individuals are valued equally regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender or sexual orientation.
 - In Canada, our fundamental freedoms and equality rights are protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, part of Canada's Constitution.
-



- Adult citizens have the right to vote in elections to choose their political representatives.
 - Adult citizens also have the opportunity to run for political office.
 - There are no obstacles to voting and no threats made to citizens before or after an election.
 - In Canada, there must be elections to choose governments every five years or less.
-



- Elected representatives are responsible for their actions. They must perform their duties according to the wishes of those they represent, not for themselves or other interests.
 - In a democracy, the media holds government to account and aims to keep citizens informed.
 - In Canada, elected representatives participate in activities like Question Period to be held to account for their actions and respond to questions from the opposition parties, and engage in meetings with the public.
-



- Laws are enforced equally, fairly and consistently. This means that everyone, including government officials, the police and members of the military, must obey the law.
 - It also means that governments cannot punish people unless they have broken the law.
 - All Canadians have a responsibility to respect the laws of the land, even if they disagree with them.
-



- Society is comprised of people with different cultural backgrounds, who practice different religions, come from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, who have different gender identities or sexual orientations. The voices of these different groups are valued.
 - Democratic societies strive to be politically tolerant and the rights of minorities are protected.
 - Those who are not in power must be allowed to organize and share their opinions.
-



- Citizen participation in government is more than just a right – it is a responsibility.
 - Participation includes voting in elections, being an informed citizen, debating issues, attending community meetings, paying taxes, serving on a jury and protesting.
 - Citizen participation builds a stronger democracy.
-

ACTIVITY 1.2: Exit Slip – #Hashtags

WHICH HASHTAGS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE THE LESSON AND/OR IDENTIFY THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS?

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT TODAY'S LESSON?

WHICH HASHTAGS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE THE LESSON AND/OR IDENTIFY THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS?

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT TODAY'S LESSON?

Lesson 2

Perspectives and Pluralism



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do people perceive things in different ways?
- 2 Is pluralism important in a democracy?
- 3 What actions can I take to contribute to pluralism in society?

OVERVIEW

In democratic societies, people with different identities and perspectives must find ways to live together and work together for the common good.

In this lesson, students analyze how people may have different perceptions and perspectives of the same object, situation or issue. Next, students practice active listening while sharing their own perspectives about a particular topic and evaluate factors that influence their thinking. Afterwards, students discuss the concept of pluralism and the importance of diversity and inclusion in a democratic society.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- explain the importance of pluralism in society and ways to support diversity and inclusion;
- engage in political discussion while considering and respecting others' perspectives (Citizenship Education Framework - Identity);
- demonstrate self-respect, as well as respect and empathy for others (Citizenship Education Framework - Attributes).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- explain how people can have different interpretations or perspectives about the same situation or issue;
- practice active listening while considering others' perspectives;
- evaluate the importance of pluralism in a democratic society;
- analyze the actions I can take to support pluralism, diversity and inclusion.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS - CHV20

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3)

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one's position on civic issues (B1.1, B1.2, B1.5)

C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally (C1.2, C1.3)

HISTORY - CHC2D/CHC2P

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through historical investigation, and identify some careers in which these skills might be useful (A2.3)

POLITICS - CPC30

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.2, A2.3)

B1. Factors Affecting Political Engagement: analyse how various factors can contribute to, and present a barrier to, their own and others' political engagement (B1.1, B1.4)

C3. Political Change in Democratic Societies: demonstrate an understanding of factors that facilitate and present challenges to democratic political change (C3.1, C3.2)

Starter

What do you see? This hook 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. Debrief on the activity through a whole class discussion.

Key questions:

- 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. Review the meaning of perception and perspective.

Suggested external resource:

["Perception vs Perspective"](#), *Genie Deez*.

- **Perception** is our interpretation of something. It is the ability to see, hear or become aware of something using one of our senses. People perceive things differently. We choose to select different aspects of something to focus our attention based on what interests us, what is familiar to us, or what we consider important.
 - **Perspective** is the way we see something. It is our point of view. Our perspectives are shaped by who we are, as well as our environment and life experiences. For example, people living in different countries may have different priorities in life, based on their beliefs and perceptions of happiness.
2. Select a discussion topic from below and distribute copies of Activity 2.1. Provide students with a few minutes to write individual responses to the questions. The responses can be informal bullets.
 - Final exams should be abolished.
 - All Canadians should be required to vote.
 - Schools should eliminate dress codes.
 - It is important to spend money exploring space.

If this activity is being completed in a remote learning setting, consider using a tool such as Flipgrid, where students record video responses.

TEACHER NOTE

Flipgrid is a website that allows teachers to create "grids" to facilitate video discussions. Each grid is similar to a message board where teachers can pose questions, and their students can post video responses that appear in a tiled grid display.

3. Organize students into groups and have them share their responses to the discussion topic, as well as the influences on their thinking. Review tips for active listening prior to the group activity (Handout 2.2).
4. Debrief on the activity as a class.
 - Did listening to others' perspectives influence your thinking about the topic?
 - Can you draw any connections between how people's life influences and experiences have shaped their thinking on the topic? What are your thoughts on what lies beneath the surface?
5. Discuss the concept of pluralism. Is pluralism important in a democratic society?

Review:

- Pluralism is the idea that people of different beliefs, backgrounds, and lifestyles can coexist in the same society and participate equally in the political process.
- Disagreement can cause us to question our ideas and consider if our current way is the best way of thinking about a problem.
- 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.

Listen to young Canadians share their views on what pluralism means to them by watching the [“What is Pluralism?”](#) video by Inspirit Foundation. At minute 1:28, the speaker says, “I don’t think that tolerance and diversity are enough.”

Key questions:

- What did they mean? What does this mean to you?
- Organize students in groups for the activity. In the centre of chart paper, or on a digital platform such as Jamboard, write or type this statement in the centre. Give students 3 minutes to respond to the statement within their groups. Allow groups to share their key points with the class.

Consolidation

Use a Circles of Action routine to close out the lesson. This routine is designed to foster students' feelings and motivations towards taking responsible action.

Based on what I learned about pluralism, what can I do to contribute...

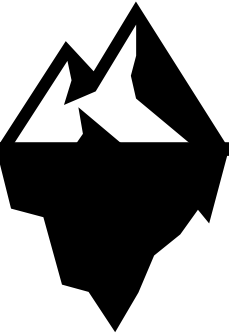
- In my inner circle (of friends, family, the people I know)?
- In my community (my school, my neighborhood)?
- In the world (beyond my immediate environment)

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance. • Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities. • Ensure that subtitles are on during videos.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will come from different backgrounds and may have different opinions on democracy. • Ensuring a safe place for respectful discussion and diverse viewpoints is encouraged. • Discuss the systemic barriers to democratic participation faced by Indigenous peoples, and other diverse cultural groups.
Accommodations & Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs or Google Jamboard for collaborative activities and discussion.

ACTIVITY 2.1: You and Your Perspectives

Answer the following questions in the right-hand column.

<p>What is the discussion topic?</p>	
<p>Tip of the Iceberg</p> <p>What is your position on the topic? What do you see on the surface?</p>	
 <p>Beneath the Surface</p> <p>List the influences on your feelings and behaviour.</p> <p>These factors can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Events from your past• Immediate circumstances• Beliefs• Preferences• Cultural values, customs, and traditions	
<p>Describe how a significant experience or influential person has shaped your perspective.</p>	

HANDOUT 2.2: Being an Active Listener

Here are some helpful reminders about how to be an active listener.



CHECK YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.

Show an openness to ideas. Avoid crossing your arms.

Try to maintain neutral facial expressions.



BE ATTENTIVE

Avoid distractions, such as devices or other people.

Block out your own thoughts.

Make sure your attention is on the speaker. Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.



DON'T INTERRUPT

When the speaker is sharing, remember it is not about you and your thoughts. Interrupting sends negative signals to the speaker and those around you.

Keep your questions or comments until the end.



SHOW EMPATHY

Imagine being in someone else's shoes. Try to feel what the speaker is feeling and consider their perspective.



BE CURIOUS, LEARNING IS THE GOAL

Asking questions demonstrates that you are curious and want to learn something new. It can also help you clarify anything that was unclear. Curiosity expands our empathy.

Examples: How did you feel when....? Can you tell me more about...?

Lesson 3

Informed Citizenship



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How does information influence my decisions?**
- 2 What are the opportunities and challenges of using online platforms?**
- 3 What actions can I take to be an informed, responsible citizen?**

OVERVIEW

Being a responsible citizen involves seeking out information from a variety of sources and comparing perspectives on issues of importance.

In this lesson, students experience the relationship between the information we consume and the decisions we make through a hands-on interactive activity. Before participating in a mock municipal election, students learn about the candidates and election issues by reviewing information from one of two polarized social media feeds. After the vote, students discuss how what they read may have influenced their decision. Next, students learn about how the internet has changed the way we consume and share information, and discuss the implications of getting information from online platforms.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- understand how news and information can influence our opinion on people, events and issues;
- explore issues related to being a responsible and informed citizen (Citizenship Education Framework - Attributes).
- develop an understanding of the complex relationships and systems in the digital world (Citizenship Education Framework - Structures);
- consider and respect others' perspectives (Citizenship Education Framework - Identity).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- analyze how news and information can influence our opinion on people, events and issues;
- explain how algorithms personalize the information I see online;
- describe strategies for being an informed citizen and accessing multiple viewpoints.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS - CHV20

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance (A1.3, A1.4)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3)

B3. Rights and Responsibilities: analyse key rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, in both the Canadian and global context, and some ways in which these rights are protected or may be infringed upon (B3.2)

C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally (C1.2, C1.3, C1.5)

HISTORY - CHC2D/CHC2P

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through historical investigation, and identify some careers in which these skills might be useful (A2.3, A2.4)

POLITICS - CPC30

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them (A1.3)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.2, A2.3)

B1. Factors Affecting Political Engagement: analyse how various factors can contribute to, and present a barrier to, their own and others' political engagement (B1.2, B1.3, B1.4)

C1. The Influence of Individuals and Groups: analyse the objectives and strategies, and assess the influence, of individuals and groups in addressing issues of political importance (C1.4)

C3. Political Change in Democratic Societies: demonstrate an understanding of factors that facilitate and present challenges to democratic political change (C3.1, C3.2, C3.3)

Starter

Start with an opening conversation about making informed decisions. Ask students to consider how they would become informed to vote in the following scenarios.

- a) School council election
- b) Government election

Using a Turn and Talk protocol, ask students to discuss the following questions with a partner.

- What actions would you take to learn about the people running for election?
- Which sources of information would you rely on and why?
- Is it important to be informed about the options before making a decision? Why or why not?

Activities

1. Complete the *Feed for Thought: Election Edition* activity found at the CIVIX website [newsliteracy.ca](https://www.newsliteracy.ca) (free registration).

TEACHER NOTE

A paper version of *Feed for Thought* is also available at [newsliteracy.ca](https://www.newsliteracy.ca). As an alternative to the online activity, you can print and distribute the two different feeds and ask students to vote using a show of hands or by using paper ballots (Activity 3.1).

- a) **Introduce the Scenario.** There is a high-stakes election coming up, and you are going to vote in it. There are two candidates to choose from, and people in your community feel strongly about who should win. It is expected to be a close race. Before you cast your ballot, you will learn about the candidates and election issues by reviewing information on social media to help make your choice. The social media feed has a mix of articles from news media and posts from friends and community members.
- b) **Read the Feeds.** Distribute the provided link to students and it will randomly assign students one of the two feeds (each feed more favourably supports one of the two candidates). Do not inform students about the two different feeds. Give students 10 minutes to review the information.
- c) **Vote.** Have students vote for the candidates using the online voting button located at the bottom of the social media feed. You can access the results from your [newsliteracy.ca](https://www.newsliteracy.ca) dashboard. Announce the vote totals to the class.

- d) **Debrief.** Through a whole-class discussion, ask students why they voted the way they did and what information shaped their decision.

Over the course of the discussion, it should become apparent that some students were provided with different information than others. At an appropriate point in the discussion, share the fact that there were two different feeds. You can also review the feeds side-by-side to compare the differences (preview links are available [news literacy.ca](https://www.news literacy.ca)).

Further questions to prompt discussion:

- How did you feel about the results of the vote before you knew there were two feeds? Were you surprised by the outcome? Why or why not?
 - How might two people end up with such different news feeds?
 - What are the consequences of people consuming different facts and opinions?
 - Do you think people should be exposed to different perspectives or more than one side of an issue before making their decision?
2. Watch the “Behind the Screens: Who decides what I see online?” video and/or the "Algorithms and Filter Bubbles" video, and/or review Slide Deck 3 to introduce the concepts of algorithms and filter bubbles, and the effects of online platforms on democracy.

TEACHER NOTE

The content in the “Behind the Screens: Who decides what I see online?” and “Algorithms and Filter Bubbles” videos is very similar. You can choose to show either option, or both.

3. Divide students into pairs or small groups for a discussion about their own experiences.

Key questions:

- You have probably observed information or advertisements online that were based on your previous internet searches or content that you read or watched. Can you share an example from your own life of when this has happened? Are there other times you have noticed algorithms personalizing your internet experience?
- What is your understanding of how recommendation algorithms work?

4. As a class, briefly discuss the implications of online personalization.

Key information and questions:

- Information environments that are tailored to individuals can have an impact on informed citizenship and democracy.
- What might happen to our understanding of people, issues, and events if we only see news or information we like or agree with?
- What impact might ‘filter bubbles’ have on discussions of divisive political issues?
- Should we make an effort to avoid ending up in a filter bubble? What steps might we take to become exposed to different perspectives?

Consolidation

Ask students to fill out the Exit Card (Activity 3.2).

- **WHAT?** Describe what you learned today. What stood out? What was your ‘a-ha’ moment?
- **SO WHAT?** Identify the implications. What does it mean for you? How does it affect you?
- **NOW WHAT?** Define a course of action. What actions will you take?

Alternatively, ask students to record one ‘a-ha’ moment from the discussion on a sticky note and attach it to the board.

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., online platforms, algorithms, filter bubbles). • Share the "Behind the Screens" and/or "Algorithms and Filter Bubbles" videos before class discussions and activities. • Ensure that subtitles are on during the videos.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may come from households with varying access to the internet, and have different levels of familiarity with social media. Keep in mind that not all students will have prior knowledge of the social media feeds being emulated in the 'Feed for Thought' activity. • Encourage students to share their own experiences with online platforms and social media. • Ensure that you are open and encouraging of diverse viewpoints your students may share.
Accommodations & Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups is not possible, considering using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

As citizens living in a democracy, we have a responsibility to stay informed about the issues that matter to us and to society. This is true all the time, but especially when we must make a meaningful choice at the ballot box.

The introduction of the internet and the rise of social media have been significant for news and information, and complicated for citizens.

Where traditional news organizations were once the **gatekeepers** of information and the only ones with the resources to disseminate it — printing presses and TV stations are costly to purchase and operate — the internet allows anyone, anywhere to be a publisher.

The rise of blogging and social media a generation ago was widely viewed as the democratization of information, bringing new voices into public discourse and leading to positive social change. The reality of online communication has been more complex.

When news came only from traditional or **legacy media** — newspapers, TV, and radio — there was always someone who stood between audiences and information, a person or process that filtered the stories or content, checked facts and packaged stories for public consumption.

Where human editors and producers were once the only gatekeepers who decided what news audiences saw, on the internet, that job belongs to algorithms, which are sets of instructions that tell computers how to perform specific tasks, like sorting information. Social media **algorithms** work in such a way that we are more

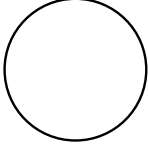
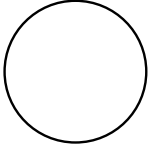
likely to see content that is similar to what we already like or agree with. Our social media feeds never give the whole picture.

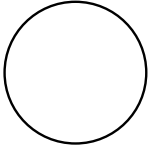
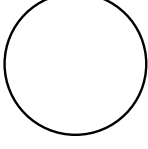
Since people have become such heavy adopters of **social media**, they now rely on these sites (such as Facebook or TikTok) for news. The problem is that social media platforms never intended to be news organizations, and there are consequences for informed citizenship when people rely on friends and the results of algorithms to find out about what is happening in the world.

Informed citizenship involves seeking out news and information from a variety of sources, comparing perspectives and keeping up with new developments. There are things you can do to make sure you are informed, particularly when there is so much information available online.

ACTIVITY 3.1: Voice your choice!

Use the sample ballots below to conduct a vote for the candidates running for election. Tabulate the results and announce them to the class.

WENDY ABBOTT	
TRACY BELL	

WENDY ABBOTT	
TRACY BELL	

ACTIVITY 3.2: What? So what? Now what?

<p>WHAT? Describe what you learned today. What stood out? What was your 'a-ha' moment?</p>	
<p>SO WHAT? Identify the implications. What does it mean for you? How does it affect you?</p>	
<p>NOW WHAT? Define a course of action. What actions will you take?</p>	

Lesson 4

Levels of Government



GUIDING QUESTIONS

1 How is government structured in Canada?

2 How do the different levels of government affect me?

OVERVIEW

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

In this lesson, students examine the different levels of government, including leadership roles, elected representatives and division of responsibilities. Afterwards, students contribute to a class bulletin where they use articles, images or social media posts to identify government services or decisions that influence their lives. In the *Consolidation* activity, students analyze which level of government has the most impact in their life and whether it is important to know which level of government is responsible for what.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- develop an understanding of how government is structured in Canada (Concepts of Thinking – Significance);
- distinguish between levels of government and their areas of responsibility (Concepts of Thinking – Political Significance);
- analyze how political institutions and political decisions affect our lives (Citizenship Education Framework – Structures, Concepts of Thinking – Objectives and Results).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- explain the roles and responsibilities associated with the different levels of government in Canada;
- describe how governments work together and influence society;
- analyze how the levels of government affect me by identifying specific examples.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS - CHV20

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance (A1.1, A1.2, A1.4, A1.5)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset (A2.1, A2.3)

B2. Canadian and Indigenous Governance Systems: explain, with reference to a range of issues of civic importance, the roles and responsibilities of various institutions, structures, and positions in Canadian and Indigenous governance systems, treaty relationships, and other Crown-Indigenous relations (B2.2, B2.3, B2.4, B2.7, B2.8)

C2. Engaged Citizenship and Creating Change through Action: analyse a civic issue of personal interest, and propose and assess methods of creating positive change in their community (C.2.2 - Extended Learning)

HISTORY - CHC2D/CHC2P

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through historical investigation, and identify some careers in which these skills might be useful (A2.3, A2.3)

POLITICS - CPC30

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them (A1.2, A1.5, A1.7)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.1, A2.3)

C1. The Influence of Individuals and Groups: analyse the objectives and strategies, and assess the influence, of individuals and groups in addressing issues of political importance (C1.4)

C3. Political Change in Democratic Societies: demonstrate an understanding of factors that facilitate and present challenges to democratic political change (C3.1, C3.2)

Starter

'Write the Room' activity:

1. Post three pieces of chart paper around the room and label each one with the name of a level of government (federal, provincial, municipal, or First Nations, Métis, and Inuit).
2. As students enter the classroom, ask students to write something they know about each level of government. Students can also write on sticky notes and post them on the chart paper.
3. Review students' existing knowledge as a class.

Activities

1. Review the structure of government in Canada using the 'Levels of Government' video and/or Slide Deck 4.

Have students create a 'sketchnote' to summarize the information. Sketchnotes are rich visual notes created from a mix of handwriting, drawings, and visual elements like arrows, boxes, and lines. An exemplar provided on the project website under Lesson 4.

Alternatively, students could create a digital presentation (slides) with images and text.

2. Review Handout 4.1 and discuss the division of responsibilities as a class. Explain to students that the levels of government work together on many issues, such as healthcare. For example, the federal government focuses on providing funding to the provinces and territories (through the Canada Health Transfer), and manages health protection, disease surveillance and prevention, including approving and buying vaccines. The provincial government handles health-care delivery, including hospitals and doctors, health promotion and public health initiatives such as vaccination campaigns. Municipal governments focus on paramedic services, sanitation, disease control, as well as setting up vaccination clinics.
3. Create a class bulletin board where students can identify how government services or decisions influence their lives. Students can contribute by attaching photos, news articles, headlines, social media posts, and other related content for each level of government. Ask each student to make two contributions for each level of government.

Consolidation

1. Ask students to write down a new piece of knowledge on a sticky note for each level of government and put it on the chart paper from the *Starter* activity.
2. Ask students to write a response to one or both of the following questions (Activity 4.2).
 - Which level of government has the most impact in my life, and why? Explain with two examples.
 - Is it important to know which level of government is responsible for what? Explain.

Extended Learning

Ask students to pick an issue that matters to them and analyze how the government could take action to improve the conditions. Students should advocate for government action through a format of their own choosing. This could include writing a letter or email to the minister(s) in charge

of their related issue or the elected representative at the appropriate level(s), or producing a rant, pitch slide deck or multi-media artwork.

For inspiration, watch one or more of the following videos about youth who have taken action on an issue of importance to them:

- Noah Irvine (Mental health): www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDrEpcvCUEE
- Alex Deans (Technology for the visually impaired): www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY-FpX4bZSs
- Levi Marshall (The Preservation Project): www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7zfStwmMMg
- Arezoo Najibzadeh (Representation of women in politics): www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jlc-3gOXiXk
- Denise Lee (Environmental sustainability): www.youtube.com/watch?v=FT36epLUGDc

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., elected representative, government, federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, prime minister, premier, mayor, MP, MLA, councillor). Students can use a Frayer Model organizer to understand these terms. • Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities (“Levels of Government”). • Ensure that subtitles are on during videos. • Provide examples or photos for each area of responsibility.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the demographic data of one or more elected bodies and discuss the need for more diversity in politics. • Review the governance structure of a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community you know about.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs or Google Jamboard for collaborative activities and discussion. If students require further practice to consolidate understanding, assign a small group of students to create a review game such as Kahoot.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Representatives at the federal level are called **Members of Parliament** (MPs). Representatives at the provincial in Ontario are called **Members of Provincial Parliament** (MPPs). The elected representative at the municipal level is usually called a **councillor or alderman**.

Most federal and provincial elected representatives belong to a political party. A **political party** is a group of like-minded individuals with a shared vision and political ideology whose intention is to achieve power and create meaningful political change. There are no political parties at the municipal level in Ontario.

The leader of the federal government is called the **prime minister**, whereas **premier** is the title given to the leader of the provincial government. At both

levels of government, the leader of the political party with the greatest number of elected representatives in the legislative body usually assumes the role of the leader of that government. Therefore, we do not vote for the position of premier or prime minister directly.

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

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

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

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

HANDOUT 4.1: Government Responsibilities

A list of some key federal, provincial/territorial and municipal government responsibilities based upon Canada's constitution.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES
 Citizenship and passports	 Colleges and universities	 Animal control
 Criminal law	 Drivers' licensing and highways	 Fire protection
 Currency	 Education	 Land use planning (zoning)
 Federal taxes	 Hospitals and healthcare delivery	 Local parks
 Fisheries and oceans	 Municipalities	 Local police
 Foreign affairs and international trade	 Natural resources	 Road maintenance
 Indigenous lands and rights	 Property and civil rights	 Recreation and community facilities
 National defence	 Provincial law and courts	 Public transportation
 Official languages	 Provincial taxes	 Waste management
 Postal service	 Social services	 Water supply and treatment
 Veterans affairs		

Some shared areas of responsibility include: Immigration, agriculture, healthcare, transportation and environment.

ACTIVITY 4.2: Reflection

<p>Which level of government has the most impact in my life, and why? Explain with two examples.</p>	
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<p>Is it important to know which level of government is responsible for what? Explain.</p>	
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Lesson 5

Municipalities



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How do municipalities influence their communities?
- 2 What actions can be taken to improve my community?
- 3 Why it is important for people to engage in civic action?

OVERVIEW

Municipalities provide essential local services and are responsible for the planning, growth and well-being of their community through the adoption of by-laws and policies.

In this lesson, students begin with an evaluation of their community and exchange of perspectives. After learning about municipalities, students complete an online scavenger hunt to learn about their their own city, town, village or township. Next, students work in groups to develop a detailed action plan to improve an issue in their community or analyze a recent by-law. In the Consolidation activity, students reflect on why they should care about their community and work with others to create positive change.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- develop an understanding of the structure and function of municipalities (Citizenship Education Framework – Structures);
- use the inquiry process to formulate questions, interpret, synthesize and critically analyze information about their municipality;
- propose and evaluate actions to improve their community (Concepts of Thinking – Political Significance);
- demonstrate positive attitudes towards civic engagement (Citizenship Education Framework – Attributes).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- analyze my community's strengths and weaknesses;
- explain the structure and function of municipalities;
- propose and analyze different actions that could be taken to address an issue and improve my community;
- evaluate the importance of being an active and engaged community member.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS – CHV20

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance (A1.1, A1.2, A1.4, A.5)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4)

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one’s position on civic issues (B1.4)

C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally (C1.2)

C2. Engaged Citizenship and Creating Change through Action: analyse a civic issue of personal interest, and propose and assess methods of creating positive change in their community (C2.2)

POLITICS – CPC30

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them (A1.1, A1.2, A1.4, A.5)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4)

C3. Political Change in Democratic Societies: demonstrate an understanding of factors that facilitate and present challenges to democratic political change (C3.3)

D1. Investigating an Issue: identify and analyse a political issue, with the goal of developing a personal plan of action to address this issue (D1.1, D1.2)

D2. Developing a Plan of Action: identify a goal associated with the selected issue and construct an action plan to achieve that goal (D2.1, D2.2, D2.3)

D3. Considering Outcomes: analyse and reflect on possible outcome(s) of their plan (D3.1)

HISTORY – CHC2P/CHC2D

A1. Historical Inquiry: use the historical inquiry process and the concepts of historical thinking when investigating aspects of Canadian history since 1914 (A1.2, A1.6, A1.7, A1.9)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through historical investigation, and identify some careers in which these skills might be useful (A2.2, A2.3)

FNMI STUDIES – NAC20

A1. Historical Inquiry: use the historical inquiry process and the concepts of historical thinking when investigating aspects of the history of Indigenous peoples within the boundaries of contemporary Canada from precontact to the present day (A1.8, A1.9)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through historical investigation, and identify some careers in which these skills might be useful (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3)

Starter

1. Ask students to evaluate their community by responding to the statements on Activity 5.1. Alternatively, the data could be collected through an online survey. A template in Google Forms and MS Forms is available on the project website. You can 'create a copy' for your class.

TEACHER NOTE

Consider having both students and their families fill out the online survey in order to analyze findings from the wider community.

2. Divide students into small groups and have them discuss their community’s strengths and weaknesses and the reasons behind their choices.
3. Analyze the community evaluation scores as a whole class. Questions to prompt discussion:
 - What was the overall evaluation of our community?
 - Was there consensus about our community's main strengths and weaknesses? Why or why not?
 - How did your discussion with classmates influence your views about the community? (Sample prompt: “I liked hearing ____’s perspective about why _____. It was something that I didn’t know about or haven’t considered before.)

Activities

1. Use the “Municipalities in Ontario” video and Slide Deck 5 to review basic information about municipalities in Ontario.

Key questions:

- What are the features and responsibilities of municipalities?
 - How do municipal councils function?
 - How do municipalities influence their communities?
2. Ask students to complete an online scavenger hunt about their municipality (Activity 5.2). Give students time to complete it independently or in pairs and then share their responses in small groups, allowing students to add to or update their own document.
 - Year of incorporation
 - Population and census data (Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021)
 - Geographic boundaries and two major landforms or waterways within it
 - Composition of the municipal council (numbers of positions and titles)
 - Description of four services provided to the community
 - Summary of three recent announcements or new programs offered and who is impacted in the community
 - Additional: Photo evidence of neighbourhood attractions, cultural institutions and activities (four pieces)
 3. Divide students into pairs or small groups and have them discuss their views about the most important needs and opportunities in their community. Students should reflect on the findings in the *Starter* activity and from their research about their municipality.

Questions to prompt student thinking:

- What do you think are the most pressing needs in our community?
- Do you see any opportunities for improvement or innovation?
- How could the health of our community be improved?

4. Ask each group to reach a consensus about one issue they want to address through a detailed plan of action. Using Activity 5.3 as a guide, each group should conduct research, design their plan and analyze the possible outcomes. Students should use primary and secondary resources, such as the municipality's website, research studies and media sources.
5. Allow each group to present its plan to the rest of the class.

Consolidation

Through a closing class discussion, have students respond to one or more of the following questions:

- Why is it important for people to engage in civic action?
- Why is it important to collaborate with others when addressing community needs?
- Why is it important to have diversity in government and within groups tackling change in our communities?

Alternative Activity

1. By-laws are the primary legislative instrument of municipalities. Municipal councils make decisions by adopting or amending recommendations from its committees and other government officials contained in reports and communications. Ask students to research a recent by-law passed by their municipal council and complete Activity 5.4. Exemplar 5.5 can be used as a guide.

Key questions:

- **Details:** What are the details of the by-law?
 - **Conditions:** What are the underlying conditions?
 - **Objectives:** What are the goals and objectives?
 - **Results:** How can progress be evaluated?
 - **Analysis:** Do you think the by-law will be effective? Why or why not?
2. In small groups or through a whole class discussion, have students share their by-law research and analysis.

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., municipalities, single-tier municipality, upper-tier municipality, lower-tier municipality, elected council, mayor/reeve, councillor/alderman, county council, warden, regional council, regional chair). • Allow students to research home communities as well as the community in which they now live.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may have different feelings towards their community. Encourage empathy and foster a safe place for respectful discussion. • Depending on the community, students could choose to focus on a particular ethnic or religious group and see how they fit into the larger community. • Focus research on programs and services for youth or relevant other groups in the community. • If applicable, encourage students to explore nearby Indigenous communities, and their changes over time, or how these communities fit into the larger community.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion. • The community plan of action presentation can be created and shared in an entirely digital format, using PowerPoint or Google Slides.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Municipalities are responsible for meeting their communities' needs and managing the growth and well-being of the community. Municipalities represent the most local level of government in Canada.

There are 444 municipalities in Ontario. Municipalities range in size and are referred to as either a city, town, village, county, township or region. Every municipality has a specific geographic area and is responsible for delivering local services for the people living within its jurisdiction.

Municipalities receive their powers and areas of responsibility from the provincial government, such as public transit, garbage and recycling, parks and recreation, water and sewage. They also have the ability to levy specific types of direct tax, such as property taxes.

Municipalities are classified as one of three types: single-tier, lower-tier or upper-tier. A **single-tier municipality** operates on its own,

such as Toronto or Thunder Bay. Whereas an **upper-tier municipality** works together to serve the community along with its **lower-tier municipalities**. For example, the Region of Peel is the upper-tier municipality for Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, which are all lower-tier municipalities. The Region of Peel handles specific responsibilities and coordinates area-wide services for all three municipalities, such as policing and waste removal.

Each lower-tier and single-tier municipality has an **elected council** composed of a **head of council (mayor or reeve)** and **council members (councillors or aldermen)**. Employees of the municipality follow the direction set by the council in managing the municipality.

In the case of upper-tier municipalities, there are two types of councils: **county councils** and **regional councils**.

The county council is composed of designated elected members from the lower-tier municipalities. The head of a county council is called a **warden**. The county council itself selects the warden from among its members.

The head of a regional council is called a **regional chair**. The chair is either chosen by a vote of the members of the regional council or directly elected by constituents in the regional municipality. Regional council members are selected in various ways. Some are elected directly by voters to sit on regional council. Some are elected to sit on both the regional council and the lower-tier municipal council. In some municipalities, members of lower-tier municipal councils are appointed by their members to serve at the regional level. The head of council of a lower-tier municipality is automatically a member of the regional council.

Council members govern their municipality by listening to the concerns and ideas of their constituents, attending meetings, and creating, discussing, and voting on by-laws they believe will improve their municipality.





ACTIVITY 5.2: Learning About My Municipality

Complete a scavenger hunt to learn more about your municipality. Use your municipality's website, Statistics Canada's website, or other information sources.

Name	Year of incorporation
Detail the population and census data (Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021).	
Identify the geographic boundaries and two major landforms or waterways within it.	
Outline the composition of the municipal council (titles and number of positions).	
Describe four services provided to the community.	
Summarize three recent announcements or new programs offered and identify who is impacted in the community.	

Additional: Photo evidence of neighbourhood attractions, cultural institutions and activities (four pieces).

ACTIVITY 5.3: Plan of Action

 IDENTIFY AN ISSUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the most pressing need in our community?• Does an opportunity exist to create positive change in our community?• Can you frame the need or opportunity as a question?	
 FIND THE FACTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the issues related to the need/opportunity?• Who is affected and how?• What research and statistics are available?	
 PROPOSED ACTIONS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What actions can be taken to address the issue? What is the best plan of action?• What individuals are in a position to create or block change? (government officials, community groups)• In which ways can we advocate for action or change in our community?	
 OUTCOMES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the intended outcomes of the actions?• What are some possible unintended consequences?• How can we evaluate the success of our plan or proposed actions?	

ACTIVITY 5.4: By-law Analysis

By-laws are the primary legislative instrument of municipalities. Municipal councils make decisions by adopting or amending recommendations from its committees and government officials. Visit your municipality's website and find a recent by-law. Analyze the by-law by responding to the questions below.

BY-LAW INFORMATION: Number, subject, date	
DETAILS: What are the details of the by-law?	
CONDITIONS: What are the underlying conditions?	
OBJECTIVES: What are the goals and objectives?	
RESULTS: How can progress or changes in behaviour be evaluated?	
ANALYSIS: Do you think the by-law will be effective? Why or why not?	

EXEMPLAR 5.5: By-law Analysis

Sample by-law analysis.

<p>BY-LAW INFORMATION: Number, subject, date</p>	<p>#1234 To provide new regulations for the care and control of dangerous dogs to protect the public. Enacted January 31, 2022.</p>
<p>DETAILS: What are the details of the by-law?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No person shall allow an animal to remain outdoors during extreme weather unless the animal has access to an enclosure that will adequately protect the animal from the elements. • No person shall keep an animal tethered where a choke collar, choke chain, pronged collar or any similar device forms part of the tether. • No person shall tether an animal unsupervised for longer than one hour. • No person shall use a choke collar, choke chain, pronged collar or any similar device at any time on a dog. Does not apply to the use of a martingale collar on a dog.
<p>CONDITIONS: What are the underlying conditions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfair treatment of animals, including exposure to extreme weather and tethering for an extended period of time and use of harmful collars.
<p>OBJECTIVES: What are the goals and objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the frequency of animals being left outside during extreme weather conditions and resulting ailments. • Reduce animal injuries and abuse due to harmful collars and neglect.
<p>RESULTS: How can progress or changes in behaviour be evaluated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the number of injuries or fatalities of animals due to extreme conditions or tethering.
<p>ANALYSIS: Do you think the by-law will be effective? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. It will be effective if the by-law is enforced and citizens are aware of it.

Lesson 6

Municipal Elections



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How is my municipal council elected?
- 2 How can I learn about the election candidates?
- 3 Which candidate(s) do I support and why?

OVERVIEW

Elections present an opportunity for citizens to discuss political issues and shape the future direction of their community.

In this lesson, students become acquainted with the municipal election process and analyze ways to compare the candidates. In groups, students collect information about or from one of the candidates, and share their findings with the rest of the class. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on the reasons behind their candidate preferences.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- develop an understanding of the municipal election process (Citizen Framework – Structures);
- use the political inquiry process to research the municipal election candidates running;
- compare and contrast how different candidates will respond to the same political issue (Concepts of Thinking – Political Perspective);
- develop a sense of their civic self-image by exploring their own political views (Citizen Education Framework – Identity).
- voice informed opinions on matters relevant to their community (Citizenship Education Framework – Active Participation).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- analyze issues facing our community;
- explain details about the municipal election process;
- identify different ways to compare the candidates;
- research the candidates running for election using primary and secondary resources;
- compare and contrast how different candidates will respond to local issues;
- evaluate which criteria is important to me when comparing the candidates and/or which candidate(s) I support and why.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS – CHV20

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance (A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4, A.5)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4)

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one's position on civic issues (B1.1, B1.5)

B2. Canadian and Indigenous Governance Systems: explain, with reference to a range of issues of civic importance, the roles and responsibilities of various institutions, structures, and positions in Canadian and Indigenous governance systems, treaty relationships, and other Crown-Indigenous relations (B2.8)

B3. Rights and Responsibilities: analyse key rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, in both the Canadian and global context, and some ways in which these rights are protected or may be infringed upon (B3.2, B3.3)

C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally (C1.2, C1.3, C1.5)

POLITICS – CPC30

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them (A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4, A.5, A.6, A.7)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4)

B2. Issues of Political Importance: explain the political importance of some current issues and analyse various perspectives associated with these issues (B2.1, B2.2, B2.3)

B3. Causes, Impact, and Solutions: analyse some issues of political importance in terms of their causes, their impact, and ways in which they have been addressed (B3.1, B3.2)

Starter

1. Share the following with students to frame the lesson.

In any given place – a neighbourhood, community, province or country – anywhere that groups of people live together and where the laws and decisions affect everyone, there will be differences in opinions about how government and society should work, including which issues are most important and how best to take action. Elections present an opportunity for citizens to discuss political issues and shape the future direction of their community.

2. In small groups, have students brainstorm some of the most pressing issues in your community. Aim for 6 to 8 issues.

3. As a class, co-create criteria to evaluate the list of community issues.

Sample criteria: Ask students to respond to the following questions for each issue – Definitely / Probably / Probably not / Definitely not

- Is the impact long lasting?
- Is the impact extreme – positively or negatively?
- Are many people affected?
- Does it directly affect you, your family and friends?
- Are many people for and/or against it?
- Are the differences between supporters and opponents substantial?

4. Return to small groups and have students rank the issues using the criteria established.

5. Follow up with a class discussion to review the small group rankings and as a class come to a consensus on the top three issues facing your community.

Activities

1. Review the municipal election process in Ontario using the following guiding questions and Slide Deck 6. Add specific information about the election races in your municipality to the Slide Deck in advance.

- Why do we have elections?
- Who is responsible for organizing municipal elections?
- How are candidates elected in municipal elections?
- How many candidates can I vote for in each race?

2. On a blackboard or whiteboard, write down the following question: How do voters decide who to vote for?

Through a discussion, generate questions to frame this decision. Start with pairs or small groups and then move to a whole class discussion.

Sample criteria for evaluating candidates:

- Why does the candidate want to be elected?
- Who would make a good leader for the community?
- Would they work well with the rest of council to make decisions for our community?
- What experience does the candidate have in serving the community?
- Which candidates share the same concerns as me? Do they have ideas to address these issues?
- What ideas or proposals do the candidates have for our community? Which candidate's ideas do I support?

3. Find out which candidates are running for election in your municipality. Show students where they can find this information by visiting your municipality's website.
4. Divide the class into pairs or small groups to research the candidates running for election. As a class, develop a checklist for creating a candidate profile. Have students also choose how the information will be presented (e.g., poster, slide deck, video, mock social media profile).

Sample candidate profile:

- Name and photo
- Personal information (What skills or experience do they have for the job?)
- Reason for running (Why do they want the job?)
- Priorities (What issues are most important to the candidate?)
- Issues (What is their position or proposed ideas for three election issues?)

TEACHER NOTE

Encourage students to use primary and secondary resources, including news articles and commentary, candidate websites and social media, or even contact the candidates directly.

5. Have each group present their candidate profile to the rest of the class. Ask students to take notes using Activity 6.1. Alternatively, you can post the group work on a digital platform and allow students to review each profile on their own.

Consolidation

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

- What criteria is most important to you when evaluating the candidates and why?
- Which candidate do you prefer and why?
- Which candidate do you think will best address the issues that matter most to you? Explain your reasoning.

Extended Learning

Consider inviting candidates to visit your class/school or organize a candidates' debate (Handout 6.2). Alternatively, you can use the candidate's website or news reports to find the answers or analyze how the candidate may respond to the questions. You can assign each group a candidate and have them share their research and responses with the rest of the class.

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., electoral system, First-Past-The-Post, multi-member election, at large, ward).
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the diversity of the candidates running in your community and discuss the need for diversity in politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of council diversity puts municipalities at risk: https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2018/lack-of-council-diversity-puts-municipalities-at-risk/ - Women in Politics: https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/women-politics/ - London's first female Muslim councillor believes representation can inspire others: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/london-s-first-female-muslim-councillor-believes-representation-can-inspire-others-1.6252907
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion. • Consider using a digital format for the candidate research and profile so that it can be shared online, in order to limit interactions or movement in the classroom.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Municipal elections provide citizens with an opportunity to discuss and debate the future direction of their community.

An individual who seeks public office or competes for the role of an elected representative is called a **candidate**. It is their job to share their vision, ideas and commitment to the job in order to win the support of voters during a campaign.

On October 24, 2022, Ontarians will elect candidates to sit on their municipal councils. The size, arrangement and election of the council differs per municipality.

Council members can be elected **at-large** (by all eligible voters in the municipality) or by **ward** where the municipality is broken down into smaller geographic areas that elect one or more representatives for their specific ward. The head of council is elected at-large in single-tier or lower-tier municipalities.

An **electoral system** is the way in which citizens elect their representatives. There are set rules for how preferences are recorded and the methods used for determining which candidate wins. There are many different electoral systems used around the world.

Municipalities in Ontario use a system called **First-Past-The-Post** (FPTP). A successful candidate must receive the most votes in order to be elected in their area. In some cases, more than one candidate is elected, either at-large or within a ward. This is called a **multi-member election**. For example, if there are six council members elected at-large, the six candidates with the most number of votes are elected.

In some municipalities, there will be numerous candidates running for a seat on council. In other municipalities, there may only be a few candidates and the race will be less contested. If a candidate has no opponents, or if the number of candidates match the number of seats on council, then the

candidate(s) automatically win. This is called **acclamation**. When this happens, no vote is held for that race.

To become a candidate in a municipal election in Ontario, you must be at least 18 years of age, a Canadian citizen and be eligible to vote in the election.

There are many ways to gather information about the election candidates. Information can be found on media websites or in newspapers, radio and television, and local magazines. Town hall meetings or all-candidate debates are typically organized where citizens are invited to listen to candidates speak on the election issues and ask them questions. Individuals may also visit candidates' offices, attend campaign events or have a chance to talk to candidates when they visit homes during door-to-door canvassing. Information may also be found through candidate websites and social media profiles.



ACTIVITY 6.1: Graphic Organizer – Getting to Know the Candidates

Fill out the graphic organizer below with information about the candidates running for election.

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

HANDOUT 6.2: A Framework for Organizing an All-Candidates' Debate

It is important when hosting an event at your school that things are run professionally and efficiently. Consider the following as you arrange your event. Check your school board's policy before planning.



PREPARATION:

- Decide on a time, date and location.
- Invite all candidates running in one or more of your election races (mayor or councillor) to participate in the meeting/debate.
- Determine if the event will be held in-person or virtually.
- Consider videotaping, podcasting and/or live-streaming the event to share with other schools in your municipality.
- Work with school staff to set up audio equipment and seating, if applicable.
- Recruit a moderator (teacher, student, community leader or journalist).



QUESTIONS:

- Determine the timing for questions and answers and whether all, some or one candidate will respond.
- Plan questions in advance and encourage other classes to submit questions to increase interest and engagement. Consider both personal and policy questions (e.g., Why did you decide to run? What makes you qualified for the job? How will you improve the community? What is your number one priority if elected?)

TIP:

Create a digital form to share with teachers across the school. Each class can contribute questions through the form or collaborate doc. Ask teachers to note student names next to the questions when possible.

- Once the questions have been selected, confirm which students will ask the questions.



FORMAT:

- Use a combination of short (i.e., 30 seconds) and longer responses (i.e., 2 minutes each). Make sure that the time limits are announced and monitored with a stopwatch.
- Establish an agenda and guidelines for the meeting to share with candidates and participating classes.
- Below is a suggested framework:
 - a) **Introduction** — The moderator should welcome the audience, introduce the candidates and detail the structure of the meeting (3 minutes).
 - b) **Opening statements** — Brief introductory statements from the candidates (2 minutes each).
 - c) **Planned questions** — Ask the pre-determined questions to the candidates (25-30 minutes).
 - d) **Open questions** — Give the audience an opportunity to ask final questions to specific candidates (10-15 minutes).
 - e) **Closing statements** — Final words from the candidates (1-2 minutes each).
 - f) **Thank you** — Plan a formal thank you from designated students (2 minutes).



ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEBATE:

- Ensure a respectful, impartial environment.
- If a candidate declines, cancels or does not show up, respect their campaign schedule and ensure that students are aware that the candidate is running in the election but is unable to attend.
- Communicate expectations regarding behaviour and participation.
- You can invite parents/guardians or members from the community, but non student audience members should NOT ask questions.
- Have students take notes during the debate to review the next class.
- If possible, provide time for students to talk with the candidates after the meeting and offer some refreshments.

Lesson 7

School Trustees



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What are the opportunities and challenges when making collective decisions?**
- 2 What is the role of school trustees?**
- 3 How can I learn about and evaluate the school trustee candidates?**

OVERVIEW

School trustees provide a link between local communities and the school board, bringing the issues and concerns of their communities to discussions and decision-making at the board table.

In this lesson, students explore collective decision-making while discussing ways to improve students' mental health and well-being. Students review the role of school trustees and research the composition of their school board. In groups, students create a profile for an ideal school trustee, before researching the candidates running for election. In the *Consolidation* activity, students evaluate the trustee candidates using analysis based on their ideal trustee.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- develop an understanding of school boards and the responsibilities of school trustees (Citizen Education Framework – Structures);
- use the inquiry process to formulate questions, interpret, synthesize and critically analyze the trustee candidates;
- consider and respect others' perspectives (Citizen Education Framework – Identity);
- work in a collaborative and critically thoughtful manner (Citizenship Education Framework – Attributes);
- voice informed opinions on matters relevant to their school community (Citizenship Education Framework – Active Participation).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- work collaboratively with their peers to discuss ideas to improve students' health and well-being;
- explain the role of school boards and school trustees;
- identify the characteristics of my "ideal" school trustee;
- research the trustee candidates using primary and secondary sources;
- evaluate the candidates running for election using evidence and analysis.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS – CHV20

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance (A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4)

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one's position on civic issues (B1.1, B1.5)

B3. Rights and Responsibilities: analyse key rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, in both the Canadian and global context, and some ways in which these rights are protected or may be infringed upon (B3.2, B3.3)

C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally (C1.2, C1.3, C1.5)

POLITICS – CPC30

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them (A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4, A.5, A.6)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4)

B2. Issues of Political Importance: explain the political importance of some current issues and analyse various perspectives associated with these issues (B2.1, B2.3)

Starter

1. Introduce the idea that a school board manages the English/French public or Catholic schools in their municipality, or within several communities in their area. Ask students if they know the name of their school board.

2. Use an adapted 'Focusing Four' protocol to discuss ideas for the following scenario.

The health and well-being of students has worsened over the last few years and is having a negative effect on student achievement. The provincial government has agreed to provide additional money to school boards to address the situation. The school boards must decide how they will spend the money in their schools in order to support the health and well-being of students in their community.

Divide students into groups of five or six and follow the steps below. One student should take on the role of facilitator in each group.

- a) **Brainstorm:** Have each group brainstorm ideas on chart paper. There should be no debate or critique during this stage.
 - b) **Clarify:** Invite group members to ask questions about any of the ideas. The student who put forward the idea should clarify their thinking as needed.
 - c) **Advocate:** Ask students to express which ideas they support and why. Statements should be positive in nature. Students can advocate for as many ideas as they like.
 - d) **Canvass:** Have students vote with a show of hands which idea they like best. The goal is to come to a consensus on one final idea.
3. Have each group share their agreed upon idea with the rest of the class and debrief on the activity.
 - What are the opportunities and challenges when making collective decisions?
 - How can you try to persuade others to agree with your ideas?
 - Why is it important to be respectful and keep an open mind when listening to others' perspectives?

Activities

1. Review key information about school boards and the role of school trustees using the "School Boards in Ontario" video and Slide Deck 7.
2. Investigate the composition of your school board.
 - Which municipalities are included in our school board? (Use a map as a visual aid)
 - How many schools are in our school board?
 - How many school trustees are elected?
 - Are school trustees elected at-large or by ward? If applicable, what is the name of our ward?
 - How many school trustees do I get to vote for?

- In small groups, ask students to create a profile for their 'ideal' school trustee using Handout 7.1 and Activity 7.2. What personal characteristics, skills, experience and motivations align with the responsibilities of the role?
- Review the list of candidates running for school trustee by using the following website:
<http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org>

TEACHER NOTE

If your school trustee candidates are acclaimed, skip to the *Alternative Activities*.

- Ask students to learn about the candidates through media sources, candidate websites and social media pages. This activity can be completed through a jigsaw method or you can assign one or two candidates to each group and have them present to the rest of the class.

Consolidation

Have a closing discussion about the candidates and ask students write a reflection about their evaluation of the candidates.

- Which candidate(s) do you think would make the best school trustee and why?
- Which candidate(s) most closely matches your ideal candidate? Explain with evidence or examples.
- What advice would you give to a friend or family member about researching trustee candidates?

Alternative Activities

- Ask students to reflect on what they would like to change or improve about their school experience and find a way to articulate this proposal to their newly elected board of trustees. This can be in the form of a letter, video, slide deck or multi-media piece.
- If your school trustee was acclaimed, invite them into your class for a discussion about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead within the school board.



ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., school board, school trustee, ward). • Encourage students to compare the education system in Ontario to the one of their home country. This can help with a deeper understanding of the institutions.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the emphasis many Indigenous groups place on consensus decision-making.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Ontario **school boards** operate the province's publicly funded schools. They administer the funding they receive from the provincial government in their designated geographic area.

There are four types of publicly funded school boards in Ontario: 31 English public boards, 29 English Catholic boards, 4 French public boards and 8 French Catholic boards. In addition, a small number of Ontario schools are operated by **school authorities**. The school authorities manage special types of schools, such as schools in hospitals and treatment facilities, and schools in remote and sparsely populated regions.

Each school board has a group of locally elected representatives known as **school trustees**. Trustees are members of the governing board, not employees. Individual trustees have no individual authority, but have responsibility for communicating with their constituents and bringing their

concerns to the board for discussion. The board of trustees makes decisions as a whole. Board decisions are made by voting, where motions are passed if they have majority support.

The board of trustees is responsible for educational leadership and planning, policy-making, resource allocation, financial oversight, monitoring and evaluation. Some of the specific responsibilities include:

- Creating an educational vision and goals for the school board
- Developing the board's multi-year strategic plan
- Hiring and evaluating the director of education (the CEO of the school board)
- Setting goals for student achievement and promoting continuous improvement
- Approving textbooks and learning materials
- Determining the number, size and location of schools
- Monitoring the effectiveness of school policies
- Assessing public satisfaction
- Approving a balanced annual budget and demonstrating financial accountability

School trustees are elected every four years during municipal elections. Since the territories of some school boards include more than one municipality, the geographic area a trustee represents often includes more than one municipality or more than one municipal ward. Some school boards divide the board into smaller areas, called **wards**. Each year, the board of trustees elect one of their members to act as chair of the school board.

In Ontario, each school board currently has two to three **student trustees**, elected each year by students to represent them. Student trustees act as a link between students and the board. Student trustees are not official board members but they do have many of the same rights and responsibilities. Student trustees participate in board meetings and committees. Student trustees may suggest motions to advance issues and may cast a non-binding vote. Student trustees are a direct way for students to have a voice at the school board level.

HANDOUT 7.1: The Role of School Trustees



THE SCHOOL TRUSTEE IS A MEMBER OF A TEAM

Only the team (the board of trustees), not an individual trustee, has the authority to make decisions or take action on behalf of a school board. A board of trustees must think about the whole board when making any decision. Trustees are required to support the implementation of any board decisions (motions, resolutions).



TRUSTEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING POLICY DIRECTION

Policies set out the expectations about what should happen or how services are to be provided within the school board. Policies are rules. The board of trustees ensures that the Director of Education carries out responsibilities for implementing the board's policies.



TRUSTEES, AS MEMBERS OF THE BOARD, ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PROVINCE

The board of trustees is answerable to the provincial government for the proper conduct of their duties and powers. This includes carrying out provincial policy and the use of provincially allocated funds.



TRUSTEES ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS

As elected officials, trustees must balance the demands of the community with the duties required by the provincial government. Trustees are required to consult with parents, students and community members on the board's multi-year plan and bring the concerns of these groups to the attention of the board.



SCHOOL TRUSTEES ARE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Trustees build and maintain relationships with the entire community – not just their neighbours or families with school-aged children. They work with their colleagues and other community partners to ensure that all students within the board's geographic area have equal opportunities to reach their full potential regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances. Trustees demonstrate their leadership in the following key areas:

- Establishing the board's multi-year strategic plan and educational vision
- Setting goals for student achievement, well-being and equity
- Monitoring progress against the board's strategic goals and priority areas
- Establishing a respectful, caring, professional climate throughout the school board
- Creating collaborative relationships inside the board and across the community
- Hiring the Director of Education and holding them accountable as they lead, execute and monitor activities
- Ensuring effective supervision of the board's financial resources
- Allocating resources in ways that ensure equity of outcomes and demonstrate accountability
- Championing equity in education

The role of school trustees involves representing all of their constituents, including marginalized communities (e.g., Indigenous communities, newcomers/immigrants, people coming from low socio-economic backgrounds) and bringing the voices of multiple groups to the board table.



TRUSTEES HOLD THEMSELVES RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CONDUCT

In exercising their role, trustees are required to comply with the board's Code of Conduct, which sets out standards that govern the ethical behaviour of trustees. This includes the expectation to act with integrity and to conduct themselves in a manner that enhances public confidence in Ontario's publicly funded education system.

ACTIVITY 7.2: My Ideal School Trustee

In the chart below, describe five key responsibilities of the role of a school trustee in the left hand column. In the right hand column, record what characteristics, skills or qualities would be needed to perform each responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITY	CHARACTERISTICS, SKILLS OR QUALITIES NEEDED

Lesson 8

The Voting Process



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Is voting in elections important?
- 2 How do I vote in municipal elections?
- 3 What are some barriers to participating in the voting process and what does it mean for me?

OVERVIEW

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

In this lesson, students analyze different reasons for voting in elections. Students review essential information about voter eligibility and when, where and how people vote in municipal elections. Afterwards, students learn about voter turnout and barriers to electoral participation, and reflect on whether any barriers may be relevant to them in the future. In the *Consolidation* activity, students create a social media style video about whether they believe citizens should vote or whether they plan to vote in the future.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- explain the importance of participating in elections (Concepts of Thinking - Significance);
- describe how to participate in municipal and school board elections (Citizenship Education Framework – Active Citizenship);
- analyze issues related to personal and societal rights and responsibilities (Citizenship Education Framework – Attributes).

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can...

- evaluate reasons for voting in elections;
- explain key information related to voting in municipal elections;
- analyze barriers to voting in elections and its relevance to me; and,
- articulate reasons for voting in a persuasive manner.

Curriculum Links

CIVICS – CHV20

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance (A1.1, A1.4, 1.5)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3)

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one’s position on civic issues (B1.2, B1.4, B1.5)

B3. Rights and Responsibilities: analyse key rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, in both the Canadian and global context, and some ways in which these rights are protected or may be infringed upon (B3.2, B3.3)

C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally (C1.2, C1.3)

POLITICS – CPC30

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them (A1.1, A1.6, A1.7)

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to politics, and identify some careers in which a background in political studies might be an asset (A2.1, A2.2, A2.3)

B1. Factors Affecting Political Engagement: analyse how various factors can contribute to, and present a barrier to, their own and others’ political engagement (B1.1, B1.2, B1.3, B1.4)

LAW – CLU3M/CLU3E

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through the study of law, and identify careers in which a background in law might be an asset (A2.2, A2.3)

C1. Human Rights: explain the legal significance of the Canadian Bill of Rights, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the Charter), and the Canadian Human Rights Act (C1.1)

LAW – CLN4U

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through the study of law, and identify careers in which a background in law might be an asset (A2.2, A2.3)

C1. Legal Principles of Human Rights Law: explain the principles underpinning human rights law and the legal significance of those laws, in Canada and internationally (C1.2)

Starter

Save the last word

1. Distribute one index card or piece of paper to each student. Introduce the activity by posing the following question: *Does voting matter?*
2. Watch the “Why Voting Matters” video and ask students to select one quote or reason for voting that stood out to them. They should write down the quote or reason on the index card. You may want to play the video twice in order to support this selection.
3. Ask students to explain why they chose the reason they did from the video by writing an explanation on the back of the card (e.g., what it meant to them, reminded them of, how it connects to prior learning).
4. Divide students into groups of three. Invite one student to read their chosen reason to rest of their group. Then ask the other two students to discuss the reason. Why do they think it was chosen? Is it meaningful for them? If so, why? After a few minutes, ask the student to read the back of their index card or to explain why they picked the reason and what it means for them. Repeat until each student has a turn sharing their selected quote/reason.

Activities

1. Explain to students that voting in municipal elections is done by secret ballot (Slide Deck 8). Voters mark their ballot behind a privacy screen and fold their ballot to conceal their choice. Using 'Think Pair Share', have students reflect on one or more of the following questions:

- Why is voting in secrecy important?
- What could happen if elections were held publicly?
- Why is it important to ensure a fair and impartial electoral process?

2. Using Slide Deck 8, review key aspects of the voting process in municipal and school board elections in Ontario.

Guiding questions:

- Who is qualified to vote in municipal elections?
- What is the voters' list?
- What are different ways that voters can cast their ballot?
- How do I mark my ballot?

3. Explain the term 'voter turnout' (Slide Deck 8) and various statistics from elections in Ontario.

Review:

- Voter turnout is the percentage of eligible electors or registered voters that cast ballots in an election.
- Having the right to vote doesn't always mean that a person will show up at the polls to cast a ballot.

TEACHER NOTE

Voter turnout data for your municipality may be available online and, if available, would provide for a more relevant discussion on turnout.

4. Provide copies of Activity 8.1 and give students a few minutes to complete it. Ask students to answer each question as honestly as they can.

TEACHER NOTE

Encourage students to take the survey home and have a discussion with their parents.

5. Review some key research findings about voting and barriers to voting using Slide Deck 8. There are many different barriers to voting, including motivational barriers and access barriers.

- Motivational barriers include low levels of political knowledge and interest in politics, lack of perceived importance, cynicism and lower sense of civic duty.
- Access barriers include not knowing when and where to vote, lack of personal identification, challenges getting to the polling station, and language and literacy skills.

6. Independently or with a partner, have students reflect on how many zeros they recorded on the voting survey (Activity 8.1) and which barriers could affect their decision or ability to vote in the future.

7. In small groups, ask students to discuss actions they can take to reduce these barriers in the future. Afterwards, debrief as a class.

Consolidation

Create a social media style video highlighting three main points as a response to one of the following questions. Consider using visual graphics and a tag line.

- Should eligible citizens vote in elections?
- Does voting matter?
- Do you plan to vote in the future? Why?

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance (e.g., election day, advance voting, vote by mail, ballot, accepted ballot, rejected ballot, voters' list).
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students that new immigrants, adults who have difficulty reading, language learners, persons who are homeless, newly arrived refugees, and other specific groups may face challenges understanding or accessing the election system. • Keep the focus on ideas to increase access and the benefits our society gets from hearing different voices, not only on the disadvantages these groups face.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Every four years, voters across Ontario decide who will represent their interests and lead their communities by electing the members of their municipal councils and school boards.

The provincial government sets out common rules that all voters and candidates must follow. However, municipalities are responsible for conducting elections for their municipal council and school boards within their jurisdiction. Every municipality has a municipal clerk who is in charge of running the election.

You are eligible to vote in the municipal council election in Ontario if:

- you are a Canadian citizen
- you are aged 18 or older
- you qualify to vote in the municipality*

*You may qualify in one of three ways:

1. You are a *resident elector* if you live in the municipality.
2. You are a *non-resident elector* if you own or rent property in the municipality, but do not live there.
3. You are the spouse of a *non-resident elector*.

There is also a special rule for students who may be living away from home while they attend school. If you are a student and consider your “home” to be the place where you live when you are not attending school (i.e. you plan on returning there), then you are eligible to vote in both your “home” municipality *and* in the municipality where you currently live while attending school.

You are eligible to vote in the school board elections in Ontario if:

- you are a Canadian citizen
- you are aged 18 or older
- you qualify to vote for that particular school board

If you are a resident elector in a municipality, you are eligible to vote for a school trustee that represents the municipality or ward where you live.

There are four types of school boards, but you can only vote for one type.

- English-language public school board
- English-language Catholic school board
- French-language public school board
- French-language Catholic school board

Voters are automatically eligible to vote for the English-language public school board unless they take steps to become a supporter of a different kind of school board. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) keeps the provincial record of school support.

If someone wants to change which type of board they vote for, they must contact MPAC. When they contact MPAC, they can only change which type of board they vote for if:

- they or their spouse are Roman Catholic and want to be an English-language Catholic school board supporter;
- they have French-language rights** and want to be a French-language public school board supporter;
- they or their spouse are Roman Catholic and are a French-language rights holder and want to be a French-language Catholic school board supporter.

**According to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*, in Ontario, a French-language rights holder is defined as either someone whose native language is French, someone who has received French-language education in elementary school, or someone whose child has received or is receiving French-language education in elementary or secondary school.

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is responsible for preparing the preliminary list of electors for each municipality. Your municipality receives the preliminary list from MPAC and then creates and posts their own **voters’ list**.

A voter’s name must be on the voters’ list in order to cast a ballot. While a voter’s name can be added on voting day, it is helpful to do this in advance. In some municipalities, being on the voters’ list ensures you receive a voter information card, which indicates your

voting place on voting day and the dates, times and locations of advance voting locations. Voters can check and see if they are on the voters’ list by contacting their municipality or by visiting the Voter Lookup website (www.voterlookup.ca).

Each municipality is responsible for conducting their own election and determining the voting method. Options include paper ballots, online voting, voting by mail, voting by phone or a combination of these methods. Please consult with your municipal clerk’s office or local elections office to find out specific information about your municipality’s election process.

When a voter arrives at a voting place, they must show identification to prove that they are the person whose name appears on the voters’ list. The identification must show their name and address. Photo identification is not required.

The **ballot** lists the names of the candidates running in each race. There is a space beside each candidate’s name on to mark the selection. In **First-Past-the-Post** elections, voters are permitted to mark their choice for as many candidates as are members elected in the race. For example, in a multi-member race where five council members are elected at-large, voters can vote for up to five candidates. Alternatively, if only one candidate is being elected in a ward, it is only possible to vote for one candidate.

A ballot is declared invalid by the **deputy returning officer** because it was not properly marked. This is called a **rejected ballot**. For example, the voter selected more than the maximum number of candidates they were allowed to choose or if the ballot was not marked clearly. In the case of municipal elections, one race or section may be declared valid and another may be deemed invalid.

Ontario’s Municipal Act allows voters to decline their ballot. To **decline** their ballot, voters must inform the election official that they are declining their right to vote when they receive their ballot. This is a public process and the choice is expressed aloud. The election official will mark “declined” on the election documentation and the ballot will not be placed in the ballot box but in an envelope for **declined ballots**.

ACTIVITY 8.1: Voting Survey

Read the questions below and answer them in the right-hand column. Include if your response is a 0 or 1. Explain the reason behind your answer. Afterwards, rank the different barriers in order of importance for you (1 = very important, 6 = not important).

<p>Attitudes towards voting</p> <p>People have different views about voting. For some, voting is a CHOICE. They feel free to vote or not vote in an election depending on how they feel about the candidates. For others, voting is a DUTY. They feel that they should vote in every election no matter what.</p> <p>Do you see voting as a choice or a duty?</p> <p><i>Duty=1; Choice=0.</i></p>	
<p>Political interest</p> <p>To what extent would you say you are interested in politics?</p> <p><i>Somewhat or very interested=1; Not very/not at all interested=0.</i></p>	
<p>Issues</p> <p>Politicians or candidates talk about issues that are important to me.</p> <p><i>Agree=1; Disagree=0.</i></p>	
<p>Personal confidence</p> <p>Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that I can't really understand what's going on.</p> <p><i>Disagree=1; Agree=0.</i></p>	
<p>Attitudes towards politicians and government</p> <p>I do not think politicians or the government care much about what people like me think.</p> <p><i>Disagree=1; Agree=0.</i></p>	
<p>The impact of my vote</p> <p>I feel that by voting I can make a difference.</p> <p><i>Agree=1; Disagree=0.</i></p>	
<p>A key takeaway from this reflection for me is:</p>	

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