

LESSON 8:

Post-Election Analysis

OBJECTIVE

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

KEY WORDS

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

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE DURING THIS LESSON

- What was the outcome of the Student Vote locally and provincially?
- What was the outcome of the general election locally and provincially?
- What is the difference between a majority and minority government?
- Who will form the next provincial government?
- How did campaign events impact the outcome of the election?
- How has this election experience helped prepare you for the future?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS

- Handout 4.1: 2011 Saskatchewan Provincial Election Results
- Student Vote results website (www.studentvote.ca/sk2016)

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Hook: 5 min

1. Announce the results of your school's Student Vote election. Who received the most votes? Was it a close race?
2. Compare the results of your school's vote with the results of other schools in your constituency. Are they similar or different? How did the results vary between schools? (All school results can be found at www.studentvote.ca/sk2016).

Teacher Note: You must wait until the official polls close in your constituency to share the Student Vote results. Student election workers at your school should be sworn to secrecy.

Instruction: 10 min

1. Seat count is the term used to show the number of representatives that each party will have in the legislature. It reflects the number of local constituency races won by each party.
2. Popular vote is the term used to show the total support a political party received across the province. It is shown as a percentage and is calculated by dividing the number of votes a party received by the total number of votes in the election. Under our electoral system (FPTP), the seat count is not related to the popular vote percentage.
3. The party that has the most seats usually forms government. The party that has the second-highest number of seats becomes the official opposition. Any other party is called an opposition party.
4. If the governing party has more than half of all the seats (31 or more), they will have a majority government. If they have half or less (30 or fewer), they will have a minority government.
5. In order to pass any legislation (laws) or budgets, the bills must have support from more than half of the members of the legislature. If the governing party has a minority government, they will need to gain the support of some of the opposition parties or independent candidates in order to pass any laws.

Discussion: 5 min

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

Activity: 25-40 min

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

Use the following comparisons for group discussion:

- Provincial seat count comparison (general election vs. Student Vote)
- Provincial popular vote comparison (general election vs. Student Vote)
- Provincial seat count comparison (2011 vs. current election)
- Provincial popular vote comparison (2011 vs. current election)
- Local constituency results comparison (general election vs. Student Vote)

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

2. Have a group discussion after analyzing some of the results and media reports. Consider some of following questions:

- Were there any big surprises in the election results?
- Which parties gained or lost seats since the last election? Why do you think that happened?
- Were the Student Vote results similar to the general election results? Why or why not?
- Which type of graph works best for displaying election results (e.g., pie chart, line graph, bar chart)?

Debrief: 5 min

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

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

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A. Once a candidate is elected to the legislature, they must make decisions about how to pursue issues on behalf of their constituency. Have students write to their newly elected MLA regarding an issue they believe should be considered a priority.

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

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

D. The province of Saskatchewan has a diverse population. Do you feel that the make-up of the legislative assembly represents all Saskatchewanians? Explain the reasons for your answer.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

How do I analyze election results?

Under our electoral system (FPTP), election results are analyzed by the number of seats each political party will have in the legislative assembly. The 61 seats contested in this election will be awarded to the candidate in each of the constituencies who receives the most number of votes.

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

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

The political party with the most seats usually forms government and their leader becomes the premier.

A minority government is a government in which the governing party has the most seats compared to any other party, but fewer than half the total number of seats.

A majority government is a government in which the governing party has an absolute majority of the seats (more than half). In Saskatchewan, a political party has to win 31 seats or more to win a majority government.

Which party will form the official opposition?

The political party that receives the second-highest number of seats usually takes on the role of the official opposition. It is their responsibility to hold the government to account and to question its actions. The official opposition organizes a shadow cabinet to act as expert critics on the portfolios managed by each cabinet minister or government ministries.

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

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

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- General election results — www.elections.sk.ca
- Student Vote results — www.studentvote.ca/sk2016
- Newspaper and media websites