

Grade 9

# BUILDING FUTURE VOTERS

*A Resource for Teaching and Learning about Citizen  
Participation, Elections and Democracy*



elections  
alberta

**At Elections Alberta**, our vision is to inspire and engage participation in the democratic process.

Democracy is most vibrant when all people participate – people of all backgrounds and all ages. We have developed this resource to assist educators in encouraging political participation among youth, in order to build involved citizenship that lasts a lifetime.

This resource will enable students to better understand the concepts of equitable participation in society, government's role in democracy, and the impact of their one vote.

We hope this resource will help to fill a knowledge gap identified by educators in the past. Elections Alberta has often been asked for support materials to facilitate learning – and *Building Future Voters* is our enthusiastic response to that challenge. Our thanks go to InPraxis Group for lending their expertise to make our objective a reality.

It is my hope that *Building Future Voters* will contribute to the development of political and democratic awareness in youth and become an invaluable teaching tool for educators.



**Lorne R. Gibson**  
Chief Electoral Officer

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Elections Manitoba

Elections British Columbia

Elections New Brunswick

Elections Canada

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Teachers should check each website for appropriateness before using it in the classroom or providing the website address to students.

The developers have made every effort to acknowledge sources used in this resource. If any questions arise as to use of source materials, we will be pleased to make the necessary corrections in future printings.



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Forms and other support materials are also available on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca), by accessing the *Education* tab.

# ■ Building Future Voters - Grade 9

## A Resource for Teaching and Learning about Citizen Participation, Elections and Democracy

The vision of Elections Alberta is to inspire and engage participation in the democratic process. This vision can be achieved if citizens are encouraged to build deep understandings about democracy as well as an appreciation of the potential impact of their actions on their own communities.

### ■ About *Building Future Voters*

This resource is about more than voting. It encourages the involvement of students in their schools and communities as a necessary first step to involvement in political processes, including voting.

This resource provides opportunities for students to:

- Engage in an exploration of democracy, provincial government, the electoral process and decision-making in the context of their lives and involvement in their communities
- Participate in decision-making and consider ways that they can be active, participatory citizens
- Explore multiple understandings of citizenship, identities, belonging and participation
- Build understandings of the electoral process in Alberta and the concepts of responsibilities and empowerment of individuals and government
- Apply those understandings to the development and implementation of a class project that is committed to making a difference in their homes, schools or communities.

*Building Future Voters* consists of the following components:

- This teaching and learning resource, which includes approaches, activities, assessment strategies, visual organizers and backgrounders for teaching about citizen participation, elections and democracy.
- *Build the Vote!*, which provides the process and materials to conduct an election simulation in the classroom.
- *Building Future Voters: A Resource for Returning Officers*, which provides Returning Officers with information and activities for participating with Alberta classrooms as they learn about the electoral process.
- The *Building Future Voters* CD, which includes PDF versions of this resource, *Build the Vote!* and the Returning Officer's resource. The CD also includes television and radio advertisements produced by Elections Alberta as well as other provincial electoral offices. It includes a *Building Future Voters* mini-library, with additional PDF documents that may be useful as background information on the electoral process.

*In the Grade 9 Social Studies program, students analyze the relationship between Canada's political and legislative processes and their impact on issues pertaining to governance, rights, citizenship and identity. They broaden their understanding and appreciation of the relationships among governance, economics, quality of life, citizenship and identity. Students also demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how Canada's political processes impact citizenship and identity in an attempt to meet the needs of all Canadians.*

#### General Outcome 9.1: Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights

Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how Canada's political processes impact citizenship and identity in an attempt to meet the needs of all Canadians.

#### General Outcome 9.2: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States

Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how economic decision-making in Canada and the United States impacts quality of life, citizenship and identity.



Elections Alberta's **Election Simulation Toolkit** includes the following items:

- Electoral Division Map
- Provincial Electoral Division Map
- Voting Screen
- Pencils (3)
- Paper Ballot Box Seals (3)
- Election Officer Badges
- Scrutineer Badges
- "Vote Here" sign (with arrow tip)
- Registration Officer Sign
- Poll Book (modified to include 6 pages)
- Statement of Poll (photocopy)
- Voter Template for Visually Impaired
- Guide for Scrutineers
- Guide for Polling Place Officials
- Guide for Use of the Special Ballot Poll
- Guide for the Conduct of Mobile Polls
- Guide for Candidates on the *Election Act*
- Information for Students on Provincial Elections (brochure).

Contact Elections Alberta using the information provided below to order the toolkit.

This resource supports selected learning outcomes that deal with the concepts of:

- Democracy
- Citizen participation
- Organization and responsibilities of government
- Economic influences
- Democratic values
- Voting rights
- Citizen responsibilities.

#### **Elections Alberta**

Suite 100, 11510 Kingsway NW  
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Monday through Friday

8:15 a.m. to 12 noon;

1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Other locations in the province can call toll free by dialing 310-0000 then dial 780-427-7191

Online Booking Form:

[www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca),  
under the *Education* tab.

Elections Alberta welcomes the ongoing participation of teachers and students by:

- Providing your feedback and suggestions on the use of these resources. A **Teacher's Feedback Form (p. 132)** is provided at the end of this resource with directions for sending it to Elections Alberta. This form can be completed online at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca).
- Submitting ideas, activities and student products to be shared with other teachers and students on the Elections Alberta website. **Teaching Ideas & Student Work Submission** and **Permission** forms (pp. 133-134) are provided at the end of this resource.
- Supporting the involvement of Returning Officers in the classroom. Contact the Elections Alberta office at the contact information on this page or access the online booking form at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca) to request the participation of a Returning Officer.

The Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies focuses on citizenship, identity and democratic processes of decision-making within society. Students focus on ways that they can participate in the democratic process and in their communities. They develop beliefs, values and attitudes that enable them to influence and effect change. Community involvement, governance and decision-making through the electoral process can be a natural place for students to explore issues, challenges and decisions that a democratic society faces.

*Building Future Voters* moves students from an understanding of the electoral process to an emphasis on political participation in the larger picture of commitment to democratic ideals. Students are encouraged to see voting as both a starting point and a natural extension of their involvement in their communities and in current issues.

*Building Future Voters* provides a context through which students explore and investigate rights and responsibilities of citizens, expanding on their knowledge of the Alberta provincial electoral process learned in Grade 6 and establishing a point of comparison to federal processes of government. Students explore the relationship between individual citizens and collective participation in government. They also focus on issues relating to impartiality, disclosure and transparency in the electoral process.

## Engaging Students in Learning

*Building Future Voters* provides an introduction as well as four learning sequences that develop and support **selected** outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies. The introduction and learning sequences can comprise from four to eight weeks of time in the school year, depending on the activities that are implemented. The suggested time allocation for each section is based on 50-minute classes.

### Make It Matter

**Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?**

This section introduces the overarching issue to students. The overarching issue provides a context for the entire inquiry presented in this resource. Students explore examples of ways that youth can take a stand on issues and questions that are of importance to them. Students are encouraged to engage in an issue or decide on a **class action project** that they believe would make a difference in their communities.

### Learning Sequence 1

**What does government have to do with democracy?**

This learning sequence encourages students to explore understandings and conceptions of democracy in Canada, and the organization and responsibilities of Canadian governments. Students review what they know and investigate what they believe is most important in a democracy.

### Learning Sequence 2

**How are government decisions and voting connected?**

The electoral process involves both political and economic considerations, including legislation and government policies that affect decision-making. Learning Sequence 2 presents an example of an issue that has political and economic implications and encourages students to explore how participation in the electoral process can affect voters' and governments' decision-making.

### Learning Sequence 3

**What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?**

Democratic processes, including elections, emphasize values of equity, fairness, accountability and openness. Learning Sequence 3 encourages students to examine the right to vote in the context of age, citizenship and equitable, accessible processes. Learning Sequence 3 also provides a historical overview of voting rights.



### Suggested Time Allocation

#### *Make It Matter*

2 to 4 50-minute class periods

#### *Learning Sequence 1*

4 to 8 50-minute class periods

#### *Learning Sequence 2*

5 to 8 50-minute class periods

#### *Learning Sequence 3*

6 to 10 50-minute class periods

#### *Learning Sequence 4*

4 to 6 50-minute class periods



### Make It Matter

The **class action project** will add a variable amount of time to the implementation of the inquiry in this resource.

## ● Learning Sequence 4

### How can citizen participation be improved?

The processes of a democratic society mean that issues continue to involve questions, concerns and challenges. In Learning Sequence 4, students explore issues related to citizen participation, including the voting age and voter turnout. This section asks students to return to the overarching issue; *Does everyone have fair and equal opportunities to participate in society?*

## ● Working with Returning Officers

Throughout *Building Future Voters*, activities encourage interaction with Returning Officers of an Alberta electoral division. Suggestions include inviting a Returning Officer to the classroom and involving him or her with students' learning in different projects. All requests for the participation of a Returning Officer must be made through Elections Alberta, at the contact information provided on page 4 of this resource. An online booking request form is also available on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca), under the *Education* tab.

### ● Features

Within each section of the resource, features provide support for different learning preferences, abilities and interests, concept, skill and inquiry development, integrated planning, sharing, assessment and reflection.



**Time Allocations** are provided for implementing each learning sequence. These time estimates are based on 50-minute class periods.



**What to Prepare** provides a list of student resources, graphic organizers and materials that are needed to implement the activities in each learning sequence.



**Make It Matter** signals information, student resources and strategies for implementing the **class action project**. Strategies are connected to the inquiry process used in this resource.



**Did You Know** is provided in both the teaching suggestions and the student resources. This feature provides additional information and support for developing understandings.



**Weblinks** provide Internet URLs that support learning strategies and provide additional information. Weblinks are provided for teachers and found in student resources.



**Find Out More** is provided for teachers and featured in the student resources. This feature encourages research and inquiry skills by providing references to additional resources and sources of information.



**Learning Log** is featured in the student resource pages. This feature presents reflective questions that encourage critical thinking and personal connections.



**Your Turn** gives a signal to students that they will be asked to complete a task. Directions for the tasks are provided.



**Differentiate** provides suggestions and strategies for addressing differing learning needs, interests and prior knowledge.



**Assess & Reflect** provides suggestions, strategies and tools for assessment of students. Rubrics, checklist templates and assessment tools are included in each section of the resource. Strategies are also provided for student reflection and metacognition.



**Share** provides approaches for sharing learning in multiple contexts, including with Returning Officers, parents and community members.



**Teacher Backgrounders** provide detailed information to support students' learning of concepts and information related to provincial government and the electoral process. They also provide weblinks for additional support.

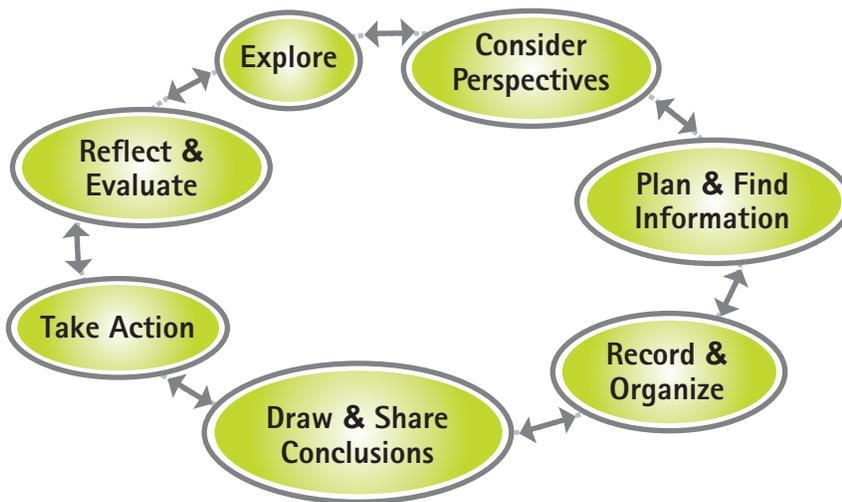


**Student Resources** can be photocopied and used with students in a number of ways. Each section of the student resources can be provided as students work through specific activities. Specific handouts may be selected for those activities that are implemented in the classroom. The resources can also be photocopied as a booklet and provided to students to work through at varying rates.



## Engaging Students in Inquiry

The inquiry model used in this resource provides opportunities for students to develop and apply research and social participation skills. Students are asked to explore inquiries by starting with their own knowledge and perspectives, use research skills to collect information, and apply critical thinking skills to develop conclusions and consider social action.



The process	Purpose of each step of the inquiry process	Questions that can guide inquiry
<b>Explore</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivate and generate interest</li> <li>Establish prior knowledge and experiences</li> <li>Identify concepts and understandings</li> <li>Make predictions</li> </ul>	What do we already know? What do we think about this issue? What do we need to understand about this issue? How does this issue or question affect me? What interests me about this issue or question? Why is this important?
<b>Consider Perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify research questions</li> <li>Identify individuals and groups involved with the question or issue</li> <li>Consider different perspectives and opinions</li> </ul>	What questions do we have? Who is affected and why? What different opinions exist?
<b>Plan &amp; Find Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on research process</li> <li>Identify, locate and organize sources and information</li> <li>Allocate tasks</li> </ul>	How will we find out what we need to know and understand? What type of information do we need? What sources do we need to consult? What is the best way to research? Who can we find out more from?

The process	Purpose of each step of the inquiry process	Questions that can guide inquiry
<b>Record &amp; Organize</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record information</li> <li>• Organize information collected</li> <li>• Analyze the information</li> <li>• Make connections and comparisons</li> </ul>	<p>How will we record our research?</p> <p>What similarities and differences do we see?</p> <p>What comparisons can we make?</p> <p>What connections do we see?</p>
<b>Draw &amp; Share Conclusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present the information</li> <li>• Draw conclusions</li> <li>• Analyze the information</li> <li>• Assess information</li> <li>• Consider solutions, perspectives, alternatives and predictions</li> <li>• Make decisions</li> </ul>	<p>How will we share our information?</p> <p>What would happen if...?</p> <p>What conclusions can we make?</p> <p>What evidence supports our conclusions?</p>
<b>Take Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify actions</li> <li>• Implement action</li> </ul>	<p>What will we do with what we have learned?</p> <p>What would happen if...?</p> <p>How can we contribute?</p> <p>How can we make a difference?</p> <p>What should we do next?</p>
<b>Reflect &amp; Evaluate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on actions</li> <li>• Consider effectiveness</li> <li>• Assess learning</li> <li>• Identify further research</li> <li>• Start the inquiry process again</li> </ul>	<p>How effective were our actions?</p> <p>What should we change?</p> <p>What should we do next?</p> <p>What do we need to find out about?</p>

## ■ Assessing Students

There are a number of opportunities to assess student work. The following tools are provided with the learning sequences in the resource:

- Criteria checklists
- Rubrics for summative assessment of students' work
- Rating scales for students to assess their learning.

**Criteria checklists** provide assessment criteria that address outcomes from the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies. Each criteria statement represents a cluster of outcomes and includes all Values and Attitudes, Knowledge and Understandings, and Skills and Process outcomes supported by the activities in each learning sequence.

The criteria checklists can be used directly to:

- Observe students as they work individually or in groups
- Monitor student participation in group or whole classroom activities and discussions
- Create rubrics with students to assess products they create
- Develop checklists to assess student work.

The checklists can also help assess where students are at the beginning or end of the section. Assessing students at the beginning of the section provides support for making decisions about differentiating instruction or making choices about which activities will be used or how they should be modified.

The checklist can be photocopied and stapled or glued in a folder for each student or can be used to assess students as they work in groups. Additional assessments can be added to the folder as the unit progresses and comments added to each student's checklist.

**Rubrics** are evaluation tools that identify the criteria for evaluation and provide a word description of each level of performance for each criterion. Often the language is complex for students and they can be time consuming to create. Rubrics are best used for summative evaluation.

**Rating scales** are evaluation tools that describe the desired behaviour and then provide a scale for rating current performance. The addition of a comment column provides a place to record evidence for the rating. Rating scales can be based on frequency, consistency, independence or quality of performance. They are generally not translated into percentage scores and therefore can have three or more levels depending on how much specificity is desired.



### Assess & Reflect

Assessment tips are provided throughout the teacher notes in each learning sequence. These tips also include suggestions for encouraging students to reflect on their own learning.

Rating scales are useful because they are less complex than rubrics. They can be used for formative assessment to help students (or peers) evaluate work in progress and identify areas for improvement. Rating scales are also useful for providing evidence of a wide range of process skills.

Rating scales and rubrics can be used together to create a broader picture of student performance. For example, students can use a rating scale to reflect on their contribution to a product as well as to rate their use of process skills. Teachers can use the evidence provided by the students on the rating scale as well as their own observations to assign rubric scores for the various criteria.

## ■ Engaging with Concepts & Vocabulary

### ■ Activities to Reinforce Understandings

Students are encouraged to develop understandings of key terms and concepts in activities and student resources. The following activities can be used to support a better understanding and more effective application of social studies concepts.

- Keep track of words, terms, ideas and concepts. When students find them in resources and sources of information, highlight or underline them or record a definition.
- Create an illustrated glossary. Record the definition with an illustration that will help students remember it. Students may be asked to maintain their glossaries individually, with a partner, or with a small group of classmates.
- Create a “What I Learned That I Did Not Know Before” booklet. In this booklet, record the definitions of new words, terms, ideas and concepts.
- Make a word splash or word bank list of words, terms, ideas and concepts to help students keep track of words associated with the electoral process and political participation. Encourage students to use these words when they complete assignments or projects.
- Have students create a word wall in the classroom using word art to display, describe or define key concepts and vocabulary.
- Encourage students to use vocabulary and concepts to create analogies, acrostic poems, word pictures, antonyms and synonyms.
- Create a mind map of words, terms, ideas and concepts that are related to each other.
- Use the glossary definitions to create a board game or game show similar to Jeopardy.
- Some of the terms and concepts in this resource deal with the provincial level of government. Encourage students to make connections and comparisons between the federal and provincial levels of government.

### ■ Glossary

The following pages provide glossary terms and concepts that are highlighted throughout the student resources. The terms are defined or described in the context and sequence of content that is presented in student resources. Students can be encouraged to use other sources, such as dictionaries, Internet glossaries and classroom resources to expand their understandings of these terms and concepts.

#### Key Curriculum Concepts\*

**Governance** The act, process or power of governing.

**Executive branch** Government body that ensures the administration of laws and of the country, comprised of the Prime Minister of Canada and the Cabinet.

**Legislative branch** Government body that is authorized to pass federal laws/legislation, comprised of the House of Commons and the Senate.

\*These terms and concepts are defined in the *Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies* (2007), Grade 9 (p. 10).

### *Learning Sequence 1*

The concept of **justice** is closely connected to the concept of fairness as well as the administration of laws.

The concept of **injustice** can include a lack of justice and equity, violations of rights, wrongs and unfair behaviours or conditions.

**Democracy** happens when citizens have a say in decisions and in their **governance**, or the ways that governments organize themselves in order to make decisions or accomplish goals.

The participation of citizens in their government and decision-making is considered by many to be a **responsibility**, or expectation, of citizenship.

Our laws are based on our **democratic values**, which include equality, respect, freedoms, peace, and law and order.

### *Learning Sequence 2*

Although obeying the law is **mandatory**, or required, and there are laws to protect heritage, the environment and freedom of expression, as well as try to prevent discrimination and injustice, there are no laws that make voting and helping others in the community mandatory.

The participation of **electors**, or those eligible to vote, as well as the results of their vote, can send important messages to and about government.

Many people find it rewarding to make sure that they are informed about **public issues**, which are issues that concern society.

In Alberta, the **electoral process**, or the steps and actions involved in an election, is run by an organization called Elections Alberta.

Most places in North America and across the world have **campaign finance legislation**, or legislation that deals with the impact of money on elections and public policy.

In Alberta, the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* is a law that maintains the accountability of candidates and those who run the electoral process. It does this through rules that provide contribution limits and require the **disclosure**, or making public, of contributions that individuals or groups make to political parties and their campaigns during an election. **Public transparency** is another term that is used to describe the disclosure of political financing.

In Alberta, there are different financial requirements during campaign periods and for non-election years that involve political parties, candidates and **constituency associations**, which are volunteer organizations that handle the activities of a political party in an electoral division.

### Learning Sequence 3

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is founded on the rule of law and **entrenches**, or guarantees, rights and freedoms in Canada's Constitution.

The *Charter* is, in some respects, Canada's most important law because it can **invalidate**, or take away the legality of, any laws that are inconsistent with it.

For more than 20 years, Canadian courts have made more than 300 decisions in which they **invoke**, or reference, the *Charter* to justify a change to Canadian laws.

Our judicial system is **bijudicial**. This means it is based on two systems of law: civil law from the French and common law from the English.

Canadian **laws** are written rules that provide guidelines for people in society.

Laws were based on **habeas corpus**, the right of a person being detained by the authorities to be brought in front of a judge to see if the detention is valid.

Canada is a **representative democracy**, which means that every citizen has the power to express their opinions and be represented in government.

It also means that **residents**, people who live in Canada whether or not they are citizens, have the same rights.

Canada's system of representative democracy is based on **principles**, or important values and ideas, which are hundreds of years old.

**Collectively**, or taken all together, election results can send a message to politicians, political parties and the public, letting them know what positions and points of view are supported by the majority.

Representatives are chosen through the single member plurality system, often called "**first-past-the-post**." In other words, the candidate winning the majority of votes in an electoral division is the winner, even if he or she received less than 50% of the "**popular vote**," which is the total number of votes cast.

Voters who are not on the list of electors must provide identification to prove who they are, and register at the **polling station**, the place where they will vote, by completing an oath.

In some areas, Elections Alberta will conduct an **enumeration**, or a door-to-door canvass to register eligible voters.

In a provincial election, each **electoral division** must elect a representative. In order to vote, each eligible voter must **register**, or identify themselves by adding their name to the List of Electors. Voting takes place in **polling places** within each **polling subdivision**.



## ■ Introduction & Class Action Project

This introductory section is designed to develop and support **selected** learning outcomes from the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies.

### ■ Advance Planning

- Start to collect media sources that students can use to explore examples related to democracy, levels of government and citizen participation.
- Have students use a notebook, binder or file folder to start a **learning log**. Encourage students to use their learning logs to reflect on what they have learned about democracy, elections and social participation.
- Create a portfolio for the **class action project** students will start in this introductory section.
- Set aside a space to display posters with inquiry questions and strategies for participation in communities and with government.



### Learning Log

Throughout the student resources, **learning log** questions are provided that encourage students to make personal connections and reflect on their learning.

*An introduction to participation  
and the impact of taking action*

## Make It Matter



Students decide on a class project to implement.

- **Plan It** (pp. 124-125)

## MAKE IT MATTER

*Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?*

This section introduces an overarching issue to students. The overarching issue provides a context for the entire inquiry presented in this resource. Students explore examples of ways that youth can take a stand on issues and questions that are of importance to them. They decide on a **class action project** that they believe would make a difference in their school or community.



### Prepare

#### Student Resource

- Student Resource I-1: Make It Matter (pp. 23-26)

#### Graphic Organizer

- T-Chart (p. 112)

#### *Build the Vote! An Election Simulation*

- A **Ballot Template** is provided in this resource.



**2 to 4 50-minute class periods**

# MAKE IT MATTER

*Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?*

## Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?</b></p> <p>An introduction to participation and the effects of taking action</p>	<p><b>9.1.3</b> appreciate how emerging issues impact quality of life, citizenship and identity in Canada (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.4</b> examine the structure of Canada’s federal political system by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do political and legislative processes meet the needs of all Canadians? (PADM, C)</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.1</b> develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue</li> <li>• generate creative ideas and strategies in individual and group activities</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.4</b> demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• propose and apply strategies or options to solve problems and deal with issues</li> <li>• propose and apply new ideas and strategies, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to problem solving and decision making</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.5</b> demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate leadership in groups, where appropriate, to achieve consensus and resolve conflicts peacefully and equitably</li> <li>• demonstrate a positive attitude regarding the needs and perspectives of others</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.6</b> develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop leadership skills by assuming specific roles and responsibilities in organizations, projects and events within their community</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.7</b> apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect on changes of perspective or opinion based on information gathered and research conducted</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.8</b> demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use skills of informal debate to persuasively express differing viewpoints regarding an issue</li> <li>• elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and diverse points of view presented in discussions</li> <li>• make reasoned comments relating to the topic of discussion</li> <li>• listen to others to understand their perspectives</li> </ul>

**C** Citizenship

**LPP** The Land: Places and People

**CC** Culture and Community

**I** Identity

**GC** Global Connections

**PADM** Power, Authority and Decision Making

**ER** Economics and Resources

**TCC** Time, Continuity and Change

Selected curriculum outcomes from Alberta’s Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Program of Studies are infused throughout the Social Studies Program of Studies and are indicated by this symbol ▶.



## Assess & Reflect

The learning outcomes in this introductory section are developed in more depth in the learning sequences. It is recommended that students be assessed as they move further into their inquiries, rather than completing formal assessments at this stage.

## MAKE IT MATTER

*Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?*

### Teaching and Learning Activities

#### ① Make It Matter

The development of personal beliefs in the ability to take action and bring about change is an important aspect of participatory citizenship. Students should be encouraged to consider ways that their actions can result in change and make a difference. They can then be encouraged to consider how participating as a voter is also a means of bringing about change.

- Provide students with **Student Resource I-1: Make It Matter (pp. 23-26)**. Read the articles with students.
- Provide students with a graphic organizer such as a **T-Chart (p. 112)**. Ask students to use the first column of the T-Chart to provide examples of injustices that they believe exist in society. Discuss ideas as a class. (*Consider discussing the ideas of both justice and injustice with students. The concept of justice is closely connected to the concept of fairness as well as the administration of laws. The concept of injustice can include a lack of justice and equity, violations of rights, wrongs and unfair behaviours or conditions.*)
- Use the second column of the T-Chart to brainstorm a list of ways that people could address these injustices.

Injustices	Actions that Address Injustices

### Differentiate



Students can be provided with different structures in which they brainstorm ideas and examples:

- Brainstorm individually, then share and compare answers with a partner.
- Brainstorm with a partner or a small group, taking turns contributing ideas and then comparing and compiling ideas and responses.
- In groups, use a strategy such as a board share. In a **board share** structure, groups brainstorm responses and ideas. A group recorder continually adds the group's ideas to the board.
- As a whole class, use **stand and share**. In this structure, all students stand. Once they have contributed an idea and it is recorded on chart paper or the board, they sit down. If another student contributes their idea, they can also sit. This strategy can be used to provide students with practice in sharing their ideas with the whole class, without feeling uncomfortable if someone repeats their ideas. They are also encouraged to think of multiple examples when brainstorming.



### Find Out More

If time permits, consider having students spend some time doing Internet or media research to find additional examples of injustices and actions that have been taken to address them.

- Ask students to categorize their examples by considering questions such as the following:
  - ➔ Are there different types or “levels” of injustice? Is there a difference between individual and collective injustices? What is this difference?
  - ➔ What actions do you think are most acceptable to society in bringing about change?
  - ➔ What actions do **you** think are most effective in bringing about change?
  - ➔ Is there a difference between what is “acceptable” and what is “effective?” (*Students may bring a variety of perspectives to this question. They may have identified more “traditional” types of political or social*

*action as being acceptable – talking to a political representative, participating in community meetings, participating with a political party or writing letters to local media. Students may have varying perceptions of the effectiveness of these traditional actions. Students may also tend to identify “non-traditional” forms of action as being more effective – engaging in forms of protest, such as boycotting or demonstration, joining an interest group or supporting a non-governmental organization (NGO). Encourage students to explore the differences between “traditional” and “non-traditional” forms of action.)*

- Ask students what they consider to be the government’s role in addressing injustices and unfairness in society. Should the government address injustices and unfairness? Should the government take action on injustice and unfairness? Do they already? How?
- Discuss and list injustices that students believe they can impact or change. Have students analyze these initial ideas, using questions such as the following:
  - ➔ What types of change are possible in the short term?
  - ➔ What types of changes could take longer?
  - ➔ What changes involve personal or group actions? What are some examples of personal and group actions?
  - ➔ What changes have challenges associated with them? What are these challenges?

The T-Chart graphic organizer can also be used to have students analyze the changes they see a need for and the potential effects and challenges. *(Encourage students to consider the criteria that could be used to evaluate how successful, challenging, realistic or unrealistic some changes may be. Consider why some ideas for change can be challenging or unrealistic and how criteria should be applied in deciding what types of actions will be effective in bringing about change.)*

- Work with the class to prioritize their ideas for change and action. Make a decision about how to select a project that the class can work on throughout the inquiry in this resource.
- Ask students to identify examples of injustices or challenges in the school or community. Use a consensus building process to decide on a project to work together on as a class that can address an injustice or challenge. The class action projects should address a relevant area of concern to students in their own schools or communities, but may include issues such as:
  - ➔ An environmental problem or challenge in the community
  - ➔ Incidents of bullying in the school or community
  - ➔ Rules that may be perceived to be unfair, such as curfews
  - ➔ Banning of junk food or bottled water in schools
  - ➔ New developments in the community
  - ➔ Community awareness of poverty or homelessness
  - ➔ Health or fitness issues.



## Share

One method that can be used to make a decision about a class project is a classroom vote. Once ideas are prioritized, a ballot can be filled out with the top choices. A **Ballot Template** is provided in *Build the Vote! An Election Simulation*. This activity also provides an opportunity to introduce the electoral system to students. Provide a basic introduction to how voting works and the idea that decisions are made by what the majority decides.

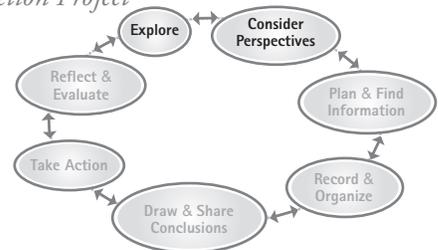
Although these issues are not associated directly with the electoral process, they provide a valuable connection to the idea of participation in a democracy and can often be related to, or affected by, governments and legislation. As students learn about government and democracy through the learning sequences, they should be encouraged to consider the connections between different forms of social participation, including voting.

- Establish project groups of four or five students and negotiate each group's responsibilities with the class. Discuss how to ensure that the project is doable within the time frame established to work on it. There are a variety of approaches that can be used to establish group responsibilities:
  - ➔ Ask each group to complete the same tasks and then compare and combine results as a class before taking the next step. Make the decision to move forward with the project as a class.
  - ➔ Establish separate responsibilities for each group. For example, have each group explore different issues, perspectives or opinions associated with the project.
- Ask students to make a commitment to work on the class action project throughout this unit of study. Discuss ideas for continuing the project throughout the year, or brainstorm examples of additional strategies that can be used to continue involvement in the project. Establish realistic goals and desired results for the project with the class.
- The ***Make It Matter*** icon at the end of each learning sequence in this resource provides additional suggestions for implementing the class action project throughout this unit. However, the scope of the project may necessitate its continuance throughout the school year. The project can be implemented by:
  - ➔ Allocating one class period every week to have students work on the class action project.
  - ➔ Dedicating two or three classes every few weeks to complete a stage in the class action project. These stages can correlate with the suggestions and planning templates referenced in Learning Sequences 1 to 4.
  - ➔ Establishing a schedule for project groups to work on the class action project once every one or two weeks during lunch or after school. Each group may be asked to work on the project on a rotating basis. This may also necessitate making participation in the class action project an optional component of this unit.
- Create a class poster or allocate bulletin board space to identify and describe the challenge or injustice that students are taking on as their class action project. Students can be asked to add mini progress reports to the poster or bulletin board to update their progress and results.



### **Make It Matter** - *Class Action Project*

- Invite each project group to use **Plan It (pp. 124-125)** to organize and create a project plan. This student resource asks students to describe the project goals and group responsibilities.





Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?

## ■ I-1 Make It Matter

Each of these events or conditions sparked action from individuals and groups at different times during the history of Canada and the United States. What events or conditions spark reactions and actions of people today?

Children often started working from the age of 7, spending 12 to 18 hours a day, 6 days a week, in factories and mines. It was not until the mid-**1800s** that laws started to pass restricting child labour in both Canada and the United States.

In **1885**, the government passed the *Chinese Immigration Act*, which established a head tax of \$50 on every Chinese person entering Canada. In 1903, this was increased to \$500.

**1914** The Supreme Court of Canada upheld a Saskatchewan law that prohibited Chinese businesses from hiring white women. Ontario passed a law forbidding "Oriental" persons from employing white females.

It was not until **1920**, with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment, that women obtained the right to vote in national elections in the United States.

During World War II from **1939–1945**, Canada restricted immigration of Jewish refugees, despite the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany. Canada accepted fewer than 5 000 Jews from 1933–1945. In 1939, a ship carrying 1 000 Jewish refugees was refused entry and forced to return to Germany. Under the *War Measures Act*, over 600 Italians as well as over 800 Germans and Austrians were sent to work camps as enemy aliens in 23 camps across the country.

◀ In **1884**, Aboriginal potlatches were made illegal under the *Indian Act*.

◀ **1916** The Manitoba Government abolished bilingual instruction. Not until 1963 was French language instruction officially authorized in all grades in Manitoba.

◀ **1917** The *Wartimes Elections Act* excluded some minorities, including Ukrainians and Germans, from voting.

◀ **1927** *The Indian Act* was amended to make it illegal for First Nations to raise money or hire a lawyer for land claims, therefore blocking effective political court action.

◀ Racially segregated schools and public facilities were the law in many parts of the United States until Oliver Brown, a railroad worker, sued the Topeka, Kansas board of education in **1951**. His daughter had been barred from attending a public school in her neighbourhood because she was African American.

## Find Out More



Find out about other young people who acted on something that mattered to them. Visit these websites:

The Ladybug Foundation  
[www.ladybugfoundation.ca](http://www.ladybugfoundation.ca)

Free the Children  
[www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com)

## Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?

There can be a lot of different answers to this question – more than just a simple “yes” or “no.” When people think about opportunities to participate, they may consider a number of different options – what options there are to participate, how much people contribute to their communities, opportunities to interact with different individuals or groups or how issues like bullying or homelessness can prevent some from participating in society.

Often, elections and voting are associated with citizen participation. Elections, and the right to vote, are important aspects of democracy. The results of elections can affect many aspects of society, including the opportunities that individuals and groups have to participate. You’ll explore why and how in your inquiries, and consider whether those opportunities are fair and equal for everyone.

Youth and children can’t vote, so how do they get a say? How can they make sure that their ideas and concerns are heard? Even though youth cannot vote, they can participate in society in a number of ways. They can provide their opinions in public forums such as the media and the Internet. They can participate in youth groups and join political organizations. They can interact with different levels of government to ensure that youth voices are heard on issues that affect them.

“PICKERING -- From shirts to scarves to sticky notes taped to their shoes, students at a Pickering elementary school went pink on Wednesday as part of an anti-bullying campaign that’s spreading around the world.

The students at Altona Forest Public School were inspired by what happened this September at Central Kings Rural High School in Nova Scotia.

When a Grade 9 student was bullied because he wore a pink shirt to school, Grade 12s David Shepherd and Travis Price at the Nova Scotia school decided to do something about it. They went out and bought 50 pink shirts and tank tops to pass out to their classmates and messaged their friends, asking them to wear pink to school the next day. Hundreds of students showed up wearing pink, about half the school, sending a strong anti-bullying message and creating what the boys dubbed a sea of pink.

Their action drew international media attention and many schools, like Altona Forest, decided to hold their own pink days.

“It’s so important to bring real life, current events into the classroom. This is something that happened this year in Canada,” said Grade 6 teacher Paula Mbonda whose class organized the theme day.

“We’re trying to stop bullying at our school and we’re going to be like the kids in Nova Scotia,” said Grade 6 student Nick Taskas, adding the pink shirt he was wearing was his own and he has no problems wearing it to school.

Classmate Keziah Scott said she tries to stop bullying when she sees it.

“We were hoping it would carry through the rest of the year because I personally see a lot of bullying going on outside and in the play yard,” she said.

The Grade 6s made a fundraiser out of it for their class trip by asking students to donate \$1 if they wore pink. The students spread the word in a variety of ways including announcements, personalized labels for everyone’s agenda reminding them of the event and a class blog. ”

*Sea of pink spreads to Pickering: Students take a stand against bullying* (December 01, 2007). Durham: [newsdurhamregion.com](http://newsdurhamregion.com) website.  
<http://newsdurhamregion.com/news/Education/article/90040>.



## What about you?

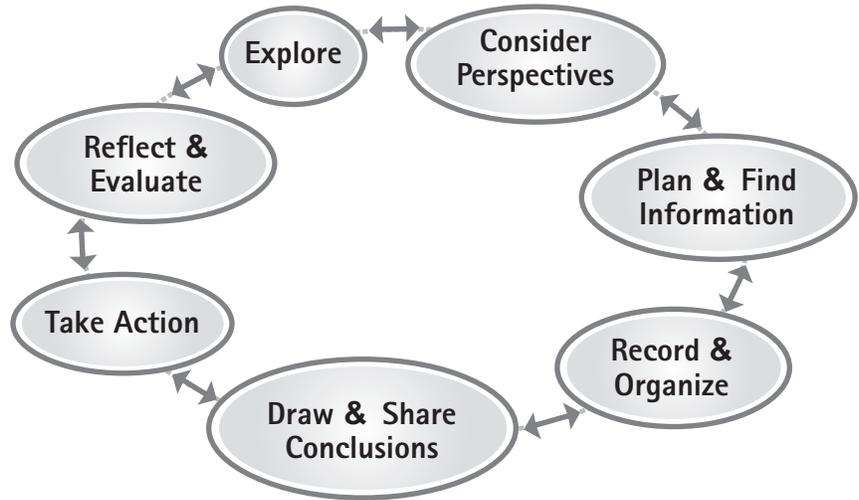
What matters to you? Brainstorm ideas that represent the people, places, ideas, issues or events that are important to you.

What do you think needs changing? Make another list of your ideas.

What do you think you could do about the things that need changing?



Making a decision to take action involves the inquiry process. As you plan how you can "make it matter" in your home, school or community, you will use a model for inquiry. What do each of the steps of the inquiry model involve?



Explore

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Consider Perspectives

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Plan and Find Information

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Record and Organize

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Draw and Share Conclusions

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Take Action

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Reflect and Evaluate

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## ■ Learning Sequences

The four activity sequences that follow are designed to develop and support **selected** learning outcomes from the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies. **Select from those activities that best meet the needs of your students.**

### ■ Advance Planning

- Start to collect media sources that students can use to explore examples related to democracy, rights, governance and participation in society.
- Identify websites that students can use to research information about democracy, rights, elections, voting and social action.
- Set aside bulletin board space for group projects that students complete in this learning sequence.
- Contact Elections Alberta through the contact information on this page to request the participation of a Returning Officer. Invite him or her to visit the class to view student work at the end of the learning sequence activities.



### Share

The *Building Future Voters Returning Officers' Resource* encourages Returning Officers to interact and work with students in the classroom. Involving Returning Officers with your students provides an authentic context in which students can develop research and inquiry skills and share learning.

#### **Elections Alberta**

Suite 100, 11510 Kingsway NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5G 2Y5

#### Office Hours:

Monday through Friday

8:15 a.m. to 12 noon;

1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tel: 780-427-7191

Fax: 780-422-2900

Other locations in the province can call toll free by dialing 310-0000 then dial 780-427-7191

#### Online Booking Form:

[www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca),

under the *Education* tab.

*An exploration of youth perspectives on democracy, government and participation*

## Make It Matter



Students work with their project groups to research and explore information that will support their **class action project**.

- **Get Informed** (pp. 126-127)

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

*What does government have to do with democracy?*

This learning sequence encourages students to explore understandings and conceptions of democracy in Canada, and the organization and responsibilities of Canadian governments. Students review what they know and investigate what they believe is most important in a democracy.



### Prepare

#### Student Resources

- Student Resource 1-1: Democracy Enacted (pp. 39-41)
- Student Resource 1-2: Government and Democracy (pp. 42-44)

#### Graphic Organizers

- KWHL Chart (p. 113)
- Continuum (p. 114)
- Retrieval Chart (p. 115)
- Sphere of Influence Chart (p. 116)



**4 to 8 50-minute class periods**



**Teacher Background 1** (pp. 96-97) provides background information that you may find useful in supporting students' learning.

# LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

*What does government have to do with democracy?*

## Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p><b><i>What does government have to do with democracy?</i></b></p> <p>An exploration of youth perspectives on democracy, government and participation</p>	<p><b>9.1.2</b> appreciate the various effects of government policies on citizenship and on Canadian society (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.3</b> appreciate how emerging issues impact quality of life, citizenship and identity in Canada (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.4</b> examine the structure of Canada’s federal political system by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (8) To what extent do political and legislative processes meet the needs of all Canadians? (PADM, C)</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.1</b> develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (4) re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue</li> <li>• (5) generate creative ideas and strategies in individual and group activities</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.4</b> demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (3) propose and apply strategies or options to solve problems and deal with issues</li> <li>• (4) propose and apply new ideas and strategies, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to problem solving and decision making</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.7</b> apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) reflect on changes of perspective or opinion based on information gathered and research conducted</li> <li>• (2) integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue</li> <li>• (3) develop a position supported by information gathered during research</li> <li>• (4) draw conclusions based upon research and evidence</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.8</b> demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration</li> <li>• (3) elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and diverse points of view presented in discussions</li> <li>• (4) make reasoned comments relating to the topic of discussion</li> <li>• (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives</li> </ul>

**C** Citizenship

**LPP** The Land: Places and People

**CC** Culture and Community

**I** Identity

**GC** Global Connections

**PADM** Power, Authority and Decision Making

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# LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

*What does government have to do with democracy?*



## Checklist

Criteria	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
<b>Students provide evidence of their learning as they:</b>			
Listen and respond respectfully to demonstrate appreciation of the effect of government policies (9.1.2; 9.S.8.5)			
Value the impact of issues on quality of life, citizenship and identity (9.1.3)			
Identify examples and effects of legislative processes and citizenship participation (9.1.4.8)			
Analyze and compare structures and functions of different levels of government (9.1.4.8; 9.S.7.2)			
Express, support and reflect on personal opinions (9.S.1.4; 9.S.7.1)			
Develop, express and support a position with evidence, examples and perspectives (9.S.4.4; 9.S.7.2; 9.S.7.3)			
Combine and compare information to develop conclusions and propose solutions (9.S.4.3; 9.S.7.4)			
Discuss and share creative and original ideas with others (9.S.1.5; 9.S.8.4)			
Communicate with others to discuss and solve issue-related problems (9.S.4.4; 9.S.8.1; 9.S.8.3)			



# LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

*What does government have to do with democracy?*



## Rubric

Level Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Proficient	2 Adequate	1 Limited *	Insufficient / Blank *
<b>Identifies examples and effects of legislative processes and citizenship participation</b> (9.1.4.8)	Applies <b>significant</b> and <b>thorough</b> examples that reflect effects of legislative processes and citizenship participation.	Applies <b>specific</b> and <b>detailed</b> examples that reflect effects of legislative processes and citizenship participation.	Applies <b>general</b> and <b>partial</b> examples that reflect effects of legislative processes and citizenship participation.	Applies <b>vague</b> and <b>sketchy</b> examples that reflect effects of legislative processes and citizenship participation.	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.
<b>Develops, expresses and supports a position with evidence, examples and perspectives</b> (9.S.4.4; 9.S.7.2; 9.S.7.3)	Provides <b>compelling</b> support for position.	Provides <b>convincing</b> support for position.	Provides <b>simplistic</b> support for position.	Provides <b>minimal</b> support for position.	
<b>Discusses and shares creative and original ideas with others</b> (9.S.1.5; 9.S.8.4)	Shares <b>insightful</b> ideas and <b>interrelated</b> examples.	Shares <b>comprehensive</b> ideas and <b>relevant</b> examples.	Shares <b>basic</b> ideas and <b>general</b> examples.	Shares <b>unconnected</b> ideas and <b>trivial</b> examples.	
<b>Communicates with others to discuss and solve issue-related problems</b> (9.S.4.4; 9.S.8.1; 9.S.8.3)	Communicates information in an <b>effective</b> manner that <b>engages</b> others.	Communicates information in a <b>purposeful</b> manner that <b>interests</b> others.	Communicates information in a <b>straightforward</b> manner that <b>generally holds the attention</b> of others.	Communicates information in an <b>ineffective</b> manner that <b>does not sustain the attention</b> of others.	

\* When work is judged to be limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

*What does government have to do with democracy?*

### Teaching and Learning Activities

#### 1 Democracy Enacted

Democracy is an abstract concept and one that is shaped by different perspectives, often affected by individuals' sense of belonging and place. Students will have explored meanings of democracy in previous grade levels, including the significance and importance of the electoral process. They extend these understandings to the organization and responsibilities of government.

- Create a **word splash** on the board, recording terms connected with democracy and the electoral process, such as:
  - Democratic
  - Government
  - Vote
  - Election
  - Rights
  - Equity
  - Freedoms
  - Responsibility
  - Politics
  - Transparency
  - Accountability.

These terms are also provided on the first page of **Student Resource 1-1: Democracy Enacted (pp. 39-41)**. After students have explored the introductory ideas in the student resource, ask them to work individually and write a paragraph, using these terms, constructing an initial response to the question: *What does government have to do with democracy?*

#### Did You Know

“Today’s young adults are less likely to join political parties, but they do join non-governmental organizations. Many believe in protest politics and consumer activism, not in status quo politics. They are, however, less likely to vote than young adults in the past and many do not plan to start voting. But (and this is a big but) they tend to be less cynical than the Baby Boomers. Many retain a temperament for democracy, but express their civic commitment in different ways.... This shift is often mistaken for apathy....”

Bristow, Jason. (March 2008). *The Next West Generation: Young Adults, Identity and Democracy*. Calgary: Canada West Foundation (p. 3).



#### Differentiate

A **word splash** activity supports vocabulary and conceptual understandings. It can also be used to support struggling or reluctant readers by having them create a context in which the vocabulary is used. A word splash is a list of terms and concepts, randomly “splashed” on paper or the board that students are encouraged to use in a piece of writing.

Discussion, inquiry or research questions can be introduced with students in a number of ways:

- A **think-pair-share** strategy asks students to think individually about their response, share with a partner, and then discuss with a small group or the whole class.
- A **KWHL Chart** (What I Know; What I Want to Know; How I Will Find Out; What I Learned) provides students with the opportunity to identify prior knowledge and understandings, questions they have, how they could research those questions and later, reflect on what they have learned. Use the graphic organizer for a **KWHL Chart (p. 113)**.
- Students can brainstorm research questions that come to mind when they are presented with an inquiry question. Each research question can be placed on a sheet of chart paper and posted in the classroom. Students, in pairs or small groups, can visit each chart and record written responses and ideas below each question. The responses should then be discussed as a class.

## Differentiate



This activity can be limited to five to ten minutes or it can take an entire class period. To explore the statements in more depth, ask each pair to share a summary statement about their differing positions on each statement with the class.

If technology such as *Senteo Clickers* is available, it can be effectively used for this activity. A software application, such as *Survey Monkey*, can also be used to have students use the statements to create and administer a survey and compare results.

## ② Perspectives on Democratic Participation

The extent to which youth perspectives and opinions are heard, particularly during elections, is a factor that is often attributed to youth apathy and disinterest in the electoral process. However, some recent research is indicating that this is a misconception. Students explore ideas and attitudes toward government, elections and voting and explore if and how government affects their lives.

- Have each student create five cards with the following phrases on them. Students can also be provided with differently coloured index cards, or create each statement on an index card.
  1. Strongly agree
  2. Agree
  3. Neutral or not sure
  4. Disagree
  5. Strongly disagree
- Read each of the statements that follow out loud, one by one. Have students indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement by holding up the appropriate card. At various points, ask students to find a classmate with a different response than their own and discuss for one or two minutes why they feel the way they do.

The government is accountable to the public.

The media can have a negative influence on a candidate's image during an election.

The messages in the media can influence people's decisions.

The government stays true to its promises.

The government cares about what youth have to say.

Voting is a responsibility and a right. Everyone of voting age should exercise their right to vote.

Elections are fair and impartial.

It doesn't matter who gets elected – things never change.

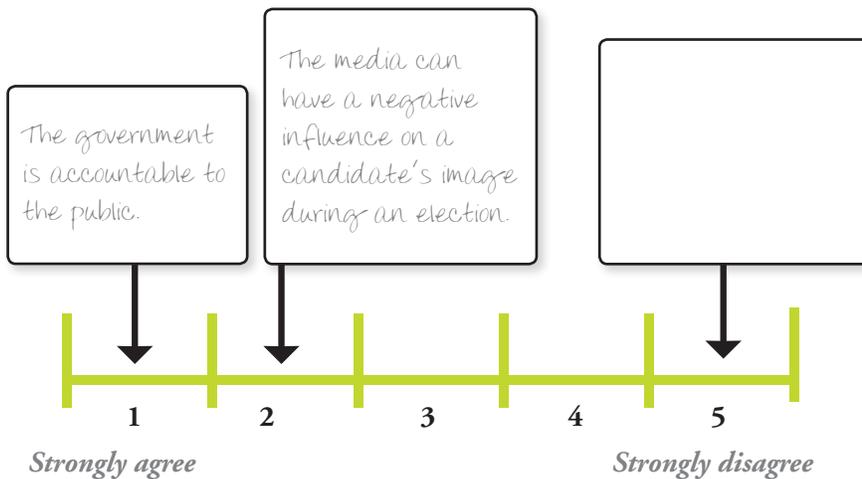
If you belong to a political party, you have to believe its views completely.

Voting is the best way to participate in a democracy.

The government represents everyone equally.

- Discuss and compare the extent to which students agree or disagree with the statements. Create a continuum on the board, listing the five choices across the continuum and recording the number of responses for each question. Students can also be provided with a graphic organizer, such as a **Continuum (p. 114)** to create their own. Alternatively, students can be asked to create bar graphs to tally their collective opinions.

To create a continuum, add up and average the responses to each question. Create the continuum by placing the averaged questions in the boxes along the top of the continuum line, as in the example below.



- Use the discussion to have students, either individually or with a partner, decide what they would identify as the most important elements in a democracy, from the perspective of youth.
- Provide students with **Student Resource 1-2: Government and Democracy (pp. 42-44)**. Have them work individually to respond to the activities, using graphic organizers such as a **Retrieval Chart (p. 115)** and a **Sphere of Influence Chart (p. 116)**. These activities focus on the following questions:
  - ➔ What are the three levels of government and how do their structures and functions compare?
  - ➔ What opportunities do you think there are for youth to participate with government? What opportunities do you think there **should** be for youth to participate? Is there a difference?
  - ➔ Do you think opportunities to participate with government are provided equally to everyone? Why or why not?
- Revisit the examples of injustice that students collected in the introductory learning sequence. How are these injustices associated with principles of democracy? (*Encourage students to consider how injustices are perceived to be inequitable or unfair because they contravene principles such as fairness and equity, as well as representation, rights, freedoms and participation.*)
- Provide each group with bulletin board space or poster paper to create a **graffiti wall**. Introduce the task by asking students to talk about examples of graffiti they have seen and what graffiti represents. Discuss examples of what graffiti includes – shapes, drawings, doodles, symbols, colours, story excerpts, quotations and word labels. (*Graffiti began originally in the 1960s as a form*



## Weblink

A **graffiti wall** is a strategy typically used in language arts classrooms and connected with literature studies. Adapt this strategy for social studies by centering its creation on a key concept, such as evidence of democracy. The graffiti walls can provide an opportunity to experiment with imagery and exaggeration, as well as discuss messages and modes of communication that represent popular culture.

A graffiti wall strategy emphasizes a constructivist approach to learning, as students express and negotiate understandings as they construct it. Find out more about this strategy at [www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=208](http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=208).



## Did You Know

Graffiti can be a contentious issue in communities today. Many, including the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, have launched campaigns to inform the public of the legal implications of spreading graffiti on public property, even though others consider it to be an art form. Ensure that you discuss appropriate and inappropriate venues for the creation of graffiti. Encourage students to look at the graffiti they create on their personal property – doodles on their binders, posters placed on the inside of lockers or cubbies or blackboards placed in public venues for graffiti creation. Caution students that the creation of graffiti on public property is illegal.

## Share



Have students take digital photographs of their graffiti walls.

Consider sharing them in one or more of the following ways:

- Post the photographs with captions that students write on a classroom or school website.
  - Send the photographs, with students' reflections on democracy, to local or community newsletters or newspapers.
  - Submit the photographs to be shared with other teachers and students on the Elections Alberta website. **Teaching Ideas & Student Work Submission** and **Permission** forms (pp. 133-134) are provided at the end of this resource.
  - Invite parents, community members or the Returning Officer to the classroom to view the graffiti walls and explore ideas about democracy with students.

*of identity “tagging” that individuals used to record their names in public places. It was more of a statement of identity than anything else. Graffiti that represented scenes became known as “pieces.” Today, graffiti is used to communicate messages about social or cultural issues as well as for individual expression and identity.)*

- Ask students to create their graffiti walls to communicate messages about the responsibilities of government in a democracy. *(Students may need some support initially to identify starting points. Messages may include issues relating to how the government ensures fairness or equality and deals with the influence of the media; how government actions and decisions affect individuals and groups; safeguarding of democratic principles, transparency and impartiality. However, it is important to encourage students to come up with their own conceptions of what is important in a democracy and what the responsibilities of government should, or should not, involve.)*
- Have each group present and discuss their graffiti walls. Create a master list of the concepts that are common among student groups. Discuss questions such as the following:
  - ➔ What does this “master list” tell you about what is important to youth in a democracy?
  - ➔ Which examples and evidence on the graffiti wall illustrate citizens' participation? Which examples illustrate changes that have been influenced by citizen action?
  - ➔ What evidence is there that shows the extent to which individuals have the opportunity to participate in decision-making and enact change?
- The graffiti walls can be continuously added to as students continue to explore how democracy is enacted in communities and evidenced in political processes.

## Assess & Reflect



Have students reflect on questions such as the following:

- To what extent do youth really have a say in government and the democratic system?
- Why should we be concerned about the extent to which people have equal opportunities to participate with government?



## Assess & Reflect

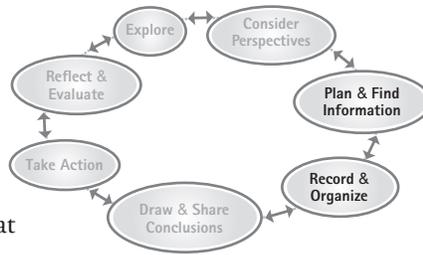
The products that students create in this activity provide an opportunity for summative assessment of students' initial understandings of the concepts of democracy, governance and social participation. Although students worked as a group to complete the graffiti walls, they demonstrate their learning in the creation of an individual product. Evaluation should be based on individual student performance and gathered from a variety of sources of evidence to make a judgement of student performance using the descriptors of the **rubric (p. 32)**:

- Use evidence from the individual work that students do in creating the Continuums, Retrieval Chart and Sphere of Influence Chart to assess individual understandings of these concepts.
- Use observation evidence collected throughout the activities of the learning sequence to consider performance of process skills and group participation.



## Make It Matter - Class Action Project

- Review the project proposal that the class selected for their project. Use **Get Informed** (pp. 126-127) to have groups research:
  - Reasons and examples that support the need for change that they have identified
  - Background information on the issue
  - Reasons and support for possible actions.
- Tell students that they will have opportunities to implement their project over the next few weeks.
- Project groups can be encouraged to explore Internet sites and various media sources, such as newspapers and community publications or watch television news programs to find information that relates to their project. Have them collect these sources in file folders or portfolios. Decide how to best organize information to continue implementing the project.







1 What does government have to do with democracy?

## 1-1 Democracy Enacted

What do these words mean to you?

# GOVERNMENT

DEMOCRATIC

Freedoms

POLITICS

equity

ELECTION

responsibility

Vote

POLITICS

rights

ACCOUNTABILITY

TRANSPARENCY

Freedoms



## Government and Citizenship

### Learning Log



What are some expectations that you have to live up to?  
How can expectations help you overcome challenges? How  
can they add pressure?

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Do you believe that a country can have expectations of its  
citizens? What might these expectations be?

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What do you think your responsibilities as a citizen are?

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Some of us may think of our government as something that was developed and put into place long ago. The truth is that our government has changed and grown as our notion of democracy has developed and our values and attitudes have influenced it.

Canada's *Constitution Act*, which was originally called the *British North America Act of 1867*, has been amended numerous times and has been shaped by how we have interpreted it in our courts, our parliament and legislatures and our communities.

There is no doubt that our understanding of our citizenship, our laws and our processes of government will continue to change over time and through the decisions of many governments. The participation of citizens in their government and decision-making is considered by many to be a **responsibility**, or expectation, of citizenship.



### Did You Know

Immigrants who wish to become Canadian citizens must take a citizenship test. The Canadian government provides a publication for people who are studying to take the citizenship test and become Canadians. This publication describes Canadian citizenship.



### Weblink

Citizenship and Immigration Canada provides information on applying to become a Canadian citizen on their website at [www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/index.asp).

“Canada is a large country with a small population. We have developed a unique federal style of government that is based on compromise and coexistence. We value our **democracy**, and every citizen is encouraged to do his or her share. Our laws are based on our **democratic values**. Canadian values include:

**Equality**—We respect everyone's rights. Everyone has the right to speak out and express ideas that others might disagree with. Governments must treat everyone with equal dignity and respect — two other fundamental Canadian values.

**Respect for cultural differences**—We try to understand and appreciate the cultures, customs and traditions of all Canadians, whether they were born in Canada or came here from another country.

**Freedom**—As Canadians, we enjoy basic freedoms, such as freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of peaceful assembly.



# 1 What does government have to do with democracy?



## 1-2 Government and Democracy

Canadians often use the term "government" to mean everything connected with making laws, collecting taxes, enforcing laws and providing public services. However, in the Canadian parliamentary system, "government" has a very limited and specific meaning:

- Government is the team of elected representatives with the support of a majority in the Parliament or a provincial or territorial Assembly.
- It provides leadership in making laws and developing policies.
- It is responsible for the government ministries that deliver the programs and services mandated by those laws.

Each of the three levels of government is organized in a similar way.

### Find Out More



Information on levels and responsibilities of government can be found in your classroom textbook. It can also be found on weblinks such as:

*The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 6th Edition, accessed at [www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf).

Information on the provinces and territories, including federal-provincial relations is available on the Canadian-Politics.com website at the weblink [www.canadian-politics.com/provinces/prov\\_assembly.shtml](http://www.canadian-politics.com/provinces/prov_assembly.shtml).

Levels of Government	Elected Officials	Some Responsibilities
Federal	Members of Parliament (MPs)	National Defence Foreign Policy Citizenship Policing
Provincial and Territorial	Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Members of the National Assembly (MNA) or Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPP) or Members of the House of Assembly (MHA)	Education Health Care Highways Policing
Municipal (Local)	Mayor or Reeve Councillors	Policing Firefighting Snow Removal Recycling Programs



How do the three levels of Canadian government compare? Each diagram in the chart shows the organization of each level of government. Create your own Retrieval Chart using the one below, or request one from your teacher.

- How would you describe and compare the organization of each level of government? Start with the organizational diagram in each column. Describe the organization and structure in the second row of the chart.
- Use other sources to research the responsibilities of each level of government. Identify three points that summarize key responsibilities of each level of government in the third row of the chart.

Federal	Provincial	Local
<p><b>Parliament of Canada</b></p> <p><b>Queen</b> Represented in Canada by the Governor General</p> <p><b>Senate*</b> Appointed on the Prime Minister's recommendation</p> <p><b>Prime Minister and Cabinet</b></p> <p><b>House of Commons</b> Elected by voters Government Members   Opposition Members</p> <p><small>*Some ministers of the government are members of the Senate.</small></p>	<p><b>Queen</b> Represented in Alberta by the Lieutenant Governor</p> <p><b>Premier and Cabinet</b></p> <p><b>Legislative Assembly</b> Elected by voters Government Members   Opposition Members</p>	<p><b>Local Authorities</b></p> <p>Municipalities   Special Areas and Improvement Districts</p> <p>School Districts   Health Authorities</p> <p>Métis Settlements*</p> <p><small>*A Métis Settlement provides services and government like a local authority.</small></p>
Organization		
Responsibilities		



What opportunities do you think there are for youth to participate with government? Use a graphic organizer such as a *Sphere of Influence Chart* to reflect on the impacts of possible actions that youth may take. Request this graphic organizer from your teacher.

## Learning Log



What opportunities do you think there **should** be for youth to participate? Is there a difference between these ideas and what you think currently exists?

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Are opportunities to participate provided equally to everyone? Why or why not?

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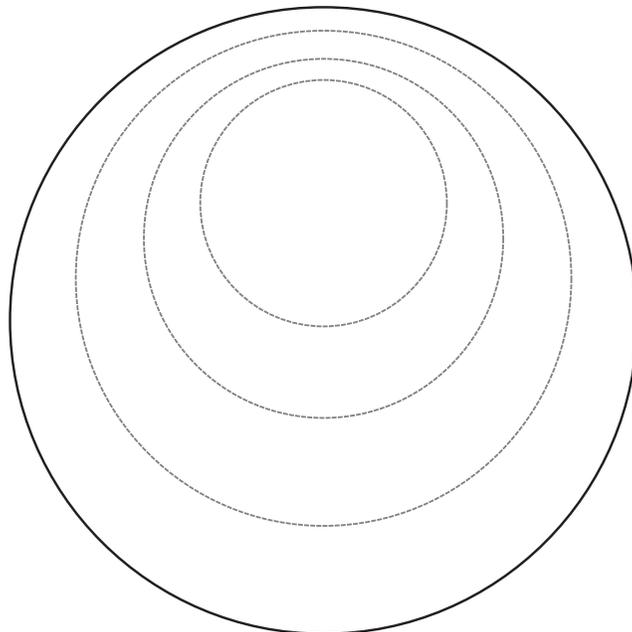


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- Start in the inner circle with the types of things that are related to the responsibilities of government and have an impact on life for youth in their communities. For example, you may identify taxes or the services and facilities that are used on a daily basis. You might say "When we make purchases, the tax we pay goes to the government" or "The government helps pay for roads and sidewalks we use every day" or "The government sets the ages at which we can drive and vote."
- In each circle of the sphere, describe actions youth may take to be involved with decision-making and daily life in a community. Place the actions in circles that are closer or further from the centre of the sphere, depending on how effective you think they may be in influencing the decisions of government. For example, you may identify talking with or writing a letter to an MP – which circle of the sphere would you put this in? You may identify an action like joining a group that is promoting lowering the voting age – which circle of the sphere would you put this in?



## ■ Learning Sequences

### LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

#### *How are government decisions and voting connected?*

The electoral process involves both political and economic considerations, including legislation and government policies that affect decision-making. Learning Sequence 2 presents an example of an issue that has political and economic implications and encourages students to explore how participation in the electoral process can affect voters' and governments' decision-making.



#### Prepare

##### Student Resources

- Student Resource 2-1: Responsibilities and Rights (pp. 53-55)
- Student Resource 2-2: Political and Economic Decision-Making (pp. 56-61)

##### Graphic Organizers

- Triple T-Chart (p. 117)
- Mind Map (p. 118)
- Continuum (p. 114)
- T-Chart (p. 112)
- Money Cards (p. 119)



5 to 8 50-minute class periods



**Teacher Backgrounder 2** (pp. 98-99) provides background information that you may find useful in supporting students' learning.

*Research into political rights and responsibilities and exploration of some economic implications of the electoral process*



#### Make It Matter

Students work with their project groups to develop strategies for communicating their project goals and for taking action.

- **Communicate and Implement** (pp. 128-129)

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

*How are government decisions and voting connected?*

### Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>How are government decisions and voting connected?</b></p> <p>Research into political rights and responsibilities and exploration of some economic implications of the electoral process</p>	<p><b>9.1.1</b> appreciate the impact of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> on rights and governance in Canada (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.6</b> assess, critically, the impact of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> on the legislative process in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (2) How does the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> support individuals in exercising their rights? (PADM, C, I)</li><li>• (4) What is the relationship between the rights guaranteed in the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> and the responsibilities of Canadian citizens? (PADM, C)</li></ul> <p><b>9.2.1</b> appreciate the values underlying economic decision making in Canada and the United States (C, ER)</p> <p><b>9.2.3</b> appreciate the impact of government decision making on quality of life (C, CC, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.2.6</b> assess, critically, the interrelationship between political decisions and economic systems by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (2) How is a political party's philosophy reflected in its platform (i.e., social programs, specific taxes, taxation model)? (ER, PADM)</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.1</b> develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (2) evaluate, critically, ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives</li><li>➤ (6) access diverse viewpoints on particular topics by using appropriate technologies</li><li>➤ (7) assemble and organize different viewpoints in order to assess their validity</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.4</b> demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (3) propose and apply strategies or options to solve problems and deal with issues</li><li>• (4) propose and apply new ideas and strategies, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to problem solving and decision making</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.7</b> apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (1) reflect on changes of perspective or opinion based on information gathered and research conducted</li><li>• (2) integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue</li><li>• (4) draw conclusions based upon research and evidence</li><li>• (6) organize and synthesize researched information</li><li>➤ (14) make connections among related, organized data, and assemble various pieces into a unified message</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.8</b> demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (3) elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and diverse points of view presented in discussions</li><li>• (4) make reasoned comments relating to the topic of discussion</li><li>• (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives</li></ul>

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
	<p><b>9.S.9</b> develop skills of media literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) examine techniques used to enhance the authority and authenticity of media messages</li> <li>• (2) examine the values, lifestyles and points of view represented in a media message</li> <li>• (3) analyze the impact of television, Internet, radio and print media on a particular current affairs issue</li> </ul>

**C** Citizenship

**LPP** The Land: Places and People

**CC** Culture and Community

**I** Identity

**GC** Global Connections

**PADM** Power, Authority and Decision Making

**ER** Economics and Resources

**TCC** Time, Continuity and Change

Selected curriculum outcomes from Alberta's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Program of Studies are infused throughout the Social Studies Program of Studies and are indicated by this symbol ➤.



## LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

*How are government decisions and voting connected?*



### Checklist

Criteria	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
<b>Students provide evidence of their learning as they:</b>			
Listen and respond respectfully to demonstrate appreciation of the effect of government policies and legislation on social and economic conditions (9.1.1; 9.2.1; 9.2.3; 9.S.8.5)			
Identify examples and effects of the ways that rights and responsibilities are protected in social and economic legislation and democratic processes (9.1.6.2; 9.1.6.4; 9.2.6.2)			
Develop, express and support a position with evidence, examples and perspectives (9.S.4.4; 9.S.7.2)			
Organize and summarize information to develop conclusions and propose ideas and solutions (9.S.4.3; 9.S.7.4; 9.S.7.6; 9.S.7.14)			
Access, organize, summarize and compare diverse viewpoints and perspectives from a variety of sources (9.S.1.2; 9.S.1.6; 9.S.1.7; 9.S.9.2)			
Express, support and reflect on development of personal opinions and perspectives (9.S.7.1)			
Discuss and share ideas and ask questions of others (9.S.8.3; 9.S.8.4)			
Access, compare and analyze diverse media messages that reflect current affairs and social or political issues (9.S.9.1; 9.S.9.3)			

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

*How are government decisions and voting connected?*

### Rubric



Criteria \ Level	4 Excellent	3 Proficient	2 Adequate	1 Limited *	Insufficient / Blank *
<b>Identifies examples and effects of the ways that rights and responsibilities are protected in social and economic legislation and democratic processes</b> (9.1.6.2; 9.1.6.4; 9.2.6.2)	Provides <b>specific and purposeful</b> analysis of the effects of social and economic legislation and democratic processes.	Provides <b>relevant</b> analysis of the effects of social and economic legislation and democratic processes.	Provides <b>general</b> analysis of the effects of social and economic legislation and democratic processes.	Provides <b>superficial</b> analysis of the effects of social and economic legislation and democratic processes.	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.
<b>Accesses, organizes, summarizes and compares diverse viewpoints and perspectives from a variety of sources</b> (9.S.1.2; 9.S.1.6; 9.S.1.7; 9.S.9.2)	Provides an <b>insightful</b> evaluation of sources.	Provides a <b>thoughtful</b> evaluation of sources.	Provides a <b>basic</b> evaluation of sources.	Provides a <b>minimal</b> evaluation of sources.	
<b>Discusses and shares ideas and asks questions of others</b> (9.S.8.3; 9.S.8.4)	Shares <b>strongly justified</b> opinions and ideas with others.	Shares <b>well supported</b> opinions and ideas with others.	Shares <b>generally supported</b> opinions and ideas with others.	Shares <b>inconsistently supported</b> opinions and ideas with others.	
<b>Accesses, compares and analyzes diverse media messages that reflect current affairs and social or political issues</b> (9.S.9.1; 9.S.9.3)	Offers an <b>insightful</b> analysis of the messages in diverse media sources.	Offers a <b>logical</b> analysis of the messages in diverse media sources.	Offers a <b>general</b> analysis of the messages in diverse media sources.	Offers a <b>vague</b> analysis of the messages in diverse media sources.	

\* When work is judged to be limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

*How are government decisions and voting connected?*

### Assess & Reflect



Use a simple checklist to assess students' demonstrations of their understanding of the difference between rights and responsibilities.

Use criteria such as the following to assess understanding:

- Able to describe multiple interpretations associated with each concept
- Able to make comparisons by describing the differences between the concepts.

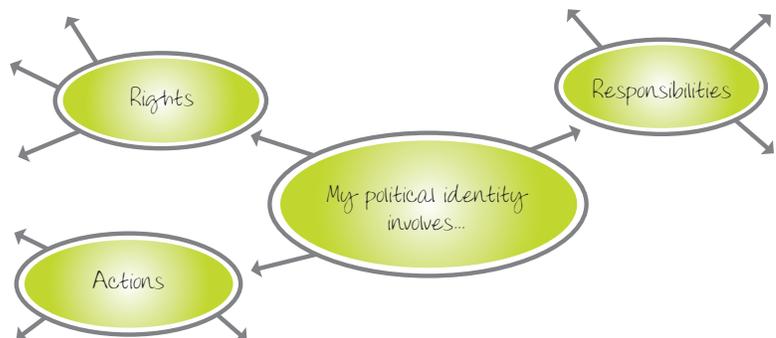
### Teaching and Learning Activities

#### 1 Responsibilities and Rights

The concept of “rights” is not always associated with rights that are guaranteed or protected by law. Some students also equate moral and ethical choices or actions with rights instead of with responsibilities. An action that is considered “right” is not always a right that is entrenched in law.

- Write phrases such as “I have the right to...” or “You have no right to...” on the board. Invite students to share examples of times they have used these phrases. How often do these phrases actually refer to rights that are protected by law? Brainstorm examples of rights that students believe are protected by law and experiences they have had that involved those rights.
- “Do rights protect opportunities to participate in a democracy?” Share this question with students and provide them with **Student Resource 2-1: Responsibilities and Rights (pp. 53-55)** and a **Triple T-Chart (p. 117)**. The student resource invites students to consider their own perspectives, as well as those of two others, regarding the following questions:
  - ➔ What do you think the most important responsibility of a citizen should be?
  - ➔ Can responsibilities be mandated? How?
  - ➔ Do you think voting is more of a right or a responsibility?
  - ➔ Should voting be mandatory? Is it appropriate to mandate something that is a right?
  - ➔ Do you think everyone has the same opportunities to get involved with decisions that the government makes?
  - ➔ What do you think? Are opportunities to participate with government and in communities protected and ensured? In what ways? Or why not?
- Encourage students to consider the relationship between political rights and responsibilities by using a graphic organizer such as a **Mind Map (p. 118)** to explore how they perceive their own political identity.

Does this student demonstrate understanding of...	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
Rights?			
Responsibilities?			



## ② Political and Economic Decision-Making

The relationship between political decision-making, economic issues and voter attitudes can impact public perceptions of the electoral process. Issues relating to equity and fairness are often involved in discussions relating to election finances. Alberta's *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* outlines the financial limits and restrictions that candidates and political parties must follow during elections and what they must disclose to the public.

- Place questions such as the following on the board, and invite students to share their initial thoughts and perspectives:
  - Do you think that participating and taking action as a citizen has financial or economic effects? What could they be?
  - Do you think financial or economic decisions made by the government can limit or encourage social action? In what ways? Why?
  - How do you think money might influence the electoral process?
- Provide students with **Student Resource 2-2: Political and Economic Decision-Making (pp. 56-61)** and two copies of the **Continuum (p. 114)**. Review the media release about the issue of oil sands development in the 2008 provincial election. Questions encourage students to consider how current issues influence voter choices as well as the actions of political parties during an election campaign. They also ask students how governments are affected when they take power after an election.

The student resource outlines the steps for conducting a campaign finance simulation, which introduces the electoral process by encouraging students to explore the financial rules and guidelines that govern electoral processes. These financial rules and guidelines affect candidates, political parties and campaign contributors.

- Ask the class to identify an issue that will be the focus for the campaign finance simulation. The issue can be related to those students identified in Learning Sequence 1 or an issue that is connected to the class action project.

Provide time for students to nominate candidates and obtain financial support from contributors. Provide students with a **T-Chart (p. 112)**. The steps for conducting the campaign are summarized in the student resource.

- First, have the class nominate five candidates. The rest of the students will be contributors.
- Distribute **Money Cards (p. 119)** randomly to students who are the contributors. Label each money card with a monetary value, using the formula below:
  - 8 cards = \$100
  - 8 cards = \$250
  - 8 cards = \$500
  - 8 cards = \$1500
  - 1 card = \$3000.



### Weblink

The *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* can be accessed on Election Alberta's website at [www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/569.htm](http://www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/569.htm).



### Share

Ask students to work in small groups to develop questions to interview a Returning Officer. Interview questions can focus on rights and responsibilities inherent in the electoral process and campaign rules and guidelines.

Interviews can be conducted in the following ways:

- Invite a Returning Officer to the classroom to be interviewed.
- Compile interview questions and have a group of students represent the class in conducting a telephone interview.
- Send interview questions by email to the Returning Officer.

Have students compile and discuss answers. How are the Returning Officer's perspectives on rights and responsibilities involved in the electoral process similar to or different from what the class has discovered and learned in their inquiry?

\*Be sensitive to the demands on a Returning Officer's time! Consider having one or a small group of students represent the class if conducting a telephone or email interview.



## Assess & Reflect

The products that students create in this learning sequence provide an opportunity for summative assessment of students' understandings of the concepts of political rights, decision-making and participation. Although students work in groups and as a class, they demonstrate their learning in the creation of individual products. Evaluation should be based on individual student performance and gathered from a variety of sources of evidence to make a judgement of student performance using the descriptors of the **rubric (p. 49)**:

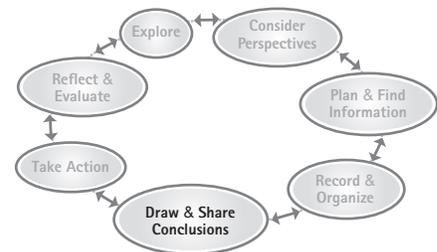
- Use evidence from the individual tasks – the survey results and reflection, mind map, continuum and fundraising analysis – to assess individual understandings of the concepts.
- Use evidence from the product that students create about participating during an election campaign.
- Use observation evidence collected throughout the activities of the learning sequence to consider performance of process skills and group participation.

- ➔ Each student should receive the same number of money cards. (For example, if you have 25 contributors in your class, each would receive eight money cards.) Each student will receive money cards that total up to different amounts.
- ➔ Ask how many students received a total of \$800 (the minimum they can receive) to spend. Ask how many received the \$3000 bill and how much his or her money cards add up to. As a class, discuss why contributors might consider contributing money to a candidate, connecting the discussion back to the issue identified earlier.
- ➔ It is now the candidate's job to persuade contributors to donate money to their campaigns. Candidates must convince contributors that they are the best representatives and should be supported with a contribution. Have candidates prepare a brief presentation for contributors. This can be done in the form of a press conference for potential campaign funders. Have contributors prepare a list of factors they consider to be most important in deciding what they will contribute to a campaign.
- ➔ Provide a set amount of time during class for candidates to meet with contributors and try to obtain contributions. Tell contributors that it is up to them to decide how they wish to contribute to the candidates.
- ➔ When all contributors have donated their money, have students regroup as a class. Count and record the amount each candidate collected. Have students respond to the questions on the student resource individually or discuss as a class.
- ➔ Ask students to work individually to construct a personal response to the questions at the end of the student resource. Analyze opportunities for participating with government decision-making during times of election campaigning.



### Make It Matter - Class Action Project

- Encourage students to consider who is important to involve in their project planning and implementation by discussing and reflecting on questions such as the following:



- ➔ How are the goals of our class project related to rights of citizens and responsibilities of government?
  - ➔ Who is important to inform about the importance and goals of the project? Are there members of the school or community who can help support the project?
  - ➔ What strategies can best be used to elicit support for the project from different individuals and groups?
- Review the research for the class project. Use **Communicate and Implement (pp. 128-129)** to identify individuals and groups who can help support the project and ways to communicate the goals and importance of the project.



## 2-1 Responsibilities and Rights

Do rights protect our opportunities to participate in a democracy?  
You decide.

“All Canadians have certain rights and responsibilities. They are based on Canadian laws, traditions and shared values.

Many of these rights are defined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which is part of Canada's Constitution. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* legally protects the basic rights and freedoms of everyone in Canada. Some of these rights and freedoms are:

- Legal rights, such as the right to a fair trial
- Equality rights, such as the right to protection against discrimination
- Mobility rights, such as the right to live and work anywhere in Canada
- Aboriginal peoples' rights
- Basic freedoms, such as freedom of thought, speech, religion and peaceful assembly. ”

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006). "What does Canadian citizenship mean?" *A Look at Canada*. Ottawa: Author (p. 38). [www.cic.gc.ca/English/pdf/pub/look.pdf](http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/pdf/pub/look.pdf).

Some citizenship rights are defined in Canadian laws. One such right is the right for citizens to be given preference for jobs in the federal government. Many of these rights and freedoms existed in earlier laws. However, with the creation of the *Charter* in 1982, they became better defined and better protected.

With these rights come responsibilities for everyone in Canada. Individual Canadians and also the levels of Canadian government have the responsibility to respect the rights and freedoms of all Canadians. However, it is important to realize that the rights of a single Canadian or a group of Canadians cannot interfere with the rights of any other. For this reason, courts must interpret the *Charter* from time to time to make sure that it is applied fairly in all situations.

## 2 How are government decisions and voting connected?



### Did You Know

#### *Oath of Citizenship*

*I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen.*

## Did You Know



To become a Canadian citizen, a person must:

- Be 18 years old or older
- Be a permanent resident of Canada
- Have lived in Canada for at least three of the four years before applying for citizenship
- Speak either English or French
  - Know Canada's history and geography
- Know about Canada's system of government and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

## Citizenship Rights

Under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Canadian citizens have the right to:

- Be candidates in federal, provincial and territorial elections
- Be educated in either official language
- Apply for a Canadian passport
- Vote in federal and provincial or territorial elections
- Enter and leave Canada freely.

Citizenship also brings responsibilities. For example, voting in elections is considered both a right and a responsibility by some.

## Citizenship Responsibilities

The publication that potential Canadian citizens can use to study for their citizenship test says that all citizens have the responsibility to:

- 
- Vote in elections
  - Help others in the community
  - Care for and protect our heritage and environment
  - Obey Canada's laws
  - Express opinions freely while respecting the rights and freedoms of others
  - Eliminate discrimination and injustice.

Although obeying the law is **mandatory**, or required and there are laws to protect heritage, the environment, and freedom of expression, as well as try to prevent discrimination and injustice, there are no laws that make voting and helping others in the community mandatory. So these are not legal responsibilities that are required of every citizen.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006). "What does Canadian citizenship mean?" *A Look at Canada*. Ottawa: Author (p. 7).  
[www.cic.gc.ca/English/pdf/pub/look.pdf](http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/pdf/pub/look.pdf).



Use a graphic organizer such as a *Triple T-Chart* to explore different perspectives on rights and responsibilities. Request this graphic organizer from your teacher. Record your own opinions in the first column. Then, find out what two other individuals think. One person you consult must be of voting age. Record their opinions in the second and third column.

	My Opinions	Person 1	Person 2
What do you think the most important responsibility of a citizen should be?			
Can responsibilities be mandated? How?			
Do you think voting is more of a right or a responsibility?			
Should voting be mandatory?			
Is it appropriate to mandate something that is a right?			
Do you think everyone has the same opportunities to get involved with decisions that the government makes?			



What do you think: Are opportunities to participate with government and in communities protected and ensured? In what ways? Or why not? Write a response in your notebook as:

- A letter to the editor
- An opinion feature for a youth newsletter
- An Internet blog.

## 2 How are government decisions and voting connected?



### 2-2 Political and Economic Decision-Making

Are you a voter? You probably are, even though you can't yet vote in local, provincial or federal elections. You have likely voted as a member of a group, with friends to try to make a choice about something or perhaps in a community meeting. The point is, you are participating and expressing your opinion when you vote.

The participation of **electors**, or those eligible to vote, as well as the results of their vote, can send important messages to and about government.

- What are some factors that you think influence the ways people vote?
- Do more people vote when there is public interest in specific issues? Do more people vote if they want to send a message to the government in power?
- Do you think that candidates may listen more to the groups that have the highest voter turnout in elections? Why or why not?

Consider this example from the 2008 provincial election in Alberta.



What does this media release tell you about the impact of government actions on the attitudes of voters?

#### Weblink



The websites in the Media Release are from the Pembina Institute website, found at [www.pembina.org](http://www.pembina.org). Their website links to the Oilsands Watch website at [www.oilsandswatch.org](http://www.oilsandswatch.org). This website contains a number of links to articles and perspectives related to oil sands development. What perspectives or biases can you find in these sources?

#### MEDIA RELEASE

Feb 26, 2008

#### Candidates' Perspectives on Oil Sands Compared with Albertan's Views

“Today, the Pembina Institute released the results of an all-candidate survey about oil sands development. Conducted from February 15 to 21, 2008, by McAllister Opinion Research, the survey compares these results with the views of a public opinion poll of Albertans that asked the same questions....”

In total, 192 candidates responded to the survey, including ... candidates representing each of the Progressive Conservative, Alberta Liberal, NDP, Green and Wildrose Alliance parties. The survey asked questions about the pace of oil sands development, the role of government in oil sands development, the management of greenhouse gas pollution, and the reclamation of oil sands projects.

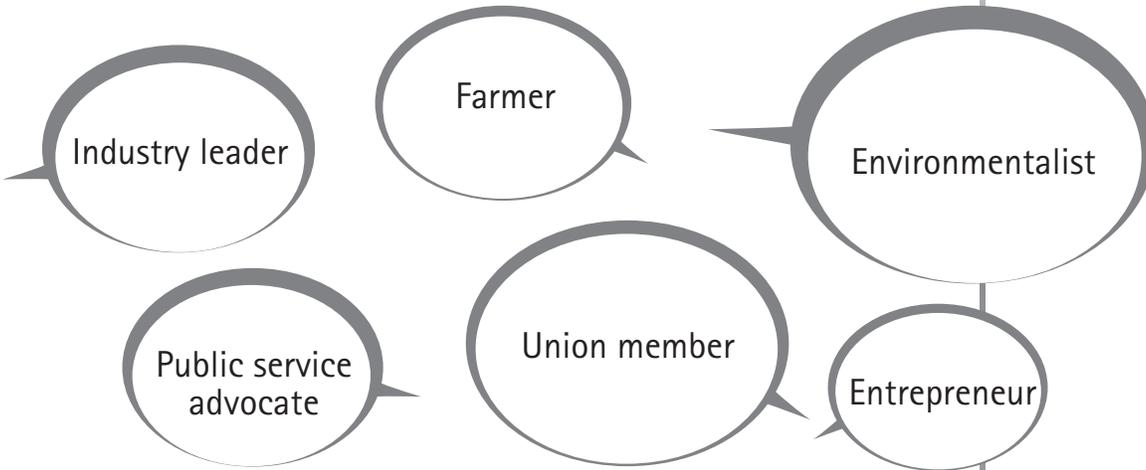
“The high candidate response rate demonstrates that many candidates see oil sands development as a significant issue and they feel compelled to share their views with the voters they are seeking to represent,” notes Simon Dyer, Oil Sands Program Director. “In April 2007 we polled 500 Albertans and asked the same questions. The results of the all-candidate survey will allow Albertans to see how closely aligned candidates are with their own views on oil sands development.”

...The complete results and a media backgrounder describing the survey results are available at [www.oilsandswatch.org/survey](http://www.oilsandswatch.org/survey). This interactive website allows Albertans to search by a candidate's name, by riding name or by postal code in order to see the responses from each of the candidates in their riding. High-resolution versions of the summary graphs are available for download at [www.oilsandswatch.org/survey](http://www.oilsandswatch.org/survey). ”

*Candidate's Perspectives Compared with Albertan's Views*. Media Release (February 26, 2008). Edmonton: The Pembina Institute. [www.oilsandswatch.org/media-release/1594](http://www.oilsandswatch.org/media-release/1594).

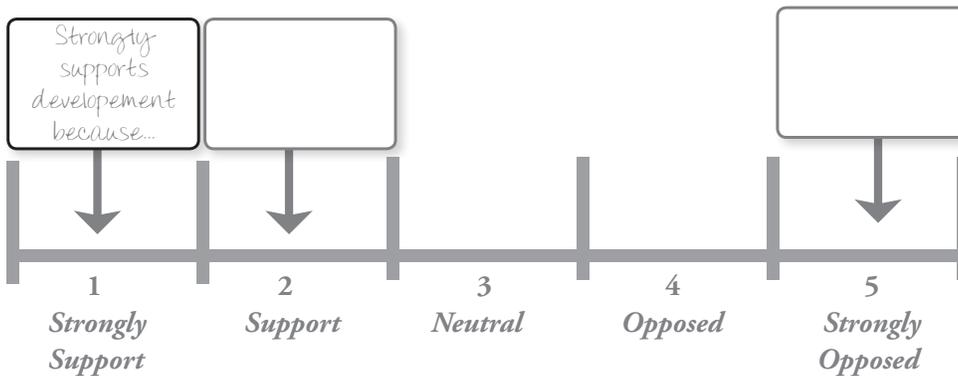


What other perspectives are involved in this issue? Find out how three of the individuals or groups identified below feel about oil sands development.

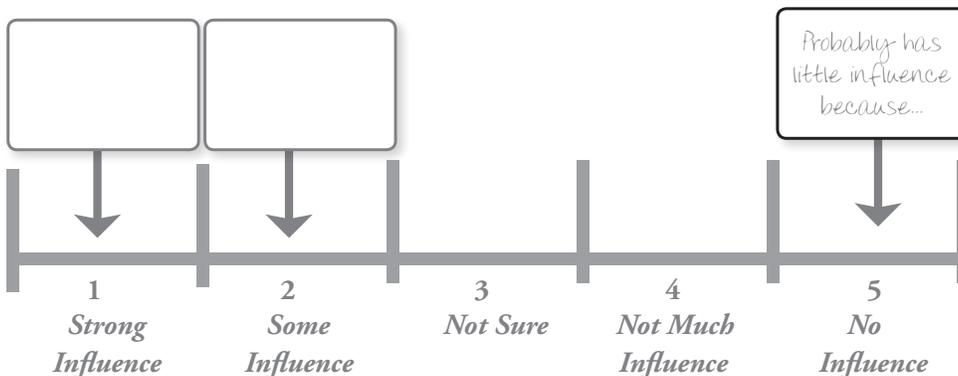


Ask your teacher for two copies of the *Continuum* graphic organizer. Place and describe the points of view of each of the three groups or individuals in the appropriate place on the first continuum. On the second continuum, place and describe the extent of the influence you think each group or individual will have on government decision-making. Use the examples of continuums on this page to help you get started.

### Support of Oil Sands Development



### Influence on Government Decision-Making



## Weblink



Election results can be found on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca).

Check the results of the 2008 provincial election. What position on oil sands development did the winning government take as part of their political platform?

Were the results of the election consistent with Albertans' position on oil sands development, according to the Pembina Institute's survey?

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## Impact of Political Involvement

Many people find it rewarding to be informed about **public issues**. They are interested in the perspectives involved and like to make the effort to find information and explore different opinions. Some people believe that being informed provides them with the knowledge they need to communicate their perspectives and opinions and influence public decision-making. Some just get involved because it gives them satisfaction to be part of the democratic process.

Some believe that lack of participation in the electoral process can have a concrete impact. For example:

- Elected representatives may gear their campaigning towards those groups that do participate more in elections. For example, seniors tend to have a higher participation rate in elections, so seniors' issues may be something that candidates focus on during an election.
- Once elected, representatives may pay more attention to those issues and groups that got them elected. If environmental or economic issues are an important issue during a campaign, the government that is elected may have made promises to develop new policies in those areas. If seniors' issues are a concern during a campaign, they may become part of the priorities of the government.

## Learning Log



If youth do not express their concerns and identify their issues, what do you think the chances would be that elected representatives will pay attention to these concerns and issues?

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## ■ The Economics of an Election

In Alberta, the **electoral process**, or the steps and actions involved in an election, is run by an organization called Elections Alberta. This organization is independent from the government. Elections Alberta makes sure that when an election happens, the following conditions are met:

- The election is open, fair and impartial.
- Voters have the necessary information to participate in the election.
- Political participants have the information and assistance to make sure they are following election rules.
- Election officers are trained to make sure elections are run properly and results are made available to people.
- Elections are evaluated to recommend any changes that could be made to improve the electoral process.

What about economic issues that relate to elections themselves? Most places in North America and across the world have **campaign finance legislation**, or legislation that deals with the impact of money on elections and public policy. This legislation is usually based on the premise that campaign spending is a significant factor in determining electoral success – in other words, getting a candidate elected.

Campaign finance legislation promotes financial equity and fairness, or creates a “more level playing field.” In Alberta, the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* is a law that maintains the accountability of candidates and those who run the electoral process. It does this through rules that provide contribution limits and require the **disclosure**, or making public, of contributions that individuals or groups make to political parties and their campaigns during an election. **Public transparency** is another term that is used to describe the disclosure of political financing.

In Alberta, there are different financial requirements during campaign periods and for non-election years that involve political parties, candidates and **constituency associations**, which are volunteer organizations that handle the activities of a political party in an electoral division. Annual reporting is the responsibility of the political party and the constituency association and is based on a calendar year. Campaign reporting is the responsibility of a political party and the candidate. It occurs in a year in which there is a provincial general election, a by-election or a Senate nominee election.



### Learning Log

Why do you think Elections Alberta is independent from the government?

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### Find Out More

Information about financial requirements for candidates and political parties can be found at [www.elections.ab.ca/efpublic/index.cfm](http://www.elections.ab.ca/efpublic/index.cfm).



Experience a fundraising campaign based on an issue that is of current importance to your class. What insights does the campaign provide about the economic aspects of an election campaign?

1. Identify and describe an issue that will be a focus of an election campaign. The issue should be something that your class agrees upon.

For this activity, you will take the role of either a candidate for election or a contributor.

- The job of the candidates will be to raise money to pay for their campaign in an election.
- The contributors will make a decision to support a candidate who they think will best represent their or their organizations' views and opinions on the issue.

2. Record the criteria for campaigning that you establish as a class. Use a Campaign Criteria *T-Chart* to record the rules and guidelines for candidates and contributors. This chart is described below.

3. Conduct the fundraising campaign.

- If you are a contributor, you will receive money cards that you will use to make your contributions. You can choose how much you will give to one or more candidates. You will be responsible for preparing a list of priorities that you will use to allocate your contributions.
- If you are a candidate, you will prepare and present a brief statement that explains why you are the best choice to receive financial support from contributors. Your statement should address where you stand on the issue. You will be asked to present your statement at a press conference to the contributors.
- You will have a set amount of time during class to distribute or collect contribution funds.

4. Analyze the results with your class and answer the Fundraising Results Analysis questions on the next page of this handout.

Criteria for Campaign Funding	Reason
1.	
2.	

Use a T-Chart like the example on the left to establish the criteria for campaign funding. Request this graphic organizer from your teacher. Consider these questions:

- Should there be limits on how much can be contributed?
- Should we limit who can contribute?
- Should there be limits on how much candidates can spend on their campaigns?
- Should the public know how much is contributed, who contributes and how much candidates spend on campaigns?



## Fundraising Results Analysis

After the fund raising campaign has been run, consider and respond to these questions:

1. Were some candidates better than others at fundraising?
2. What influenced the negotiations between candidates and contributors?
3. Do those with money to spend have an advantage?
4. What impact does campaign funding have on the outcome of an election?
5. Why do you think there are contribution limits in a campaign?
6. Is the system fair and equitable?
7. Should the government reimburse political parties and candidates for their campaign spending?



### What do you think?

- How do you think political and economic decisions made by government affect opportunities that citizens have to participate during an election campaign?
- What are these opportunities?
- Are these opportunities fair and equitable?
- How should these opportunities be communicated to others in the school or community?

Construct your response using a format from the choice board below. In your response, focus on one strategy for participating with government.



Write a letter that you would send to local media

Create a poem or lyrics to a song

Design a poster that could be displayed in the community

Create a comic strip that communicates a message

Create a collage with current media examples

Develop a 30-second radio public service announcement script



## ■ Learning Sequences

### LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

*What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?*

Democratic processes, including elections, emphasize values of equity, fairness, accountability and openness. Learning Sequence 3 encourages students to examine the right to vote in the context of age, citizenship and equitable, accessible processes. Learning Sequence 3 also provides a historical overview of voting rights.



#### Prepare

##### Student Resources

- Student Resource 3-1: Times Change (pp. 73-76)
- Student Resource 3-2: An Election Experience (pp. 77-79)

##### Graphic Organizers

- T-Chart (p. 112)
- Cause and Effect Timeline (p. 120)
- Mind Map (p. 118) or Flow Chart (p. 121)

##### *Build the Vote! An Election Simulation*

- Election simulation resources, templates, forms and directions are provided in this resource.
- An **Election Simulation Toolkit** can be ordered from Elections Alberta at the contact information provided on page 4 of this resource.



6 to 10 50-minute class periods



**Teacher Backgrounder 3** (pp. 100-105) provides background information that you may find useful in supporting students' learning.

*An exploration of the right to vote in the context of time, age, citizenship and equitable, accessible processes*



#### Make It Matter

Students explore options for implementing their class action project and plan steps and activities.

- **Plan for Action (p. 130)**

Elections Alberta's **Election Simulation Toolkit** includes the following items:

- Electoral Division Map
- Provincial Electoral Division Map
- Voting Screen
- Pencils (3)
- Paper Ballot Box Seals (3)
- Election Officer Badges
- Scrutineer Badges
- "Vote Here" sign (with arrow tip)
- Registration Officer Sign
- Poll Book (modified to include 6 pages)
- Statement of Poll (photocopy)
- Voter Template for Visually Impaired
- Guide for Scrutineers
- Guide for Polling Place Officials
- Guide for Use of the Special Ballot Poll
- Guide for the Conduct of Mobile Polls
- Guide for Candidates on the *Election Act*
- Information for Students on Provincial Elections (brochure).

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

*What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?*

### Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?</b></p> <p>An exploration of the right to vote in the context of time, age, citizenship and equitable, accessible processes</p>	<p><b>9.1.1</b> appreciate the impact of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> on rights and governance in Canada (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.4</b> examine the structure of Canada's federal political system by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (8) To what extent do political and legislative processes meet the needs of all Canadians? (PADM, C)</li></ul> <p><b>9.1.6</b> assess, critically, the impact of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> on the legislative process in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (4) What is the relationship between the rights guaranteed in the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> and the responsibilities of Canadian citizens? (PADM, C)</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.1</b> develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (4) re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.2</b> develop skills of historical thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (1) analyze selected issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a context of time and place</li><li>• (2) distinguish cause, effect, sequence and correlation in historical events and issues, including the long- and short-term causal relations</li><li>• (4) analyze the historical contexts of key events of a given time period</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.4</b> demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (3) propose and apply strategies or options to solve problems and deal with issues</li><li>• (4) propose and apply new ideas and strategies, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to problem solving and decision making</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.6</b> develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (1) develop leadership skills by assuming specific roles and responsibilities in organizations, projects and events within their community</li></ul> <p><b>9.S.7</b> apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (2) integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue</li><li>• (3) develop a position supported by information gathered during research</li><li>• (4) draw conclusions based upon research and evidence</li></ul>

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
	<p><b>9.S.8</b> demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration</li> <li>• (2) use skills of informal debate to persuasively express differing viewpoints regarding an issue</li> <li>• (3) elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and diverse points of view presented in discussions</li> <li>• (4) make reasoned comments relating to the topic of discussion</li> <li>• (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives</li> </ul>

**C** Citizenship

**LPP** The Land: Places and People

**CC** Culture and Community

**I** Identity

**GC** Global Connections

**PADM** Power, Authority and Decision Making

**ER** Economics and Resources

**TCC** Time, Continuity and Change

Selected curriculum outcomes from Alberta's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Program of Studies are infused throughout the Social Studies Program of Studies and are indicated by this symbol ➤.



## LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

*What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?*



### Checklist

Criteria	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
<b>Students provide evidence of their learning as they:</b>			
Listen and respond respectfully to demonstrate appreciation of the impact of the evolution of rights (9.1.1; 9.S.8.5)			
Identify examples and effects of legislative processes and citizenship participation (9.1.4.8)			
Apply understandings of the rights and responsibilities inherent in the electoral process (9.1.4.8; 9.1.6.4)			
Analyze context and importance and describe cause and effects of significant events (9.S.2.1; 9.S.2.2; 9.S.2.4)			
Develop, express and support a position with evidence, examples and perspectives (9.S.4.4; 9.S.7.2; 9.S.7.3)			
Communicate with others to discuss and persuasively express viewpoints on issue-related problems (9.S.4.4; 9.S.8.1; 9.S.8.2; 9.S.8.3; 9.S.8.4)			
Organize and summarize information to develop conclusions and propose ideas and solutions (9.S.4.3; 9.S.7.4)			
Express, support and reflect on personal opinions to demonstrate understandings (9.S.1.4)			
Demonstrate commitment to taking on roles and responsibilities in projects and events in the community (9.S.6.1)			

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

*What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?*



### Rubric

Criteria \ Level	4 Excellent	3 Proficient	2 Adequate	1 Limited *	Insufficient / Blank *
<b>Apply understandings of the rights and responsibilities inherent in the electoral process</b> (9.1.4.8; 9.1.6.4)	Applies <b>comprehensive</b> examples to describe rights and responsibilities involved in the electoral process.	Applies <b>thorough</b> examples to describe rights and responsibilities involved in the electoral process.	Applies <b>basic</b> examples to describe rights and responsibilities involved in the electoral process.	Applies <b>superficial</b> examples to describe rights and responsibilities involved in the electoral process.	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.
<b>Analyze context and importance and describe cause and effects of significant events</b> (9.S.2.1; 9.S.2.2; 9.S.2.4)	Provides an <b>insightful</b> analysis of cause and effect relationships involved in significant events.	Provides a <b>thoughtful</b> analysis of cause and effect relationships involved in significant events.	Provides a <b>basic</b> analysis of cause and effect relationships involved in significant events.	Provides an <b>ineffective</b> analysis of cause and effect relationships involved in significant events.	
<b>Demonstrate commitment to taking on roles and responsibilities in projects and events in the community</b> (9.S.6.1)	Formulates <b>purposeful</b> strategies and roles for taking responsibility for a project.	Formulates <b>relevant</b> strategies and roles for taking responsibility for a project.	Formulates <b>generalized</b> strategies and roles for taking responsibility for a project.	Formulates <b>superficial</b> strategies and roles for taking responsibility for a project.	
<b>Communicate with others to discuss and persuasively express viewpoints on issue-related problems</b> (9.S.4.4; 9.S.8.1; 9.S.8.2; 9.S.8.3; 9.S.8.4)	Communicates information in a <b>purposeful</b> manner that persuasively <b>engages</b> the audience.	Communicates information in a <b>memorable</b> manner that <b>interests</b> the audience.	Communicates information in a <b>straightforward</b> manner that <b>holds the attention</b> of the audience.	Communicates information in an <b>ineffective</b> manner that <b>does not sustain attention</b> of the audience.	

\* When work is judged to be limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

## Did You Know



Many 18-year-old-men bravely entered into combat for Canada in World War II. It was after this period in history that there was a movement to drop the voting age from 21 to 18.

In the 2004 federal general election, 37% of electors aged 18–24 voted.

In the 2006 general election, approximately 44% of electors in the 18–24 age group voted.

Elections Canada. *Election basics: Frequently asked questions.* Young Voters Site [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca).

## Find Out More



Elections Alberta completed a survey with the general public after the March 2008 Alberta provincial election. The results of this survey are provided in a research report entitled *Elections Alberta: Survey of Voters and Non-Voters* (July 17, 2008). This resource is available in PDF format on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca), as well as in the *Building Future Voters CD* mini-library. The survey provides information on the public's perception of voting, awareness of their rights and obligations, levels of voting participation and satisfaction with the voting process.

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

*What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?*

### Teaching and Learning Activities

#### 1 Times Change

Many political rights, including the right to vote, have not always been accessible to all citizens. Encouraging students to consider who democracy serves and who can participate is an important aspect of understanding the important connections between democracy, participatory citizenship and the electoral process.

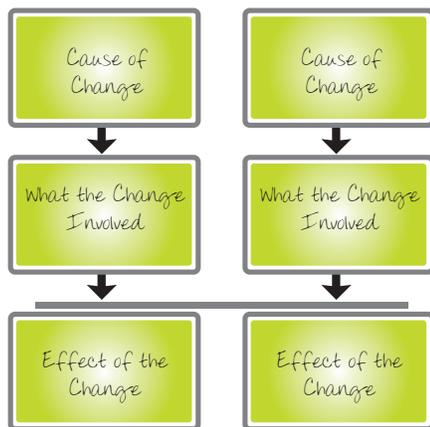
- Share the video and radio advertisement clips produced by Elections Alberta, provided on the *Building Future Voters CD*. As they watch each clip, have students identify the issue they address. (*The video and radio advertisements were created by Elections Alberta for the 2008 provincial election and targeted at potential voters. Advertisements from other provinces are also included.*)
- Use a graphic organizer such as a **T-Chart (p. 112)** and the video and radio clips to introduce discussion on why students think people choose to vote or choose not to vote in an election. Remind students that the advertisements are satirical!

Why people choose to vote	Why people choose not to vote

- Share the following questions with students in a class discussion:
  - ➔ How important do you think it is to participate in elections?
  - ➔ Who can vote today? How has the right to vote changed over time? Do you think it is still changing? Why?
  - ➔ What factors have most influenced the challenges and successes that individuals and groups experienced in obtaining rights? (*Encourage students to review what they have learned previously about historical events, people and places that relate to the development of democracy in Alberta and Canada, such as the fight for the right to vote by women's groups like the Famous 5, the importance of Confederation and the influence of the British, French and Aboriginal peoples on the ways Canadians make decisions as a society. This historical perspective is something that students will have learned in Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 Social Studies.*)
  - ➔ Do you think the concept of democracy has changed over time? In what ways? (*Encourage students to consider whether democracy is something that is "static" or whether it changes over time, in much the same way as the concept of rights has also changed. Discuss how democracy is an evolving idea that is influenced by perspectives of both individuals and groups. For example, students may be asked to revisit, from their learning in previous grade levels, how the Athenians, the Haudenosaunee, the British and the French had different views of democracy. In addition, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has also influenced Canadian democracy to be more inclusive.*)

→ Is the electoral process fair and equitable? Do you think there should be any changes to who can vote today, and how they can vote? (*Students may contribute ideas such as changes in the voting age or the use of technology in the process of voting. Post these in the classroom for reference in Learning Sequence 4.*)

- Invite students to explore the information on the **Student Resource 3-1: Times Change (pp. 73-76)**. If Internet access is available, work with partners or small groups to find additional information about events that contributed to changing understandings and laws regarding rights.
- Ask students to identify what they think are the five most influential events in the development of rights over time. Use these events to create a **Cause and Effect Timeline (p. 120)** and include one of the following elements in timeline text or visuals:
  - Quotations that represent the successes in achieving equity and representation in rights
  - Brief profiles of individuals who influenced events
  - Brief descriptions of events
  - Explanations and examples of how individual actions or events connect to the principles of democracy – fairness, equity, representation, justice
  - Examples or facsimiles of primary sources.



- Display the timelines in the classroom. Timelines can be constructed as:
  - Displays to add to students' graffiti walls
  - Three-dimensional mobiles and displayed on a wire strung across the classroom
  - A bulletin board display
  - A presentation, such as a PowerPoint display or an Internet webpage.



### Share

Timelines can be shared in different contexts, with other students, classrooms, parents or community members.

Have students add information to their graffiti walls on the electoral process, summarizing key points and issues on index cards and placing them as "callouts" or speech bubbles on the graffiti walls.



### Weblink

Student research on the history of voting rights and democracy can be structured as a **WebQuest**.

Information about creating a WebQuest, as well as examples of WebQuests, can be found on the WebQuest.Org website at <http://webquest.org/index.php>.

A **cause and effect timeline** is a graphic organizer that can be used to develop understandings of chronology and time-related concepts, as well as skills of sequencing and analysis. The timeline can include visuals as well as text.

An electronic timeline template is accessible at [www.readwritethink.org/materials/timeline/index.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/timeline/index.html).



### Assess & Reflect

Use a rating scale such as the one below to assess students' demonstration of historical thinking skills.

Does this student demonstrate ability to...	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
Describe relevance and sequence of significant events?			
Identify causes and effects of significant events?			

Ask students to individually reflect on the following question:

- What do I appreciate most about the changes that others have acted for?



Through Elections Alberta, invite a Returning Officer to participate with students in planning and holding the student election. Returning Officers can be invited to participate in a number of ways:

- Ask the Returning Officer to email or fax a Writ of Election on behalf of the Chief Electoral Officer to establish the beginning of the simulation. Discuss dates and timelines for the election simulation with the Returning Officer when you are in contact with him or her.
- Invite the Returning Officer to the classroom to provide an information session on electoral processes for the class or for students who are acting as Deputy Returning Officers and Poll Clerks.
- Invite the Returning Officer to participate with students on Polling Day. The Returning Officer can be asked to act as an observer. Discuss with students how established democracies, including Canada, often send observers to developing democracies.

## 2 An Election Experience

Experiencing the electoral process provides insight into how elections work and why they are structured and legislated the way they are. The electoral process emphasizes the importance of open, fair and impartial elections.

- Open a class discussion with questions that ask students to revisit the overarching issue: *Does everyone have fair and equitable opportunities to participate in society?*
  - ➔ What impact do you think voting really has? Is the electoral system fair and equitable for everyone?
  - ➔ Do you think election results affect the other ways that people may choose to participate in society? Why?
- Provide students with **Student Resource 3-2: An Election Experience (pp. 77-79)** and invite them to review the information on the first page. Discuss the issue of fairness and equity related to an electoral system that is based on majority decision-making.
 

Explain to students that they will be participating in an election simulation, taking on the roles of voters as well as people involved in administering the election process. This process encourages students to explore issues related to fairness and equity in the context of a classroom, multiple classrooms or a school-wide election.
- Review what students know about the electoral process and discuss questions such as the following as a class:
  - ➔ Voter registration: Why should all voters register? (*Encourage students to consider ideas such as ensuring one vote per person, fairness, making sure that only people really living in the area actually vote, etc.*)
  - ➔ Voter eligibility: Why do we establish eligibility criteria for voters? (*Students may discuss ideas that include the importance of eligibility criteria to make sure that voters are old enough to make a good decision; to protect citizen's right to vote; to ensure that voters actually live in the electoral division, etc.*)
  - ➔ The election process: Why is it important to follow the same process for each election?
- Introduce the election simulation by referring students to the information on the student resource, which guides them through questions that they will consider in planning and holding a student election. Students are encouraged to identify issues that will become a focus for the student election. The student resource provides an introduction to the election simulation.

The election simulation is provided in *Build the Vote! An Election Simulation*. This resource booklet provides templates, forms and directions for implementing an election in the classroom. Additional election materials can also be ordered from Elections Alberta at the contact information provided on page 4 of this resource. A PDF version of the election simulation resource is also provided on the **Building Future Voters CD**.



- The information, forms and templates in *Build the Vote!* are designed to actively engage students with the electoral process, give them opportunities to stand as candidates, explore political party affiliations, run campaigns and vote.
  - ➔ Information is presented in source card formats, designed to be photocopied and cut into two to four cards per page.
  - ➔ Source cards represent roles involved in the electoral process, including election officers, candidates, candidate’s official agents, scrutineers, lobby groups and media.
  - ➔ Templates guide students through steps in the process that are modeled on Alberta election processes.
  - ➔ The activities, templates and source cards can be applied in different contexts:
    - To conduct a mock election in the classroom
    - To conduct a mock election for combined classrooms at the same grade level
    - To organize and conduct a mock election for your school.
- Encourage students to add insights about the electoral process to their graffiti walls.

### IF THIS IS AN ELECTION YEAR

Post a large sheet of poster paper horizontally. Divide it into three columns, labelled “Fact,” “Opinion” and “Not Sure.” Introduce the chart to the students. Ask them to define and clarify the difference between facts and opinions.

Make sure students understand that facts are verifiable, while opinions are not. Ask students the following questions, allowing for as many responses as there is time:

- ➔ What do you know about this election?
- ➔ How do you know?
- ➔ What do you know about the candidates?
- ➔ How do you know?

As each response is given, ask the group to evaluate whether the statement is a fact (provable) or simply someone’s opinion. Write the statement in the corresponding column. If consensus is not reached for any statement, write it in the “Not Sure” column. When all responses are given and posted, review the items in each column. Discuss whether any of the items in the “Not Sure” column are verifiable as fact.

When reviewing the “Opinion” column, be sure to address the idea that opinions are not invalid, and talk about what makes them valid (different ideas, goals, perspectives and understandings). You can also examine the newspaper or magazine articles and campaign flyers or posters that the students bring in. Some might bring in editorials, political cartoons or news articles.



## Assess & Reflect

Use a checklist to assess students’ demonstrations of their understanding of the electoral process.

Use criteria such as the following to assess understanding:

- Analyzes the structure and function of the electoral process.

Does this student demonstrate ability to...	Yes	Somewhat	No
Identify the processes that are part of elections?			
Provide reasons for each process?			
Compare roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups involved in the electoral process?			
Apply analysis of process to different levels of government?			

Activity adapted from *Voting: What’s it all about?* Read-Write-Think. NCTE International Reading Association website. [www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=396](http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=396).

## Assess & Reflect



Ask students to reflect individually on how the electoral process affects them personally.

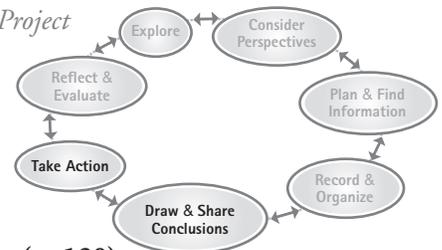
The research that students complete provides an opportunity for assessment of students' understandings of the electoral process. These understandings should be assessed through an individual demonstration of learning.

Evaluation should be based on individual student performance and gathered from a variety of sources of evidence to make a judgement of student performance using the descriptors of the **rubric (p. 67)**:

- Use evidence from the work that individual students complete during the student election to assess individual understandings of the electoral process.
- Use observation evidence collected throughout the activities of the learning sequence to consider performance of process skills and group participation.



## Make It Matter - Class Action Project



- Encourage students to draw conclusions from the research they completed to support their project. Use a graphic organizer such as a **Mind Map (p. 118)** or **Flow Chart (p. 121)** and **Plan for Action (p. 130)** to develop paths of action they can take. Provide students with time to start to implement actions related to the project.
- Discuss how elected representatives identify things that need to be improved or changed and develop a plan to try to implement change or take action.
- Work with students to establish a context for the election that is connected to the class project. This context can involve possible actions that each group will present as part of their election campaigns, depending on the type of project your class is implementing:
  - ➔ Strategies for communicating and lobbying for a need for change with their MLA or the government, such as making a presentation, sending a letter, sharing research and findings, sending an invitation to meet with the class, etc.
  - ➔ Strategies for implementing the project in the classroom or school, such as holding a school awareness campaign, organizing student meetings or working groups, holding lunch hour take action meetings, etc.
  - ➔ Strategies for implementing the project in the community, such as preparing a community information night, holding a press conference, organizing a public service announcement or campaign, organizing a mini-conference, etc.
- Candidates can campaign on the basis of how they will take leadership in developing, furthering and implementing the goals of the project.



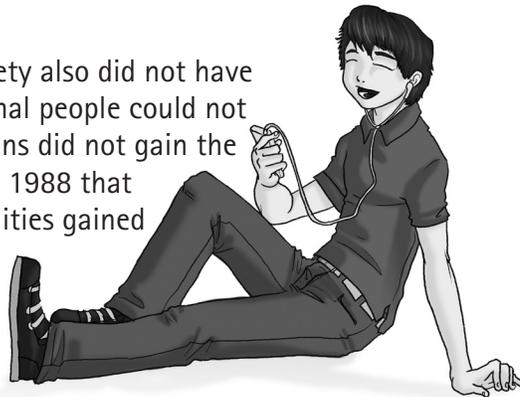
## 3-1 Times Change

Some people think that Canadians take their rights for granted and do not always recognize the challenges and struggles that have influenced those rights. Over different time periods, not everyone had the access to rights that is part of the foundation of our society today.

What injustices and inequalities did people face in the past? The legal and political system of English common law and French civil law is based on rule of law, which means that the government, like the people, is accountable to the law. However, it has not always been this way. Before the 1900s, there were no laws that protected people against discrimination or prejudice, except criminal laws. Those rights that did exist were reserved for male property owners. Although there were some gains made in the 1800s to expand rights to different groups, there were many who still experienced discrimination based on their gender, race, religion, ethnicity and language.

In the early 1900s, women started to gain political and legal rights, both federally and provincially. They insisted on, fought for, and won the right to enter "non-traditional" professions and gain their independence. However, most of the power was still in the hands of the economically dominant white male.

Other groups in Canadian society also did not have access to many rights. Aboriginal people could not vote until 1960. Asian Canadians did not gain the vote until 1949. It wasn't until 1988 that people with intellectual disabilities gained the right to vote.



Equality in the workplace, equal access to places to live and the ability to use public services was not part of many Canadians' daily lives until well into the 1900s. However, laws against discrimination were slowly established and people started to pay more attention to the importance of working toward equality for all.

In the 1930s, legislation made discrimination based on race, religion and political affiliation illegal. Over the years, different laws have improved equality for citizens and residents of Canada. However, ethical and moral work is still necessary to change attitudes of prejudice and discrimination.

## 3 What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?



### Weblink

Explore the *Time Portal on Humans Rights Cases* [www.chrc-ccdp.ca/en/timePortals/1900.asp](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/en/timePortals/1900.asp)

Visit the *Historica Voices* website at [www.historica.ca/voices/index.do](http://www.historica.ca/voices/index.do).

Watch the *Historica minute* on Hart and Papineau. Go to [www.historica.ca/minute](http://www.historica.ca/minute), click on *Historica Minutes* and search for the Hart and Papineau minute under the *Building Democracy* tab.



### Learning Log

What does the term "ethics" mean to you?

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What are "morals?" How would you describe your moral values?

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## Find Out More



Find out more about John Humphrey, the Montréal lawyer who drafted and won support for the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Watch the Historica minute on John Humphrey. Go to [www.historica.ca/minute](http://www.historica.ca/minute), click on Historica Minutes and search for the John Humphrey minute under the *Canada and the World* tab.

Find and download the *Youth Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* on the John Humphrey Society for Peace and Human Rights website at <http://jhcentre.org>. Go to the link called *Educational Resources*.

## Legislation and Declarations Protecting Human Rights

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted on December 10, 1948 and is often considered one of the United Nations' greatest achievements. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* promoted non-discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion and politics. It recognized that human rights are a matter of international concern. It asserted individual, fundamental rights to health care, education and work. The Declaration served as a model for many constitutional documents throughout the world, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* came into force on April 17, 1982. Section 15 of the *Charter*, which addresses equality rights, came into effect three years after this date.

The *Charter* is founded on the rule of law and **entrenches**, or guarantees, rights and freedoms in the Constitution. It recognizes:

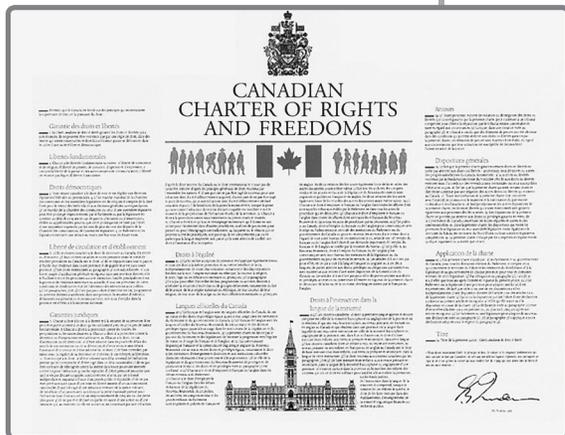
- Fundamental freedoms (e.g. freedom of expression and of association)
- Democratic rights (e.g. the right to vote)
- Mobility rights (e.g. the right to live anywhere in Canada)
- Legal rights (e.g. the right to life, liberty and security of the person)
- Equality rights
- The multicultural heritage of Canadians
- Official language and minority language education rights.

In addition, the provisions of section 25 guarantee the rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

The *Charter* is, in some respects, Canada's most important law because it can **invalidate**, or take away the legality of, any laws that are inconsistent with it. For more than 20 years, Canadian courts have made more than 300 decisions in which they **invoke**, or reference, the *Charter* to justify a change to Canadian laws.

The *Charter* has also had a major impact on the promotion and protection of human rights in Canada. It has reinforced the rights of official-language minorities and led to the recognition and enforcement of the rights of minorities and disadvantaged groups. In matters related to justice, the *Charter* has clarified what the rights of offenders are.

How important do you think it is that people are treated fairly, equally and respectfully? These concepts are fundamental values within Canadian society and within the justice system. Canada's government makes decisions through a system of legislation, regulations and laws. Our judicial system is **bijudicial**. This means it is based on two systems of law: civil law from the French and common law from the English. Increasingly, Aboriginal principles of justice are also influencing laws and decision-making.



## Weblink



Information about the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as well as human rights today can be found on the Taking IT Global website at [www.takingitglobal.org/themes/udhr60/](http://www.takingitglobal.org/themes/udhr60/).

Additional information on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* can be found on the United Nations Association in Canada website at [www.unac.org](http://www.unac.org).

Why do federal and provincial governments pass laws? Canadian **laws** are written rules that provide guidelines for people in society. The police and courts are responsible for enforcing those laws. Canadians have rights and freedoms that are protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* through the justice system. Some of the rights and freedoms protected by the justice system include:

- Fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of religion, thought, belief, opinion and expression
- Legal rights, including the right to life, liberty and security of the person
- Equality under the law. Every Canadian has an equal right to the protection and services of the police and the courts.

Some citizenship rights are also defined in Canadian laws. One such right is the right to be given preference for jobs in the federal government. Many of these rights and freedoms existed in earlier laws. However, with the creation of the *Charter* in 1982, they became better defined and better protected.

With these rights come responsibilities. Part of our responsibilities involve duties we have as citizens under the law. These duties include:

- Serving on juries when called to serve
- Knowing the law
- Testifying in court when summoned.

Individual Canadians and all levels of government have the responsibility to respect everyone's rights and freedoms. However, it is important to realize that the rights of a single Canadian or a group of Canadians cannot interfere with the rights of any other. For this reason, courts must interpret the *Charter* from time to time to make sure that it is applied fairly in all situations.



How do you think human rights protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* affected the establishment of voter eligibility in Canada over time?

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Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006). "What does Canadian citizenship mean?" *A Look at Canada*. Ottawa: Author (p. 7).  
[www.cic.gc.ca/English/pdf/pub/look.pdf](http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/pdf/pub/look.pdf).



### Learning Log

What impact, if any, do you think the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has on your daily life?

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What impact do you think the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has had on the development of democracy?

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## Who was protected?

Before the entrenchment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, some believed that criminal laws protected criminals more than they did residents of Canada. People charged with crimes had a number of protections that were based on English common law. They had the right to a fair trial and the right to have fair procedures. Laws were based on **habeas corpus**, the right of a person being detained by the authorities to be brought in front of a judge to see if the detention is valid. The laws also said that a person had the right to be secure in his or her own house unless the police obtained a search warrant.



What issues do you think these laws brought up in Canadian society at the time? How did the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* expand the legal rights of citizens?

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What examples can you find that shows how the concept of democracy has changed over time?

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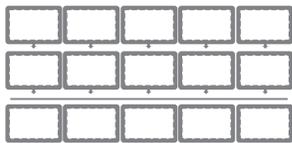
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*The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.* Canada in the Making website. [www.canadiana.org/citm/index\\_e.html](http://www.canadiana.org/citm/index_e.html).

## The Highest Court?

From 1875, the year it was created, until 1949, the Supreme Court was, in fact, not the highest court in Canada. During this time, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in Britain, had jurisdiction, or the power of decision making, over all colonial courts. This included the Dominion of Canada until 1949.

In 1947 the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ruled that the Parliament of Canada could abolish civil appeals to the Judicial Committee. This was accomplished in 1949, at which time the Supreme Court of Canada became the last court of appeal for all cases originating in Canada.



Build a timeline of influential events. Pick what you think are the five most important events in the development of rights over time. Write or draw what is important about each event, placing it in chronological order on a *Cause and Effect Timeline* graphic organizer. Request this graphic organizer from your teacher.

## Learning Log



Do any of the events you've selected for your timeline impact you? How?

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Do the rights we have in place today give everyone fair and equitable access to participate? To vote? What would you change if you could? Write a personal response to these questions in your notebook.



## 3-2 An Election Experience

Can you think of times when someone has represented you? Or you have represented others? When you are a group leader or spokesperson, you represent the members of your group. When a family member attends a community meeting, he or she may be representing you and your interests. When a classmate attends a school meeting, he or she may represent your class. Representation in government works much the same way – at all levels of government.

Canada is a **representative democracy**, which means that every citizen has the power to express their opinions and be represented in government. It means that **residents**, people who live in Canada whether or not they are citizens, have the same rights. This system of representative democracy is based on **principles**, or important values and ideas, which are hundreds of years old.

Voting is sometimes described as the most important action that a citizen can take to be politically involved in a representative democracy. Every eligible voter has the right to vote in a democracy, although some choose not to vote.

A democracy cannot exist without free and fair elections. A free and fairly run election makes everyone equal because each citizen has one vote. Therefore, voting gives every individual an equal say. **Collectively**, or taken all together, election results can send a message to politicians, political parties and the public, letting them know what positions and points of view are supported by the majority.

The idea of majority decision-making is an important aspect of the electoral process.

- The political party with the majority of seats forms the government.
- Decisions to pass laws are made through a majority of votes.
- Representatives are chosen through a system that is often called "**first-past-the-post**." In other words, the candidate winning the majority of votes in a constituency is the winner, even if he or she received less than 50 % of the "**popular vote**," which is the total number of votes cast.

These processes are based on those in the *Election Act*, which is the legislation governing electoral procedure in Alberta.

### 3 What do you mean, my vote doesn't count?



#### Learning Log

When have you made decisions by majority decision-making? What other forms of decision-making have you used?

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#### Did You Know

The *Election Act* is the main legislation that guides the conduct of elections in Alberta. It sets out all the rules and procedures that must be followed to ensure that elections are fair and impartial. Elections Alberta is responsible for making sure the *Election Act* is followed. They must remain independent from any political party or government in power.



Is the electoral process fair and equitable? You decide. Does your school already have a student government? How are you represented? What opportunities are there for students to show leadership?

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Consider holding an election to elect a student government for your classroom or school.

A student government can represent the interests and voices of students when making decisions that may affect everyone. A student government can also take responsibility for leadership tasks related to a school or classroom project or action plan.



As a class, decide what type of student election you will hold. Identify whether your election will be held in your school, with other classrooms or in your classroom only.

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If you had a student government, what would its responsibilities be? Think about this question as you prepare to hold a student election. Make a list and check it with other classmates.

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## Did You Know



The most common voting age around the world is 18, with a few countries that have lower voting ages. East Timor, Indonesia, North Korea, the Seychelles and Sudan have a national minimum voting age of 17. Austria, Brazil, Cuba and Nicaragua have a minimum age of 16. People who are between the ages of 16 and 18 and employed can vote in Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro. However, in Uzbekistan, the minimum age to vote is 25. In Italy, the minimum voting age for elections to the Senate is also 25.

In Alberta, there are criteria that must be met for voting eligibility. To be eligible to vote in a provincial election in Alberta, a person must:

1. Be a Canadian citizen
2. Be 18 years old or older
3. Be ordinarily resident in Alberta for at least six months prior to Polling Day.

The following persons are not eligible to vote:

- Returning Officers (except to break a tie)
- Persons who, on Polling Day, are inmates of correctional institutions, excluding persons sentenced to terms of imprisonment of 10 days or less or for the non-payment of fines.



Find out what the criteria are for voting in federal elections.

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What criteria will establish voter eligibility in your election?

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In some ways, your school is like an **electoral division**. Your classroom is like a **polling subdivision**. In a provincial election, each electoral division must elect a representative. In order to vote, each eligible voter must **register**, or identify themselves by adding their name to the List of Electors. Voting takes place in **polling places** within each polling subdivision.



Why do you think it is important that all voters register?

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In most elections, there are issues that people are concerned about. Your student election should be focused on issues that are important to your class. The issues may relate directly to your classroom or school. They may also be issues related to a project that your class or school is working on.



What issues do you think will be important in your election?

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How might your issues differ from other classrooms, groups of people or communities?

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## Make It Matter

Make your student election matter to your class action project. What actions or policies will be important to the candidate election campaigns? Consider strategies like the following, depending on the type of project you are working on.

- **Strategies for communicating and lobbying for a need for change** with your MLA or the government, such as making a presentation, sending a letter, sharing research and findings or sending an invitation to meet with the class.
- **Strategies for implementing the project in the classroom or school**, such as holding a school awareness campaign, organizing student meetings or working groups or holding lunch hour take action meetings.
- **Strategies for implementing the project in the community**, such as preparing a community information night, holding a press conference, organizing a public service announcement or campaign or organizing a mini-conference.

Encourage your candidates to campaign on the basis of how they will take leadership in developing, furthering and implementing the goals of your class action project.



## ■ Learning Sequences

### LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

#### *How can citizen participation be improved?*

The processes of a democratic society mean that issues continue to involve questions, concerns and challenges. In Learning Sequence 4, students explore issues related to citizen participation, including the voting age and voter turnout. This section asks students to return to the overarching issue: *Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?*



#### Prepare

##### Student Resources

- Student Resource 4-1: Why Participate (p. 91)
- Student Resource 4-2: Make a Commitment (pp. 92-93)

##### Graphic Organizers

- Cause and Effect Chart (p. 122) or a T-Chart (p.112)



4 to 6 50-minute class periods



**Teacher Background** 4 (pp. 106-109) provides background information that you may find useful in supporting students' learning.

*A focus on political involvement and citizen participation*



#### Make It Matter

Students assess the impact and results of their activities and consider how effective their class action project has been.

- **Assess the Impact (p. 131)**

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

*How can citizen participation be improved?*

### Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p><b>How can citizen participation be improved?</b></p> <p>A focus on political involvement and citizen participation</p>	<p><b>9.1.1</b> appreciate the impact of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> on rights and governance in Canada (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.2</b> appreciate the various effects of government policies on citizenship and on Canadian society (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.3</b> appreciate how emerging issues impact quality of life, citizenship and identity in Canada (C, I, PADM)</p> <p><b>9.1.6</b> assess, critically, the impact of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> on the legislative process in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (4) What is the relationship between the rights guaranteed in the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> and the responsibilities of Canadian citizens? (PADM, C)</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.1</b> develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (2) evaluate, critically, ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives</li> <li>• (3) demonstrate the ability to analyze current affairs from multiple perspectives</li> <li>• (4) re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue</li> <li>• (5) generate creative ideas and strategies in individual and group activities</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.4</b> demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) take appropriate action and initiative when required in decision-making and problem-solving scenarios</li> <li>• (2) participate in and predict outcomes of problem-solving and decision-making scenarios</li> <li>• (3) propose and apply strategies or options to solve problems and deal with issues</li> <li>• (4) propose and apply new ideas and strategies, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to problem solving and decision making</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.5</b> demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) demonstrate leadership in groups, where appropriate, to achieve consensus and resolve conflicts peacefully and equitably</li> <li>• (2) demonstrate a positive attitude regarding the needs and perspectives of others</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.6</b> develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) develop leadership skills by assuming specific roles and responsibilities in organizations, projects and events within their community</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.7</b> apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) reflect on changes of perspective or opinion based on information gathered and research conducted</li> <li>• (2) integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue</li> <li>• (3) develop a position supported by information gathered during research</li> <li>• (4) draw conclusions based upon research and evidence</li> <li>➤ (14) make connections among related, organized data, and assemble various pieces into a unified message</li> <li>➤ (16) analyze and synthesize information to create a product</li> </ul>

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
	<p><b>9.S.8</b> demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration</li> <li>• (2) use skills of informal debate to persuasively express differing viewpoints regarding an issue</li> <li>• (3) elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and diverse points of view presented in discussions</li> <li>• (4) make reasoned comments relating to the topic of discussion</li> <li>• (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives</li> </ul> <p><b>9.S.9</b> develop skills of media literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (2) examine the values, lifestyles and points of view represented in a media message</li> <li>• (3) analyze the impact of television, Internet, radio and print media on a particular current affairs issue</li> </ul>

**C** Citizenship

**LPP** The Land: Places and People

**CC** Culture and Community

**I** Identity

**GC** Global Connections

**PADM** Power, Authority and Decision Making

**ER** Economics and Resources

**TCC** Time, Continuity and Change

Selected curriculum outcomes from Alberta's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Program of Studies are infused throughout the Social Studies Program of Studies and are indicated by this symbol ▶.



## LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

*How can citizen participation be improved?*



### Checklist

Criteria	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
<b>Students provide evidence of their learning as they:</b>			
Listen and respond respectfully to demonstrate appreciation of the effect of government policies and legislation on social and economic conditions (9.1.1; 9.1.2; 9.S.8.5)			
Value the impact of issues on quality of life, citizenship and identity (9.1.3)			
Identify examples and effects of the ways that rights and responsibilities are protected in social and economic legislation and democratic processes (9.1.6.4)			
Access, organize, summarize and compare diverse viewpoints and perspectives from a variety of sources (9.S.1.2; 9.S.1.3; 9.S.9.2)			
Organize and summarize information to develop conclusions and propose ideas and solutions (9.S.4.2, 9.S.4.3; 9.S.7.2; 9.S.7.4; 9.S.7.14; 9.S.7.16)			
Develop, express and support a position with evidence, examples and perspectives (9.S.4.4; 9.S.7.2, 9.S.7.3)			
Express, support and reflect on development of personal opinions and perspectives (9.S.1.4; 9.S.7.1)			
Discuss and share ideas with and ask questions of others (9.S.8.3; 9.S.8.4)			
Access, compare and analyze diverse media messages that reflect current affairs and social or political issues (9.S.9.3)			
Participate and communicate with others to discuss and resolve issue-related problems (9.S.4.4; 9.S.8.1)			
Discuss and share creative and original ideas with others (9.S.1.5; 9.S.8.4)			
Communicate with others to discuss and persuasively express viewpoints on issue-related problems (9.S.4.4; 9.S.8.1; 9.S.8.3; 9.S.8.2)			
Demonstrate commitment to taking on roles and responsibilities in projects and events in the community (9.S.4.1; 9.S.6.1)			
Work collaboratively and cooperatively in a group setting (9.S.5.1; 9.S.5.2)			

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

*How can citizen participation be improved?*

How am I doing?



How well did I:	A great job	A good start	Not there yet	I know this because:
Contribute to the group?				
Provide information and ideas?				
Listen to the ideas of others?				

How consistently did I:	Most of the time	Some of the time	Not very often	I know this because:
Communicate ideas and opinions with others?				
Apply my understandings to my work?				
Reflect on what I was learning?				

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

*How can citizen participation be improved?*



### Rubric

Level Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Proficient	2 Adequate	1 Limited *	Insufficient / Blank *
<b>Value the impact of issues on quality of life, citizenship and identity</b> (9.1.3)	Provides <b>meaningful</b> description of ways that citizens can contribute to improve quality of life.	Provides <b>purposeful</b> description of ways that citizens can contribute to improve quality of life.	Provides <b>appropriate</b> description of ways that citizens can contribute to improve quality of life.	Provides <b>minimal</b> description of ways that citizens can contribute to improve quality of life.	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.
<b>Identify examples and effects of the ways that rights and responsibilities are protected in social and economic legislation and democratic processes</b> (9.1.6.4)	Applies <b>comprehensive</b> examples of rights and responsibilities involved in social and economic legislation.	Applies <b>thorough</b> examples of rights and responsibilities involved in social and economic legislation.	Applies <b>generalized</b> examples of rights and responsibilities involved in social and economic legislation.	Applies <b>superficial</b> examples of rights and responsibilities involved in social and economic legislation.	
<b>Work collaboratively and cooperatively in a group setting</b> (9.S.5.1; 9.S.5.2)	Contributes <b>skillfully</b> to group products and <b>consistently</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	Contributes <b>effectively</b> to group products and <b>frequently</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	Contributes to group products and <b>occasionally</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	Contributes <b>minimally</b> to group products and <b>seldom</b> engages in appropriate group behaviours.	
<b>Express, support and reflect on development of personal opinions and perspectives</b> (9.S.1.4; 9.S.7.1)	Provides a <b>perceptive</b> reflection on individual and group work.	Provides a <b>thoughtful</b> reflection on individual and group work.	Provides a <b>basic</b> reflection on individual and group work.	Provides an <b>unclear</b> reflection on individual and group work.	

\* When work is judged to be limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

## LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

### *How can citizen participation be improved?*

#### Teaching and Learning Activities

##### ① Why Participate

The issue of participation in the electoral process is one that continues to be discussed whether it is an election year or not. Considering whether voting should be mandatory or a choice encourages students to critically analyze the importance of the electoral process in a democracy.

- Provide students with **Student Resource 4-1: Why Participate (p. 91)**. Ask students to work with a partner to rank common reasons provided for voting and not voting. Compare and discuss responses.
- Invite students to brainstorm strategies, either individually, in a group or as a class, which could increase participation in the electoral process. Encourage students to consider not just voting, but also interest in the process and results of elections as well as strategies that could influence what democracy in Canada “looks like.” (*Some common suggestions that students may offer include lowering the voting age, make voting a mandatory responsibility, focus on educating new voters, allow voting by Internet, get families talking about politics and elections at home, make sure election dates are set so that everyone has the same information on an election, get candidates and political parties to talk about issues that are important for young people or change election campaign finance rules.*)
- Select one or two strategies that students think are most effective. Analyze the consequences of the strategy as a class using a graphic organizer such as a **Cause and Effect Chart (p. 122)** or a **T-Chart (p. 112)**. Consider causes and effects or pros and cons.

What is the effectiveness of online voting?

Pros	Cons
-easier and more convenient to vote -appeals to people who use the Internet	-security and privacy may be difficult to ensure -extra costs may be added because traditional voting methods would still be needed

Discuss some current issues related to electoral reform, such as:

- All Canadians should be required to vote.
- People should be allowed to vote on the Internet.
- Candidates should spend roughly the same amount of money on campaigns to “level the playing field.”
- Every province and territory, as well as the federal government, should be required to hold elections on fixed dates.
- The legal voting age should be lowered.



#### Differentiate

Index cards can be used to brainstorm ideas individually, while poster paper can be used for group brainstorming.

Add the index cards to the graffiti walls or display posters in the classroom.



#### Did You Know

Elections in Alberta can be called at the discretion of the government in power, within five years from the date they are elected. In some other provinces, such as British Columbia, election dates are set.



#### Find Out More

A chart that shows the provinces that hold elections on fixed election dates is provided in the **Building Future Voters CD** mini-library. 

## Assess & Reflect



Assess students' contributions to the debate by using a checklist such as the following:

Does this student demonstrate the ability to...	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
Communicate their point of view in a persuasive manner?			
Use evidence and examples to justify their point of view?			

Have students reflect on a question such as the following:

- What inspires me to get involved?

- Have students work individually or with a partner to research the advantages and challenges that might be involved in one of the issues. Decide on the issue to be debated as a class, depending on student interest and motivation. As an optional extension activity, students can be asked to create their own research source cards on current or local issues related to political participation and the electoral process.
- Define key terms in the issue statement that is selected. Discuss and negotiate how this issue statement should be debated and how the debate will be assessed. For example, students may be required to include supporting evidence that includes media images and advertising, statistics and visuals that support their side of the argument.
- Have students work with a partner and use previous research, website links and classroom resources to explore the issue question and evidence supporting different positions. Ask students to collect and organize evidence that supports these positions.
- Have pairs work together, but individually prepare a position statement and evidence that represents their position. Have students use their position statements and evidence to participate in a **horseshoe debate**.
- Compare decisions about the extent to which students were involved in the debate to the reasons that individuals choose to vote or not to vote. Are there similar reasons? How do choices to participate affect quality of life?



## Share

A **horseshoe debate** is an informal debating strategy that encourages students to research multiple positions and perspectives, analyze evidence that supports alternatives, and present opinions and evidence. In a horseshoe debate, desks are arranged in an open semi-circle, or a horseshoe shape. Students on one half of the semi-circle are assigned the task of presenting a prepared statement and the supporting evidence on one side of the issue. Students in the other half take the opposite position. Students can be asked to take turns presenting the position and a brief summary of the evidence they have collected. Once students share their positions and evidence, the floor is opened for questions and challenges. Students can be assessed on both their research and presentation, as well as on their participation in the question and challenge component of the debate.

There are different options for structuring the debate process. Students can be asked to select the side they will present and defend and sit on that side of the semi-circle. Or, students can be asked to research and support multiple perspectives on an issue, and be assigned one perspective on the day of the debate.

Students may also be asked to stand in a horseshoe to present their position statements. As each student presents their perspective, other students can move around the horseshoe, depending on how their opinions are affected by the presenter's arguments.

When debriefing the debate, have those students who did not participate discuss their decision to not become involved. Why did they choose non-involvement over involvement?

## 2 Consider Action

Revisiting concepts of democracy reinforces and emphasizes the value of informed participation. Developing a commitment to participate in democratic processes is an important forerunner to decisions about how to participate in the electoral process.

- As a class, brainstorm ideas about what an ideal active citizen is.
- Ask students to form groups to create an advertising campaign that will be implemented in the school. The advertising campaign will be focused on the question, “What is an ideal active citizen?” The advertising campaign can include a variety of products:
  - A podcast
  - Posters
  - PowerPoint presentations
  - Speeches or school lunch symposiums
  - Videos.
- Provide students with **Student Resource 4-2: Make a Commitment (pp. 92-93)**. Work with the class to establish a format or criteria for their advertising campaign in advance, listing the elements that they should include, such as meanings of citizenship, characteristics of an ideal citizen and strategies for citizen participation. The campaign materials that students develop should include visuals and written information. Students should develop a project plan, detailing the following information:
  - The purpose and products for the advertising campaign
  - Group tasks and timelines
  - Individual responsibilities within the group. Each individual group member should clearly identify a product that they will create that will become part of the group’s effort.

Alternatively, have students create a persuasive poster, collage, storyboard or photo essay that responds to the question, “Should there be any changes to the rights we have as citizens today?” or “Does everyone have equal and fair opportunities to participate in society?”

- Revisit students’ graffiti walls. Have students add different perspectives on the ways that democracy can work to impact or address injustices.
- Invite students to use the last page of the student resource to develop a personal commitment card. Provide students with blank index cards, or have them make their own on construction paper or cardstock.



## Differentiate

Provide students with choices regarding the type of product they create to apply their understandings and to demonstrate learning. Some of these product choices can include the following:

- A **personal poster** is used to create a personal response, including visuals and text. The personal poster should be completed individually.
- A **collage** is created with a collection of items from different sources. A collage can include excerpts from media sources, photographs, illustrations, drawings, quotations and literature excerpts. It can also include items that students create themselves. Three-dimensional objects can be used in a collage to create a “collage in relief.”
- A **storyboard** is a series of drawings, sketches and text that is used to present a sequence of ideas or events. A storyboard is usually created using a series of boxes like a comic strip.
- A **photo essay** is a collection of photographs that are presented in order to tell a story or evoke an emotional reaction. A photo essay can provide a written explanation, literature excerpt or quotation or descriptive words and phrases with each photograph. When students are asked to create a photo essay, they can be encouraged to take their own digital photographs and create their essay in electronic form or they can cut and paste photographs they find in different sources.



## Share

Through Elections Alberta, invite a Returning Officer to the classroom to listen to students’ advertising campaigns.



## Differentiate & Share



Students can be provided with options in sharing their work. Smaller group presentation contexts encourage students to develop skills in more comfortable contexts.

- Students can share with a partner. Have partners develop questions they can ask of each other.
- Students can present their work to a small group, taking turns presenting their opinions and evidence.
- Students can practice a presentation with a partner or small group, then present to the whole class.



## Assess & Reflect

Have students reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned by responding to the following three statements:

- I liked learning about....because....
  - I struggled when I was trying to learn....
  - I didn't know that...



## Assess & Reflect

Ask students to reflect individually on the value of social and political participation within their communities.

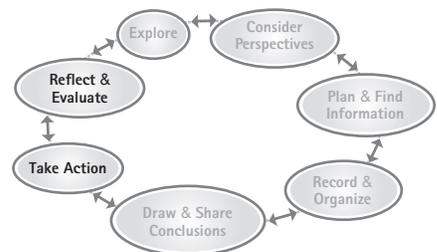
The products that students create in this learning sequence provide an opportunity for assessment of students' understandings of the options for social and political participation and their own accountability as citizens. These understandings should be assessed through an individual demonstration of learning. Evaluation should be based on individual student performance and gathered from a variety of sources of evidence to make a judgement of student performance using the descriptors of the **rubric (p. 86)**:

- Use evidence from the Cause and Effect Chart, T-Chart and Persuasion Map to assess students' abilities to analyze cause and effect and consequences of actions.
- Use observation evidence collected throughout the activities of the learning sequence to consider performance of process skills and group participation.



## Make It Matter - Class Action Project

- Provide time for students to continue to implement their class project. If students are completing their projects, have them reflect on the impact they think their actions have had. If students are still implementing their projects, have them reflect on the effectiveness of their project work to date.



- Encourage the class to check in with each other by discussing and reflecting on questions such as the following:
  - ➔ What has most inspired us with our project work so far?
  - ➔ Who have we connected with? How have different perspectives changed or affected our project work?
  - ➔ What do we consider to be the most successful in the work we have done? Why is it successful? What challenges or barriers have we had to overcome?
- Use **Assess the Impact (p. 131)** in to guide students through an assessment and reflection of their project work. Depending on the project and how much work students have completed, assign parts or all of the resource.



## 4-1 Why Participate

A democratic society is based on the belief that all citizens have a voice in decision-making about the ways they live and work together. However, individuals have differing perspectives about how and when they should participate politically.



Why do you think some people choose to vote and others do not? Explore the following list of reasons. Rank each list in the order that you think is most common. Compare your ranking with two of your classmates.

Rank	Common Reasons for Voting	Rank	Common Reasons for Not Voting
	To exercise the right – we live in a democracy and we have the right to vote – why not use it		Do not have time
	Out of duty – many people feel that it is their job as citizens to participate in elections		Forget
	To support a particular candidate or their political party		Have to work
	To have a voice – to have a say in how things are done		Do not like any of the choices
	To change things, to make a difference		Do not know who to vote for
	The system does not work if people do not vote		Out of town
			Not interested
			Do not think it matters
			Do not know when or where to vote

## 4 How can citizen participation be improved?

**15% of Canadians would rather vote in U.S. election: Survey**  
Monday, February 4, 2008

"Fifteen per cent of Canadians would give up their ballot in Canada's next federal election to vote in the U.S. election, a new poll co-sponsored by the CBC has found. The poll, done by the Canadian polling company Environics, asked 2,001 Canadians over the age of 15 questions about how they perceive their role, and Canada's role, in the world. Forty-six per cent of those surveyed in January by telephone said it matters a great deal to Canada who wins the November 2008 U.S. presidential election. Another 35 per cent said it mattered somewhat, while only eight per cent said it doesn't matter at all."

*15% of Canadians would rather vote in U.S. election: survey. (February 4, 2008). CBC News Online. [www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/02/01/poll-cbc.html](http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/02/01/poll-cbc.html).*



# 4 How can citizen participation be improved?

## 4-2 Make a Commitment



### Develop a Campaign

What matters when people participate as citizens?

Develop an advertising campaign focused on the question, "What is an ideal active citizen?"

Consider the elements that will be included in your campaign such as meanings of citizenship, characteristics of an ideal citizen and strategies for citizen participation. The campaign materials that you develop should include visuals and written information.

Make a plan for creating your advertising campaign. Ensure that each group member has responsibility for completing one task.

#### Ideas

- A Podcast
- Posters
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Speeches or Lunch Hour Symposiums
- Videos
- Advertisements
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

The Products We Will Create	The Purpose of Each Product	The Tasks	Who is Responsible and When It Has to be Done



# Future Voter Commitment Card

Future Voter Commitment Card



When I am 18 years old  
in \_\_\_\_\_, I will vote.  
(year)



Future Voter Commitment Card



When I am 18 years old  
in \_\_\_\_\_, I will vote.  
(year)



## Learning Log

How will you participate in the democratic process? Will you vote when you are 18? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# Teacher Backgrounders

## TEACHER BACKGROUNDER 1

### Find Out More



Some of the information in this backgrounder is based on *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 6th Edition, accessed at [www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf).

### Weblink



*Teaching Democracy: What Schools Need to Do*, by Joseph Kahne & Joel Westheimer is available at the weblink [www.democraticdialogue.com/DDpdfs/TeachingDemocracyPDK.pdf](http://www.democraticdialogue.com/DDpdfs/TeachingDemocracyPDK.pdf). This article presents a number of perspectives valuable in thinking about how to approach teaching democratic principles.

An online module on parliamentary democracy from Athabasca University can be accessed at [www.athabascau.ca/govn/parliamentary\\_democracy/introduction/options.html](http://www.athabascau.ca/govn/parliamentary_democracy/introduction/options.html).

Information on the provinces and territories, including federal–provincial relations, is available on the Canadian-Politics.com website at [www.canadian-politics.com/provinces/prov\\_assembly.shtml](http://www.canadian-politics.com/provinces/prov_assembly.shtml).

### An Overview of Government

People often use the term “government” to mean everything connected with making and enforcing laws, collecting taxes and providing public services. However, in our parliamentary system “government” has a very limited and specific meaning. It refers to the team of elected representatives that has the support of a majority in parliament or a provincial assembly. This majority government is responsible for providing leadership to make laws and for ministries that deliver programs and services mandated by those laws. In this system, government is also referred to as the cabinet.

The **bicameral**, or two-house, system that provides the structure of government at the federal level originated in Great Britain. The British Parliament evolved into an elected House of Commons and the appointed House of Lords in the 14th century. In Canada, this is equivalent to the House of Commons and the Senate.

The provincial equivalent of the federal parliament is the legislature. Alberta's Legislature consists of a **unicameral** house called the Legislative Assembly and the Lieutenant Governor. Like their federal counterparts, the premier and cabinet are from the same political party – the one with the most elected members in the Assembly.

Each provincial legislature consists of a unicameral legislature with an elected assembly. Holding elections in which ordinary citizens elect representatives to a parliament is also part of Canada's British heritage. Local village leaders were called to parliament as early as the 13th century, although voting rights were extended to the middle and working classes only in the 19th and 20th centuries and to women in the 20th century.

### Responsible and Direct Democracies

The Canadian system of government, and therefore the electoral system, is based on the British principle of responsible government, which means that the cabinet must have the support of a majority in the elected Assembly to continue governing. This establishes a system in which the government is **responsible**, or accountable, to the Assembly. If a major policy or law is defeated, the government must resign and call an election.

Responsible government has always been part of the Canadian system, but the concept of responsible government came from Britain. It began in Britain in 1742, when the first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, resigned after two of his major policies were defeated in the Commons.

In the Canadian system of responsible government, the areas of proposing, passing and administering laws overlap. The premier and **cabinet**, or executive branch, are the chief lawmakers. The **premier** is the leader of the party commanding a majority of support of elected members in the Assembly while **cabinet ministers** are appointed **Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)** from that party. The **executive branch** consists of appointed members of the legislative branch.

When a political party has majority support or commands a majority, the party holds more than half of the seats in the Assembly. In this case, the government formed is called a **majority government**. In Alberta's parliamentary system, majority governments tend to be stable because voting on major government initiatives such as bills and budget estimates normally occurs along party lines. The defeat of a major government initiative would mean the downfall of the government. Therefore, party unity is usually necessary for the government to remain in office. Consequently, party discipline, under which all MLAs from the same party support their party's policies in the Assembly, is a tradition in the parliamentary system.

A party may also be said to command a majority if it holds fewer than half the seats in the Assembly provided that enough members from opposition parties support its major initiatives to ensure that they pass. This is called a **minority government**. If one of its major initiatives is defeated, the government must resign, usually resulting in an election call. Minority governments rely on compromise with members from other parties, so their bills and spending priorities may represent a consensus of different parties' ideas. Thus opposition members in a minority government usually have more influence on government business than they do with a majority government.

Direct democracy is a system of government in which voters can directly repeal, amend or initiate policies and laws through binding referendums. Switzerland provides a good example of a country that practices direct democracy in establishing laws and policies. Swiss voters can challenge laws or policies through petition and referendum. The result of referendum voting is binding on the government.



## Weblink

A comprehensive history of the vote is available on the Elections Canada website at [www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=gen&dir=his&document=index&lang=e&textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=gen&dir=his&document=index&lang=e&textonly=false).

The CBC Archives provide a number of video clips and articles that deal with the history of the vote on *Voting in Canada: How a Privilege Became a Right*, found at [http://archives.cbc.ca/IDD-1-73-1450/politics\\_economy/voting\\_rights/](http://archives.cbc.ca/IDD-1-73-1450/politics_economy/voting_rights/).

Perspectives on voting and citizenship, including historical and youth perspectives, can be found on the *Historica Voices* weblink at [www.historica.ca/voices/index.do](http://www.historica.ca/voices/index.do).



Information relating to campaign financing legislation, both federally and provincially, can be found on the Maple Leaf Web website at [www.mapleleafweb.com/old/features/parliament/party-finance/regulating-donations.html](http://www.mapleleafweb.com/old/features/parliament/party-finance/regulating-donations.html).

A summary of the guidelines and rules for federal campaign financing can be accessed on the Elections Canada website at [www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=ec90533&dir=bkg&lang=e&textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=ec90533&dir=bkg&lang=e&textonly=false).

## Find Out More



The *Election Act* is the main legislation that guides the conduct of elections in Alberta. It sets out all the rules and procedures that must be followed to ensure that elections are fair and impartial. Elections Alberta is responsible for making sure the *Election Act* is followed.

They must remain independent from any political party or government in power. The *Election Act* and other election-related legislation can be accessed on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca/legislation.html](http://www.elections.ab.ca/legislation.html).

## TEACHER BACKGROUNDER 2

### Economics of the Electoral Process

All federal and provincial elections in Canada today are governed by legislation that regulates, to varying degrees, the contributions and expenditures of candidates and political parties – before, during and after election campaigns. The tools for regulating political donations include actions such as reporting requirements for the names of donors, the amounts of contributions, and the amounts and types of expenditures. Other rules restrict candidates, parties and their supporters – such as limits on contributions, expenditures or both. Legislation at provincial and federal levels requires that the parties' nominated candidates register with the Chief Electoral Officer before the candidates can accept contributions.

Every candidate for office in a federal or provincial election must have an Official Agent (or Chief Financial Officer), who is the only person authorized to accept contributions and to authorize expenditures on behalf of the candidate during the writ period. The maximum penalties for violating this rule are harsh and include the loss of the right to vote or to be a candidate in a future election.

In Alberta, the **electoral process**, or the steps and actions involved in an election, is run by an organization called Elections Alberta. This organization is independent from the government. Elections Alberta makes sure that when an election happens, the following conditions are met.

- The election is open, fair and impartial.
- Voters have the necessary information to participate in the election.
- Political participants have the information and assistance to make sure they are following election rules.
- Election officers are trained to make sure elections are run properly and results are made available to people.
- Elections are evaluated to recommend any changes that could be made to improve the electoral process.

Most places in North America and across the world have campaign finance legislation. This legislation usually deals with the impact of money on elections and public policy and is based on the premise that financial support is a significant factor in determining electoral success – in other words, getting a candidate elected.

The legislation promotes financial equity and fairness, or creates a “more level playing field.” In Alberta, the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* is a law that maintains the accountability of candidates and their contributors. It does this through rules that provide contribution limits and the disclosure, or making public, of contributions that individuals or groups make to political parties and their campaigns during an election.

In Alberta, there are different financial requirements during campaign periods and for non-election years that involve political parties, candidates and **constituency associations**, which are volunteer organizations that handle the activities of a political party in an electoral division. Annual reporting is the responsibility of the political party and the constituency association and is based on a calendar year. Campaign reporting is the responsibility of a political party and the candidate. It occurs in a year in which there is a provincial general election, a by-election or a Senate nominee election.

- Annual contributions are those made to a political party or constituency association.
- Annual contributions cannot be made during an election campaign. A campaign begins when a Writ of Election is issued by the Chief Electoral Officer and ends two months after Polling Day.
- During an election campaign period, campaign contributions or donations can be provided to candidates and registered political parties. They must be reported.
- The candidate's financial report must include a list of contributors that contributed a total of over \$375 in cash or valued goods and services.
- Contributions may be made by individuals, corporations that conduct business in Alberta, and trade unions/professional associations that operate in Alberta.
- There is a maximum contribution limit of \$15 000 in any one year to each registered political party.
- During a campaign period, there is a maximum amount of \$30 000 that can be donated to a candidate. There is a maximum of \$30 000, multiplied by the number of candidates that are running on behalf of the party, that can be donated to the party.

## TEACHER BACKGROUNDER 3

### Provincial General Elections

Canada's Constitution requires that provincial elections be held at least once every five years, but they are usually held approximately every four years.

A government that waits until the end of its legal term to call an election runs the risk of being forced to call one at a time that may not be as advantageous politically, therefore reducing its chances of winning. Conversely, governments that take advantage of favourable political conditions by calling an election too soon – a snap election – risk criticism. Governments normally look for a combination of an upsurge of popularity at the polls and the winding down of their mandate to call an election. Holding an election is a complex affair, beginning well before the Premier formally asks the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the Legislative Assembly.

### Electoral Divisions

The difficult decisions involved in an election are not all made by voters. One of these decisions involves how to divide the province into voting districts, or electoral divisions, each of which has one MLA.

Alberta is divided into 83 constituencies. One Member of the Legislative Assembly represents each electoral division, and that member represents everyone within the electoral division's boundaries, regardless of how they voted in the last election or whether they voted at all.

Electoral division boundary lines change about every ten years and are normally determined by a special body called the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission is made up of a chairperson appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and four members (commissioners) appointed by the Speaker: two on the recommendation of the Premier and two on the recommendation of the Leader of the Official Opposition in consultation with the other opposition leader or leaders. A boundaries commissioner must have a thorough knowledge of electoral law combined with an understanding of the needs and wishes of the people who live in the electoral division. The commission draws the boundaries mainly on the basis of population but also considers common community interests, the geographical area, natural boundaries such as rivers, political boundaries such as county lines and city limits as well as other factors. Its decisions are guided by a law called the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*. When the commission changes boundaries, the changes must become law before they can take effect.

### Find Out More

Some of the information in this backgrounder is based on *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 6th Edition, accessed at [www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf).

### Weblink

Students can search for their electoral division on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca/streetkey/](http://www.elections.ab.ca/streetkey/).

## Running an Election

The complex task of running a provincial general election belongs to Elections Alberta, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. This office must do the following:

- Divide electoral divisions into polling subdivisions
- Update the Lists of Electors, which may include a full or partial enumeration to collect voters' names by going door to door
- Train Returning Officers to run the election
- Make sure voting is conducted according to the rules
- Take care of all election paperwork
- Issue the official election results.

## First-Past-the-Post

In Canadian elections winners are chosen through the single-member plurality system, or “**first-past-the-post**.” In other words, the candidate winning the most votes in an electoral division is the winner, even if he or she received less than 50% of the “**popular vote**,” which is the total number of votes cast.

Another voting system used by some democracies is **proportional representation**, in which parties win seats according to the percentage of the total votes cast in their favour. There are many countries using this system, including Germany, Switzerland and Ireland.

## Political Parties

When a group of people have similar ideas about the major issues affecting people in a democratic society, they may form a political party with a view to electing some of their people to office and therefore having a better chance of putting their ideas into practice.

Members of a political party can influence politicians and governments when policies are being formed or reviewed. In an election campaign, candidates usually concentrate on promoting policies that are already in place. Young adults can get involved by joining a party's youth association. Alberta's major political parties include the Progressive Conservatives, the Liberals and the New Democrats. The Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals have their roots in the 19th century, while the New Democratic Party was born in the 20th century. The same parties are prominent in federal politics and also in the politics of other provinces. Many parties have both federal and provincial wings, and each wing can have its own members and select its own candidates.

Political parties begin the work of choosing candidates long before an election. Each party tries to select, or **nominate**, one candidate to run in each electoral division. Candidates who don't belong to a political party are called **independents**.



## Find Out More

Elections Alberta provides a number of detailed resources on the electoral process on their website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca).

Some of these resources include:

*A Guide for Polling Place Officials* (PDF). [www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/A\\_Guide\\_for\\_Polling\\_Place\\_Officials.pdf](http://www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/A_Guide_for_Polling_Place_Officials.pdf).

*Guidelines for the Selection of Returning Officers* (Document). [www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/Documents/Guidelines\\_for\\_RO\\_selection.doc](http://www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/Documents/Guidelines_for_RO_selection.doc).

*A Guide for Candidates on the Election Act* (PDF). [www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/Documents/Guide\\_for\\_Candidates\\_on\\_the\\_Election\\_Act.pdf](http://www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/Documents/Guide_for_Candidates_on_the_Election_Act.pdf).

*A Guide for Scrutineers* (PDF). [www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/Documents/A\\_guide\\_for\\_Scrutineers.pdf](http://www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/files/Documents/A_guide_for_Scrutineers.pdf).



## Weblink

An excellent website that describes direct democracy in Switzerland is available at [www.swissworld.org/dvd\\_rom/direct\\_democracy\\_2005/index.html](http://www.swissworld.org/dvd_rom/direct_democracy_2005/index.html). This website provides a number of examples and illustrations. Students will find this website challenging but parts of it may be suitable for whole class demonstration and discussion.



## Find Out More

Information on political parties in Alberta can be accessed on Elections Alberta's website at [www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/603.htm](http://www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/603.htm). This information can also be found in the telephone directory under the political party's name.

## Making a Choice

Voters choose how to vote for a variety of reasons. They may vote for a candidate based strictly on individual qualifications. They may also vote for both the candidate and for the political party that candidate represents, unless the candidate is running as an independent. When deciding how to vote for a candidate in an election, it is important to listen not only to the candidate but also to the party leader. Party leaders will communicate what their party intends to do if they form a government while individual candidates may also focus on what they want for their electoral divisions.

Candidates will often go door to door during their campaigns. People seeking public office welcome questions. They are competing for votes and a chance to explain their party's policies. Voters should explore the issues that most concern them, and find out what their candidates and their parties plan to do about them. There are a variety of strategies voters can use to communicate with candidates and get involved in the electoral process:

- Talk to candidates and other individuals at their constituency associations or campaign headquarters.
- Find out how previously elected candidates handled issues in the past by reading copies of *Hansard*, which can be found on the Assembly's website at [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) and is searchable by keyword. If voters know the important details about an issue, their questions are likely to be more to the point, and they will be better able to judge how much the candidates know about that particular issue.
- Attend public meetings, debates, forums and discussion groups in which candidates will be speaking. One of the best ways to find out about a party's election platform is for candidates in one electoral division get together to talk about issues and answer voters' questions. This is an opportunity to hear how potential MLAs would deal with issues and concerns.
- Listen to or take part in a phone-in program, watch candidates' panel discussions or read their statements on important issues in the media.

The media provides helpful sources of information about candidates and issues. Television, radio and newspapers all offer extensive coverage of election issues, the best of which involve the candidates themselves speaking on various matters.

## The Electoral Process in Alberta

An election officially begins when the government in power passes an **Order in Council** and the **Chief Electoral Officer** issues a **Writ of Election** to each **Returning Officer**.

The election period is a total of 28 days after the date of the Writ of Election. This means that voting day is on the 28th day. **Nomination Day**, the date by which all candidates must be nominated, is the 14th day after the date of the Writ of Election and **Polling Day**, the day on which voting takes place, is the 14th day after Nomination Day.

Each Returning Officer completes an **Election Proclamation**, which contains the following information:

- The place, dates and times fixed for revisions to the **Lists of Electors**
- The place and times fixed for nomination of candidates, and the date fixed for the closing of nominations
- The locations, dates and times for voting at the advance polls
- The date and times for voting
- The place, date and time for the announcement of the official results
- The name, address and phone number of the Returning Officers in the electoral division.

As soon as possible following the date of the Writ of Election, each Returning Officer publishes the information on the Election Proclamation, a map of the electoral division and a list of polling places. This information is published in one or more newspapers in each electoral division.

The Chief Electoral Officer provides copies of the Lists of Electors and polling subdivision maps to each registered political party. Each political party and candidate is entitled to receive this information. The same material is provided by the Returning Officer to independent candidates.

The Returning Officer can accept changes to the Lists of Electors, starting on the 5th day after the date of the Writ of Election and continuing each day, except Sundays and holidays. Changes can continue to be made until 4:00 p.m. on the Saturday before the opening of the advance polls.

These changes often include names of electors who:

- Were not included on the List of Electors
- Moved since the List of Electors was prepared
- Recently became eligible to vote.

A **candidate** is a person who is running for election in an electoral division. A candidate must file an Application for Registration of Candidate with Elections Alberta to begin to raise and spend money on his or her campaign and to begin campaigning. After the Writ of Election is issued and the candidate has registered by filing a nomination paper with the Returning Officer, his or her name will appear on the ballot.

To be nominated, a candidate must be at least 18, a Canadian citizen and a six-month resident of the province. A person does not have to be ordinarily resident in an electoral division in order to be a candidate in that electoral division. A member of the Senate or House of Commons of Canada is not eligible to be nominated as a candidate.

Each candidate is required to appoint an elector as an **official agent**. The name, address and telephone number of the appointee must be on the Candidate Nomination Paper and is published by the Returning Officer in a newspaper of general circulation.



## Find Out More

The responsibilities of Election Officers are described on the Elections Alberta website at [www.electionsalberta.ab.ca/Public%20Website/597.htm](http://www.electionsalberta.ab.ca/Public%20Website/597.htm).

Information for candidates and political parties can be found at [www.electionsalberta.ab.ca/Public%20Website/politicalparticipants.htm](http://www.electionsalberta.ab.ca/Public%20Website/politicalparticipants.htm).

Changes to the List of Electors can also be made by electors using Voterlink at [www.voterlink.ab.ca](http://www.voterlink.ab.ca), an online voter registration service provided by Elections Alberta.

Persons appointed as official agents must be eligible to vote under the *Election Act*, but do not have to be a resident in the electoral division where their candidate is seeking office. The official agent must consent to the appointment by signing the Candidate Nomination Paper. A candidate cannot act as an official agent.

A **scrutineer** is a person who represents the candidates at each polling station. Scrutineers may watch election procedures in each polling station during polling hours as well as when the votes are unofficially counted after the polling station is closed.

Each candidate may appoint, in writing, not more than four resident electors for each polling station and Registration Officer's station as scrutineers. Not more than one scrutineer per candidate per ballot box or Registration Officer's station may be present at any one time. A scrutineer may attend more than one polling station or Registration Officer's station. Scrutineers must take the Oath of Secrecy at each polling station or Registration Officer's station before performing their duties.

There are four types of **polls** that are used to conduct voting in each electoral division:

- **Polling Day polls** are open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election. Several polling stations can be located at one polling place.
- **Special ballot polls** are used for electors who are unable to vote on Polling Day or at an advance poll. Special ballot polls can be used by people with physical challenges, candidates, election officers, official agents or scrutineers. They may also be used by people who live in remote areas or are away on Polling Day.
- **Advance polls** are established by the Returning Officer in each electoral division. These polls can be used by people with physical challenges and those who believe they will be absent from their polling station on Polling Day to vote in advance. Election officers, candidates, official agents or scrutineers can also use advance polls if their official duties may prevent them from voting at their own polling station on Polling Day. Advance polls are open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday prior to Polling Day. The dates and locations are published by the Returning Officer in the Election Proclamation. All electors who wish to vote at an advance poll must complete an Advance Poll Declaration.
- **Mobile polls** can be established by the Returning Officer for places like seniors' and treatment centres. The hours for mobile poll voting are established by the Returning Officer, who consults with the staff at these centres.

The votes cast at all types of polls are counted after the close of polls on Polling Day. The *Election Act* allows a candidate to briefly visit polling places during polling hours, but campaigning is prohibited. Students and members of the media are also permitted to briefly visit polling places.

A **ballot** is a list of the candidates' names that electors use to vote. Candidates' names are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by their last name. Candidates' names cannot include titles, degrees, prefixes or suffixes. The name of the political party which the candidate represents appears directly below the name of the candidate. If the candidate is not running for a political party, the word "Independent" is printed beneath the candidate's name.

**Voting** involves the following process.

- The Deputy Returning Officer is responsible for obtaining each elector's name and address.
- The Poll Clerk finds the elector's name in the Poll Book beside a consecutive number. The Poll Clerk then draws a line through the elector's name on the List of Electors, which is preprinted inside the Poll Book.
- The Deputy Returning Officer provides the ballot to each elector once their name has been found in or added to the Poll Book. The ballot is numbered with a corresponding number found in the Poll Book and the Deputy Returning Officer initials the back of the ballot.
- The Deputy Returning Officer then provides instructions to the voter to proceed to a polling booth and mark the ballot by placing an "X" in the circle opposite the name of the selected candidate. The ballot should then be folded and handed back to the Deputy Returning Officer once the elector has voted.
- When the voter is in the polling booth, no one else may enter or look into the booth to see the ballot. Voting is private and secret. Exceptions are made if the voter is physically unable to vote or cannot read the ballot. An elector may receive assistance after appropriate oaths are taken.
- Ballots may not be removed from the polling place. If a person declines to vote, the Deputy Returning Officer writes the word "Declined" on the ballot and places it in a separate envelope.
- The Deputy Returning Officer checks the ballot without unfolding it to ensure the number matches and it is the same ballot provided to the voter. The ballot is then placed in the ballot box after the stub with the identifying number is removed.
- The Poll Clerk marks the Poll Book to show the voter has voted.

## TEACHER BACKGROUNDER 4

### After the Election

The electoral process is not finished after an election is complete. Individuals who are involved in an election, including Elections Alberta and the government, have important responsibilities to fulfill.

The work of Elections Alberta is also not finished when an election is over. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for providing reports as well as ensuring that the electoral process happens according to the laws set out by the *Election Act*.

The Chief Electoral Officer is required, by law, to prepare and file certain prescribed reports.

The Chief Electoral Officer submits an annual report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The report provides consolidated information from the financial statements of parties, constituency associations and candidates.

As required by the *Election Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer also submits a report to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices following each enumeration, election, by-election, plebiscite and referendum. The report provides detailed information on each activity, and presents poll-by-poll results of the election.

After an election is over, the Returning Officer must prepare reports on the election and provide these reports to the Chief Electoral Officer. A Returning Officer's appointment expires four months after the election is over.

The Chief Electoral Officer is also responsible for exploring and identifying ways that the electoral process can be improved.

### The Issue of Voter Participation

The issues of low voter turnout and voter apathy in elections for all levels of government – federal, provincial and municipal – has increasingly become a matter of concern for governments, politicians and many Canadians. The reasons are many – some based on opinion and some based on evidence and statistics. The sources that follow provide a sampling of perspectives and statistics on these issues from across Canada.

### Find Out More

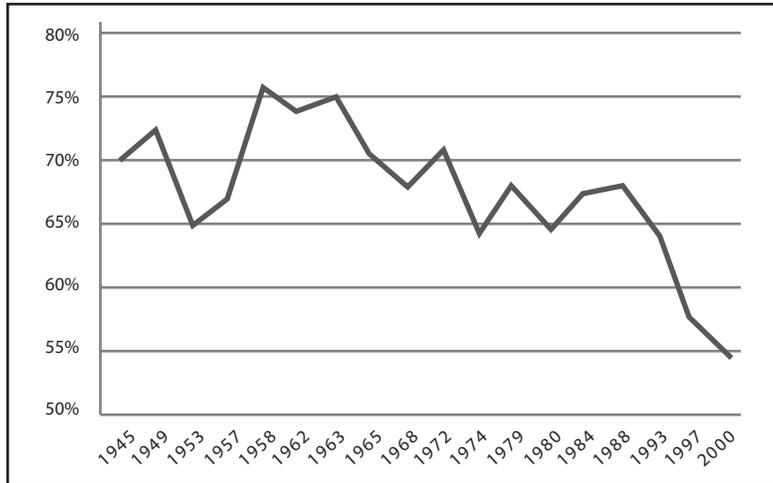


Elections Alberta provides a number of detailed reports on election results and statistics on their website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca).

Statistics Canada provides an overview of youth political participation in the following article:

Milan, Anne (2005). "Willing to Participate: Political engagement of young adults." *Canadian Social Trends, Winter 2005*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. [www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/political.pdf](http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/political.pdf).

**Figure 1 Canadian voter turnout (as a percentage of the voting age population)**



The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, online: <[www.idea.int/vt/region\\_view.efm?CountryCode=CA](http://www.idea.int/vt/region_view.efm?CountryCode=CA)>

Law Commission of Canada (2004). *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services (p. 39). [www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf](http://www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf).



## Find Out More

The Maple Leaf Web website provides a feature topic on *Voter Turnout in Canada* at [www.mapleleafweb.com/features/voter-turnout-canada](http://www.mapleleafweb.com/features/voter-turnout-canada). A variety of perspectives and statistics are provided on this link, including some from other countries.

The *Voter Almanac* link at [www.mapleleafweb.com/voter-almanac](http://www.mapleleafweb.com/voter-almanac) also provides statistics and information.

“... looking at each of the past two general elections, the number of people who did not vote at all was larger than the number of people who voted for the winning party. Now, we can rationalize these results with reference to political circumstances or social change, but at some stage we have to face up to the fact: something is going wrong here, and in a fundamental way. Casting a ballot is the most basic function of our democratic system. That so many Canadians chose not to do so is the political equivalent of the canary in the coalmine. It demonstrates graphically how high the stakes surrounding reform are—that far too many Canadians cannot be bothered to vote because they don’t think their vote matters.”

P. Martin (December 2002–January 2003). “The Democratic Deficit.” *Policy Options at 11* (p. 1). In Law Commission of Canada (2004). *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services (p. 4). [www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf](http://www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf).

“The heart of our citizenry, if one may so speak, is deeply troubled. Across the province, Quebecers are extremely disillusioned with politics. Their frustration with their powerlessness to influence decisions that affect their lives and those of their fellow citizens is palpable. One major source of disappointment is the voting system; citizens do not feel that their vote is truly and systematically reflected in the composition of the National Assembly.” [Translation]

Original source: Steering Committee of the Estates-General on the Reform of Democratic Institutions, *Prenez votre place! La participation citoyenne au coeur des institutions démocratiques québécoises* (Quebec, March 2003) at 21.

Law Commission of Canada (2004). *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services (p. 5). [www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf](http://www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf).

“Under our current voting system, our votes only count—or have impact on the allocation of seats—when we happen to share the most popular partisan viewpoint in our riding. In other words, what you believe in determines whether your vote counts—not the fact that you’re an equal citizen along with everyone else in your riding.”

*Make Every Vote Count* (2003), available from Fair Vote Canada. For contact information visit [www.fairvotecanada.org](http://www.fairvotecanada.org).

Law Commission of Canada (2004). *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services (p. 68).  
[www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf](http://www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf).

**Figure 2 Perceived Reasons Why Young People Less Likely to Vote (Open-ended; multiple responses)**

	Under 25 years (%)	25 years and older (%)
<b>Not Integrated</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>71</b>
Distanced from politics by age; not feeling represented, connected	40	37
Lack of information, understanding, knowledge	34	27
Lack of encouragement	2	4
Too busy, too mobile	3	3
<b>Disengagement</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>59</b>
Uninterested, apathetic	31	30
Negativism, cynicism, disillusionment	9	14
Distrustful of system, politicians	7	9
Irresponsibility, rebelliousness, laziness	4	6
<b>Other</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Do not know</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>*</b>

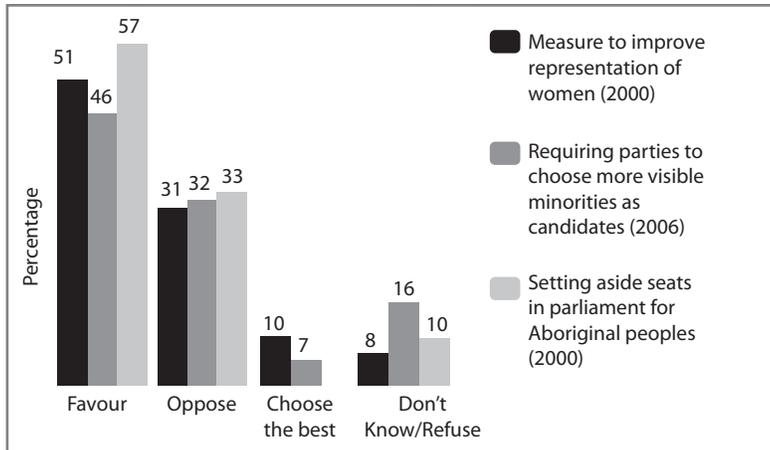
\*less than 1 percent.

J. Pammett and L. LeDuc (2003). “Confronting the Problem of Declining Voter Turnout Among Youth” 5:2 *Electoral Insight at 6*.

“Of particular concern in recent years has been the lack of youth participation in traditional political processes. For example, only about 25 percent of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 24 cast ballots in the 2000 federal general election. Although there is a range of factors contributing to the non-participation of youth, including a lack of knowledge about politics and insufficient time to vote, there is evidence to suggest that many youths do not feel connected to the system of democratic governance, or that they lack interest in politics. [Figure] 2, taken from a recent study completed in co-operation with Elections Canada, reveals some of the reasons that people provided when asked why young people did not vote in the 2000 election. As the table illustrates, one-third of people under the age of 25 cited disinterest and apathy as perceived reasons why youth did not vote, while two fifths suggested that not feeling represented or connected played a role in the decision not to vote.”

Law Commission of Canada (2004). *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services (p. 41).  
[www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf](http://www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf).

**Figure 3 Opinions of Canadians on measures to improve representation of various groups in Parliament**



Adopted from P. Howe and D. Northrup (2000). "Strengthening Canadian Democracy: The Views of Canadians." *Policy Matters at 18–20* (pp. 1-5). The category "choose the best" refers to "choose the best candidate." It does not apply to seats for Aboriginal peoples.

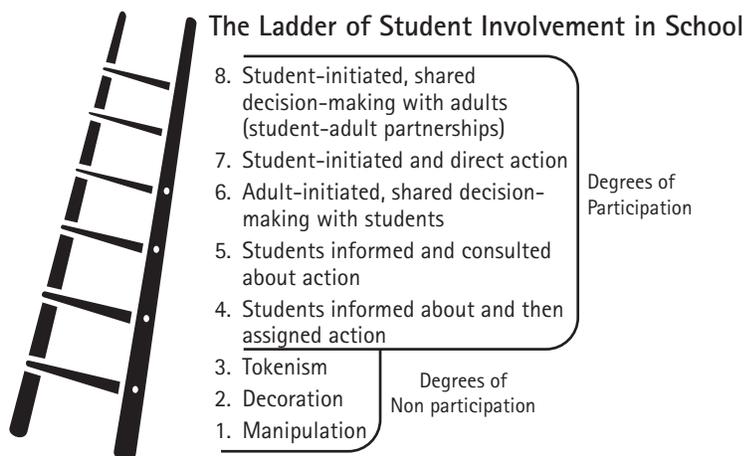
Law Commission of Canada (2004). *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services (p. 63).

[www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf](http://www.fairvotecanada.org/files/VotingCountsElectoralReformforCanada.pdf).

## Youth engagement

Youth engagement can be defined or described as meaningful participation and consistent involvement in activities that are focused on other individuals or groups. Youth can be engaged in many things, and in many different ways. Youth involvement can include volunteer activities, leadership roles, political participation, membership with organizations or individual actions such as participating in meetings, becoming involved in a lawful protest or rally or speaking out at public forums. In other words, participation can range from those actions that are considered to be more "traditionally" based to those that are not. Recent research is showing that young people tend to be involved, but in those activities that are perceived as "non-traditional."

An expert on youth participation, Roger Hart, describes involvement using the analogy of an eight-step ladder. This ladder is referenced in *The Heart of the Matter: Character and Citizenship Education in Alberta Schools Workshop Facilitator Guide* (Alberta Education, 2007). It can provide a useful context in which to analyze the forms of participation that students identify.



Adapted from Roger Hart's *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. New York, NY: UNICEF, 1994.



## Find Out More

A research paper that deals with the concept of youth engagement in social issues and organizations can be accessed on the website [www.mealexchange.com](http://www.mealexchange.com).

Yeung, Monica (January 2007). "Youth Engagement in Canada." *Ingredients for Learning Research Paper*. Toronto: University of Toronto.

Other interesting research articles on the issue of youth engagement and political participation include:

Bristow, Jason. (March 2008). *The Next West Generation: Young Adults, Identity and Democracy*. Calgary: Canada West Foundation.

MacKinnon, Mary Pat; Pitre, Sonia; Watling, Judy. (CPRN Research Report, October 2007). *(Mis) Understanding Youth Engagement Synthesis Report: Charting the Course for Youth Civic and Political Participation*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc.

A paper discussing the issue of Aboriginal youth engagement can be accessed at <http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/retrieve/3566/chodarr0246.pdf>.

Matthew, C. (n.d.) *An Exploration of Aboriginal Youth Engagement*. Centre for Native Policy and Research.



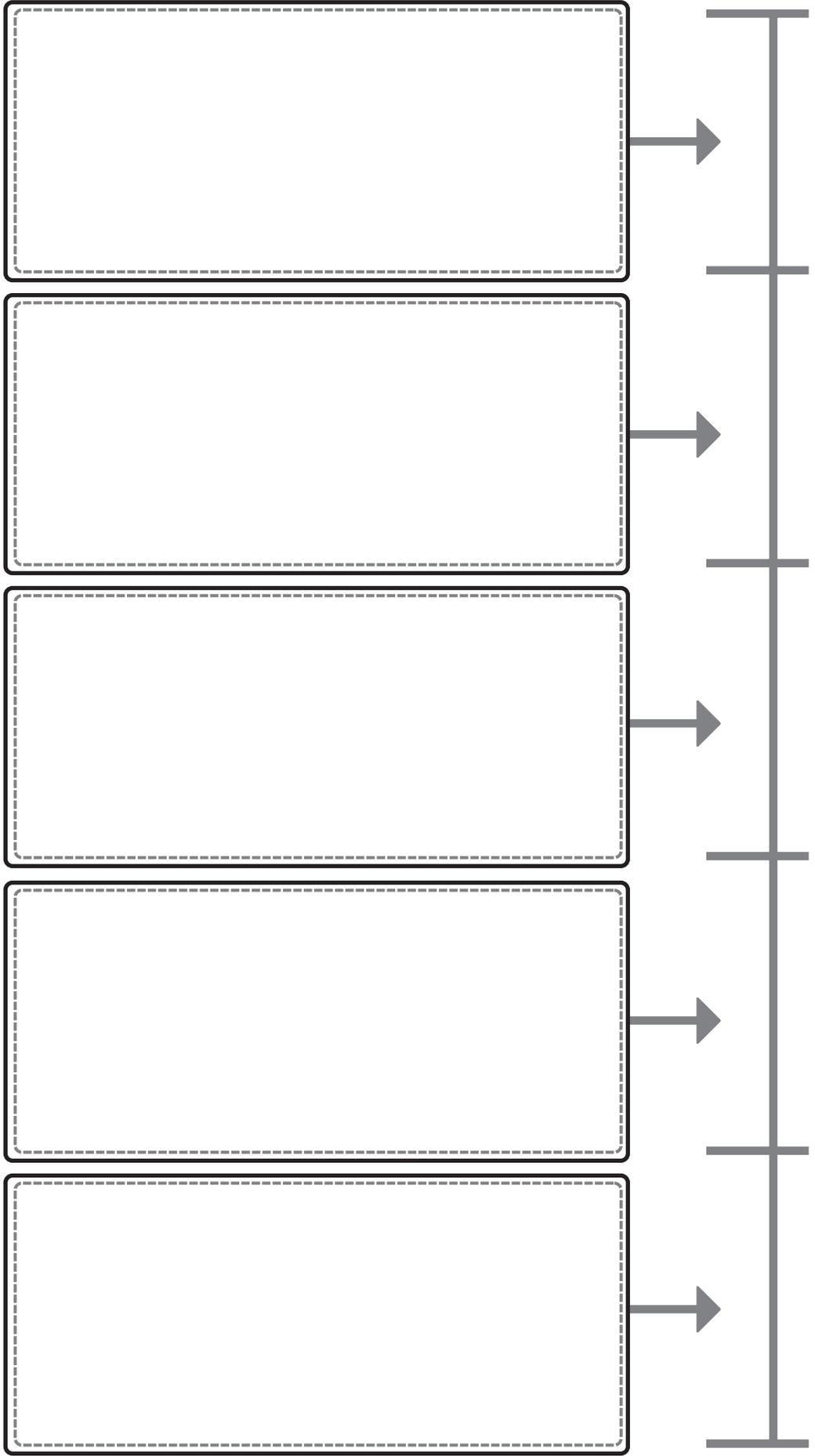
# Graphic Organizers



# KWHL Chart

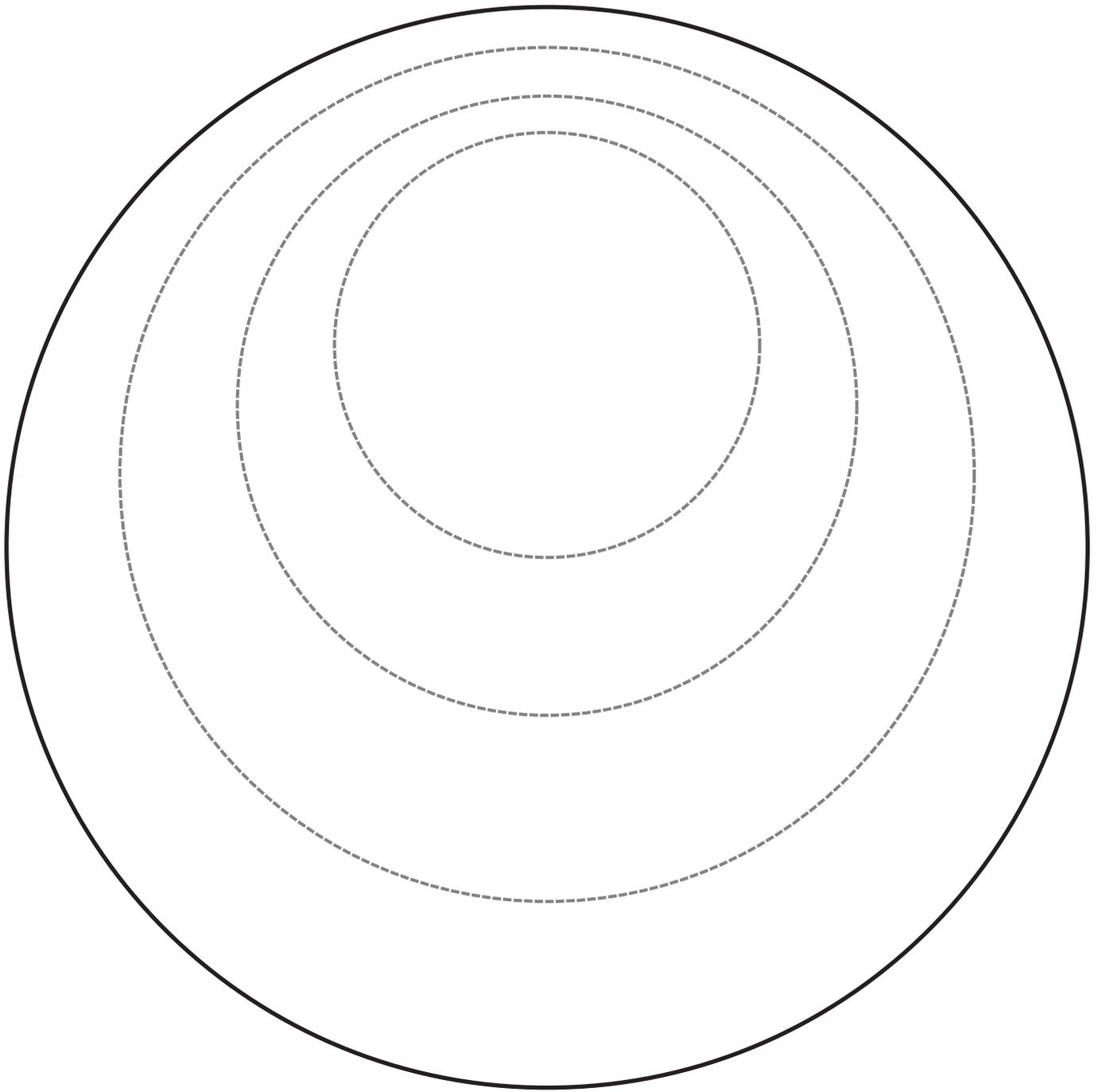
What I Know	What I Want to Know	How I Will Find Out	What I Learned

# Continuum

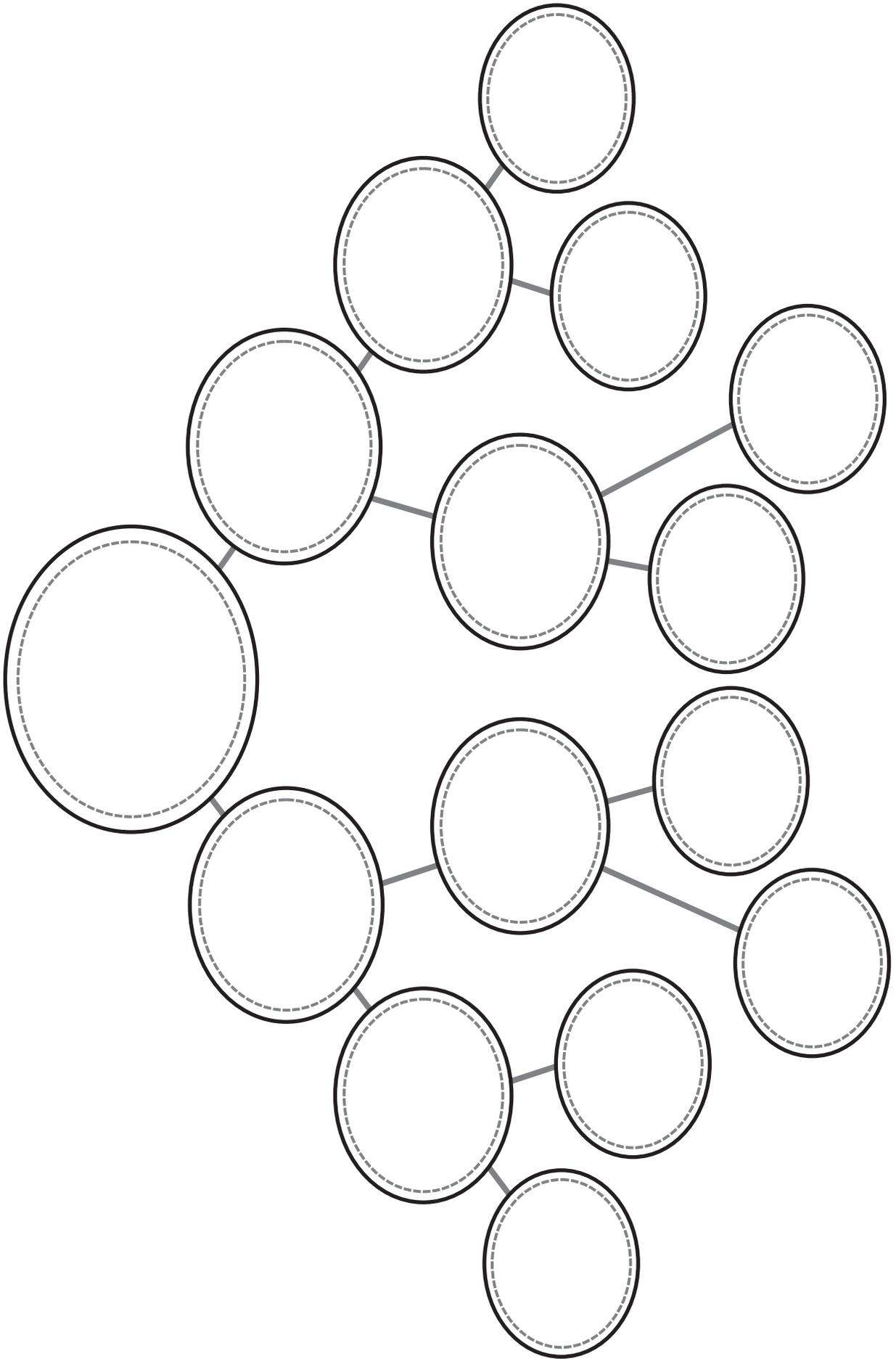




# Sphere of Influence

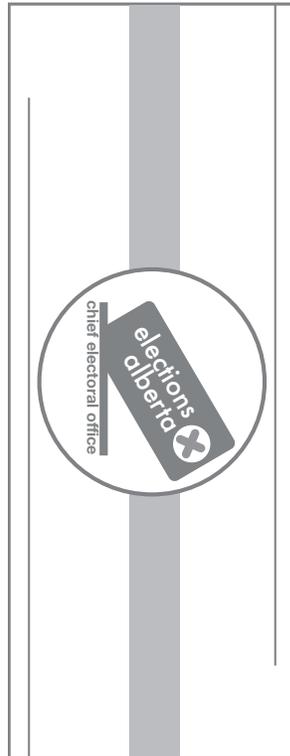
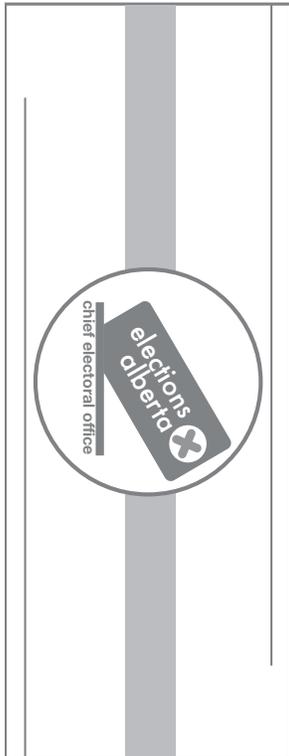
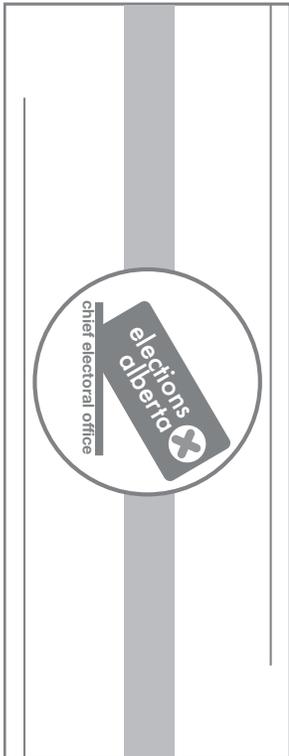
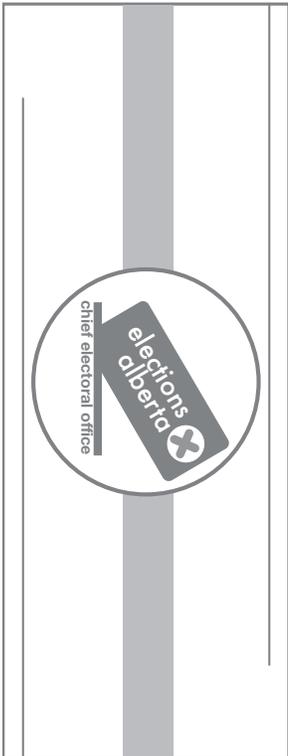
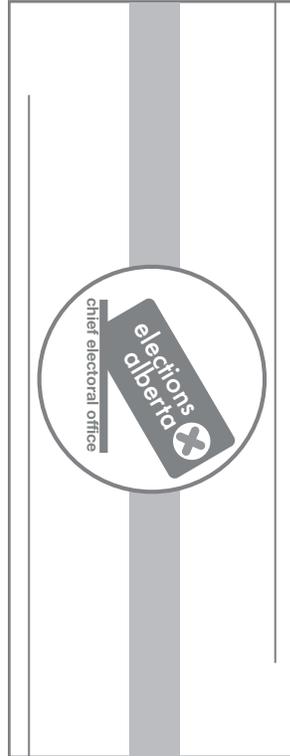
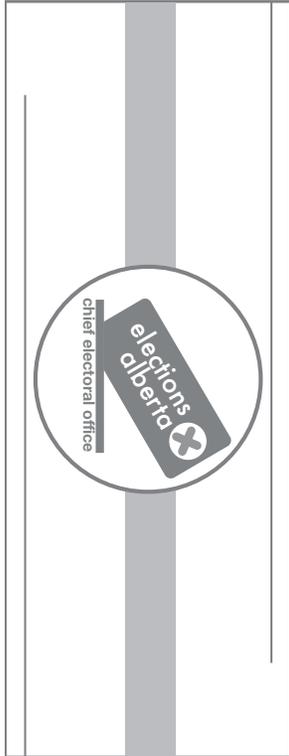
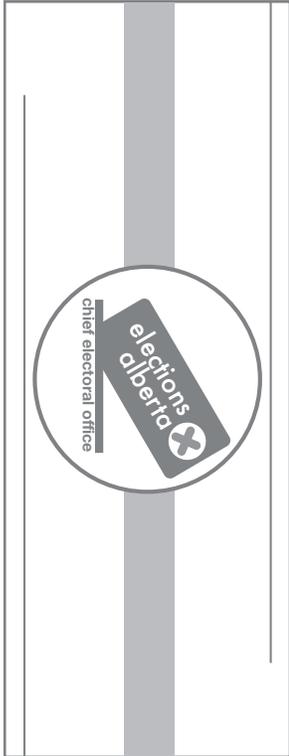
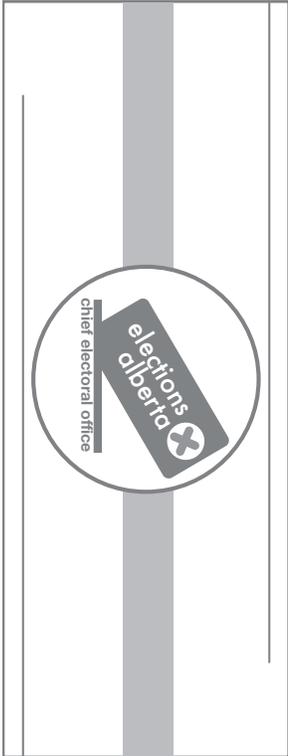


# Triple T-Chart



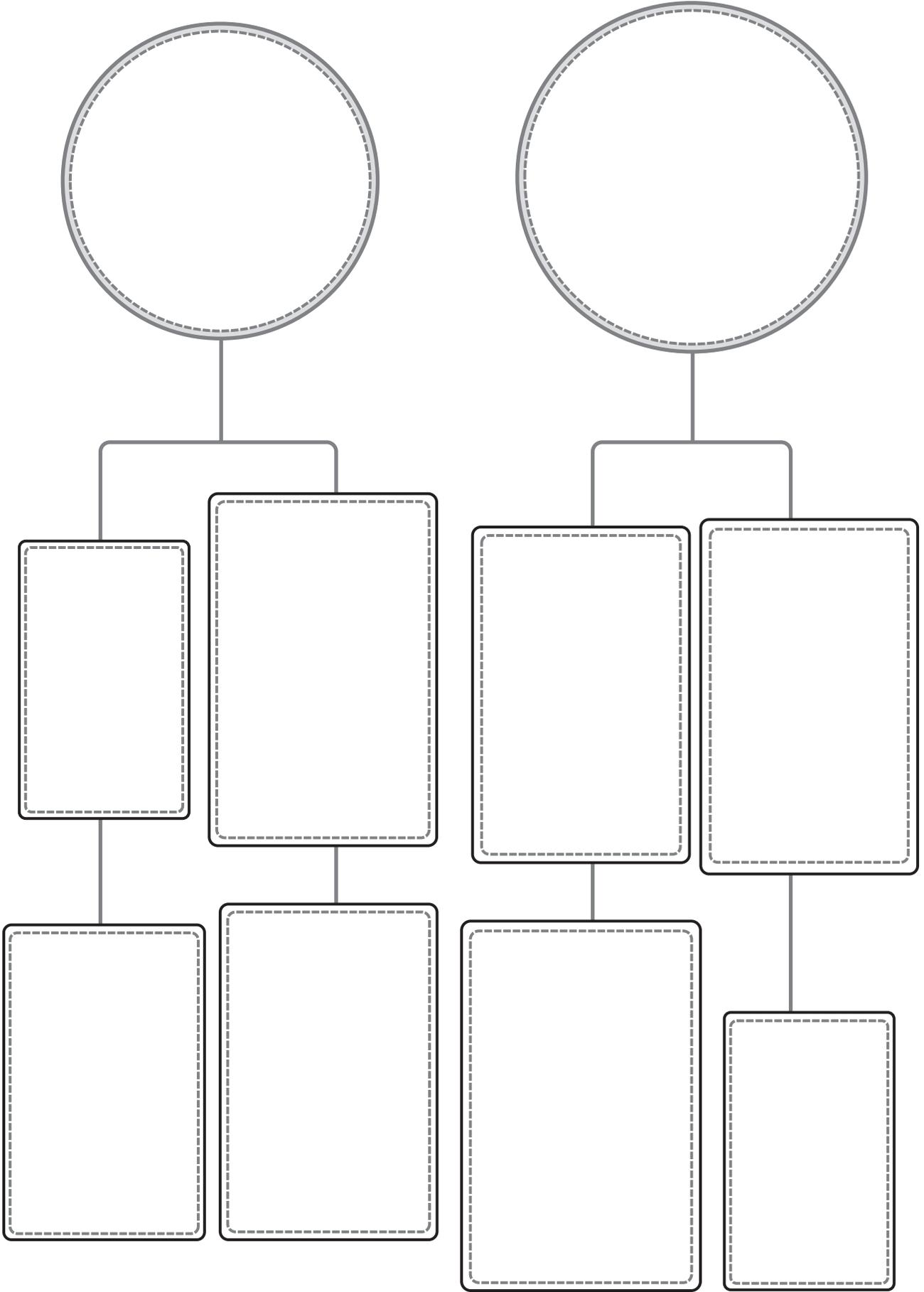
# Mind Map

# Money Cards

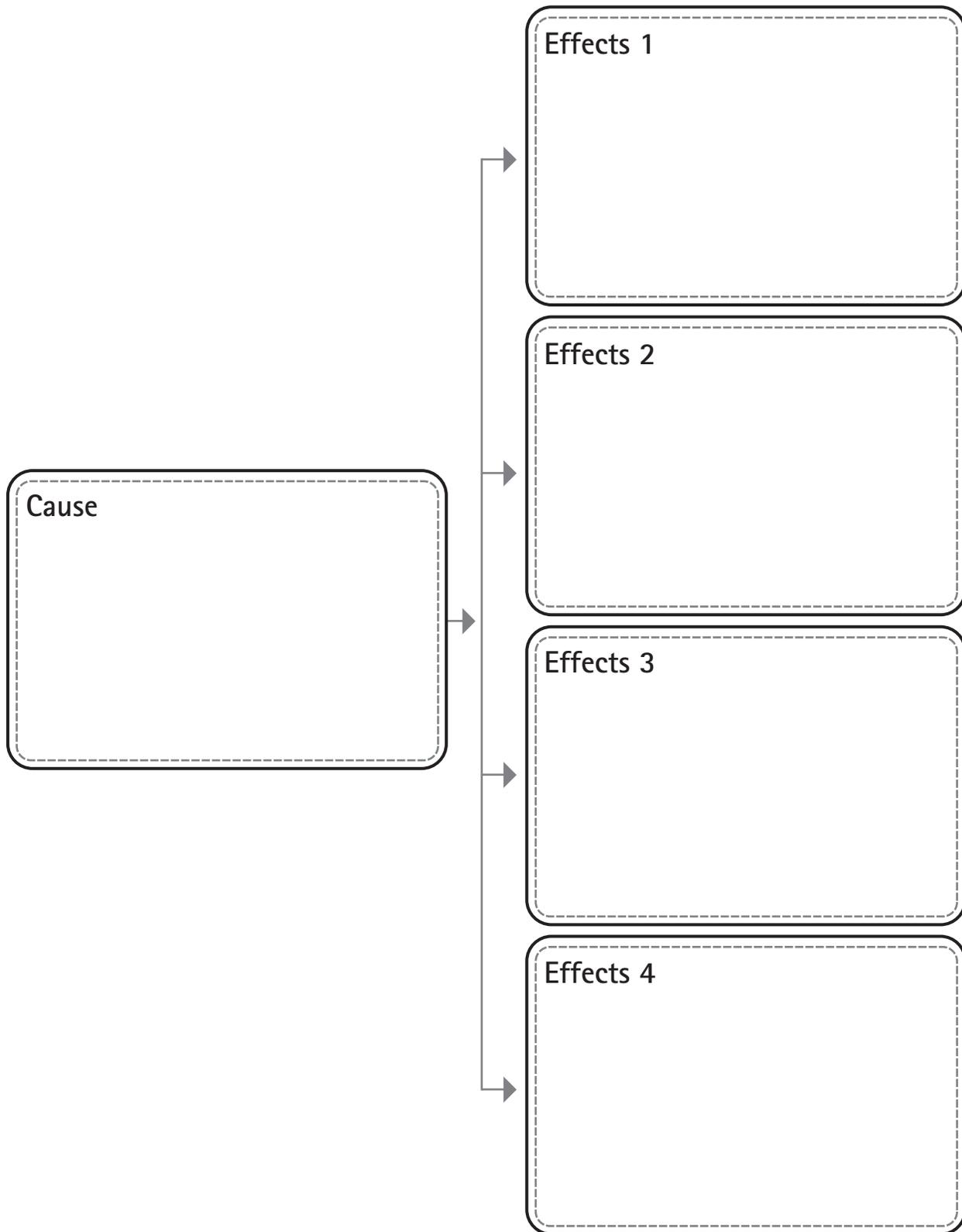


# Cause and Effect Timeline

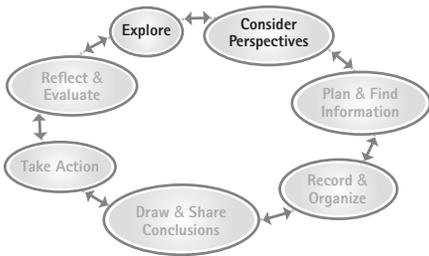
A diagram for a Cause and Effect Timeline. It features a central vertical line. To the left of this line, there are five pairs of empty rectangular boxes with dashed borders. Each pair is connected by a right-pointing arrow. To the right of the central line, there are five single empty rectangular boxes with dashed borders, each aligned horizontally with one of the pairs on the left.



# Cause and Effect Chart



# Project Planner Templates



## Plan It

- What do we already know?
- What do we think about this issue?
- What do we need to understand about this issue?
- How does this issue or question affect us?
- What interests us about this issue or question?
- Why is this important?
- What questions do we have?
- Who is affected and why?
- What different opinions exist?

Ideas turn into action when you plan the steps you need to take. Start planning by thinking about the purpose and goals of your class action project.

**What would you like to see changed? Describe the purpose of your project.**

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**What are the project goals? Write them down. Make the goals focused and specific by describing actions.**

For example, if your project involves helping make your neighbourhood safer or cleaner, identify a specific goal like organizing monthly safety meetings for parents and students, or holding a neighbourhood cleanup day twice a year. If your project involves making your school more aware of the problem of poverty or bullying, identify specific goals like holding a rally or starting a monthly newsletter.

## What resources will help you reach the project goals?

What different types of resources will you need to carry out your project?	What support do you think you will need from people in your classroom, school or community?	Describe how much time you will need to work on the project.	Consider what information will help you carry out your project. Make a list of questions you have.

### Project Group

Make a list of everyone in your project group.

- What is each group member good at? What would each group member like to do?
- How will you assign tasks?
- How will you keep track of each group member's responsibilities?

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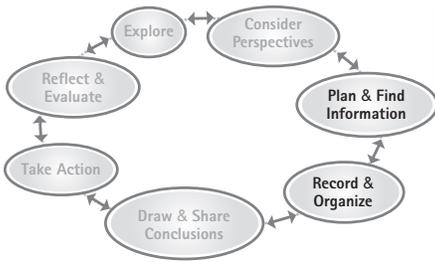
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- How will we find out what we need to know and understand?
- What type of information do we need?
- What sources do we need to consult?
- What is the best way to research?
- Who can we find out more from?
- How will we record our research?
- What similarities and differences do we see?
- What comparisons can we make?
- What connections do we see?



## Get Informed

What information do you need to support the project? Consider different types of sources you can consult to answer questions and develop knowledge and expertise about your issue.

### Review Learning

What have you already learned about your class action project? What information is important and relevant to the project?

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### Where can you find information?

**Print sources:** Go to your school or local library. Books, magazines and newspapers can provide research information.

**Internet sources:** Make a list of websites of interesting organizations, government sites, online newspapers and magazines. Check the search terms you will use with your teacher. When you find information, check the accuracy of the information you find on the Internet with your teacher or another adult.

**People sources:** Talk to friends and family members. Identify individuals who have expertise and organizations that can provide information.

List other sources.

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### Ask Questions

What more can you learn about the issues that relate to your project? Develop questions to which you need answers. For example:

- What makes this issue unique and important?
- Who is most affected? Why?
- Does this issue have local, national, or global effects? What are they?
- Who is already involved? (Consider individuals or groups such as government, businesses, non-profit organizations, etc.)
- What different strategies have others used to try to deal with the issue?

List other questions you may have:

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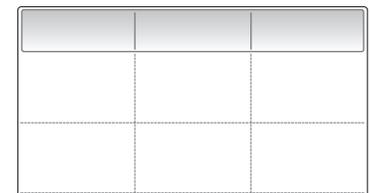
## Organize Research

Make a plan to find information. Identify the responsibilities and tasks of each group member by using this chart.

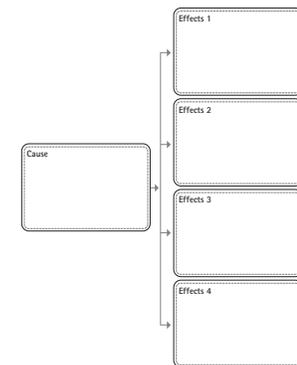
Group Member	Responsibilities (Area or Topic)	Tasks and Specific Jobs	Target Date

Use graphic organizers to help you organize your research. Decide what type of graphic organizer works best for collecting the information you need. Ask your teacher to provide you with the organizers you need.

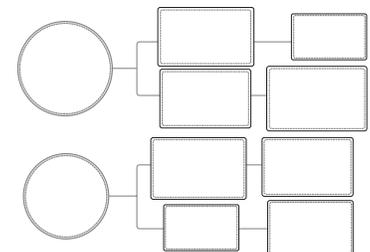
### Triple T-Chart



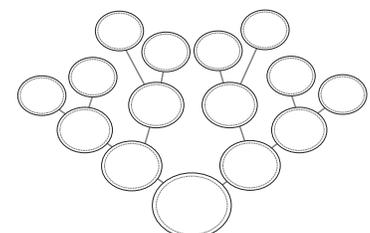
### Cause and Effect Chart

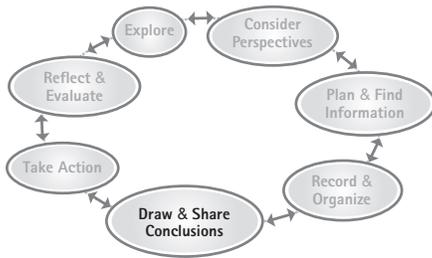


### Flow Chart



### Mind Map





How will we share our information?  
 What would happen if...?  
 What conclusions can we make?  
 What evidence supports our conclusions?

Communicating effectively involves identifying the people you know and what they can offer or help you with.

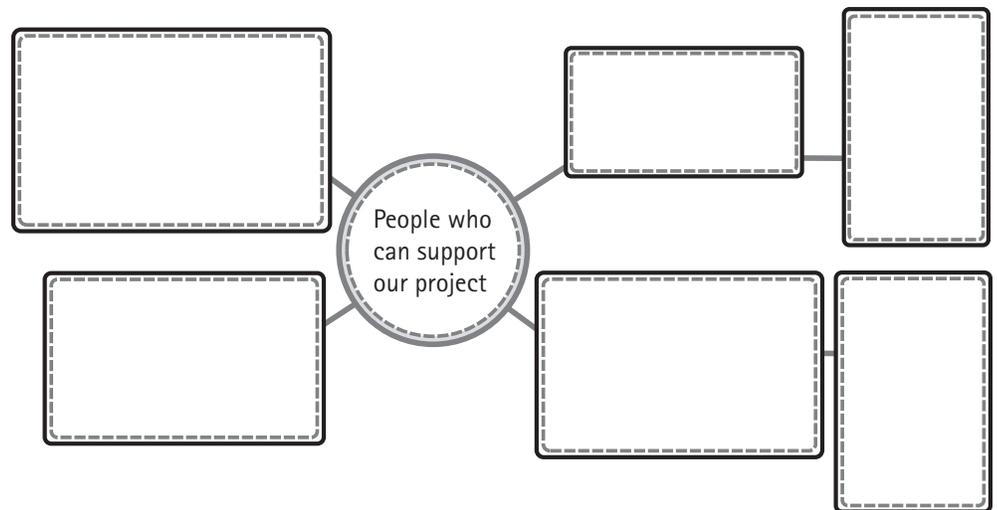
- Use a mind map to start identifying people you think can support your project. Ask your teacher for this graphic organizer.
- Describe what they can do in the second layer of the map.
- Identify other people who could contribute to your project.



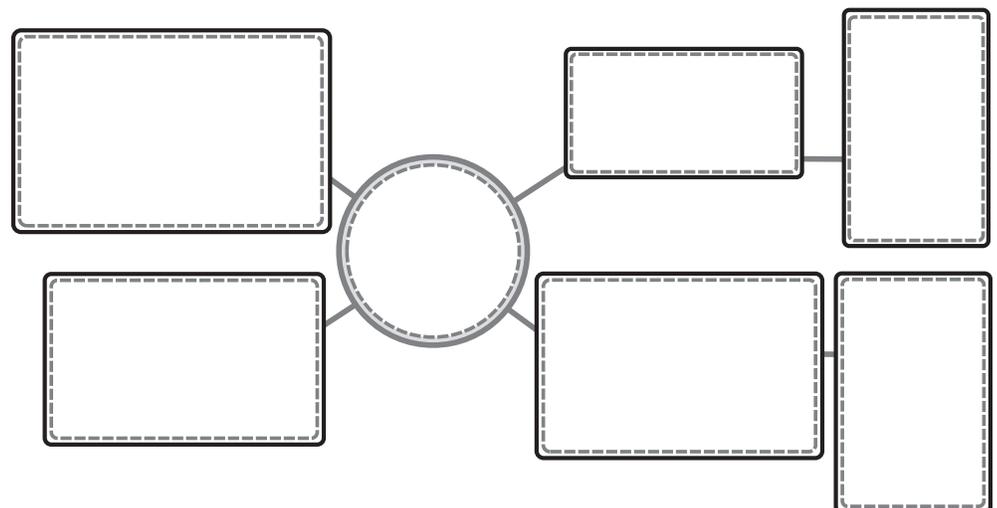
## Communicate and Implement

Effective communication is important to the success of your project. Effective communication involves:

- Communicating with others to ask questions and find information
- Asking for help from experts
- Telling others about your project
- Getting support for your project.



What progress have you made? Summarize the actions you have taken so far in the flow chart below. What are the next steps?



What conclusions can you make from your class action project? Use the chart below to analyze what you have accomplished and learned.

What is most important to know about our class action project?	What have we learned that we did not know before? What conclusions can we make?	What evidence supports our conclusions?	What are some solutions that address the issue or challenge of our class action project? What would happen if we implemented these solutions?



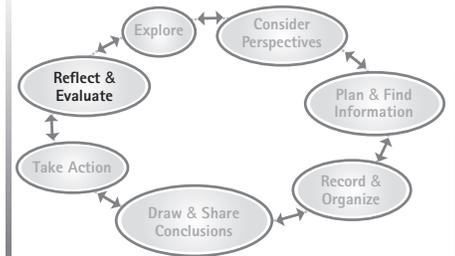
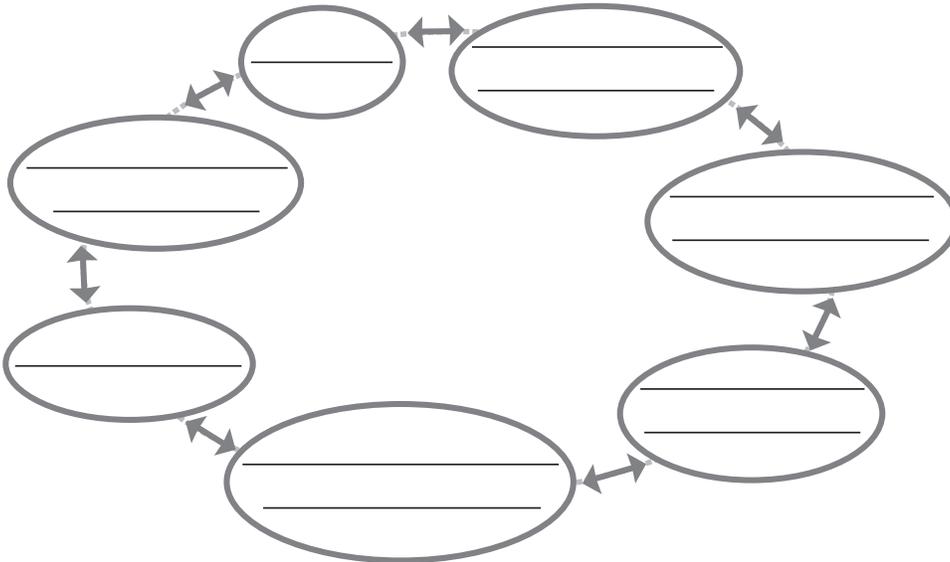


## Assess the Impact

How can you **assess**, or judge, the impact of your activities?

- Keep your assessment simple. Evaluate how successful you think your activities were. What were the results? Describe them.
- Ask for the input of others. What did they think? How were they affected?
- Look for unexpected results from your activities. What were they and who did they affect?
- What else could you do? What other ideas resulted from your activities?

Use the inquiry circle to assess the process you have used to implement your project.



How effective were our actions?

What should we change?

What should we do next?

What do we need to find out about?

### How can you tell if you are successful? Consider:

- The people who have participated
- Who and how many you have affected
- Satisfaction from team members
- Other projects that get ideas from your work
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We hope this resource is helpful in supporting your Social Studies program. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about this resource.

Please return this page to:

**Elections Alberta**  
Suite 100, 11510 Kingsway NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5G 2Y5

Office Hours:  
Monday through Friday

8:15 a.m. to 12 noon;  
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tel: 780-427-7191  
Fax: 780-422-2900

Other locations in the province can call toll free by dialing 310-0000 then dial 780-427-7191

This feedback form can also be completed online on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca), under the *Education* tab.

## *Building Future Voters*

### ■ **Teacher's Feedback Form**

1. This resource provides effective and practical strategies to support student learning about citizenship, democracy and the electoral process.

strongly agree     agree     disagree     strongly disagree

COMMENTS

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2. This resource is well organized, and easy to read and use.

strongly agree     agree     disagree     strongly disagree

COMMENTS

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3. The activities and strategies in this resource were effective in helping me prepare to work with students at the Grades 6, 9 or 12 levels (circle one).

strongly agree     agree     disagree     strongly disagree

COMMENTS

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4. We welcome your comments and suggestions for future editions of this resource.

COMMENTS

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**■ Permission Form**



Elections Alberta has developed educational resources, called **Building Future Voters**, for teaching about citizenship, democracy and the electoral process for Grades 6, 9 and 12 Social Studies classrooms. Some activities that your child completes may involve working directly with a Returning Officer of an Alberta electoral division.

Elections Alberta would like to share examples of student ideas, responses and work on their website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca). They are asking for your permission in two areas:

**One: To share your child’s work with Elections Alberta**

I/we are aware that by giving this consent, I/we are permitting Elections Alberta and Returning Officers who may visit the classroom, to view samples of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child)’s work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

**Two: To display a sample of your child’s work on the Elections Alberta website**

NOTE: These samples would include your child’s first name and community only and would appear on the Elections Alberta website.

I/we are aware that by giving this consent, I/we are permitting Elections Alberta to display samples of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child)’s work on the Elections Alberta website at [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca), and that if consent were withheld, this posting would not occur.

I \_\_\_\_\_ give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_’s work (if selected) to be displayed on the Elections Alberta website.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

If you have any questions or concerns, Elections Alberta can be contacted using the information below:

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***Building Future Voters***

**■ Teaching Ideas & Student Work Submission Form**

The teaching and learning process can always be improved. We welcome your ideas and suggestions for enhancing, adapting to adding to the activities, information and materials in this resource.

Please submit your ideas on this form and attach any photographs or photocopies you may have of student work. Ensure that you also attach the **Permission Form** provided on page 133 of this resource with any student work that you send to us.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Description of idea or suggestion (Attach extra pages if required):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Attached:**

Student work (Describe and identify students by first name, grade level and community. Attach list if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Permission Form(s)





