

SECONDARY LESSON 2: PREPARING FOR THE MEETING



GUIDING QUESTIONS

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

OVERVIEW

Members of Parliament sit in the House of Commons to serve as representatives of the people. Members participate in debate about important issues, communicate 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. Next, students reflect on ways to engage in conversation in a constructive and respectful manner. Afterwards, students brainstorm questions they would like to ask during their Rep Day meeting using different discussion protocols.

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?](#)" (2023) video as a class.
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?

TEACHER'S NOTE:

The 'Think Pair Share' protocol consists of four steps.

1. Ask students a question or use a prompt.
2. Ask students to think individually about the question or prompt.
3. Divide the students into pairs and have them share their thoughts and reflections with each other.
4. After the students have exchanged their thoughts with their partner, have a group discussion as a class.

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 specific groups.

2. Watch the "[Rep Day: What Motivates you to Be an MP?](#)" (2023) 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 338Canada's website ("[Explore the Map](#)") or the [Elections.ca](#) website ('Voter Information Service'), look up your Member of Parliament and information about your riding. This site has a riding map and you can also use this as a starting point to look up 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 based on background facts.

4. Emphasize the role of elected representatives to listen to the concerns of people (constituents) living in their riding. In tandem, discuss the need for us to engage in conversation in a constructive and respectful manner, especially with someone who may hold different views. Discuss: How do we communicate in a respectful manner? What behaviours reflect active listening?

TEACHER NOTE:

Consider reviewing [Handout A2.1: Being an Active Listener](#)

5. To prepare for the meeting, use one of the suggested discussion protocols below 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 should the government take action on?
- What can the government do to help young Canadians?

Suggested discussion protocols:

First Option: Conver-stations

- a) Place students in groups of 4 to 6.
- b) Have students discuss answers to the first guiding question: “What concerns do you have about your future?” Designate one student from each group to take notes to collect ideas.
- c) After 5 minutes, have students rotate groups: 2 students from each group will move to a new group while the other members remain.
- d) Once the new groups have been established, have students discuss the second guiding question: “What issues should the government take action on?” Students may refer to the key points gathered from the previous discussion, and share the ideas they came up with from their other groups.
- e) After 5 minutes, have students rotate groups one more time. Have 2 students who have not changed groups yet move to a new group.
- f) Once the final groups have been established, have students discuss the final guiding question: “What can the government do to help young Canadians?”
- g) After a final 5 minutes of discussion, have one representative from each group share some of the ideas their group came up with.

Second Option: Note ‘n Vote

Use this discussion protocol to help students brainstorm questions they would like to pose to their MP. Students will use sticky notes or pieces of paper to generate ideas and respond to their classmates.

- a) Explain to students that their task is to come up with questions that they would like to ask during the MP visit. 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
 - Issues that matter to them, family or friends

Students should also feel free to add personal questions, as well, such as the MP’s favourite place to go in their riding, their favourite movie or TV show, favourite (and least-favourite) subject in school, etc.

- b) Provide students with sticky notes or pieces of paper and tape that they can use to affix their questions to a board or wall.
- c) Once everyone has submitted their questions, give students time to read the questions from the other members of the class.

Give students the chance to vote on the questions they think are the most interesting or important. Students may identify their favorite questions by adding checkmarks or applying stickers to their top three choices, or through a class discussion where students can identify and make a case for the questions they would most like to raise. Encourage students to identify questions that they did not come up with themselves.

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 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, as a class, go through the MP Visit Debrief and Follow-Up activities.

EXIT CARD 3-2-1

3

What are **three** things you learned about the role of elected representatives?

2

What are **two** questions you want to ask your Member of Parliament?

1

What is **one** thing you want to share with your Member of Parliament?

3

What are **three** things you learned about the role of elected representatives?

2

What are **two** questions you want to ask your Member of Parliament?

1

What is **one** thing you want to share with your Member of Parliament?