

Lesson 2: Preparing for the Meeting

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Why do people want to run for political office?
- What is the role of elected representatives?
- What questions or concerns do I want to share with my Member of Parliament?

OVERVIEW

Members sit in the House of Commons to serve as representatives of the people. Members participate in debate about important issues, convey their constituents' views and concerns with the government, and advocate on their behalf.

In this lesson, students learn about the role of elected representatives and investigate their school's riding. Afterwards, students reflect on their own concerns and ideas they would like to share with their Member of Parliament. Afterwards, students brainstorm questions they would like to ask during their Rep Day meeting.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- analyze the reasons why people run for political office;
- describe the role of elected representatives;
- identify their school's riding and Member of Parliament;
- discuss concerns and issues that matter to them; and,
- formulate questions they want to ask their MP.

STARTER

1. Watch the "[Rep Day: Why Run for MP?](#)" video as a class. (Note: This video was filmed in spring 2021 and some MPs are no longer in their position or with the same political party.)

2. Using a Think-Pair-Share protocol, ask students to discuss some of all of the following questions:

- What did you find most interesting from the video?
- Did their responses influence your view of politicians? If so, how?
- Could you relate to any of the MPs? Would you consider running for political office?

ACTIVITIES

1. Watch the animated video "[CIVIX Explains: Elected Representatives](#)" to become familiar with the role of elected representatives.

- Each elected member represents the people living in a specific geographic area, called a riding or constituency.
- Elected representatives are responsible for proposing, studying, debating and voting on bills (potential laws), and reviewing and approving government spending.

- Elected representatives also work with their constituency office to respond to the concerns of their constituents (people living in their area), helping them navigate government services and intervening when necessary to solve issues.
- Public service is a public trust. It requires that our elected representatives act honestly and in the best interests of their constituents, not for themselves or the interests of certain groups.

2. Watch the “[Rep Day: Rewarding Aspects](#)” video as a class to listen to MPs share what they find rewarding about their role. Afterwards debrief as a class. Guiding questions:

- How were their responses similar or different?
- Would you consider a career where you serve or help the people living in your community, or where you try to improve society?

3. Using CPAC’s Route 338 website (‘Explore the Map’), look up your Member of Parliament and information about your riding. This site has pictures and fast facts about geography, culture and residents.

- What makes your riding unique?
- How would you describe your local community?
- Can you think of any opportunities or challenges with being a Member of Parliament for your riding?

Have students create a fact sheet with details about their MP and riding so that they can refer to them during the meeting. This allows the conversation to focus on more substantive issues, rather than basis facts.

4. Emphasize the role of elected representatives to listen to the concerns of people living in their riding (constituents). To prepare for the meeting, use a discussion protocol to get students talking about issues and concerns that they have.

Guiding questions:

- What concerns do you have today or about your future?
- What issues are important to you? What issues should the government take action on?
- In what ways, could the government help young Canadians or your community? Do you have any ideas to share?

Suggested discussion protocol:

- **Conver-stations:** Students are placed into groups of four to six students. The first discussion begins with the first question. After enough time has passed for discussion, one or two students from each group rotate to a different group, while the other group members remain. Once in their new group, they will discuss the next question, and share some of the key points from their last group’s conversation. For the next rotation, students who have not rotated before may be chosen to move, resulting in groups that are continually evolving.

5. Using a sticky note brainstorming session, ask students what questions they would like to ask their Member of Parliament. Questions could focus on why they wanted to become an elected representative, interesting experiences they have had during their time, their most important accomplishments, new projects the government has started in the community, or issues that matter to them. Include some short personal questions as well, such as what is their favourite place in the riding, favourite movie or TV show,

favourite subject in school, how many siblings they have, etc. Have students write them on their sticky notes and post them on wall or blackboard.

6. Organize the questions from the brainstorming strategy into themes and write down a final list of questions to ask your Member of Parliament. Refer to the 'Framework for Planning your Virtual Meeting.' Consider sharing some of the questions in advance with your MP so that they can prepare.

CONSOLIDATION

Have students fill out the *3-2-1 Exit Card* on the following page (two cards per page).

- What are three things you learned about the role of elected representatives?
- What are two questions you want to ask your Member of Parliament?
- What is one thing you want to share with your Member of Parliament?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

After the meeting with your Member of Parliament, ask students to write a follow-up letter thanking them for their time and any final thoughts or concerns they have.

Exit Card 3-2-1

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