

Canada's Federal Election Process

— Grades 4-8 —

Written by Frances Stanford

Ten lessons to assist your students in their understanding of the election process. Students will learn what elections are, their processes and the reasons elections are held. Insight into how campaigns are run, what a platform is and the platforms of the major political parties in Canada will peak their interest as they gain an understanding of decisions made in our country today. The history of elections, as well as historic facts about Canadian elections provide an interesting read. The dictionary of electoral words is a helpful tool.

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Printed in Canada

Published in Canada by:
On The Mark Press
Belleville, Ontario
www.onthemarkpress.com

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



At A Glance

Overall Expectations	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8	Lesson 9	Election Project
Language Skills										
Reading comprehension	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Summarize events/details	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Communicate orally	•		•		•			•		•
Communicate in writing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Vocabulary development	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Reasoning & Critical Thinking										
Make comparisons	•									
Develop opinions and personal interpretations	•	•		•	•	•		•		•
Make inferences (e.g., why events occurred)	•	•	•		•	•				
Develop research skills		•				•				
Analyze and evaluate historical information	•	•	•	•			•	•		
Recognize the validity of differing points of view	•				•	•		•		•
Use graphs and diagrams							•			
Understanding Big Ideas										
Understand what an election is and why they are held	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Understand how to hold an election	•	•	•	•			•	•		•
Understand how Canada's political system is organized	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		
Understand how to campaign for an election	•					•	•			•
Understand what a platform is						•				•
Describe the roles and responsibilities of people involved in an election		•	•	•		•	•			
Analyse, synthesize, and interpret election results	•							•		
Understand the history of elections in Canada	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	
Understand some of the problems and issues associated with elections	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		

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OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

BIG IDEAS:

- understand what an election is
- understand how to hold an election
- understand why elections are held
- understand how to campaign for an election
- understand what a platform means and be able to write a platform
- understand the platforms of the political parties in Canada
- describe the roles and responsibilities of the people involved in an election
- analyse, synthesize and evaluate election results
- use appropriate vocabulary to describe their inquiries and observations
- formulate questions to facilitate research on issues and problems arising from elections

WAYS TO USE THIS

RESOURCE:

The information in this unit has been provided to enable a teacher to make reproducible handouts or overheads for large group lessons which may also be used to supplement the teacher's knowledge of elections. The information may be used in any order the teacher wishes and in any format. The teacher can select the amount of information needed for his/her class.

A dictionary of election terms has been included. Reproduce this for student use if needed. (Pages 6-10)

The lesson plans provide ideas on how to introduce, teach, and reinforce the various aspects of elections in Canada. A follow-up is provided for each lesson. Not all lessons need to be taught and not all follow-ups need to be completed. Use your own discretion and choose those that meet the curriculum requirements.

Specific curriculum outcomes have been placed at the beginning of each lesson. Some reproducible lesson plans and sheets may have to be adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners.

PLANNING AHEAD

Collect any of the following materials that pertain to the teaching of this topic:

- pamphlets and posters used in an election campaign
- a copy of a sample ballot
- a ballot box
- a map of Canada showing the electoral districts
- a map of your province showing the electoral districts
- cartoons that are used in the media at the time of an election
- a blank map of Canada and its provinces for students to label
- sample political platforms which have been used by politicians in Canada
- videos advertising the candidates in elections

Hold an election in the classroom to expose the students to the voting process. It would be especially fitting if this unit could coincide with a federal, provincial, or municipal election. The students could take the positions of the different political parties and campaign throughout the school. An election day could be held at school.

To get you started, purchase our resource *The Classroom Election (SSJ1-63)*. It includes all the information you need to get started and run a successful election in your school. Individual lesson plans can be purchased at onthemarkpress.com.

BULLETIN BOARD DISPLAYS

Maintain an ongoing bulletin board throughout this unit adding to or changing the details whenever necessary. Display any or all of the following:

- a map showing the electoral districts of Canada and/or your province and/or your town or city
- a picture of key government leaders
- a timeline showing the major political parties in power since 1867
- a sample voters' list

WEB SITES

- www.educationworld.com
- www.en.wikipedia.org
- www.cbc.ca
- www.ndp.ca
- www.liberal.ca
- www.greenparty.ca
- www.conservative.ca

GUEST SPEAKERS

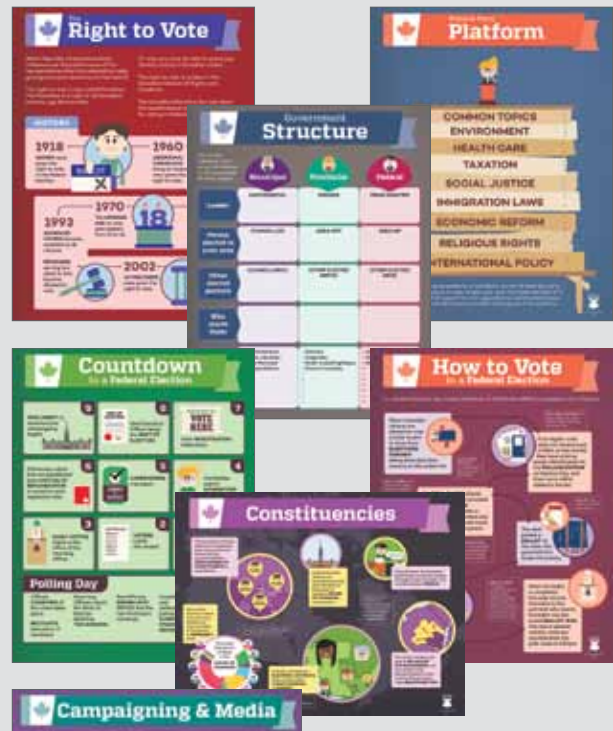
1. Make sure that you contact your guest speaker well in advance of this unit to ensure that he/she is available to come to your classroom to speak to the students. A guest speaker could be your federal Member of Parliament, your local Member of Provincial Parliament, or a member of your local municipal government.
2. Have students prepare appropriate questions in advance and discuss these questions in class to ensure that they are appropriate for the occasion.
3. Send a newsletter home with the students to inform the parents of the topic the students will be studying. Some of these parents may have information pertinent to the unit or may be able to speak to the class on issues related to the topic.

ELECTIONS IN CANADA POSTER SET

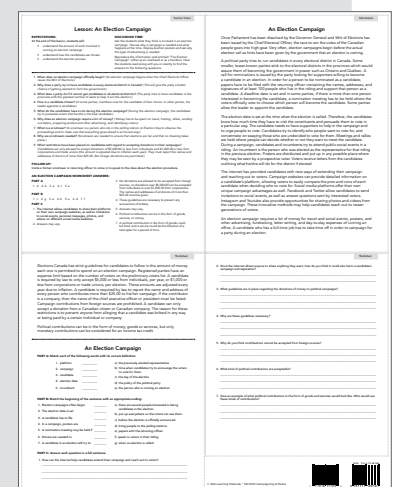
These posters are the **perfect companion** pieces for our election book!

Teach about all levels of Canadian elections with these 17" x 22", full-colour posters, with bonus activities on the back.

The 8 Poster Set includes: The Right to Vote, Political Party Platform, Government Structure, Countdown to a Federal Election, How to Vote in a Federal Election, Constituencies, Campaigning & Media, and Prime Ministers.



SS1701



POLITICAL PARTIES

LEARNING GOALS:

At the end of this lesson, students will:

- understand the nature of political parties in Canada
- understand how a political party is recognized in Canada
- understand what a party platform is

DISCUSSION TIME:

Ask students how many political parties there are in Canada. Ask them to name them. Record all answers on chart paper or on the board.

Reproduce the information card entitled “Political Parties” either as a handout or as an overhead. Have the students read the information silently or along with you to find the answers to the following questions:

1. Why are political parties important to the election process in Canada? *(They allow the voters a choice in which party they wish to represent them in the next government.)*
2. Who is usually a candidate in an election? *(The candidate is a person who is a supporter of a political party who has been nominated or appointed to run for election to government.)*
3. How do people usually decide who they wish to vote for? *(They usually vote for the person who is a supporter of their favourite political party.)*
4. When did political parties emerge in Canada? *(Political parties first emerged in Canada in the 1840s.)*
5. When did election ballots change? How did they change? *(Election ballots changed in 1974. Before this, the candidates’ names were listed on the ballots, along with their names, addresses, and occupations. Since 1974, the name is listed with the party with which the candidate is affiliated.)*
6. Why was this change helpful to both the voters and the party? *(This change was helpful to the voters because it helped to eliminate the confusion around the party with which the candidate was affiliated. It was helpful to the party because it helped to formally recognize the party as a political entity.)*
7. How does a political party become officially registered? *(The leader of the party has to apply to the Chief Electoral Officer along with the names, addresses and occupations of people who have agreed to be the auditor and the chief agent. He/She also has to submit the names, addresses and signatures of at least 250 people who are supporters of the party. The party has to have at least one candidate in an election.)*
8. Why are these signatures needed? *(The signatures are needed to make sure that the party does have enough support.)*
9. What benefits are there to registering as a political party? *(Once a political party has been registered, it can then issue income tax receipts, be reimbursed for certain election expenses, and have its candidates recognized as belonging to the party.)*
10. What are the four major political parties in Canada? *(The four major political parties in Canada are: the Liberal Party of Canada, the Conservative Party of Canada, the New Democratic Party of Canada, and the Bloc Quebecois.)*
11. Name some other parties in Canada. *(Some other parties in Canada are the Green Party, Marxist-Leninist Party, Canadian Action Party, and the Christian Heritage Party.)*

12. What is a party platform? (*A party platform is the political stand the party takes during an election.*)
13. Why is it important to the voters? (*The platform is important to the voters so they will know what each party's position is on issues that concern them.*)
14. Why does each party have a platform? (*Parties need this platform to explain to voters what they will or will not do if elected and to persuade the voters to vote for their candidates.*)

FOLLOW-UP:

- Ask the students to research the political platforms of the major parties.
- Ask the students to use the internet to find the names of ALL the political parties in Canada.

ANSWERS: POLITICAL PARTIES IN CANADA (PAGES 58 & 59)

PART A

1. Political parties are an important part of the Canadian political process because they allow the voters a choice in whom they wish to have represent them in the next government.
2. In a true parliamentary system, voters would vote for the person, not the party.
3. Answers may vary.
4. In some parties they are nominated and elected by a vote; in other parties they are appointed by the leader of the party.
5. A registered political party can issue income tax receipts, be reimbursed for campaign expenses, and have their members officially recognized as belonging to the party.
6. This is to ensure that the party has a certain minimum level of support.
7. The four major political parties in Canada are: the Liberal party, the Conservative Party, the Bloc Quebecois, and the New Democratic Party.

PART B

Answers may vary.





Political Parties in Canada

Political parties are an important part of the Canadian political process because they allow the voters a choice in whom they wish to represent them in the next government. When voters cast their ballots, they are voting for an individual person under a true parliamentary process. This person is usually a supporter of a political party. They are voting for a person to represent them as part of the government in the House of Commons. When enough supporters of a political party are elected, that party forms the government. Most times, people vote for the individual who is running for election because he/she is a supporter of a certain party. In these cases, the person is voting for the party rather than the individual.



Political parties emerged in Canada during the 1840s. Originally, they were very informal and it is only recently that they have acquired legal status. Until 1974, the election ballots listed the names of the candidates along with their addresses and occupations. There was no method of identifying their political affiliation, so a voter had to know which party his/her preferred candidate supported.

In order for supporters of a political party to be allowed to run as candidates in an election, the leader of the party has to file an application with the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, which is signed by the leader, an auditor, and a chief agent. Each application must be accompanied by the names, addresses and signatures of at least 250 electors who are members of the party. This is to ensure that the party has a

BALLOT

-  **JEFF B.**
-  **JOHN C.**
-  **SARAH W.**
-  **MAXINE D.**
-  **KYLE L.**

The election of 1974 was the **FIRST TIME THAT PARTY AFFILIATION WAS SHOWN ON THE BALLOT** next to the candidate's name. This change helped to eliminate the confusion of voters, and formally recognized the existence of political parties.



Political Parties in Canada

Part A: Answer the following questions in full sentences:

1. Why are political parties an important part of the Canadian political process?

2. How would voters cast their ballots in a true Parliamentary process?

3. Is it fair to say that since 1974, voting in Canada is not representative of the true Parliamentary process? Why or why not? _____

4. How are candidates chosen to run in an election? _____

5. What are the benefits of being a registered political party? _____

6. Why does a party need the signatures of at least 250 supporters?

7. Name the four major political parties in Canada.
