

# Lesson 1: Government and Elections

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How is government organized in Canada?
- How do we choose our elected representatives at the federal level?
- What was the outcome of the 2021 federal election?

## OVERVIEW

Canada has several levels of government, each with its own elected representatives and areas of responsibility. Elected representatives are chosen through elections.

In this lesson, students explore the main levels of government in Canada. After learning about our voting system, students analyze the results of the 2021 federal election. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on what they learned and share any lasting questions.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- identify the roles and responsibilities associated with the different levels of government;
- explain how representatives are elected at the federal level;
- analyze the 2021 federal election results; and,
- communicate key concepts about government and elections in Canada.

## STARTER

1. Show students the photo in Slide Deck 1A and ask them to tell you any information they know about it (who, what, where, when and how).

Key details:

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Members of Parliament are pictured in the House of Commons in Ottawa on September 22, 2022.
- Canadians elect representatives to debate issues and pass laws for the country. These representatives are called Members of Parliament.
- After the last election, the Liberal Party of Canada formed government because they had the most members in the House of Commons. As a result, Liberal party's leader (Justin Trudeau) is the prime minister.

2. In pairs or small groups, invite students to share what they know about how government is organized in Canada. Afterwards review as a class.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Using the '[Levels of Government](#)' video, review how government is structured in Canada. The video covers the different responsibilities for each level of government, and the titles given to the elected representatives and leader of the government.

2. Play the Government in Canada Trivia Game (Slide Deck 1B) to review the key concepts. The content is based on information from the video, along with summary content in the review slides.

3. Explain to students that the levels of government also work together on many issues, such as healthcare. For example, the federal government focuses on providing funding to the provinces and territories (through the Canada Health Transfer), as well as health protection, disease surveillance and prevention, including approving and buying vaccines. The provincial government handles health-care delivery, including hospitals and doctors, health promotion and public health initiatives such as vaccination campaigns. The municipal government focuses on paramedic services, sanitation, disease control, as well as setting up vaccination clinics.

4. Ask students to share what they know about the process of how we choose our representatives. Have students discuss in pairs or small groups and then review responses as a class.

Afterwards, review the election process in Canada using the [‘Federal Elections’](#) video and Slide Deck 1C. Key points:

- The country is divided into 338 smaller geographic areas called ridings (or electoral districts). During a federal election, each riding has its own race, where interested individuals compete for the job of Member of Parliament (MP). These individuals are called candidates. Most candidates belong to a political party – a group of people who share similar beliefs about government and society.
- In our voting system, voters can only choose one candidate on the ballot.
- In each riding, the candidate with the most votes wins and becomes the MP.
- The political party with the greatest number of MPs usually forms government and their leader becomes the prime minister.
- The party with the second greatest number of MPs becomes the official opposition and their leader becomes the leader of the official opposition.

5. As a class, analyze the results of the 2021 federal election using Slide Deck 1C (includes both general election and Student Vote results). Discussion questions:

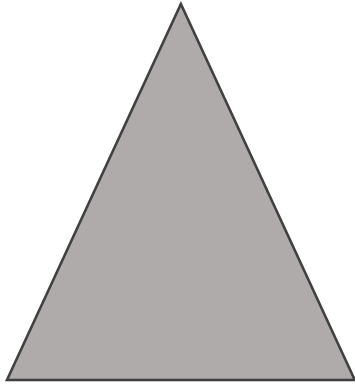
- Which party formed government?
- Which party is the official opposition?
- How did the Student Vote results compare to the general election? How were they similar and how were they different?

## CONSOLIDATION

Ask students to reflect on their learning using the triangle, square, circle graphic organizer.

- Triangle: What are three important points you have learned?
- Square: What is something that you agreed with?
- Circle: What is something that you are wondering or that is circling in your head?

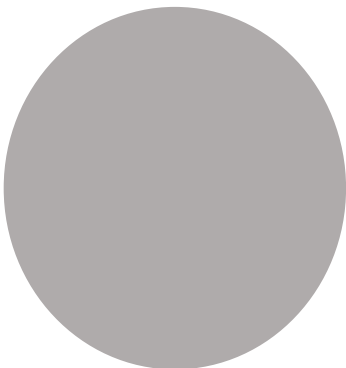
## Triangle-Square-Circle Graphic Organizer



**What are three important points you have learned?**



**What is something that you agreed with?**



**What is something that you are wondering or that is circling in your head?**