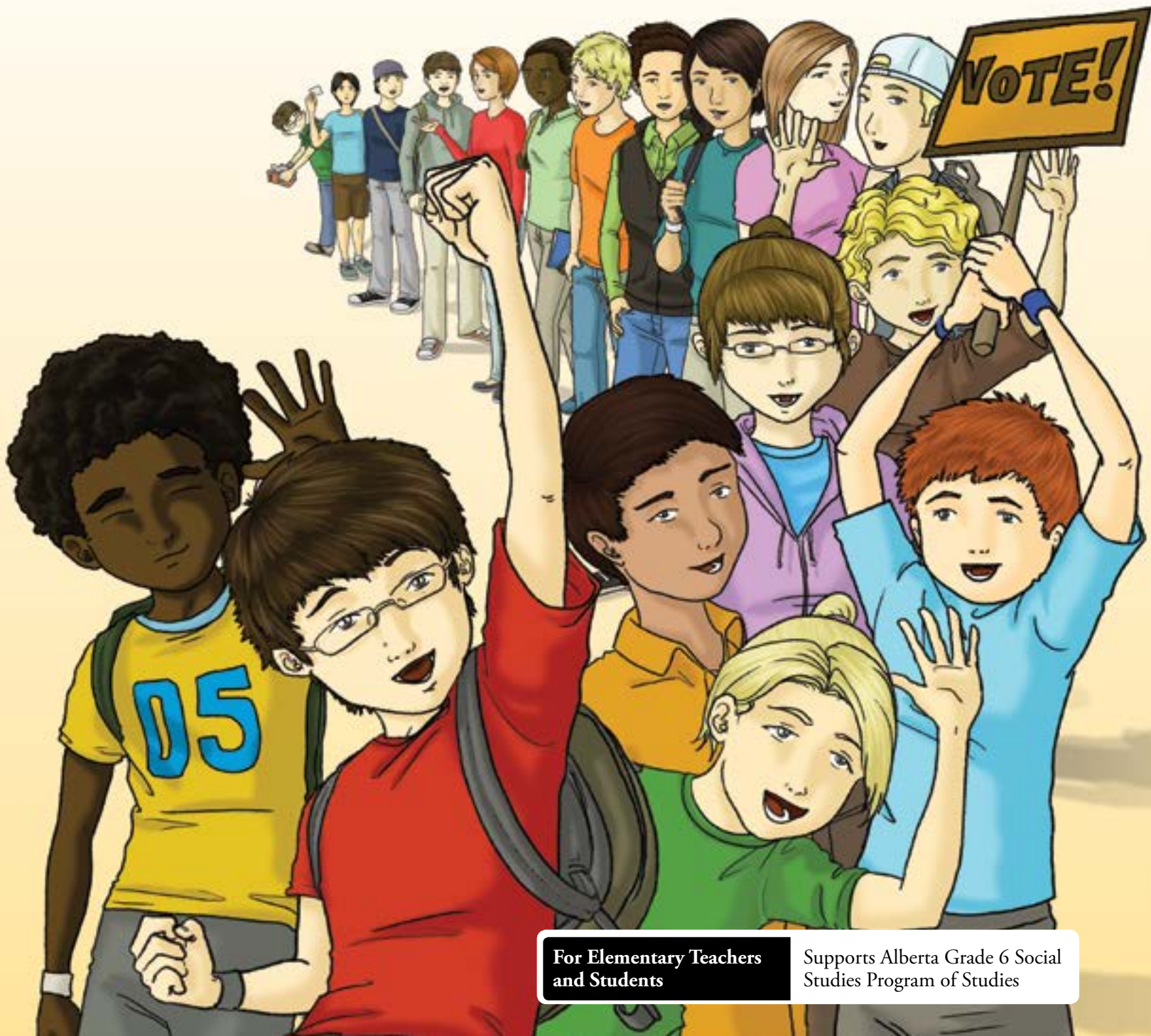


BUILDING FUTURE VOTERS

*Teaching and Learning About Democracy, Elections and
How to Participate as a Citizen*



For Elementary Teachers
and Students

Supports Alberta Grade 6 Social
Studies Program of Studies

“Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.”

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

At **Elections Alberta**, we are committed to encouraging youth to explore the democracy in which we live. Youth who are introduced to democracy at an early age are more likely to take on a consistent, active role, as an adult.

Through *Building Future Voters*, we strive to develop an informed understanding of the electoral system and the role each individual has as a citizen so they may take personal responsibility and initiative in influencing the outcome of important decisions that will ultimately affect their lives.

This new edition modernizes the resource in both print and digital form, providing educators and students improved access to its many learning opportunities.

It is with personal hope that *Building Future Voters* will continue to contribute to the development of the next generation of informed and engaged voters.



Glen Resler

Chief Electoral Officer

Acknowledgements

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Please be aware that internet websites may change or disappear in the time between when this resource was written and when it is read. All websites in this resource were current at the time of publication.

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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A variety of support materials are also available on Election Alberta's *Building Future Voters* website at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

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■ Building Future Voters

Teaching and Learning about Democracy, Elections and How to Participate as a Citizen

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 a deeper understanding of democracy and an appreciation for the impact of their actions on their communities. *Building Future Voters* emphasizes engaged and active participation, collaboration and commitment to democratic values – all principles important to meaningful participation in society.



Learn through Competencies

This teaching and learning resource provides a range of rich opportunities to develop competencies that integrate across curricular areas. These competencies provide a focus for the learning activities in this resource and encourage the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge for deep and lifelong learning.

Students **think critically** when they conceptualize what democracy means to them. They question and analyze evidence, assertions and assumptions about democracy and citizenship and reflect on their own thinking.

Students **solve problems** when they approach challenges relating to citizenship and governance with creativity and flexibility. They also clarify, draw from multiple perspectives and explore and generate ideas for action.

Students **manage information** as they use a variety of digital and print sources, organize and make connections. They interpret and analyze the reliability, validity and integrity of current, historical and geographic information.

Students **innovate and apply creative thinking** when they generate new ideas and apply understandings of democracy, government and the role of the electoral process. They transform ideas into actions and contribute to their communities.

Students **communicate** when they share ideas through oral, written and non-verbal media. They also consider perspectives and demonstrate curiosity and respect for government and electoral processes.

Students **collaborate** when they work with others, exchange ideas and share responsibilities to explore diverse opinions, approaches and goals.

Students **build cultural and global citizenship skills** as they analyze political and social contexts and evaluate the impact of decision-making. They build appreciation for equity and diversity and believe in their capacity to make a difference.

Students **build strategies for personal growth** as they explore ways to contribute to their communities and develop a commitment to democratic ideals.

This teaching and learning resource supports the Alberta Grade 6 Social Studies curriculum and learning about participation in the democratic process, provincial government and communities.

Direct democracy
Social participation
Representative democracy
Responsibilities
Provincial government
Provincial electoral process



Competency Cues

Teaching and learning support for competencies is provided throughout this resource. Look for cues and tips on ways to focus on and develop the competencies.

Alberta Education identifies and provides support for the competencies at <https://education.alberta.ca/competencies>.

● About *Building Future Voters*

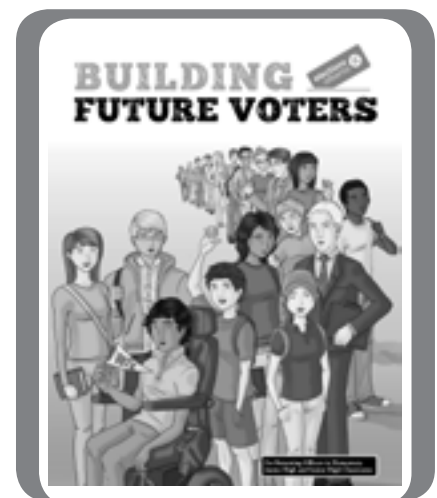
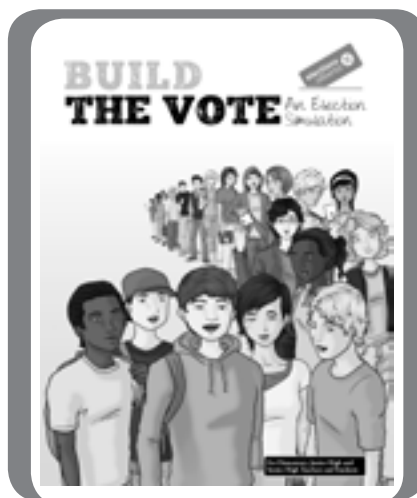
This resource is about more than just voting. It encourages the involvement of students in their schools and communities as a necessary first step to involvement in political processes, including voting.

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 make a commitment to become active, participatory citizens
- Explore multiple understandings of citizenship, identities, change, rights, responsibilities and participation
- Build understandings of the electoral process in Alberta and the concepts of responsibility and empowerment of individuals and government
- Apply those understandings to the development and implementation of a **Make It Matter** project that is committed to making a difference

● *Building Future Voters* Print Components

- This teaching and learning resource includes approaches, activities, assessment strategies, visual organizers and backgrounders for teaching about citizen participation, elections and democracy.
- *Build the Vote!* provides the process and resources to conduct an election simulation in the classroom.
- *Building Future Voters: A Resource for Returning Officers* provides Returning Officers with information and activities to participate in Alberta classrooms as students learn about the electoral process.



● *Building Future Voters* Website



- The *Building Future Voters* website, at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca, engages students in an exploration of issues, information, fast facts and questions – all connected to the inquiries in each learning sequence of this resource.
- The teacher webpage of the *Building Future Voters* website provides PDF versions of this resource, *Build the Vote!* and *Building Future Voters: A Resource for Returning Officers*. Additional resources and weblinks are also provided on the teacher webpage.
- Fillable PDF versions of all student resources in the *Building Future Voters* teaching and learning resources are available on the elementary webpage.

Integrate Technology



Tweet ideas, activities and insights to share with other educators on @ElectionsAB. Use #BFVAB to contribute to the conversation!

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Fax: 780-422-2900

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

● Participate with *Building Future Voters*

Elections Alberta welcomes the ongoing participation of teachers and students by encouraging them to provide feedback and suggestions on the use of these resources. Support the involvement of Returning Officers in your classroom. Contact the Elections Alberta office to provide feedback and request the participation of a Returning Officer.

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
- Registration Officer Sign
- Poll Book (modified to include 6 pages)
- Statement of Poll (photocopy)
- Blind Voter Template
- 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 to order the toolkit.

Engage Students in Learning

The Learning Context

The Alberta Grade 6 Social Studies Program of Studies focuses on citizenship, identity and democratic processes of decision-making within society. Students explore ways that they can become involved with 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 build understandings of the issues, challenges and decisions that a democratic society faces.



Building Future Voters encourages students to take an active role in their own learning and explore a variety of learning opportunities, approaches and strategies through inquiry and discovery. Thinking critically, solving complex problems, adapting to respond to challenges and valuing ethical and responsible participation in society are important aspects of living in a democracy.

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 communities and with current issues.

Building Future Voters provides a context through which students explore and investigate provincial electoral processes and the values of impartiality and effectiveness in a democratic system. Strategies emphasize the development of an interest in and commitment to participation in the electoral process. *Building Future Voters* provides an overview of the provincial level of government and encourages students to connect these understandings to the broader concept of representative democracy.

Building Future Voters includes an introduction as well as four learning sequences that develop competencies and support **selected** outcomes in the Grade 6 Social Studies program.

The introduction and learning sequences comprise four to eight weeks of time in the school year, depending on the activities that are implemented. The suggested timing for each section is based on 45-minute classes.

Ethical participation

Responsible
participation
Living in a
democracy

Timing



Make It Matter

2 to 4 45-minute class periods

Learning Sequence 1

6 to 10 45-minute class periods

Learning Sequence 2

5 to 8 45-minute class periods

Learning Sequence 3

6 to 10 45-minute class periods

Learning Sequence 4

4 to 6 45-minute class periods

Make It Matter



The action project can add a variable amount of time to the implementation of each learning sequence.

● Learning Sequences

Make It Matter

What difference can I make?

Make It Matter introduces an overarching inquiry question that provides the context for the *Building Future Voters* elementary program. Students explore examples of ways that young people can take a stand on issues and questions that are of importance to them. They decide on an individual, group or class action project that will make a difference in their school or community.

Learning Sequence 1

Why does democracy need participation?

The abstract concepts of democracy and representation can be difficult for some Grade 6 students to understand. Learning Sequence 1 encourages students to explore what democracy means. It examines similarities and differences between direct and representative democracy, and asks students to consider how a democracy encourages participation and involvement.

Learning Sequence 2

Why does provincial government matter?

The provincial level of government has an effect on many aspects of day-to-day life. A review of provincial government deepens students' understandings of the concept of representative democracy as well as the responsibilities of government. Learning Sequence 2 encourages students to build understandings of the concept of responsibility through research into the responsibilities of government ministries and departments.

Learning Sequence 3

If I could vote, would I?

The electoral process represents a fundamental principle of democracy – citizen participation. The electoral process emphasizes values of equity, fairness, accountability and openness. Learning Sequence 3 invites students to explore and experience the electoral process in Alberta. They experience how to vote, the impact of a vote, how to convey messages and how to participate.

Learning Sequence 4

What matters most after an election?

The processes of democracy do not end with an election. In Learning Sequence 4, students investigate how they can build strategies for participation and involvement in their school and communities. This final learning sequence asks students to return to the overarching inquiry question, **What difference can I make?**

● Learning with Returning Officers

Throughout *Building Future Voters*, activities encourage interaction with Returning Officers of an Alberta electoral division. All requests for the participation of a Returning Officer must be made through Elections Alberta, at the contact information provided on **page 6** of this resource.

● Features to Look For

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.



Competency Cues provide teaching support for building and enhancing learning through a competency-focused approach.



Curriculum Connections indicate references or teaching suggestions to support learning outcomes in the Alberta Social Studies program of study.



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



Integrate Technology highlights suggestions for using the *Building Future Voters* website, social media and internet sources.



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



Integrate identifies opportunities to integrate strategies and activities and reinforce outcomes across different subject areas.



Assess and 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.



Backgrounders provide detailed information and weblinks that support concepts and information related to provincial government and the electoral process.



Timing suggestions are provided for implementing each learning sequence. These time estimates are based on 45-minute class periods.



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



Student Resources can be photocopied and used with students in a number of ways. Each section of the student learning 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.



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



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.



Pause and Reflect is featured in the student resources. This feature presents reflective questions that encourage critical thinking and personal connections.

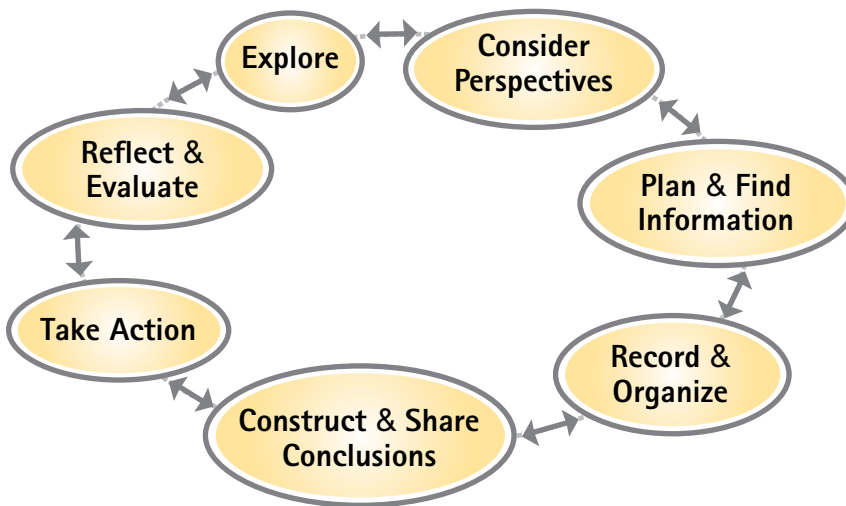


Your Turn gives a signal to students that they will be asked to complete a learning task. Directions for the tasks are provided.

engage
inquire
reflect
investigate
assess

Engage 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 to guide the inquiry process
Explore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate and generate interest • Establish prior knowledge and experiences • Identify concepts and understandings • Make predictions 	What do we already know? What do we think about this issue? What do we need to understand about this issue? What do we think we will find out as we investigate this issue? How does this issue or question affect us? What interests us about this issue or question? Why is this important?
Consider Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify research questions • Identify individuals and groups involved with the question or issue • Consider different perspectives and opinions 	What questions do we have? Who is affected and why? What different opinions exist? Are there contradictory perspectives? What are they?

The process	Purpose of each step of the inquiry process	Questions to guide the inquiry process
Plan and Find Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on research process • Identify, locate and organize sources and information • Allocate tasks 	<p>How will we find out what we need to know and understand?</p> <p>What type of information do we need?</p> <p>What sources do we need to consult?</p> <p>What is the best way to research?</p> <p>From who can we find out more?</p>
Record and Organize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record information • Organize information collected • Make connections and comparisons 	<p>How will we record our research?</p> <p>What concepts or topics are best used to organize information and ideas?</p> <p>How can we show our understanding of the information?</p> <p>What similarities and differences do we see?</p> <p>What comparisons can we make?</p> <p>What connections do we see?</p>
Construct and Share Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the information • Draw conclusions • Analyze the information • Assess information • Consider solutions, perspectives, alternatives and predictions • Make decisions 	<p>What would happen if...?</p> <p>Are there inconsistencies between ideas or values and actions?</p> <p>How does evidence support conclusions?</p> <p>Can alternative interpretations be proposed?</p> <p>What conclusions can we make?</p> <p>What solutions should we propose?</p> <p>What evidence supports our conclusions?</p> <p>How has our thinking or perspectives changed?</p> <p>How will we share our findings and solutions?</p>
Take Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify actions • Implement action 	<p>What will we do with what we have learned?</p> <p>How can we contribute?</p> <p>How can we make a difference?</p> <p>What should we do next?</p>
Reflect and Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on actions • Consider effectiveness • Assess learning • Identify further research • Start the inquiry process again 	<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> <p>How can we reflect on our learning through this inquiry?</p> <p>What has inspired us most?</p>

Assess 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 6 Social Studies program of study. Each criteria statement represents a cluster of outcomes and includes the 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 class 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 placed 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 can be 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. Rubrics can be time consuming to create and are best used for summative evaluation. The language in rubrics can be complex and are therefore important to discuss and review with students.

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 and 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.



Integrate Technology

Google Docs assessment tools, including class versions of the checklists in this resource, are provided on the *Building Future Voters* teacher webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

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.

Engage with Concepts and Vocabulary

Activities that 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.
- Use prompts and questions to encourage students to pause and reflect about what they have investigated and learned.
- Create an illustrated online or print 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.
- Invite students to create a digital **I learned something new today!** booklet. In this booklet, record the definitions of new words, terms, ideas and concepts. Alternatively, use an app such as Google Drive and Google Docs to create a shared class version of the booklet.
- 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 apply these words when they complete assignments or projects.
- Have students create a word wall in the classroom or online, 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. Share on classroom blogs or school websites.
- 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.

Glossary

The terms and concepts that follow are highlighted throughout the student resources. The terms are defined in the **context and sequence** of the content that is presented in student resources. Students can be encouraged to use other sources, such as dictionaries, online glossaries and classroom resources to expand their understandings of these terms and concepts.



Curriculum Connections

Representative democracy is a political system whereby citizens elect their representatives to govern and make decisions on their behalf.

Democracy is a political system in which citizens have a voice in decision-making (government of the people, for the people, by the people).

Electorate refers to a group of qualified voters.

MLA is an elected member of the legislative assembly, representing a specific constituency within the province.

Provincial government is the level of government whose constitutional mandate is to make decisions and pass legislation relating to provincial issues and services.

These terms and concepts are defined in the *Alberta Social Studies Program of Study* (2007), Grade 6 (p. 10).



Find Out More

Elections Alberta provides a glossary of terms related to the electoral process at www.elections.ab.ca/resources/glossary/. Encourage students to consult this glossary.

Learning Sequence 1

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

In some Aboriginal models of **consensus decision-making**, decisions are arrived at with the direct participation of everyone.

Canada is a **representative democracy**, in which citizens elect representatives to form a government and make decisions on their behalf.

Residents, people who live in Canada, have many of the same rights whether or not they are citizens. However, residents who are not citizens cannot vote in elections.

The provincial government is run by a **legislature**, or a group of people who are elected by citizens to represent them and form the government in the province.

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

The government elected for Canada as a whole governs through the **parliament**.

In a **direct democracy**, citizens make decisions in person, without going through representatives.

Sometimes, an important decision is made by holding a **referendum**, a vote in which every citizen can participate. **Plebiscites** are similar to referendums, but are usually held to determine public opinion on an issue.

Today's parliament developed in what is now Great Britain. It came into being because **monarchs**, rulers who were kings and queens, needed more and more money to fight wars and run the kingdom.

All decisions of the Iroquois Confederacy had to be **unanimous**, or agreed to by everyone.

The government in Canada can be described as a **responsible government**. This means that elected representatives are responsible to the people who elect them.

In the Alberta Legislature today, the monarch is represented by the **Lieutenant Governor**, who is the formal head of state.

To govern, the premier and cabinet must have the support of a majority of elected representatives, known as **Members of the Legislative Assembly**. These representatives are also called MLAs.

The power and authority to make laws is given to the premier and his or her **cabinet**. The cabinet is a group of Members of the Legislative Assembly, chosen by the premier, who help make decisions.

Members of the cabinet are called **ministers**. Ministers propose most of the laws that pass, and they vote on them along with their fellow MLAs. Ministers are also responsible for running government ministries and the laws guiding them.

Learning Sequence 2

Legislation is law passed by a government.

Civil rights include rights that citizens are entitled to – for example, freedom of speech, religion, equality and security.

Each provincial government decides how to carry out these responsibilities. This is often done by establishing **government ministries**, or departments, that look after each area of responsibility.

The provincial government also takes responsibility for its environment and resources. It has to look after its own **finances**, like taxes and budgets.

MLAs also deal with **special-interest groups**, which are organizations and groups that promote specific views and actions.

MLAs gather information from as many constituents as possible. They then discuss the issue in private meetings, called **caucus meetings**, with other MLAs from the same party.

Private government members are often called **backbenchers** because in the Legislative Assembly they sit in the back rows, behind the cabinet ministers. However, the correct term for any member who is not in cabinet is “private member.” A private government member is an MLA who belongs to the governing party.

Private members sit on cabinet policy committees and can sponsor **government bills**, proposals for laws that will be discussed and debated before becoming law.

In addition, private government members, as well as opposition members, introduce their own bills. These are called **private bills**.

The role of an **opposition party** is to analyze and critique government activity, propose improvements and present itself to the public as an alternative to the party in power. Opposition parties often assign some of their MLAs to be critics of specific departments. Together, opposition critics are called a **shadow cabinet**.

MLAs also serve on **committees**. Committees of the Legislative Assembly are made up of MLAs from various parties. During session, the whole Legislative Assembly, which includes all MLAs, meets as a committee to study the details of proposed laws and spending programs.

Learning Sequence 3

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.

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

People can provide different reasons to explain why they vote the way they do. Some vote for a **candidate**, a person running for election, if they think he or she is most qualified.

Others look at their vote as a vote for both their candidate and for the political party that candidate represents, unless he or she is running as an **independent**, a person who is not a member of a specific political party.

The boundaries of an **electoral division** are established mainly on the basis of population. However, electoral divisions also take into account common community interests, the geographical area, natural boundaries such as rivers, political boundaries such as municipalities and other factors.

Provincial voters must be registered to vote. They must provide identification to prove who they are when they register. Voters can register at their **polling station**, the place where they vote, by completing a declaration. They can also register online or by phone outside of an election period.

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

The **Register of Electors** is used to maintain an accurate and up-to-date list of eligible voters.

The **List of Electors** is used to keep track of who has voted on polling day and ensure that people vote only once.

A **political party** is formed to present candidates who will run in an election. If the candidate is elected to office, he or she will have a chance to put their party's ideas into practice.

Each party **nominates**, or selects, one candidate to run in each electoral division.

Political parties and candidates use many strategies to **campaign**, or promote their views and ability to represent the people who live and work in their electoral division.

One of the best ways to find out about a party's election **platform**, or their views, principles and policies, is when candidates of one electoral division get together to talk about issues and answer voters' questions.

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**.

In Canadian elections, winners are chosen through the **single-member plurality** voting 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.

An alternative voting system used in some democracies is **proportional representation**, in which parties win seats according to the percentage of the total votes cast in their favour. An additional system is **preferential voting**, in which voters can rank candidates in order of preference.

Learn with Technology



Building Future Voters integrates technology to provide support, choice and flexibility in learning. Technology can create opportunities for differentiating instruction, increasing engagement, encouraging collaboration and supporting social participation.



The **Integrate Technology** feature focuses on strategies and approaches for using the *Building Future Voters* website as well as integrating social media, researching with technology-based resources and collaborating and communicating with others.

Tweet students' project ideas, accomplishments and insights about citizenship, democracy, elections and voting on **@ElectionsAB**. Use **#BFVAB** to get involved and contribute to conversations about what it means to be a future voter.

Use sharing platforms such as **Google Drive**, **Padlet** and **Pinterest**. Padlet, found at www.padlet.com, is a virtual wall that allows sharing of any content, including images, videos, documents and text, on a common topic. Pinterest, found at www.pinterest.com, is a social network that allows you to visually share, and discover, images or videos to your own or others' boards. Invite students to share ideas and resources on Google Drive. Padlet and Pinterest boards can be set up specifically for your classroom.

Kahoot, found at www.getkahoot.com, is a platform that allows students to create learning games from a series of multiple choice questions, with added videos, images and diagrams. Challenge students to create kahoots based on what they are learning about citizenship, democracy, elections and voting.

Survey Monkey, found at www.surveymonkey.com, provides a platform for the creation and administration of surveys. Kahoot can also be used for survey creation.

Snapchat, at www.snapchat.com offers a feature called **My Story**, created from video clips and pictures taken over time and made into a movie. Stories can be downloaded to students' camera rolls and shared via email with a class.

Apps such as **Evernote** and **OneNote** can be used to collect, organize and share sources of information and research, while online software such as **Skype** can enable conversations, face-to-face interviews and collaboration with other classrooms and community members.

Prezi, found at www.prezi.com, is a presentation tool that can be used as an alternative to traditional slide making programs such as PowerPoint. Instead of slides, Prezi makes use of one large canvas with pan and zoom capabilities. Students can use this tool to create and share projects and learning products.

The Building Future Voters website, at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca, engages students in an exploration of issues, information, fast facts and questions – all connected to the inquiries in each learning sequence of this teaching and learning resource. Suggested approaches to integrate the *Building Future Voters* website into the activities of each learning sequence are included in the **Integrate Technology** feature.

The Building Future Voters elementary webpage is organized around sections that focus on **Make It Matter** and the four learning sequences in this resource. Clickable icons open pop-ups, which provide a variety of sources, including primary sources, videos, news articles, research and website links. Challenge students to discuss and reflect on the questions provided in the pop-ups.

Student activities and visual organizers are also provided on the elementary webpage. Encourage students to question and explore what it means to be a future voter by clicking on and opening the icons, timeline tiles and flip boxes.



MAKE IT MATTER Action Project

Make It Matter is designed to be the introduction to the *Building Future Voters* program. This introductory section emphasizes competency development and supports learning outcomes from the Grade 6 Social Studies program.

Prepare

- Start to collect media sources that students can use to explore examples related to democracy, provincial government and participation in the community.

Consider using a digital bulletin or vision board, such as OneNote, Evernote, Pinterest or Padlet, to collect and pin media sources. Alternatively, if your school provides students with access to school or class websites, set aside space to collect and share information with students and their parents.
- Have students regularly reflect on what they are learning about democracy, elections and social participation. Have students create a digital notebook or file folder as they explore and research with online sources. Use Google Drive to create a classroom sharing space for action project updates.
- Create a digital or paper portfolio for the **Make It Matter** action project that students start in this introductory section.
- Set aside a space to display posters with inquiry questions and strategies for participation in communities and with government.
- Establish a digital file for use on interactive whiteboards in which students create graffiti walls or thought clouds related to inquiries and issues. Encourage students to add to this file as they work through learning activities. Invite students to collect digital images that they can add to their graffiti walls or thought clouds.

Competency Cues

Focus on competencies that emphasize critical and innovative thinking, the development of cultural understandings and application of active citizenship skills in **Make It Matter**.



MAKE IT MATTER

What difference can I make?

Make It Matter introduces an overarching issue that provides a context for the inquiries in the *Building Future Voters* resource. Students explore examples of youth who take a stand on issues and questions that are of importance to them. They investigate and decide on an individual, group or class action project that they believe would make a difference in their school or community.



Prepare

Student Resource

- I-1: Make It Matter (pp. 27-30)

Graphic Organizer

- Triple T-Chart (p. 137)

Build the Vote! An Election Simulation

- Ballot Template



2 to 4 45-minute class periods



Students use **Plan It** (pp. 144-145) to make decisions about their action project.



Assess and 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.

Participate
change
Take
Impact
action



Curriculum Connections

Find the learning outcomes supported by **Make It Matter** on **page 155**.

MAKE IT MATTER

What difference can I make?

Teaching and Learning Activities

① Make It Matter

The belief that one person can take action and bring about change is an important aspect of participatory democracy. Students should be encouraged to consider ways that their actions can result in change and make a difference. They can then be encouraged to think about how participation as a voter is also a means of bringing about change, even if the representative voted for is not elected.

- Provide students with a graphic organizer such as a **Triple T-Chart (p. 137)**. Work with the class to make a list of actions they have taken in the past that have resulted in positive change. Why were these actions successful? Record actions, effects and reasons in the chart.

Actions	Effects	Reasons for Success

- Ask students to also share examples of other individuals they know who have affected change. Add these examples to the class Triple T-Chart. Discuss how taking action and affecting change can make a person feel. To what extent does taking action result in feelings of empowerment and contribution?
- Provide students with **I-1: Make It Matter (pp. 27-30)**. Read the resource with a partner and brainstorm a list of changes they think would improve situations or conditions for themselves and their communities. These changes can involve situations in the classroom, school or community.
- Work with students to discuss and critically analyze their initial ideas, using questions such as the following:
 - ➔ What types of change are possible in the short term?
 - ➔ What types of changes would take longer?
 - ➔ What changes involve personal or 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 each change and potential effects and challenges. Discuss the importance of identifying innovative, but realistic, possibilities for action. *(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*

Integrate Technology



Explore examples, information and questions on the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca. The **Make a Difference** section supports the learning activities in this **Make It Matter** introduction.

Invite students to explore and discuss examples of youth action and participation in **Make a Difference**.

Set up the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage on an interactive whiteboard, or provide time for individual students or small groups to explore the stories, images and information in this section. Challenge students to reflect on and respond to questions posed to them in the pop-up windows.

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.)

- Invite students to brainstorm examples of injustices or challenges in the school or community. Some of these issues may include:
 - ➔ An environmental problem or challenge in the community
 - ➔ Incidents of bullying in the school or community
 - ➔ Negative uses of social media
 - ➔ Community supports for youth
 - ➔ Community awareness of poverty or homelessness
 - ➔ Health or fitness issues

Although these challenges may not be directly associated 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, they should be encouraged to consider connections between different forms of social participation, including voting.

- Work with the class to identify ideas for projects that are most relevant to them. Discuss options for taking on a project as an individual student, with a partner, in a small group or as a class. List and prioritize ideas for change and action.

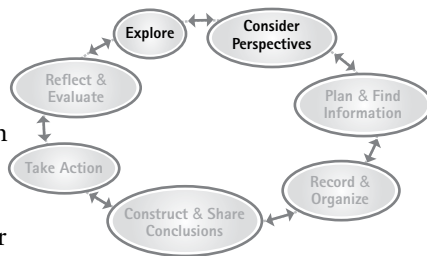
2 Plan a Project

- Organize students in project groups. These project groups can be of varying sizes. Discuss and list the responsibilities for the project, including those required of individual students and those shared in a small group.



Make It Matter

Provide students with **Plan It** (pp. 144-145) and work with them to plan and organize their projects. Students will identify and describe their project goals and individual or group responsibilities.



- If the decision is made to work on a class project, vote or use consensus building to select a challenge or issue.



Integrate

The action projects that students undertake can support and reinforce learning outcomes in Wellness Education, building physical, emotional, intellectual and social capacity. Reinforce concepts of community engagement and volunteerism. Use articles that deal with bullying in this resource and on the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage to address social, spiritual and emotional health.



Share

A classroom vote can be used to make a decision about a class project. 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. Encourage students to compare majority decision-making with consensus building processes.

Integrate Technology



Use Padlet, at www.padlet.com, or Pinterest, found at www.pinterest.com, as an **action project progress wall**. Padlet and Pinterest boards or a Google Drive can be set up specifically for your classroom.

Tweet project ideas and progress on **@ElectionsAB**. Use **#BFVAB** to start a conversation about ways to get students involved in social action. Encourage students to share their project ideas. Have students identify and describe the challenges or injustices that they are taking on and add mini progress reports to update their progress and results.

- Discuss how to ensure that the project is achievable within the time frame established to work on it. There are a variety of approaches that can be used to structure 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 to the next task as a class.
 - ➔ Establish separate responsibilities for each group. For example, have groups explore different issues, perspectives or opinions associated with the project.
- Ask students to make a commitment to work on their 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 students.
- The **Make It Matter** icon at the end of each learning sequence provides additional suggestions for implementing the action project. However, the scope of the project may necessitate its continuance throughout the school year. The project can be implemented in a number of ways:
 - ➔ Allocate one class period every week to have students work on their action projects.
 - ➔ Dedicate two or three classes every few weeks to complete a stage in the action projects. These stages can correlate with the suggestions and planning templates referenced in Learning Sequences 1 to 4.
 - ➔ Establish a schedule for project groups to work on their action project once every one or two weeks during lunch or after school. If you are working on a class project, different groups can be asked to work on the project on a rotating basis. Participation in the action project can be an optional component of *Building Future Voters*.



■ Make It Matter

What matters most to you? Some of you may answer this question by talking about your family and friends, your health, feeling good about yourself or making a difference in your community.

Have you ever thought about what matters to you as a citizen? When people think about what matters, they may think about what they can do to participate as citizens.

Elections and voting are often associated with citizen participation. The election process, and the right to vote, are important parts of democracy. The results of an election can affect many aspects of your life, even though you are not old enough to vote.

However, many young people who can't vote decide to participate in other ways. They act on what matters to them. The following news excerpts show how some young people decided to get involved in an issue that was important to them – bullying.



What difference can I make?

make a difference

vote

community

citizen

participation

Students stand up to bullying with 'buddy benches'

Windsor, Ont., school urges students who feel frightened to take a seat and wait for help

Elementary school students across the country are taking a stance against bullying by — oddly enough — sitting down.

The concept is part of a global trend known as "friendship benches," or "buddy benches," which are designed to raise red flags in playgrounds when children need help or feel lonely. When students are bullied, or just not feeling welcome, they are urged to take a seat on the bench. Teachers or fellow students are taught to approach them and ask what's wrong....

Breaking the silence

St. Angela Catholic Elementary School in Windsor, Ontario will be one of the latest schools to get a bench next week. A group of high school students in the area donated the bench after working with anti-bullying agency Kill It With Kindness.

The Friendship Bench Project Canada is the group's latest focus in its efforts to stomp out bullying. They promote the bench as a way for children to get help and to teach other students to show compassion.

St. Angela school principal Jeff Fairlie embraced the idea, saying the bench will hopefully be another way for students to talk about bullying before situations go too far.

"There are still students who feel they don't have a voice," he said. "For those students, this particular bench will be another option for them. They don't have to have the words ready, they can just sit down and somebody will come to them."

Grade 6 student spreads anti-bullying message

Tanya Cronin

Kamloops – Today's anti-bullying movement was felt at the elementary school level as well.

Kids at Dallas Elementary in Kamloops were treated to a lesson against bullying, taught by a fellow grade 6 student. Promise Dirkson put together her very own lesson plan and went class to class, in the hopes of stopping schoolyard bullying from happening. Promise has been a victim of bullying, and feels it's important to spread the message, so others don't experience what she has.

"I think that it's important that they know, so they don't be a bully or they know what happens when they are bullied what to do. I think bullying is when you try to make people feel less like themselves to make yourself feel better," says Dirkson.

Students were dressed in pink to stand up against bullying, something that can be a serious problem among kids as young as Kindergarten. Dallas Elementary ensures to create a safe environment for students, and is actively involved in promoting positivity both in the classroom and outside.

Watch Promise Dirkson speak about her message at <http://cfjctoday.com/article/514170/grade-6-student-spreads-anti-bullying-message>.

Cronin, Tanya (February 24, 2016). *Grade 6 student spreads anti-bullying message*. CFJC Today.

Students leave their mark

Simon Arseneau
Multimedia Journalist



Grade 6 students Jillian Gaudry-Sinclair (back) and Brodee Miller (front) leaving their handprints on a bulletin board as part of anti-bullying activities at Barr Colony School on Wednesday.

As part of the many activities taking place on Pink Day, students at Barr Colony School left their handprint to show their support in the fight against bullying.

Beginning Wednesday morning, students would read a pledge, leave their pink handprints on a bulletin board, and then sign their name under the print to show they are going to stand up against bullying.

Leaving the handprint is part of the theme of standing up and standing strong against bullying, which last year was represented by having every student leave their shoeprint or handprint instead.

Arseneau, Simon (February 25, 2016). *Students leave their mark*. Lloydminster Meridian Booster.



What do you think?

What are some examples of situations or conditions that you think are unfair or unjust? What makes them unfair or unjust?



Find Out More

Find out about other young people who acted on something that mattered to them.

Explore more ideas, examples and information about taking action in **Make a Difference on Building Future Voters** at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

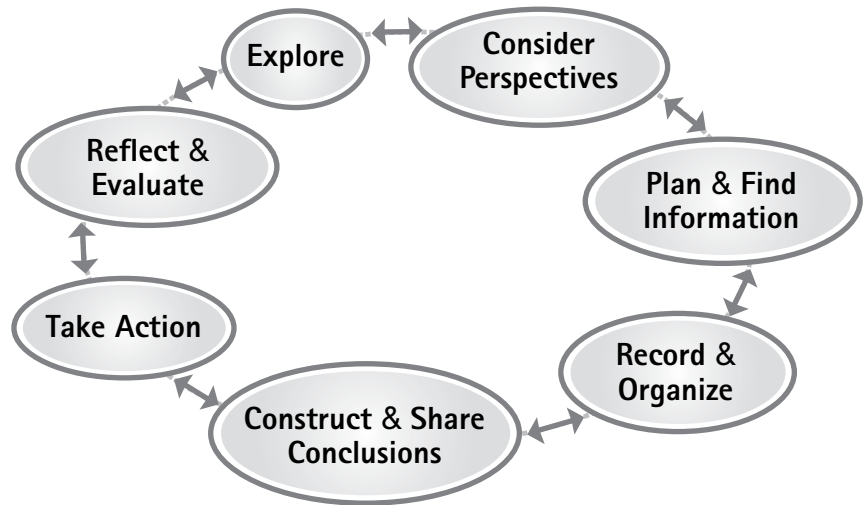
Learn about the Ladybug Foundation at www.ladybugfoundation.ca. Find out more about the WE movement at www.we.org.

How could these unfair or unjust situations or conditions be changed? Select one and make a list of ideas for change.

What do you think you can do about the situations or conditions 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

Consider Perspectives

Plan and Find Information

Record and Organize

Construct and Share Conclusions

Take Action

Reflect and Evaluate



Learning Sequences

The four learning sequences in this resource are designed to develop and support competencies and selected learning outcomes from the Grade 6 Social Studies program. Select from those activities that best meet the needs of your students.

Prepare

- Collect media sources and identify websites that students can use to explore examples related to democracy, provincial government, elections, voting and participation in the community.

Establish a digital repository of online sources of information that students can access for research. Bookmark sources that are appropriate for students to use. Consider online options and apps for the creation of secure bulletin boards, posting walls and blogs.

- Set aside digital or classroom bulletin board space for products and projects that students complete in the learning sequences.
- Ask students to create blog posts or Twitter messages as they progress through the learning sequences. These messages can be limited to sharing with classmates and parents. Send messages to [@ElectionsAB](#). Use [#BFVAB](#) to share insights, ideas and actions.
- Have students continue to reflect on what they have learned about democracy, elections and social participation.

If online programs and apps are used, continue to pin and collect information as students explore and research with internet sources. If available, share student work and research on classroom or school-based online bulletin boards or websites.

Competency Cues

Learning sequence activities provide opportunities for students to develop, reinforce and apply competency-based knowledge, skills and attitudes. Watch for evidence of critical and creative thinking, information management, communication and collaboration skills and development of understandings related to responsible citizenship.

Share



Building Future Voters: A Resource for Returning Officers encourages Returning Officers to interact and work with students in the classroom. Returning Officers can provide your students with an authentic context in which they can develop research and inquiry skills and share learning.

- Encourage students to continue to add concepts, ideas, questions, keywords and visuals to digital interactive whiteboard graffiti walls or thought clouds.
- Contact Elections Alberta 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.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

Why does democracy need participation?

The abstract concepts of democracy and representation can be difficult for some Grade 6 students to understand. **Learning Sequence 1** encourages students to explore what democracy means. It examines similarities and differences between direct and representative democracy, and asks students to consider how a democracy encourages participation and involvement.



In this learning sequence, students develop, demonstrate and apply competencies when they:

- Build understandings of democratic principles by exploring perspectives and influences on **citizenship**
- **Think critically** to analyze rights and responsibilities associated with a democracy
- Develop and demonstrate oral, written and visual **communication** skills and engage in **collaborative** processes
- Apply a research process to **manage information** and assess options for citizen participation



Prepare

Student Resources

- 1-1: Messages About Democracy (pp. 45-47)
- 1-2: Direct or Representative? (pp. 48-49)
- 1-3: Development of Democracy (pp. 50-53)
- 1-4: Why Participate? (p. 54)

Graphic Organizers

- Wheel Chart (p. 133)
- KWHL Chart (p. 134)
- Storyboard (p. 135)
- Timeline (p. 136)



6 to 10 45-minute class periods



Backgrounder 1 (pp. 106-107) provides information that can help you support student learning.

representation
collaborate
democracy
participation



Curriculum Connections

Find the curriculum connections chart for **Learning Sequence 1** on **page 156**.



Make It Matter

Students use **Get Informed** (pp. 146-147) to conduct research and assess information they collect to support their action project.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

Why does democracy need participation?



Criteria Checklist

Criteria	Almost always	Sometimes	Not yet
Students provide evidence of their learning as they:			
Listen and respond respectfully to explore and build understandings of democratic principles (Social Studies 6.1.1.1; 6.1.1.3; 6.1.1.4; 6.1.2.3; 6.S.8.5)			
Apply citizenship skills to demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of rights and responsibilities (Social Studies 6.1.2.1; 6.1.2.2; 6.1.2.3; 6.S.4.2; 6.S.8.2)			
Develop inquiry questions (Social Studies 6.S.7.2; 6.S.7.6)			
Examine, evaluate and assess sources to manage information (Social Studies 6.S.1.2; 6.S.7.2; 6.S.7.4)			
Generate, discuss and share innovative and creative ideas (Social Studies 6.S.1.4, 6.S.4.1; 6.S.8.1)			
Express and support personal and diverse opinions (Social Studies 6.S.1.3, 6.S.8.2)			
Describe importance and identify effects of significant events (Social Studies 6.S.2.3; 6.S.2.4)			
Use graphic organizers to make connections between concepts and ideas (Social Studies 6.S.4.7)			
Communicate ideas and information (Social Studies 6.S.8.1)			
Collaborate and cooperate with group members (Social Studies 6.S.5.1; 6.S.5.2)			



Competency Cues

This learning sequence focuses on the development of understandings about the concept of democracy. Encourage students to make connections between responsible citizenship and the impact of decisions and actions on communities within a democracy. Facilitate opportunities for students to build the belief that they have the capacity to make a difference.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

Why does democracy need participation?



Rubric

Criteria \ Level	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Adequate	1 Limited	Not demonstrated
Applies citizenship skills to identify and share evidence of democratic principles, including rights and responsibilities (Social Studies 6.1.2.1; 6.1.2.2; 6.1.2.3; 6.S.4.2; 6.S.8.2)	Identifies and shares significant and thorough evidence of rights and responsibilities in a democracy	Identifies and shares specific and detailed evidence of rights and responsibilities in a democracy	Identifies and shares general and partial evidence of rights and responsibilities in a democracy	Identifies and shares vague and minimal evidence of rights and responsibilities	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task
Examines, evaluates and assesses sources to manage information (Social Studies 6.S.1.2; 6.S.7.2; 6.S.7.4)	Manages sources to provide insightful conclusions	Manages sources to provide thoughtful conclusions	Manages sources to provide a basic summary of information	Uses sources to provide ineffective summary of information	
Expresses and supports personal and diverse opinions to collaborate with others (Social Studies 6.S.1.3, 6.S.8.2)	Provides compelling support for personal opinions	Provides convincing support for personal opinions	Provides simplistic support for personal opinions	Provides minimal support for personal opinions	
Communicates ideas and information (Social Studies 6.S.8.1)	Expresses ideas and shares information in an effective manner that engages others	Expresses ideas and shares information in a purposeful manner that interests others	Expresses ideas or shares information using straightforward strategies that inform others	Shares limited information through ineffective strategies that do not sustain the attention of others	

LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

Why does democracy need participation?

Teaching and Learning Activities

1 Messages about Democracy

Democracy is an abstract concept that is shaped by different perspectives and often affected by individuals' sense of belonging and place.

- Write the inquiry question, **Why does democracy need participation?** on the board. Invite students to brainstorm and share their initial responses to this question.

Ideas related to the concept of democracy are discussed in **1-1: Messages about Democracy (pp. 45-47)**. Students can also be provided with a graphic organizer such as a **Wheel Chart (p. 133)** to help them organize their ideas. *(If students have not been introduced to the concept of democracy yet, share and discuss ideas related to the following principles:*

- ➔ *In a democracy, all citizens have a say in decision-making.*
- ➔ *People living in a democracy have the freedom to make choices and express opinions.*
- ➔ *In a democracy, there are equal rights and responsibilities for everyone.*
- ➔ *A democracy has a justice system that applies to everyone.*
- ➔ *In a democracy, the government is accountable, or responsible, to the people.*

If you present these statements to students, encourage them to underline terms that are important within each of the sentences or phrases and discuss their meanings. Terms can be added to an illustrated glossary or word wall.)

- Once students have brainstormed, discuss as a class and organize their ideas into categories as a class. Display the categories and related ideas in the classroom. *(Students may come up with categories such as elections, leadership, politics, government, equality, freedom, rights, etc.)*
- Have groups use their categories and ideas to find evidence and examples that represent different understandings and perspectives on democracy. Explore and find examples from sources such as the media, music lyrics, literature, the school environment, evidence or examples from the community as well as artifacts and stories related to personal experiences.
- Ask students to work with their project groups to create a **graffiti wall** about democracy. Discuss and list common elements of graffiti – shapes, drawings, doodles, symbols, colours, story excerpts, quotations and word labels.
- Create the graffiti wall on a bulletin board space, a poster or chart paper. Combine evidence and examples of democracy and organize them around categories that make sense to each group. Use drawings, shapes, symbols, doodles and colours to connect related ideas and examples. Remind groups to ensure that each student has equal representation on the graffiti wall.



Integrate Technology

Provide time for students to explore the **Democracy and Participation** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

The student resources and graphic organizers for this learning sequence can be accessed and downloaded on the webpage, completed in digital format and saved to a computer.

Explore as a class with an interactive whiteboard, or provide time for individual students or small groups to explore the stories, images and information on this section. Encourage students to respond to the questions posed, either in class discussion or through individual or small group reflection.



Differentiate

Students may have already explored the concept of democracy this year in class, or may be introduced to it for the first time in this learning activity.

Ask students to brainstorm what they understand the concept of democracy to mean:

- Individually in their notebooks
- On sticky notes or index cards
- In small groups or as a class, using chart paper.

Remind students to record all their responses without debating them.

Find Out More

A **graffiti wall** strategy encourages students to “hear” and build respect for ideas and perspectives of others.

Students create the graffiti wall by individually or collaboratively filling a poster or bulletin board space with drawings, shapes, symbols, colours, excerpts, quotations and illustrations.

The graffiti wall can be centred on a key concept, such as evidence of democracy.

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.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/graffiti-boards.

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.

- Have each group present and discuss their graffiti walls and post them around the classroom. The graffiti walls can be continuously expanded as students explore and research democracy and voting.



Integrate Technology

A graffiti wall can be created digitally, using a bulletin board app such as Padlet, Evernote or Pinterest. Students can be asked to create and pin their examples on a class or small group board.



Integrate

Students can be guided through a discussion of the use of graffiti as an expression of political and social issues and citizenship engagement. An example of graffiti as a form of expression can be found in the feature on Tom Grayeyes in Culture Clashes, in *Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices*. Tom Grayeyes uses his graffiti art to challenge stereotypes of indigenous peoples. (ISBN 978-1-55451-687-2)

Graffiti walls can also provide an opportunity to experiment with imagery and exaggeration, as well as discuss messages and modes of communication that represent popular culture. Encourage students to experiment with sentence patterns and imagery. Compare ways that diverse cultures and communities explore the concepts of democracy and participation.



Assess and Reflect

Ask students to individually reflect on the creation of their graffiti walls. Respond to questions such as:

- What did you learn about democracy from the ideas and perspectives of others?
- What is most important to you about living in a democracy? How are these ideas reflected in your graffiti wall?

These questions can also be used for a summative assessment of students’ understandings of the concept of democracy. Ask students to use their reflection to construct a paragraph focused on “multiple meanings of democracy.”

2 Direct or Representative?

As students discuss understandings of democracy, they may bring up ideas related to the concepts of representation, fairness, equity and impartiality. These concepts are central to representative and direct democracies as well as to the role of the electoral process in a representative democracy.

- Provide students with **1-2: Direct or Representative? (pp. 48-49)**, which asks students to compare the concepts of direct and representative democracy.
- Explore the concepts of direct and representative democracy further in a class discussion, using the following questions from the student resource:
 - ➔ What evidence of representative democracy do you see around you? What evidence of direct democracy do you see? (*Ask students to think about daily life in their homes, schools and community – what examples prove that we live in a democracy?*)
 - ➔ Why do we have a representative democracy instead of a direct democracy? Can you think of examples of places where direct democracies exist? (*Use this question to reinforce understandings of the differences between direct and representative democracies. Students may use the example of class or community meetings, where everyone has a direct say in making a decision. They may also refer to some Aboriginal models of consensus decision-making, in which decisions are arrived at with the direct participation of everyone.*)
 - ➔ What characteristics and values do you think are most important for a representative democracy to exist? (*Traditionally, principles such as free elections, universal voting rights, freedoms, equal rights, fairness and equity in administering the law are considered essential for representative democracy to exist.*)
 - ➔ Why are elections important in a representative democracy? Are they important in a direct democracy? (*Consider the importance of the electoral process in selecting representatives who make decisions on behalf of citizens. In a direct democracy, everyone participates in decision-making.*)
 - ➔ Who do you think should benefit from democracy? Why? (*Students may be encouraged to consider the difference between citizens and residents. Only citizens have the right to vote, but all residents are affected by decisions made by representatives. The concept of residency, however, is also important to voter eligibility in a representative democracy. Voter eligibility is usually determined by age, citizenship and residency.*)
- The student resource also asks students to work with a small group to develop a one-minute role play or a one-page cartoon strip that shares what a principle of democracy looks like in a representative democracy and a direct democracy. Provide each group with a graphic organizer such as the **Storyboard (p. 135)** to plan and create their role plays or comic strips. Provide a limited amount of time to create the role play or cartoon strip. Ask each group to share with another group or with the class.



Did You Know

In a **representative democracy**, citizens elect representatives to form a government and make decisions on their behalf. In a **direct democracy**, citizens make decisions in person, without going through representatives. This is similar to a town hall meeting, where anyone from the town can come to the meeting and vote on decisions.

The Treaty of La Grande Paix de Montréal is an example of representative decision-making. This treaty was signed by the governor of New France and over 1300 representatives of 39 First Nations. First Nations representatives signed the treaty with the symbols of their clans.



Differentiate

Initial discussion questions can be presented to 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. 134)**.
- Each 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.

Integrate Technology



Identify and discuss perspectives on democracy in the **Democracy and Participation** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

Competency Cues



Encourage students to consider how and why values such as diversity, equity, fairness and representation affect their ability to make a difference in their communities.



Assess and Reflect

Use a simple checklist to assess students' demonstrations of their understanding of the difference between direct and representative democracies.

Use criteria such as the following to assess understanding:

- Able to describe the characteristics of each concept
- Able to compare by describing the differences between the concepts

Does this student demonstrate understanding of...	Yes	Somewhat	Not Yet
Direct democracy?			
Representative democracy?			

diversity
equity
fairness

3 Development of Democracy

Encouraging students to consider who democracy serves, and who can participate, is an important aspect of understanding the connections between democracy, participatory citizenship and the electoral process. A brief historical perspective on the development of democracy and voting rights and privileges encourages appreciation of the value of participation.

- Discuss the following questions with students:
 - ➔ How is voting a way to participate in democracy?
 - ➔ Who can vote? Who cannot?
 - ➔ Do you think it has always been this way? Why or why not?
 - ➔ How would you define the “right to vote?” What challenges and successes do you know about that individuals and groups experienced in obtaining the right to vote? *(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 Grade 4 and 5 Social Studies. The purpose of this discussion question is to tie into students’ prior knowledge from previous grade levels. Information relating to historical contexts of the development of rights related to fairness and equity will be provided in Grade 6 textbook resources.)*
 - ➔ Do you think there should be any changes to who can vote today, and how they can vote? *(Students may contribute ideas related to changes in the voting age and the use of technology in the process of voting.)*
 - ➔ Why are only citizens allowed to vote? How do all residents, citizens or not, benefit from democracy?
- Invite students to explore the information on **1-3: Development of Democracy (pp. 50-53)**. If internet access is available, work with partners or small groups to find information about events that contributed to the development of democratic processes, such as the right to vote.
- Ask students to create a **graphic timeline** that identifies what they consider to be the five most important events in the development of democratic processes and voting rights. Students can be provided with a graphic organizer such as the **Timeline (p. 136)**.
- Share timelines or add them to the graffiti walls in the classroom.



Integrate Technology

The timeline in **Democracy and Participation** on the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage provides additional information and images related to the development of democracy. Ask students to explore the timeline events in the context of its introduction: Is democracy all about voting and elections? The right to vote has changed over the years.

Student research on the history of voting rights and democracy can be structured as **webquests**. Information about creating a webquest, as well as examples of webquests, can be found on the Quest Garden website at www.questgarden.com.

A **graphic timeline** can be used to develop understandings of chronology and time-related concepts, as well as skills of sequencing and analysis. A graphic timeline includes visuals as well as text. An electronic timeline template can be found at www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline_2/.



Assess and Reflect

Use a rating scale to assess students’ demonstration of historical thinking skills.

Does this student demonstrate the ability to...	Yes	Almost	Not Yet
Describe the importance of significant events?			
Identify effects of events?			

Ask students to individually reflect on this question: What do I appreciate most about changes for which others have worked?

Differentiate



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

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.

4 Inspired by Democracy

Bringing students back to the inquiry question, **Why does democracy need participation?** encourages them to connect the concept of participation with its role in a democracy and to connect the value of their action projects with the broader concept of democracy.

- Invite students to revisit how they have defined and explored the concept of democracy. (*Encourage students to consider how democracy encourages involvement and participation of citizens through the concepts of representation, equality and voice. For example, the opportunities that everyone has to voice opinions, become involved in groups that are trying to bring about change and vote are all important aspects of participation in a democracy.*)
- Revisit the graffiti walls created at the beginning of the learning sequence. Ask each project group to identify the elements in their graffiti walls that represent important aspects of democracy.
- Ask students to brainstorm a list of ways that individuals and groups can participate in a democracy, using either index cards or poster paper. Add the index cards to the graffiti walls or display posters in the classroom.
- Provide each student with **1-4: Why Participate? (p. 54)** and have them create a personal poster, collage, storyboard or photo essay to respond to the inquiry question – **Why does democracy need participation?** Remind students to use examples from previous group work and research in the creation of their product. Share and discuss the rubric for the final student product.



Share

Have students take digital photographs of their graffiti walls. Consider sharing them in one or more of the following ways:

- Post the photos, with captions that students write, on a classroom or school website.
- Send the photos, with students’ reflections on democracy, to local or community newsletters or newspapers.
- Share photos, stories and reflections on **@ElectionsAB**. Tweet inspiring examples to **#BFVAB**.
- Invite parents, community members or the Returning Officer to the classroom to view the graffiti walls and explore perspectives on democracy with students.

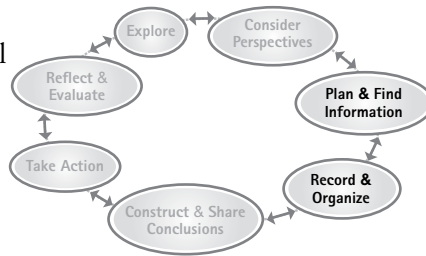


Make It Matter

Provide students with **Get Informed** (pp. 146-147). Work with individual students, groups or the class to research:

- Reasons and examples that support their identified need for change
- Background information and perspectives
- Reasons and support for possible actions

Encourage students to use websites and media sources, such as newspapers, community publications or television news programs to find information that supports their project. Have them collect their sources in digital or paper file folders or portfolios. Decide how to best organize information to continue implementing the project.



Assess and Reflect

The products that students create in this activity provide an opportunity for summative assessment of students' understandings of the concepts of democracy and 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. 36)**:

- Use evidence from the individual project – the poster, collage, storyboard or photo essay – to assess individual understandings of the concepts of participation and democracy. This project is the final student product for this learning sequence.
- Use observation evidence collected throughout the activities of the learning sequence to consider performance of process skills and group participation.





■ Messages about Democracy

What do you think about when you hear the word "democracy?" You may think about democracy as a form of government, but it is much more than that. **Democracy** happens when citizens have a say in decisions and in their **governance**, or the ways that they organize themselves in order to make decisions or accomplish goals. There can be evidence of democracy in many different places – in families, schools and communities.

Democracy can mean different things to different people. However, when democracy is defined and described, ideas like the following are often included:

- In a democracy, all citizens have a say in decision-making.
- People living in a democracy have the freedom to make choices and express opinions.
- In a democracy, there are equal rights and responsibilities for everyone.
- A democracy has a justice system that applies to everyone.
- In a democracy, the government is accountable, or responsible, for its actions and to the people.

What does a dictionary say about democracy?

a: government by the people; *especially:* rule of the majority

b: a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections

Merriam Webster Dictionary online: www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy

1 Why does democracy need participation?



As you read, underline the words or phrases that you think are most important in helping you understand the meaning of "democracy."

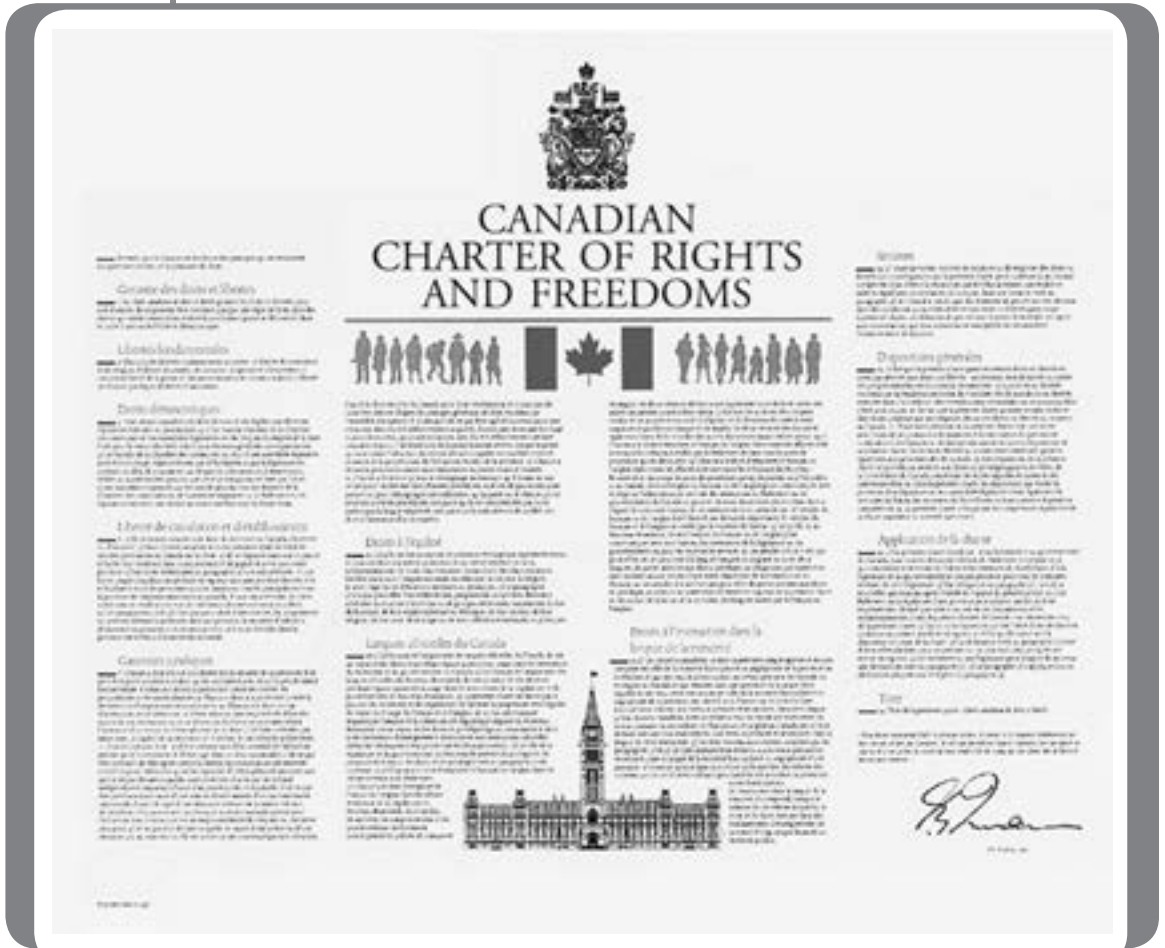
Find out more about democracy in **Democracy and Participation** on the **Building Future Voters** elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

democracy people elections government



■ What does the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* say about democracy?

In Canada, democracy is protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The *Charter* protects the rights and freedoms of individuals.



Find Out More

Find and download the *Youth Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* from the John Humphrey Society for Peace and Human Rights. Search the internet using the title of this resource.

All citizens who are 18 years of age or older can vote in federal, provincial or territorial elections.

All citizens who are 18 years of age or older can run for public office.

No federal or provincial government can be in power for more than five years without calling an election. This rule ensures that voters can choose their government.

A government must explain its actions to the people by holding a session at least once a year.

■ What do people say about democracy?



To me, democracy means voting, expressing my opinions and having a say in government.

I think democracy is more than just voting. It's important to get involved with others in my community.



I have the same rights as everyone else.

If the candidate I voted for doesn't win, I can voice my opinion and participate with government in different ways.



Pause and Reflect



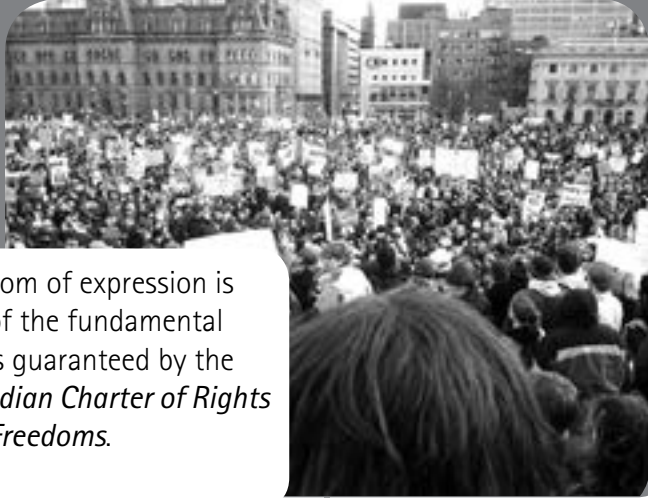
Write your own definition of democracy.



Describe what democracy means, using the words and phrases that you underlined. Use a graphic organizer such as a Wheel Chart to identify four important aspects of a democracy.

1 Why does democracy need participation?

■ Direct or Representative?



Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Who makes decisions in communities, the province and the country? Everyone has a say about who represents them in every level of government. Canada is a **representative democracy**, in which citizens elect representatives to form a government and make decisions on their behalf. **Residents**, people who live in Canada, have many of the same rights whether or not they are citizens. However, residents who are not citizens cannot vote in elections.

Alberta also has a representative democracy. The provincial government is run by a **legislature**, or a group of people who are elected by citizens to represent them and form the government in the province.

This system of representative democracy is based on **principles**, or important values and ideas, which are hundreds of years old. The representatives elected in provinces govern through the legislature. The government elected for Canada as a whole governs through the **parliament**.

Pause and Reflect



How do you think people participate in a representative democracy?

To what extent do you think you participate in democracy?

Representative democracies are different from direct democracies. In a **direct democracy**, citizens make decisions in person, without going through representatives. This is similar to what happens in a town hall meeting, where anyone from the town can come to the meeting and vote on decisions that are being made. However, for town meetings to work, people have to attend them and participate.



Which of the statements in the margin apply to representative democracy? Which apply to a direct democracy? Which apply to both? Write each statement in the chart where it best applies.

Representative Democracy	Direct Democracy	Both



Work with a small group to create a one-minute role play or create a comic strip using a **Storyboard** graphic organizer.

Your role play or comic strip should show what one of the statements you organized in the chart looks like.

- Everyone is responsible for following the same rules and laws.
- In an election, all eligible voters have the right to vote for a person who will represent them.
- Each class representative meets with the principal to discuss a school-wide decision.
- Everyone votes on a decision to be made for the class.
- People get up and take turns explaining how they will vote on a community issue at a town hall meeting.
- Sometimes, an important decision is made by holding a **referendum**, a vote in which every citizen can participate.
Plebiscites are similar to referendums, but are usually held to determine public opinion on an issue.
- People have the freedom to express their opinions.
- An election is held to vote for representatives who make decisions on behalf of the people who elect them.
- All people can participate directly in decision-making.

1 Why does democracy need participation?

Did You Know

The word “democracy” comes from two Greek words: “demos,” which means people, and “kratia,” which means rule. The idea that the people should rule themselves was an important part of life in Greece about 2 500 years ago. Ancient Greece was divided into small units called city states. All citizens got together in an Assembly to make decisions and govern the city state.

In today’s democracy, citizens elect people to represent them in the Assembly. They do not attend the Assembly themselves.

But the basic idea that was important in ancient Greece is still the same – that people have common interests which they can promote by making decisions and acting together.

Development of Democracy

What do you know about Canada's history? It is made up of many stories, people and events. Democracy has a history too. There are many events and ideas that have contributed to the way the democratic system in Canada works.

A British Heritage

The Greeks contributed some of the principles and ideas that are part of the parliamentary system of government, but today's parliament developed in what is now Great Britain. It came into being because **monarchs**, rulers who were kings and queens, needed more and more money to fight wars and run the kingdom. They got this money by taxing people.

Eventually, these people refused to pay taxes unless they had a say in how that money would be spent. Over time, the government in Britain gained more control over decision-making and the monarch held less and less power.

A First Nations Legacy

The Iroquois Confederacy was a sophisticated political and social system. It united the territories of five First Nations in a “symbolic longhouse.”

The people of the Iroquois Confederacy call themselves the Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee) meaning “people who build a house.” These united First Nations influenced some principles of democracy in Canada today.

The original five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy were divided into two groups: the Elders, consisting of the Mohawk, the Onondaga, and the Seneca; and the Younger, the Oneida and the Cayuga.

Pause and Reflect

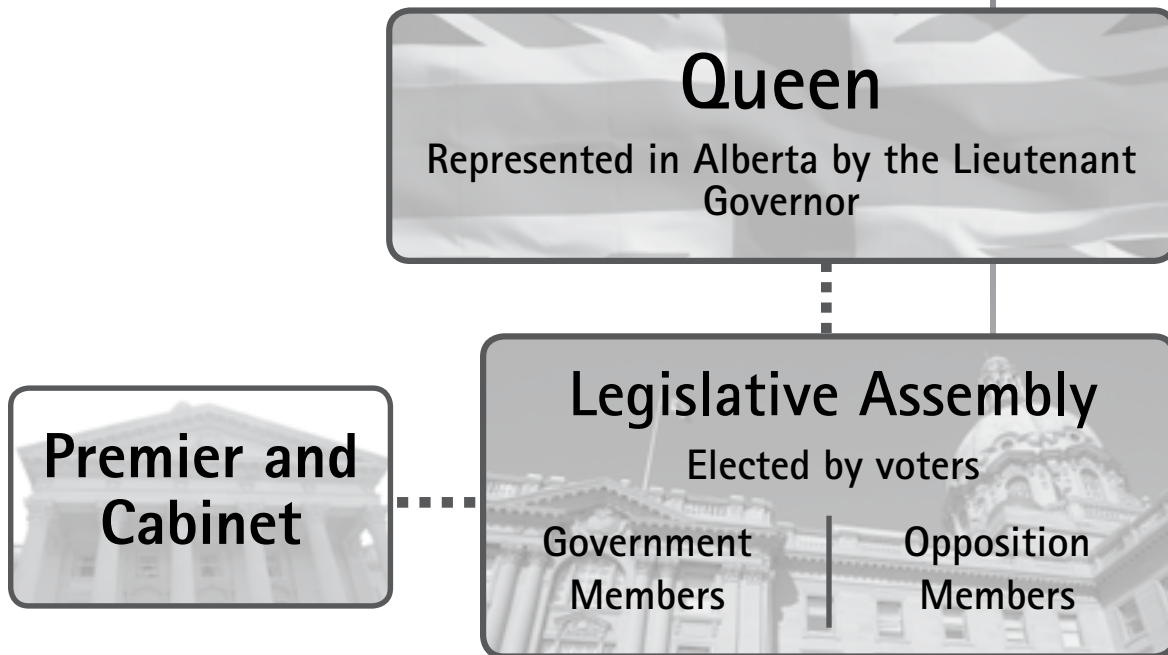
How do you think decisions made by the Haudenosaunee longhouse compare with decisions made in a democracy?

All decisions of the Confederacy had to be **unanimous**, or agreed to by everyone. Decisions were made when all nations agreed. If they could not agree, they continued to negotiate until an agreement could be made. Decisions were recorded in the belts of wampum, which kept track of important events.

■ The Process of Responsible Government

The government in Canada can be described as a **responsible government**. This means that elected representatives are responsible to the people who elect them.

- Canada's federal government has a two-house system that came from Britain. The two houses are called the parliament and the senate.
- The provinces have one house. It is called the legislature. In the Alberta Legislature today, the monarch is represented by the **Lieutenant Governor**, who is the formal head of state.



- The power and authority to make laws is given to the premier and his or her cabinet. The premier is the leader of the political party that has the most elected representatives in the entire legislature.
- The **cabinet** consists of the premier and cabinet members. The cabinet is responsible for putting government policy into practice. The premier is the head of the cabinet and chooses cabinet ministers from the elected members of his or her party.
- To govern, the premier and cabinet must have the support of the majority of elected representatives, known as **Members of the Legislative Assembly**. These representatives are also called MLAs. Members of the cabinet are called **ministers**. Ministers propose most of the laws that pass, and they vote on them along with their fellow MLAs. Ministers are also responsible for running government ministries and the laws that guide them. If a major policy or law is defeated, the government must resign and call an election.
- Elections are held to elect representatives.



Find Out More

Consult other sources for more information about the provincial level of government.

- What questions do you have about the provincial level of government? Make a list of three or four questions to answer.
- What can you find out about the responsibilities of the premier, ministers and MLAs?

Compare what you find out to the local level of government. What are two similarities or differences?

Voting has changed a lot since **1867**... Check out some milestones in the history of the vote in Canada!

Did You Know



Did you know that when the first election in Canada was held, the people who were **not** eligible to vote outnumbered those who were eligible to vote?

Find Out More



Is democracy all about voting and elections? Find out how the right to vote has changed over the years.

Explore these events and others in the history of democracy in Canada on the **Democracy and Participation** timeline on the **Building Future Voters** elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

In **1867**, only 11% of Canada's population was eligible to vote. Today, that percentage is over 68%, almost every Canadian citizen aged 18 and over.

In **1917**, during World War I, the *Wartimes Elections Act* and the *Military Voters Act*, gave all members of the armed forces, both male and female, the right to vote in the 1917 federal election. This included First Nations peoples and individuals under the age of 21.

In **1918**, women were given the right to vote in federal elections.

In **1920**, the position of Chief Electoral Officer of Canada was created. The Chief Electoral Officer was given the responsibility to make sure federal elections across Canada were run according to the laws of the time.

In **1948**, Canadians of Asian origin obtained the right to vote.

In **1874**, people could now vote in private. Paper ballots and voting booths were used for the first time.

In **1885**, the first version of a federal *Election Act* was passed by the federal government. The right to vote was applied differently from one town and one province to the next. The right to vote was based on property ownership.

In **1919**, women obtained the right to run as candidates in federal elections.

In **1920**, First Nations peoples were given the right to vote but they had to give up their treaty rights and status under the *Indian Act*.

In **1921**, Agnes Macphail became the first woman elected as a representative to parliament. She would be the only woman in the federal parliament for the next 14 years.

In **1950**, Inuit people obtained the right to vote and the right to run as candidates in federal elections.

In **1960**, First Nations people living on reserves were granted the right to vote and the right to run as candidates in federal elections without having to give up their status under the *Indian Act*.

In **1982**, the right to vote and the right to be a candidate in an election were guaranteed in the Constitution by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

In **1992**, special measures, such as blind voting templates, wheelchair access to polls and interpreters, were put into the *Canada Elections Act* to ensure access to vote for people with disabilities.

In **1955**, religious discrimination was removed from federal election laws. Previously, peoples such as the Doukhobors, who objected to war, were not allowed to vote.

In **1970**, the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18.

In **1988**, federally appointed judges and persons with intellectual disabilities obtained the right to vote in federal elections.

In **1993**, a special, or mail-in, ballot was made available for citizens who were away on election day, on vacation or temporarily living outside of their electoral divisions.

In **2002**, following a ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, voting rights were given to all inmates, for federal elections. This also occurred in Alberta, with inmates voting in the 2015 provincial election.



Find Out More

Find out more about the development of voting rights in Canada. Explore pictures, videos and news stories on the CBC digital archives, *Voting in Canada: How a Privilege Became a Right*, at www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/voting-in-canada-how-a-privilege-became-a-right.



Build your own timeline. Pick what you think are the five most important events in the history of the vote. Consult the information and images on the **Democracy and Participation** timeline.

Write or draw what is important about each event, placing it in chronological order on a **Timeline** graphic organizer.

1 Why does democracy need participation?

Make It Matter

As you create your project, think about what you can do to participate effectively with your family, friends, school or community.

■ Why Participate?

What do you think about when you hear the word "democracy?" You may think about democracy as a form of government, but it is much more than government. It involves participation. Why do you think it is important to participate in a democracy?

Share your ideas about democracy and participation with your classmates or other students in your school. Choose from the projects described below, or develop your own idea for a project. Collect sources, personal examples and visuals that show why and how you think it is important to participate.

Your project should:

- Include ideas about the importance of democracy and what it can look like "in action"
- Use a variety of sources and examples, such as print materials, media sources, photographs, interview quotations, personal examples
- Include a paragraph that represents your opinion on why it is important to participate.

With your class, create a display around the question, "Why Participate?"

Choose a Format:



A **personal poster** includes visuals and text. It should communicate a strong message.



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 you create yourself. 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 create an emotional reaction. A photo essay can provide a written explanation, literature excerpt or quotation or descriptive words and phrases with each photograph. To create your photo essay, you can take digital photographs and create your essay in electronic form or cut and paste photographs you find in different sources.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

Why does provincial government matter?

The provincial level of government affects many aspects of day-to-day life. A review of the roles of provincial government can develop understandings of the concept of representative government as well as the responsibilities of government. **Learning Sequence 2** asks students to consider how the responsibilities of government compare to the individual responsibilities they have as a citizen.



In this learning sequence, students develop, demonstrate and apply competencies when they:

- **Think critically** to compare individual and government roles and responsibilities
- Explore multiple perspectives about **citizenship** to conceptualize what democracy and government means to them
- Apply multiple literacies to develop and demonstrate oral, written and visual **communication** skills and engage in **collaborative** processes
- Apply a research process and interpret data to **manage information**



Prepare

Student Resources

- 2-1: Responsibilities? Me? (pp. 63-64)
- 2-2: Responsibilities of Provincial Government (pp. 65-71)

Graphic Organizers

- Triple T-Chart (p. 137)



5 to 8 45-minute class periods



Backgrounder 2 (pp. 108-119) provides information that can help you support student learning.

provincial government

representatives

roles

responsibilities



Curriculum Connections

Find the curriculum connections chart for **Learning Sequence 2** on pages 157-158.



Make It Matter

Students use **Communicate and Implement (pp. 148-149)** to develop strategies for communicating the goals of their action project and taking action.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

Why does provincial government matter?



Criteria Checklist

Criteria	Almost always	Sometimes	Not yet
Students provide evidence of their learning as they:			
Listen and respond respectfully to explore and build understandings of democratic principles (Social Studies 6.1.1.1; 6.1.1.4; 6.1.2.3; 6.S.4.2)			
Identify responsibilities of provincial government (Social Studies 6.1.1.5; 6.1.5.1; 6.1.5.2; 6.1.5.4)			
Analyze structures and functions of provincial government (Social Studies 6.1.5.1; 6.1.5.2)			
Access and organize information from different sources (Social Studies 6.S.1.5; 6.S.5.3; 6.S.7.8; 6.S.8.6)			
Examine, evaluate and assess sources to manage information (Social Studies 6.S.4.2; 6.S.7.2; 6.S.7.3; 6.S.7.4; 6.S.7.8)			
Construct maps to provide evidence of understanding of political boundaries (Social Studies 6.S.3.1)			
Develop inquiry questions (Social Studies 6.S.7.2; 6.S.7.6)			
Generate, discuss and share innovative and creative ideas when collaborating with others (Social Studies 6.S.1.4; 6.S.4.1)			
Express and support personal and diverse opinions with others (Social Studies 6.S.4.1; 6.S.7.4)			
Use graphic organizers to make connections between ideas (Social Studies 6.S.4.7)			
Collaborate and cooperate with group members (Social Studies 6.S.4.3; 6.S.5.2)			
Communicate ideas and information (Social Studies 6.S.8.1; 6.S.8.2; 6.S.8.7)			



Competency Cues

This learning sequence focuses on the development of understandings of the roles and responsibilities of provincial government. Encourage students to consider why understanding the responsibilities of government is important to their responsibilities as an active citizen. Facilitate opportunities for students to build understandings of governance as a human activity that affects the well-being of communities.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

Why does provincial government matter?



Rubric

Level Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Adequate	1 Limited	Not demonstrated
<p>Applies citizenship skills to compare responsibilities of provincial government</p> <p>(Social Studies 6.1.1.4; 6.1.5.1; 6.1.5.2; 6.1.5.4)</p>	Provides a specific and purposeful analysis of the responsibilities and importance of provincial government	Identifies and compares relevant information about responsibilities and importance of provincial government	Identifies general information about responsibilities and importance of provincial government	Provides superficial information about responsibilities and importance of provincial government	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task
<p>Applies critical thinking skills to analyze structure and functions of provincial government</p> <p>(Social Studies 6.1.5.1; 6.1.5.2)</p>	Provides an insightful analysis of the structure and function of provincial government	Provides a functional analysis of the structure and function of provincial government	Provides a basic analysis of the structure and function of provincial government	Provides a minimal analysis of the structure and function of provincial government	
<p>Discusses and shares innovative and creative ideas to communicate with others</p> <p>(Social Studies 6.S.1.4; 6.S.4.1)</p> <p>Applies critical thinking when expressing and supporting opinions</p> <p>(Social Studies 6.S.4.1; 6.S.7.4)</p>	Shares strongly justified ideas and opinions with others	Shares well supported ideas and opinions with others	Shares generally supported ideas and opinions with others	Shares inconsistently supported ideas and opinions with others	
<p>Collaborates to contribute to group processes</p> <p>(Social Studies 6.S.4.3; 6.S.5.2)</p>	Makes effective contributions and consistently engages in appropriate group behaviours	Makes skilled contributions and frequently engages in appropriate group behaviours	Makes reasonable contributions and usually engages in appropriate group behaviours	Makes inconsistent contributions and seldom engages in appropriate group behaviours	

LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

Why does provincial government matter?

Teaching and Learning Activities

① Responsibilities? Me?

The concept of responsibility is one that students can be encouraged to explore on a personal level before applying it to the broader concept of responsibilities of government. Students should be asked to make connections between the responsibilities of citizens and the responsibilities of government.

- Invite students to explore and discuss the concept of responsibility in **2-1: Responsibilities? Me?** (pp. 61-62). Have students work individually to complete the personal responsibility storyboard.

② Responsibilities of Provincial Government

Although the three levels of government – federal, provincial and municipal – have different responsibilities, they often overlap. An understanding of the responsibilities and roles of the provincial level of government establishes a context in which students are encouraged to see the relevance of government, the electoral process and the choice to vote to their daily lives.

- Ask students to review their understandings of provincial government – what does the provincial level of government do? If students have not already explored levels of government, introduce these levels – federal, provincial and local – using the core textbook resource and other classroom resources.
- Create a list of daily routines and experiences that are affected by provincial government. **2-2: Responsibilities of Provincial Government** (pp. 65-71) provides an introductory questionnaire that asks students to consider how different levels of government affect their experiences.

As a class, use the list to brainstorm services and facilities that students think are provided by provincial government in Alberta. Post a list of these services and facilities in the classroom.

Share



Provide opportunities for students to share their personal storyboards with each other.

Differentiate



Students can be asked to create their list of routines and experiences individually, with a partner or in a small group.

Use “kidwatching” techniques throughout the activity to monitor students’ work process as well as their progress. If you identify students who need more practice or additional instruction, provide them with one-on-one assistance in later sessions or create opportunities for students to work in pairs or small groups so that they can benefit from collaborative work.



Integrate

Students' lists can be expanded into a story entitled **A Day in the Life of a Grade 6 Student** and include the types of activities, routines and experiences that are influenced by different levels of government.

Encourage students to consider how they can apply real life themes to factual or fictional creations.

- Have students work with a small group to create a map of the electoral division in which they live.

Encourage groups to also use different sources of information, such as community brochures, neighbourhood or real estate maps and internet sources. Consider using one of the following formats to create a simplified electoral division map. If the electoral division represents a large area, suggest that students add detail only to the area in which they live.

- ➔ **A bird's-eye view.** This type of map shows streets and areas and provides symbolic representations of buildings, facilities and residences.
- ➔ **A three-dimensional map.** This type of map shows streets and areas, but represents buildings, facilities and residences in three-dimensional formats.
- ➔ **A photo map.** This type of map shows streets and areas, but photographs or drawings of buildings, facilities and residences are added to the map in the appropriate places.

Have each group share their electoral division maps, noting similarities and differences in how they have represented them. Encourage students to consider why groups may have represented the same area in different ways and revisit the concept of perspectives.



Integrate Technology

Find maps of Alberta electoral divisions on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/resources/maps/.

Provide time for students to explore examples in the **Government Matters** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca. The student resources and graphic organizers for this learning sequence can be accessed and downloaded on the webpage, completed in digital format and saved to a computer.

Explore as a class with an interactive whiteboard, or provide time for individual students or small groups to explore the stories, images and information in this section. Encourage students to respond to the questions posed, either in class discussion or through individual or small group reflection.

- Use a **cooperative learning jigsaw strategy** to have each group research, in more depth, the responsibilities of the provincial level of government. This strategy involves the following steps:

One: Assign each group member responsibility for one or two of the departmental responsibilities of the current Alberta government (depending on group size) that are identified in the student resource. These responsibilities are represented by government ministries, which, in 2016, included:

- Advanced Education
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Culture and Tourism
- Economic Development and Trade
- Education



Assess and Reflect

Assess students' contributions to the electoral division maps by using a checklist such as the following:

Does this student demonstrate ability to...	Yes	Almost	Not Yet
Contribute to the placement of services and facilities relevant to provincial government on the group map?			
Compare different interpretations of information used to construct group maps?			

Find Out More



The Alberta government website provides an up-to-date list of government ministries. Ministries can change after an election or during a government's term of office. Find information on the organizational structure of government, including current ministries at www.alberta.ca/organizational-structure.aspx.



Information on the general responsibilities of government ministries is also provided in **Backgrounder 2** (pp. 108-119).

- Energy
- Environment and Parks
- Health
- Human Services
- Indigenous Relations
- Infrastructure
- Justice and Solicitor General
- Labour
- Municipal Affairs
- Seniors and Housing
- Service Alberta
- Status of Women
- Transportation
- Treasury Board and Finance

Students should be made aware that these departments reflect the approach of a political party to government, but also do provide insight into the responsibilities of any provincial government in power. These ministries can be grouped into broader categories.

Two: Regroup students into expert groups. The expert groups are comprised of one student from each map group. Students in expert groups are responsible for gathering and researching information on the departmental responsibilities of provincial government in Alberta. Students can use a graphic organizer, such as the **Triple T-Chart** (p. 137) to organize their research.

Three: Each expert group should create a presentation of the information they collect so that they can teach students in their original groups about the area of government responsibility that they have researched. Encourage groups to develop a strategy for presenting their research to their electoral division mapping groups.

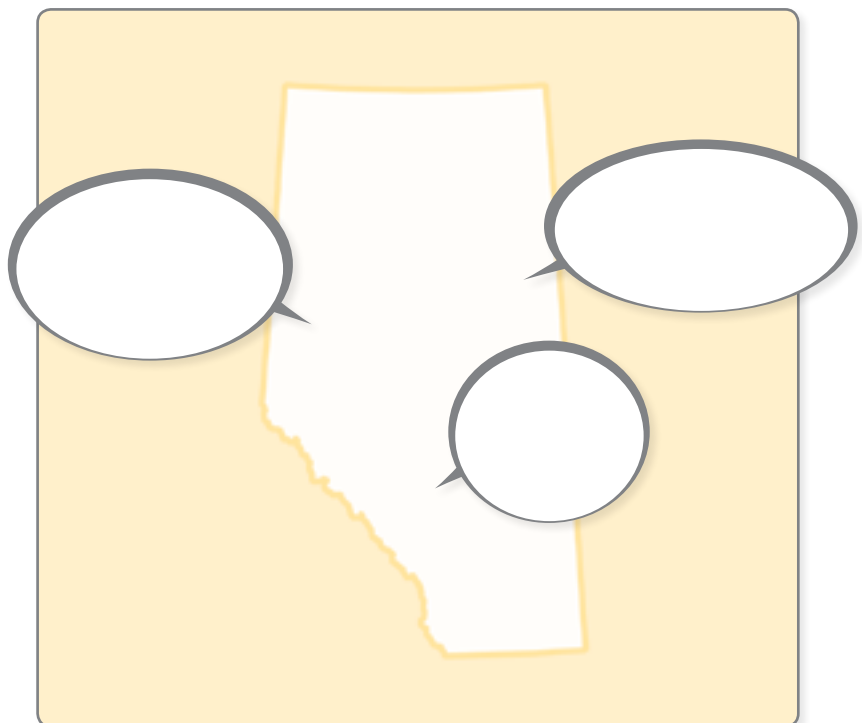
Did You Know



The provinces' areas of responsibility as defined in the *Constitution Act of 1867* (previously the *British North America Act 1867*) include health, child welfare, municipal government, transportation, labour, property and civil rights and education.

An election year provides an excellent opportunity to look at how government ministries can change when elections result in changes in the political party in power or just with the ministers assigned to each ministry.

Find the *Constitution Act of 1867* on the Department of Justice website at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-1.html>.



Four: Have students return to their electoral division mapping groups and present their research to other group members. Have each group create “callouts” or “text bubbles” using construction or coloured paper to add labels to their electoral division maps, identifying how the provincial government is responsible for, or has an impact on, different aspects of life in communities.

Five: The callouts or speech bubbles can also be created for the graffiti walls.



Share

Ask students to work in small groups to develop questions to interview a Returning Officer. Interview questions can focus on meanings of representative and direct democracy, establishment of electoral divisions and how the electoral process is connected to the responsibilities of provincial government.

Interviews can be conducted in the following ways:

- Through Elections Alberta, invite a Returning Officer to the classroom to be interviewed.
- Compile interview questions and have a group of students represent the class and conduct a telephone interview.
- Send interview questions by email to the Returning Officer. Alternatively, set up an interview using conferencing technology, such as Skype.

Have students compile and discuss answers. How are the Returning Officer’s perspectives on democracy and government 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 and Reflect

Ask students to reflect individually on what provincial government does for them personally.

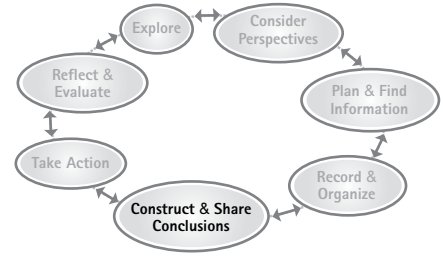
The research that students complete provides an opportunity for assessment of students’ understandings of the responsibilities of provincial government. These understandings should be assessed through an individual demonstration of learning. Evaluation should be based on individual student performance and gathered from a variety of sources of evidence to make a judgement of student performance using the descriptors of the **rubric (p. 57)**:

- Use evidence from the T-Chart completed during expert group research to assess individual understandings of the responsibilities of provincial government.
- Use observation evidence collected throughout the activities of the learning sequence to consider performance of process skills and group participation.
- Ask students to submit the final page of **2-2: Responsibilities of Provincial Government** as evidence of their understanding of the concepts of responsibility and representation.



Make It Matter

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 the project related to the responsibilities of provincial government? Should an MLA be contacted? If so, how could he or she help support the project?
- Who else 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 obtain support for the project from different individuals and groups?

Ask students to review their project research. Use **Communicate and Implement (pp. 148-149)** to identify individuals and groups who can help support the project and ways to communicate its goals and importance.

2 Why does provincial government matter?

Responsibilities? Me?

What do you think of when you hear the word responsibility? Chores? Schoolwork? Do you ever associate responsibility with what it means to be a citizen?

Over time, some of the responsibilities of citizens have changed. Although basic responsibilities are often linked to values that may have remained the same, the actions associated with those values have changed.

By the 1920s, more children were starting to attend school. By 1925, about 30% of girls and 25% of boys between the ages of 15 and 19 attended school. It was important to educate students about citizenship, although a citizenship that was based on British values and history.

How have children's responsibilities changed over time?



Pause and Reflect

What do you think your responsibilities as a citizen are?

How would your life be different if you were born in the mid-1800s?



Did You Know

Over time, children in Canada have been expected to help out with family responsibilities. In the past, even very young children were given responsibility at an early age. Teenagers were expected to take on a wide range of responsibilities – including those such as finding a job to contribute to the family income, working on the farm, looking after the house and younger children, cooking, cleaning and sharing in all aspects of running a household.

Before the middle of the 1800s, there was really no such thing as childhood. It wasn't until the early 1900s that views started to change and people recognized that being a child was different from being an adult. Legislation, or laws, that regulated the minimum working age was passed to ensure that children went to school instead of to work.

What responsibilities of citizenship are expected of children? Today, many think that children should learn the basic responsibilities they will be expected to fulfill as adults. In the past, even though children were viewed as smaller versions of adults, they did not have the rights that children have today.



How do you think your responsibilities will change? Use the **Storyboard** graphic organizer to sketch some of the changing responsibilities you think that you will have as you get older.



2 Why does provincial government matter?

Responsibilities of Provincial Government

Governments have responsibilities to the people who elect them. These responsibilities were set out in the *Constitution Act of 1867*. The *Constitution Act* says that provinces are responsible for:

- Health
- Child welfare
- Municipal government
- Transportation
- Labour
- Property and **civil rights** (these include rights that citizens are entitled to – for example, freedom of speech, religion, equality and security)
- Education

Each provincial government decides how to carry out these responsibilities. This is often done by establishing **government ministries**, or departments, that look after each area of responsibility.

The provincial government also takes responsibility for its environment and resources. It has to look after its own **finances**, like taxes and budgets. The provincial government also provides many different services for the residents of the province, such as issuing birth certificates, making sure the public is safe and enforcing the laws.

ministries
 constitution
 responsibilities
 provinces
 rights



Pause and Reflect

What do you remember learning about the importance of the *Constitution Act of 1867*?



Find Out More

Find out more about the responsibilities of the provincial government on the **Building Future Voters** elementary webpage.

Go to www.buildingfuturevoters.ca and explore the information, images and examples in **Government Matters**.



How does government affect your daily life and experiences? Answer each of the questions in the questionnaire. Under each question, you will find some items. Beside each item, identify which level or levels of government you think influences it!

	Always	Occasionally	Never
1. Do you use an alarm clock to wake up? Radio programs _____ Power _____			
2. Do you eat cereal for breakfast? Bilingual food labels _____ Grain crops _____			
3. Do you take a bus or get a ride to school? Traffic signs, sidewalks and roads _____ Licenses on cars or buses _____			
4. Do you visit the doctor's office for a check-up? Health care _____			
5. Do you use a recreation centre in your community? Recreation programs _____			
6. Do you go camping in parks? Provincial park _____ National park _____			
7. Do you play on a sports team? Playing fields _____ Arena _____			
8. Have you ever had a part-time job? Workplace safety laws _____			
9. Do you visit with seniors or Elders? Seniors' Centre _____			
10. Have you ever seen an election held in your school or community league? Elections _____			



The webpage below shows a list of Alberta government ministries in 2016. What do you think each government ministry is responsible for? Write the government ministry beside its area of responsibility in the chart.

Alberta Provincial Ministries in 2016

The screenshot shows a webpage with a 'Government' tab selected. A search bar is visible in the top right corner. The list of ministries is as follows:

- Advanced Education
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Culture and Tourism
- Economic Development and Trade
- Education
- Energy
- Environment and Parks
- Health
- Human Services
- Indigenous Relations
- Infrastructure
- Justice and Solicitor General
- Labour
- Municipal Affairs
- Seniors and Housing
- Service Alberta
- Status of Women
- Transportation
- Treasury Board and Finance

Responsibility	Government Ministry	Responsibility	Government Ministry
Health		Property and Civil Rights	
Child Welfare		Education	
Municipal Government		Environment and Resources	
Transportation		Finances	
Labour		Services for Residents	



Find out more about the responsibilities of two government ministries. Record and organize your research using a **Triple T-Chart** graphic organizer like the one below.

In the middle column of the chart, answer the following questions. Add some of your own questions.

1. What is the main purpose of this government ministry or department?
2. What are two to three of the most important responsibilities of this ministry or department?
3. What are examples of services, facilities or programs that this ministry provides to residents of Alberta?
4. What does this ministry or department have to do with your daily life?
5. _____
6. _____

Find Out More



Find out more about the responsibilities of the provincial government by exploring what each ministry does in Alberta.

Go to the Alberta government website and search for government ministries. Find this information at www.alberta.ca/ministries.cfm.

Government Ministry	Purpose and Responsibilities Services, Facilities or Programs	Source of Information

Responsibilities of a Representative

Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) have full-time, important jobs. MLAs represent all of the people who live in the electoral division in which they were elected, whether or not those people are eligible to vote, voted for another candidate or did not vote at all. MLAs are responsible for helping their constituents with problems or concerns.

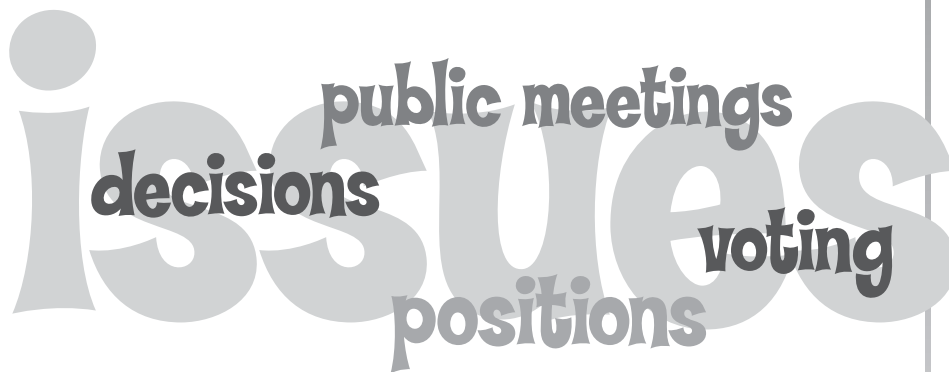
In the Legislative Assembly, MLAs share the views of their constituents by introducing bills and debating and discussing concerns with other MLAs. An MLA communicates with other elected members and various government ministries. MLAs perform most of their duties in their constituencies. Here they listen to the problems, questions, ideas and opinions of the people who live in the electoral division they represent.

MLAs also deal with **special-interest groups**, which are organizations and groups that promote specific views and actions. Do you know of any groups in your community that are concerned about the environment, child care, health, drunk driving, education or any other important issue? These groups can meet with an MLA, who may support their cause by proposing a new law or resolution in the Legislative Assembly or by writing a letter to a government ministry.

In addition to meeting with their constituents, MLAs spend time becoming informed about matters of public interest, preparing speeches and going to meetings to talk about policies and issues.

■ Making Decisions

MLAs often have to take a stand on issues and decisions, and the perspective or view they support depends on the platforms of the political party to which they belong, their constituents' points of view and their own personal beliefs. Through public meetings, day-to-day contact and local media forums, MLAs gather information from as many constituents as possible. They then discuss the issue in private meetings, called **caucus meetings**, with other MLAs from the same party.



The caucus members decide as a group what their party's position will be. Voting in the Legislature tends to be along party lines, according to what the caucus decided beforehand. However, MLAs may vote as they see fit, rather than according to the position of their caucus. If some MLAs feel that the position of the caucus does not reflect what their constituents want or that it would not be beneficial to the people who live and work in their electoral division, they can and sometimes do speak against it.

Cabinet ministers are MLAs who are in charge of specific government ministries and can influence ministry policies and programs. Ministers may remain as ministers but not MLAs when the Legislative Assembly has been dissolved for an election. As well as representing their constituents, ministers are ultimately responsible for the policies and actions of the ministry they lead.



Did You Know

There are many different individuals and groups that a Minister has to deal with. For example, the Minister of Energy must be responsible to constituents as well as deal with all matters related to that ministry. Below is a partial list of people who the Minister of Energy might have to deal with:

- Technical staff in the Department of Energy and the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board
- Natural gas, oil, electricity, mineral and petrochemical developers, producers and retailers
- Transporters of energy (e.g., pipelines, electrical transmission)
- Environmental and other nongovernment organizations
- Advocates of alternative energy sources
- Technical experts in industry and academia
- Committees and other groups formed to address energy matters
- MLAs from opposition parties, particularly the critics of the Energy department
- Energy and mining representatives from federal, provincial or territorial and municipal governments
- People in the energy field from other countries
- Representatives from the media
- Individual consumers and taxpayers from across the province

■ Private Government Members

Private government members are often called **backbenchers** because in the Legislative Assembly they sit in the back rows, behind the cabinet ministers. However, the correct term for any member who is not in cabinet is "private member." A private government member is an MLA who belongs to the governing party.

Private members sit on cabinet policy committees and can sponsor government **bills**, proposals for laws that will be discussed and debated before becoming law.

In addition, private government members, as well as opposition members, introduce their own bills. These are called **private bills**.

The role of an **opposition party** is to analyze and critique government activity, propose improvements and present itself to the public as an alternative to the party in power. Opposition parties often assign some of their MLAs to be critics of specific departments. Together, opposition critics are called a **shadow cabinet**. For example, an environment critic discusses issues with the Minister of Environment, suggests alternative policies and priorities and keeps these issues public. Opposition critics, like the ministers they shadow, hear concerns and ideas from various persons and interest groups from anywhere in the province.

■ Committees of the Legislative Assembly

MLAs also serve on **committees**. Committees of the Legislative Assembly are made up of MLAs from various parties. During session, the whole Legislative Assembly, which includes all MLAs, meets as a committee to study the details of proposed laws and spending programs.



Why does provincial government matter? Choose one of the following two questions to respond to. Write your response to the question in the top section of the box below. In the bottom, create a drawing, symbol, icon or poem that supports your response.

The provincial level of government can influence your daily life in many ways. As a grade 6 student, what is most important to you about the provincial level of government? Why?

Even though you are not old enough to vote, your provincial representative or MLA is still responsible to you. If you could write a letter to your MLA about current issues that concern you, what would you say?

Handwriting lines for student response, consisting of a large rectangular box with horizontal lines.



LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

If I could vote, would I?

The electoral process represents a fundamental principle of democracy – citizen participation. The electoral process emphasizes values of equity, fairness, accountability and openness. **Learning Sequence 3** asks students to apply understandings and demonstrate curiosity and respect for the values associated with democratic processes such as elections.



In this learning sequence, students develop, demonstrate and apply competencies when they:

- Recognize and reflect on **citizenship** values that are part of democratic processes to create opportunities for participation within communities
- **Think critically and solve problems** to consider challenges and opportunities involved in the electoral process
- Apply multiple literacies to develop and demonstrate oral, written and visual **communication** skills and engage in **collaborative** processes
- Apply a research process and interpret data to **manage information** and analyze issues



Prepare

Student Resources

- 3-1: About Voting and Elections (pp. 83-84)
- 3-2: To Vote or Not to Vote (pp. 85-91)
- 3-3: An Election Experience (pp. 92-93)

Graphic Organizers

- Storyboard (p. 135)
- Triple T-Chart (p. 137)
- Mind Map (p. 138) or Flow Chart (p. 139)

Build the Vote! An Election Simulation

- Election simulation resources, templates, forms and directions

Order the **Election Simulation Toolkit** from Elections Alberta. See page 6 of this resource for ordering information.



6 to 10 45-minute class periods



Backgrounder 3 (pp. 120-125) provides information that can help you support student learning.

structures and functions

electoral
process

vote



Curriculum Connections

Find the curriculum connections chart for **Learning Sequence 3** on **pages 159-160**.



Make It Matter

Students use **Plan for Action (p. 150)** to explore options for implementing their project and plan steps and activities.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

If I could vote, would I?



Criteria Checklist

Criteria	Almost always	Sometimes	Not yet
Students provide evidence of their learning as they:			
Listen and respond respectfully to explore and build understandings of democratic principles (Social Studies 6.1.1.1; 6.S.8.5)			
Describe the sequence and importance of the electoral process (Social Studies 6.1.5.4)			
Analyze ways to participate in democratic decision-making processes (Social Studies 6.1.1.4; 6.1.2.3; 6.S.4.1; 6.S.4.2)			
Examine, evaluate and assess sources to manage information (Social Studies 6.S.1.1; 6.S.1.2; 6.S.7.1; 6.S.7.3; 6.S.7.4; 6.S.9.5; 6.S.9.6)			
Access and organize information from different sources (Social Studies 6.S.1.5; 6.S.5.3)			
Generate, discuss and share innovative and creative ideas (Social Studies 6.S.1.4)			
Participate in problem solving and decision-making processes by offering ideas and providing examples and reasons (Social Studies 6.S.4.1; 6.S.4.2; 6.S.5.3; 6.S.8.2)			
Identify different points of view and perspectives (Social Studies 6.S.4.2)			
Analyze current affairs (Social Studies 6.S.9.3)			
Use graphic organizers to make connections between ideas (Social Studies 6.S.4.7, 6.S.7.3)			
Formulate and administer survey questions (Social Studies 6.S.7.2)			

Criteria	Almost always	Sometimes	Not yet
Students provide evidence of their learning as they:			
Communicate information (Social Studies 6.S.8.1)			
Work collaboratively and cooperatively in a group setting (Social Studies 6.S.4.3; 6.S.5.1; 6.S.5.2; 6.S.8.5)			
Contribute to group processes (Social Studies 6.S.5.1, 6.S.5.2; 6.S.8.5)			



Competency Cues

This learning sequence emphasizes the role of the electoral process in democratic societies as well as the responsibilities of citizenship. Encourage students to analyze how decision-making is part of the electoral process. Ask them to reflect on their potential for involvement in these decision-making processes. Focus on communication and collaboration skills as students interact with each other and share ideas and opinions.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

If I could vote, would I?



Rubric

Criteria \ Level	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Adequate	1 Limited	Not demonstrated
Thinks critically to analyze the sequence and importance of the electoral process (Social Studies 6.1.5.4)	Provides a purposeful analysis of the sequence and importance of events in the electoral process	Provides a relevant comparison of the sequence and importance of the electoral process	Provides a basic description of the sequence and importance of the electoral process	Provides a superficial description of the sequence and importance of the electoral process	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task
Describes and assesses ways to participate as a citizen in democratic decision-making processes (Social Studies 6.1.1.4; 6.1.2.3; 6.S.4.1; 6.S.4.2)	Makes insightful comparisons of the effectiveness of multiple ways to participate in democratic processes	Makes functional comparisons of the effectiveness of multiple ways to participate in democratic processes	Makes basic comparisons of the effectiveness of multiple ways to participate in democratic processes	Makes inconsistent comparisons of the effectiveness of multiple ways to participate in democratic processes	
Solves problems by offering ideas and providing examples and reasons (Social Studies 6.S.4.1; 6.S.4.2; 6.S.5.3; 6.S.8.2)	Provides insightful ideas and interrelated examples and reasons to support solutions and proposals	Provides clear ideas and relevant examples and reasons to support solutions and proposals	Provides adequate ideas and general examples and reasons to support solutions and proposals	Provides unconnected ideas and overgeneralized examples and reasons to support solutions and proposals	
Manages information to formulate and administer survey questions (Social Studies 6.S.7.2)	Formulates purposeful questions (that would likely encourage a meaningful response)	Formulates relevant questions (that would likely encourage an attentive response)	Formulates routine questions (that would likely encourage a general response)	Formulates superficial questions (that could encourage a trivial response)	

LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

If I could vote, would I?

Teaching and Learning Activities

1 About Voting and Elections

The provincial electoral process is an important aspect of the democratic process and is important to citizenship and decision-making.

- Provide students with **3-1: About Voting and Elections (pp. 83-84)** and ask them to individually review the introduction and complete the Fast Quiz. Have them work with a partner to compare answers, providing reasons for choosing each response. Suggest that students use a process of consensus to agree on a response to each question.
- Discuss each question in the Fast Quiz as a class. Have pairs indicate, with a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down,” whether they think each statement is true or false. Discuss the process of consensus each pair used to agree on their response. Detailed answers to the Fast Quiz are provided in the **Voting and Elections** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage.



Assess and Reflect

Ask students to reflect on the processes used in consensus building:

- Two heads are better than one.
 - There can be different perspectives involved in looking at information.
 - Being an active listener is important.
 - Sometimes you can change your mind when you listen to reasons you didn't think of before.
-
- Revisit students' ideas and opinions from previous activities about the importance of participation in democratic processes. Provide students with **3-2: To Vote or Not to Vote (pp. 85-91)**. Refer them to the list of reasons that people can give when they choose to vote or not to vote.
 - Have students work with their partner to rank the reasons in each column, with “1” being the most common reason provided for not voting and “6” or “9” being the least common. Discuss the rankings as a class and use the discussion to introduce the voter survey that students will plan and implement.



Integrate Technology

Make time for students to explore the **Voting and Elections** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage at

www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

The student resources and graphic organizers for this learning sequence can be accessed and downloaded on the webpage, completed in digital format and saved to a computer.

The Fast Quiz is provided through interactive flip boxes on the webpage. Challenge students to take the quiz individually, with a partner or as a class. Ask students to reflect on their true-false responses in the context of the introduction to the quiz: What do you know about voting in Canada and around the world? Are all elections equal? How have democratic processes originated and changed over time?

Explore as a class with an interactive whiteboard, or provide time for individual students or small groups to explore the stories, images and information on this section. Encourage students to respond to the questions posed, either in class discussion or through individual or small group reflection.



Competency Cues

Discuss the process of consensus building and how it applies to many different aspects of daily life. Skills related to consensus building are citizenship skills and can demonstrate flexibility and resilience when adapting to new or unfamiliar situations.

Find Out More



The Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta is required by the *Election Act* to provide a report on each provincial general election and byelections. These reports provide a summary of the electoral process, including key dates, candidate and voter statistics and results. These reports can be found on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/reports/.

Share



Through Elections Alberta, invite a Returning Officer to help students plan and hold 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 election officers.
- 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.

The survey provides students with the opportunity to explore information about the electoral process, including:

- When and how elections are held
 - Voter registration
 - Electoral boundaries
 - Representation by MLAs
 - Political parties
 - Participation in elections, including campaigns, election platforms and media
- Assign students the task of conducting a survey with one or two adults who are of voting age (18 years of age or older). The student resource provides survey questions about experiences during elections and knowledge-based questions about the electoral process and the current provincial government in power.
 - Have students work in small groups to compare the results of their surveys. Ask students to use a graphic organizer such as a **Triple T-Chart (p. 137)** to organize their results. The student resource provides background information for students, corresponding to each survey question, in the section “Exploring Results.”

Invite each group to share insights from the survey with the rest of the class. What have they learned about the electoral process from conducting the survey?

Question	Interview 1	Interview 2
Do you discuss politics and government with your family?	Often discusses politics at dinner time	Not often

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.

- 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 will encourage students to explore concepts related to the electoral process in the context of a classroom, multiple classrooms or a school-wide election. Start by introducing aspects of the electoral process and discussing 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 providing students with **3-3: An Election Experience (pp. 92-93)**, which guides students through questions to consider to plan and hold a student election. Students are encouraged to identify issues that will become a focus for the student election.

Support for an election simulation is provided in *Build the Vote! An Election Simulation*. This resource booklet provides templates, forms and directions to implement an election in the classroom. Access this resource on the teacher webpage of the *Building Future Voters* website at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca. An Election Simulation Toolkit can also be ordered from Elections Alberta at the contact information provided on **page 6** of this resource.

- The information, forms and templates in the election simulation are designed to actively engage students, 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, candidates' 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 an election simulation in the classroom
 - ➔ To conduct an election simulation for combined classrooms at the same grade level
 - ➔ To organize and conduct an election simulation or student council election for your school
- Encourage students to add insights about the electoral process to their graffiti walls.



Integrate Technology

Examples of videos produced by Elections Alberta for the 2012 and 2015 provincial elections are provided in the **Voting and Elections** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage, at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

Have students develop their own 30-second advertisements, either for television or radio, that encourage people to vote. Provide students with a graphic organizer such as the **Storyboard (p. 135)** to plan their advertisements.



Integrate

Have students graph voter participation in Alberta. Elections Alberta provides voting statistics over a number of years at www.elections.ab.ca/reports/statistics/overall-summary-of-ballots-cast-and-voter-turnout/.

Students can focus on one electoral division and research, chart and graph voter participation percentages. A spreadsheet summary of votes by electoral division can be downloaded on the Election Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/reports/statistics/. Graphs can also be created using a spreadsheet program such as Excel. Have students analyze and compare their results.

Learn Alberta provides a graphing activity at www.learnalberta.ca/content/mejhm/index.html?l=0. Go to the **Statistics and Probability** tab and select **Data Display and Graphs**. The **Exploring Election Data** resource allows students to explore and interpret Alberta provincial election results from 1905 to 2004 using a pictograph, line graph, bar graph, circle graph or data table. The resource includes print activities, solutions and learning strategies.

Assess and 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	Almost	Not Yet
Identify the characteristics of the electoral process in sequence?			
Provide reasons for each characteristic within the electoral process?			
Compare roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups involved in the electoral process?			

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 2015 federal general election, 57% of electors aged 18 to 24 voted. In the 2011 general election, approximately 39% of electors in the 18 to 24 age group voted.

Elections Canada. *Voter Turnout by Age Group*. www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rec/eval/pes2015/vt&document=table1&lang=e

For 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 an 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.

Activity adapted from *Voting: What's it all about?* Read-Write-Think. NCTE International Reading Association website. www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/voting-what-about-396.html



Make It Matter

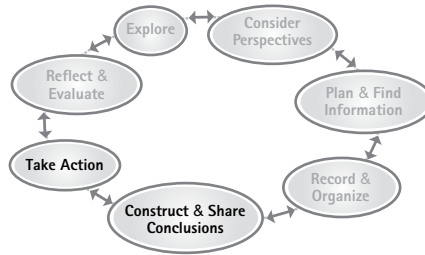
Encourage students to draw conclusions from the research they completed to support their projects. Use a graphic organizer such as a **Mind Map (p. 138)** or **Flow Chart (p. 139)** to organize research, look for patterns and draw conclusions.

Use **Plan for Action (p. 150)** to develop a plan for implementation. Discuss how elected representatives identify priorities for change and actions that are needed to make those changes, including the development of legislation and policies.

Work with students to connect the processes involved in their class election to possible actions they can take to implement their projects. Students can be encouraged to present action strategies as part of their class election campaigns, considering strategies such as:

- Communicating and lobbying for support of their project with an MLA or the government, including making a presentation, sending a letter or email, sharing research and findings, sending an invitation to meet with the class
- Implementing the project in the classroom or school, including creating a school awareness campaign, organizing student or working group meetings, holding lunch hour take-action meetings
- Implementing the project in the community, including preparing a community information night, holding a press conference, organizing a public service announcement or social media campaign, organizing a mini-conference

Candidates can campaign on the basis of how they will take leadership in developing, furthering and implementing the goals of the project.



Assess and Reflect

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

The research that students complete provides an opportunity to assess 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. 76)**:

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



Competency Cues

Emphasize collaborative processes, focusing on the development of respect for, and reasoned consideration of, diverse interests, perspectives and opinions. Watch for evidence of listening skills, flexibility and compromise.





About Voting and Elections

Voting can be described as the first or easiest step that a citizen can take to become politically involved. Every citizen of voting age has the right to vote in a democracy, although some choose not to.

A democracy cannot exist without free and fair elections. Everyone is equal in a free and fairly run election 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. Results let the government know what positions and points of view are supported by the majority.

All levels of government make important decisions that affect almost every aspect of your life. Some of these decisions affect things like:

- Your school, including how much time you spend there
- The environment, including how clean the air and water is or how decisions are made about environmental challenges
- Your health, including the availability of health insurance or how much it costs to go to the doctor or buy prescription drugs
- Who gets to visit, work and live in the country
- Your safety, including the size of police and fire departments
- How much money the government will spend on the military or on peace-keeping missions.

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.

3 If I could vote, would I?



Pause and Reflect

What do you know about elections? Why do you think they are so important in a democracy?



Pause and Reflect

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

- 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.



Challenge yourself with this fast quiz. What do you think – True or False? Then, discuss your responses with a partner. Use a process of consensus to agree on a response for each question.

- ___ 1. In some countries, the voting age is less than 18.
- ___ 2. The United States is the world's most populated democracy.
- ___ 3. It is illegal to eat your ballot in a Canadian federal election.
- ___ 4. The secret ballot originated in Australia in the 1850s and is sometimes called the Australian ballot.
- ___ 5. The word "democracy" originated in ancient Rome.
- ___ 6. Quebec was the first Canadian province to allow women to vote.
- ___ 7. In some countries, voting is compulsory. If a person chooses not to vote, he or she can be fined, made to do community service or given a prison sentence.
- ___ 8. Alberta was the first province to hold an election for an Alberta representative to the Senate of Canada.

Find Out More



Find out more about the elections and the experience of voting on the **Building Future Voters** elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

Explore information and examples in **Voting and Elections**. Take the fast quiz and check your answers on the webpage.

electoral process

voting age
ballot
candidate





3 If I could vote, would I?

■ To Vote or Not to Vote



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.

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



Survey

Use the questions on the Survey form to interview one or two individuals who are of voting age (18 and older). Add your own questions to the interview.

Survey

(Circle one that applies)

Gender: Male Female

Age: 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 >55

Part I: Participation

Do you discuss politics and government with your family?

Do you believe that it is important to vote? Why or why not?

Have you ever voted in an election (federal, provincial or municipal)?

Was there ever a time that you did not vote? Could you explain why?

At what age did you first vote?

When you vote, what is the number one thing that you consider when making your decision?

(Continued on next page)

Part II: Knowledge

How often are provincial elections held?

What is an electoral division? In what electoral division do you live?

What is voter registration? How is it conducted?

Why are voters registered?

What does MLA stand for?

Who is your current MLA?

What is a political party?

What political party does your MLA belong to?

What are the current political parties in Alberta? Which of these parties are represented in the Legislature?

What advice would you give future voters about participating during an election?

■ Exploring the Survey Questions

When you vote, what is the number one thing that you consider when making your decision?

People provide different reasons to explain why they vote the way they do. Some vote for a **candidate**, a person running for election, if they think he or she is most qualified. Others vote for both their candidate and the political party that candidate represents, unless he or she is running as an **independent**, a person who is not a member of a specific political party.

Some vote for the party leader through the candidate. Party leaders indicate what their party intends to do if they are elected to form a government. Individual candidates tend to focus on what they want to do for their electoral division.



Pause and Reflect

Why do you think governments must call an election every five years? Why do you think the times between elections can vary?

How often are provincial elections held?

The *Constitution Act* requires provincial elections to be held at least once every five years. Elections are usually held approximately every four years.

In Alberta, the government in power can decide when to call an election. Sometimes the government calls an election early.

Once an election is called, each electoral division goes through the election process. Candidates and political parties campaign to get support from voters. During four days of advance polling and on polling day, voters can cast their ballots from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

What is an electoral division? In what electoral division do you live?

In order to run an election, the province must be divided into electoral divisions, also called **constituencies**. Each electoral division elects one MLA. In 2016, there were 87 constituencies for over 3 million Albertans.

Electoral divisions are determined by a special organization called the Electoral Boundaries Commission. This organization is made up of a chairperson appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and four members, who are called commissioners.

The boundaries of an **electoral division** are established mainly on the basis of population. However, electoral divisions also take into account common community interests, the geographical area, natural boundaries such as rivers, political boundaries such as municipalities and other factors.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission's decisions are guided by a law called the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*. When the Commission adjusts boundaries, the changes must become law before they can take effect.

Find Out More



You can find maps of each electoral division on the Elections Alberta website. You can also search for the name of your MLA. Go to <http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca>.

What is voter registration? How is it conducted?

Elections Alberta records the names of eligible voters on a permanent Register of Electors. A List of Electors is provided for each electoral division during an election.

Elections Alberta provides an online voter registration service called Voterlink. Find this service at www.voterlink.ab.ca.

Eligible voters can add their names to the List of Electors on voting day. Provincial voters must be registered to vote. They must provide identification to prove who they are when they register. Voters can register at the **polling station**, the place where they vote, by completing a declaration. They can also register online or by phone outside of an election period.

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

Pause and Reflect



Why do you think it is important to keep track of who has voted on polling day?

voter registration

MLA

elect

political party

voting

Why are voters registered?

The **Register of Electors** is used to maintain an accurate and up-to-date list of eligible voters. The **List of Electors** is used to keep track of who voted on polling day and to ensure that people vote only once.

What does MLA stand for?

MLA stands for Member of the Legislative Assembly. When a candidate gets elected, he or she becomes an MLA. An MLA represents all people in their electoral division, regardless of how a person voted in the last election or whether he or she voted at all.

Who is your MLA?

A list of current MLAs can be found on the Legislative Assembly of Alberta's website at www.assembly.ab.ca.

What is a political party?

When a group of people have similar ideas about the major issues affecting people in a democratic society, they may form a political party. A **political party** is formed to present candidates who will run in an election. If the candidate is elected to office, he or she will have a chance to put their party's ideas into practice.

In an election campaign, candidates concentrate on promoting policies that they believe will represent the best interests of the people in their electoral division. Political parties begin the work of choosing candidates long before an election. Each party **nominates**, or selects, one candidate to run in each electoral division. Candidates who don't belong to a political party are called independents.

What political party does your MLA belong to?

Alberta's major political parties are the Progressive Conservatives, Wildrose, the Liberals and the New Democrats, although there are other parties. These parties are also prominent in federal politics and in the politics of other provinces. They have both federal and provincial divisions, and each division has its own members and selects its own candidates.

Find Out More



Young adults can get involved with a political party by joining its youth association. Most of Alberta's political parties have their own websites, with information about their activities and events. You can also find contact information on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/parties-and-candidates/parties/.

How many political parties do we currently have in Alberta? How many are represented in the Legislature?

In 2016, there were ten registered political parties in Alberta:

- Alberta First Party
- Alberta Liberal Party
- Alberta New Democratic Party
- Alberta Party
- Alberta Social Credit Party
- Communist Party – Alberta
- Green Party of Alberta
- Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta
- Reform Party of Alberta
- Wildrose Party

After the 2015 provincial election, there were five political parties represented in the Alberta Legislature. The New Democrat Party formed the government with 54 seats. The Wildrose Party formed the Official Opposition with 22 seats. The Progressive Conservative Party had 9 seats, the Liberal Party had 1 seat and the Alberta Party had 1 seat.

What advice would you give future voters about participating during an election?

Political parties and candidates use many strategies to **campaign**, or promote their positions and ability to represent the people in their electoral division. All people can actively participate in election campaigns. How effective do you think each of these strategies are?

- Candidates often go door-to-door during campaigns. If you meet a candidate, ask questions. Remember that candidates compete for votes, and a chance to explain the advantages of their party's policies is a chance to convince you to vote for them.
- Focus on the issues that interest you and find out what your candidates and parties plan to do about them.
- If you don't get a chance to talk to candidates face-to-face, call campaign headquarters.
- Find out how candidates or their political parties handle issues by reading copies of *Hansard*, which are found on the Legislative Assembly's website at www.assembly.ab.ca. You can search by keyword. The more you know about an issue, the better your questions will be. You can then judge how much the candidates know about that particular issue and whether their views reflect yours.
- One of the best ways to find out about a party's election **platform**, or their views, principles and policies, is at online, in-person or phone-in community meetings, town halls or open houses. Listen to find out how candidates would deal with your concerns and those of your community.
- Watch candidates' panel discussions or party leaders debates on television or online. Watch for statements about important issues in the newspaper.
- Political parties and candidates also do their own advertising, including television and radio commercials, newspaper advertisements, lawn signs and posters. Check out the messages on these different forms of advertising.



Design a **Poster** or **Storyboard** for a television ad that encourages people to register to vote for the next election.



Did You Know

Canada uses a voting system called **single-member plurality**, or “first-past-the-post.” In other words, the candidate who gets the most votes in an electoral division wins, even if he or she received less than 50% of the “**popular vote**,” or the total number of votes cast.

An alternative voting system used in some democracies is **proportional representation**, in which parties win seats according to the percentage of the total votes cast in their favour. An additional system is **preferential voting**, in which voters can rank candidates in order of preference.

When the election is over, the Chief Electoral Officer prepares a report, with the official results of the election and statistics on voter turnout. These reports are published on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/reports/. Immediately after an election, Elections Alberta also provides unofficial results.

■ 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. For example, when a classmate attends a school meeting, he or she represents your class. Representation in government works much the same way.

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

The election experience you are about to have is based on processes in the *Election Act*, which is the legislation governing electoral procedure in Alberta.

vote
act
representation
student government
leadership



Does your school already have a student government?
How are you represented? What opportunities are there for students to show leadership?

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.

What should the responsibilities of your student government be? Think about this question as you prepare to hold a student election. Make a list and check it with other classmates.

Find Out More



The **Voting and Elections** section of the **Building Future Voters** elementary webpage provides some information about voting processes.

Go to www.buildingfuturevoters.ca and explore the information and examples.

People must meet conditions to be eligible to vote in a provincial election in Alberta. A person must be:

1. A Canadian citizen
2. 18 years old or older
3. Ordinarily resident in Alberta for at least six months prior to polling day

People who are guilty of corrupt practices during an election are excluded from voting. Section 45 of the *Election Act* identifies people who are not eligible to vote.



How will you establish voter eligibility in your election?

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?

In most provincial elections, there are issues that people are concerned about. Your student election will 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?



Make It Matter

Make your student election matter for your action project. What actions or policies are important for the candidates' election campaigns? Consider strategies like these, depending on your project.

- **Communicate and lobby for change** with your MLA or the government by making a presentation, sending a letter, sharing research and findings or sending an invitation to meet with the class.
- **Implement the project in the classroom or school** by holding a school awareness campaign, organizing student meetings or working groups or holding lunch hour take-action meetings.
- **Implement the project in the community** by 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 promote your action project.



Did You Know

The *Election Act* is the main legislation that guides elections in Alberta. It sets out 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.



LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

What matters most after an election?

The processes of democracy do not end with an election. In **Learning Sequence 4**, students investigate how they can build strategies for participation and involvement in their school and communities. Students analyze and evaluate how citizen participation goes beyond voting after an election.



In this learning sequence, students develop, demonstrate and apply competencies when they:

- Apply **citizenship** skills and assess **personal growth** by exploring ways to contribute and make a commitment to democratic processes
- **Innovate** and create opportunities by generating ideas and options for action
- Apply multiple literacies to develop and demonstrate oral, written and visual **communication** skills and engage in **collaborative** processes
- Apply a research process and interpret data to **manage information** and transform ideas into action



Prepare

Student Resources

- 4-1: What Matters (pp. 103-104)

Graphic Organizers

- T-Chart (p. 132)
- Persuasion Map (p. 140)
- Bookmarks (p. 141) or Trading Cards (p. 142)



4 to 6 45-minute class periods



Backgrounder 4 (pp. 126-129) provides information that can help you support student learning.

processes of democracy
participation
strategies
impact
involvement
electoral process



Curriculum Connections

Find the curriculum connections chart for **Learning Sequence 4** on **pages 161-162**.



Make It Matter

Students use **Assess the Impact (p. 151)** to predict and analyze the impact and results of their activities and the effectiveness of their action projects.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

What matters most after an election?



Criteria Checklist

Criteria	Almost always	Sometimes	Not yet
Students provide evidence of their learning as they:			
Listen and respond respectfully to explore and build understandings of democratic principles (Social Studies 6.1.1.1; 6.1.1.4)			
Value and respect citizen participation in a democratic society (Social Studies 6.1.1.1; 6.1.1.4)			
Demonstrate knowledge of democratic principles, including the concepts of rights and responsibilities (Social Studies 6.1.1.1; 6.1.6.1; 6.1.2.3)			
Apply understandings of the electoral process (Social Studies 6.1.1.4; 6.1.6.3)			
Express and support personal and diverse opinions (Social Studies 6.S.1.3, 6.S.8.2)			
Organize and compare information to develop conclusions and propose creative and innovative solutions (Social Studies 6.S.4.3; 6.S.4.4; 6.S.7.4)			
Identify and demonstrate respect for different points of view and perspectives (Social Studies 6.S.1.1; 6.S.5.3)			
Communicate and collaborate with others to discuss and solve issue-related problems (Social Studies 6.S.4.2; 6.S.4.3; 6.S.5.2; 6.S.5.4, 6.S.8.7)			
Demonstrate a commitment to community and engagement with community issues (Social Studies 6.1.1.4; 6.1.6.1; 6.S.6.1)			
Reflect on processes used to implement a project (Social Studies 6.S.7.11)			



Competency Cues

This learning sequence emphasizes participation and engagement with democratic processes. Encourage students to reflect on ways that collaboration in classroom contexts promotes and builds skills for a democratic society. Watch for evidence of problem-solving strategies that demonstrate flexibility and creativity. Provide opportunities for students to synthesize and assess information to draw conclusions and propose solutions and actions.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

What matters most after an election?



How am I doing?

How well did I:	Great job	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

What matters most after an election?



Rubric

Criteria \ Level	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Adequate	1 Limited	Not demonstrated
Values citizen participation (Social Studies 6.1.1.1, 6.1.1.4)	Provides meaningful description of ways that citizens can contribute to improve quality of life	Provides purposeful description of ways that citizens can contribute to improve quality of life	Provides appropriate description of ways that citizens can contribute to improve quality of life	Provides minimal 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
Thinks critically to apply understanding of the electoral process (Social Studies 6.1.1.4; 6.1.6.3)	Applies comprehensive examples of roles and responsibilities in the electoral process to justify importance of participation	Applies thorough examples of roles and responsibilities in the electoral process to justify importance of participation	Applies generalized examples of roles and responsibilities in the electoral process to justify importance of participation	Applies superficial examples of roles and responsibilities in the electoral process to justify importance of participation	
Collaborates with others (Social Studies 6.S.5.2; 6.S.4.2)	Contributes skillfully to final product and consistently engages in appropriate group behaviours	Contributes effectively to final product and frequently engages in appropriate group behaviours	Contributes reasonably to final product and usually engages in appropriate group behaviours	Contributes minimally to final product and seldom engages in appropriate group behaviours	
Demonstrates personal growth through project reflection (Social Studies 6.S.7.11)	Provides a perceptive reflection on project processes	Provides a thoughtful reflection on project processes	Provides a basic reflection on project processes	Provides an unclear reflection on project processes	

LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

What matters most after an election?

Teaching and Learning Activities

1 Voting: A Mandatory or Optional Right?

The issue of participation in the electoral process is one that continues to be discussed, whether in 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.

- Ask students to discuss why the electoral process is an essential part of a democratic society. If elections are important, should voting be a choice or a mandatory requirement?

Explore the meanings of the concepts of choice and mandatory with students. *(Encourage students to revisit the rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including political rights. Discuss privilege as a benefit or a right that is not necessarily extended to everyone.)*

- Work as a class to create a comparison chart, using a graphic organizer such as a **T-Chart (p. 132)** or poster paper. Have students identify what happens in Alberta elections with optional voting. Then, have them brainstorm and compare what they think the effects of mandatory voting could be. *(Students may be encouraged to look back at voter participation rates and think about citizen participation. Ask students to consider whether citizen participation would increase if there was mandatory voting.)*
- Guide students to identify a question that will help them explore the issue of voting as a choice or a mandatory requirement, such as **Should voting be mandatory for all citizens?** or **Should voting be a choice?** Tell students that they will create a persuasion map that explains their position on this issue. Remind them to use facts and examples to support their position. Provide students with a **Persuasion Map (p. 140)** graphic organizer. Ask students to share their persuasion maps with other students in the class.
- Students can use this same strategy to explore other issues that relate to the electoral process. Issues to explore can include:
 - Lowering the voting age
 - Setting fixed dates for elections
 - Allowing voting over the internet.

Students may have some of their own ideas for other issues they would like to explore, research and share.



Integrate Technology

Make time for students to explore the **What Matters** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca. The student resources and graphic organizers for this learning sequence can be accessed and downloaded on the webpage, completed in digital format and saved to a computer.

This section presents information on issues related to the electoral process, including mandatory voting, internet voting and the voting age.

Explore as a class with an interactive whiteboard, or provide time for individual students or small groups to explore the stories, images and information on this section. Encourage students to respond to the questions posed, either in class discussion or through individual or small group reflection.

A **persuasion map** is a graphic organizer that can help students identify a position or opinion and organize supporting reasons, facts and examples around it. The map can be used as a starting point for the development of a persuasive essay or position statement.

Find an electronic version of a persuasion map at www.readwritethink.org/materials/persuasion_map/. Encourage students to check the outline they create on this organizer with a peer review group or with their teacher.

Integrate Technology



Have students revisit the **What Matters** section of the *Building Future Voters* elementary webpage. This section presents examples of issues related to the electoral process, including mandatory voting, internet voting and the voting age. Explore as a class, with partners, in small groups or individually.

Differentiate



Provide students with options to share 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.

2 What Matters

The roles and responsibilities of elected representatives and the interaction between representatives and their electorate provide opportunities for democratic participation.

- Ask students to revisit perspectives, ideas and examples related to political and democratic participation. Encourage them to consider what they think participation really means. Provide students with **4-1: What Matters (pp. 103-104)** and ask them to complete the personal action planner.

- Revisit the graffiti walls created in **Learning Sequence 1**. Have students add different perspectives on democracy to their graffiti walls using speech bubbles or character dialogues.

Encourage students to brainstorm and contribute diverse perspectives related to democracy, the electoral process, the roles and responsibilities of provincial government, voter participation and any other issues that they have investigated or are interested in.

- Ask students to think about how they can make a commitment to participate in the electoral process. Students can be asked to make a commitment card with blank index cards, or on construction paper or cardstock. They can also use the **Bookmarks (p. 141)** or **Trading Cards (p. 142)** to create their cards.

- Invite students to work with a partner or small group to discuss what they learned and found most compelling about voting and democratic participation.

Brainstorm strategies that could be used to encourage citizens to vote, either individually, in a group or as a class. (*Some common suggestions that students may offer include focus on educating new voters, get families talking about politics and elections at home, lower the voting age, get candidates and political parties to talk about issues that are important for young people.*)

- Challenge students to use these strategies to develop bookmarks or trading cards that promote citizen engagement and participation. Encourage students to include slogans, visuals, messages or action statements that focus on the benefits of involvement with the electoral process.



Share

Consider ways that students can be encouraged to share their bookmarks with potential voters in the community. Share at community events, parent council meetings or parent nights at the school. Scan and post on classroom or school websites or blogs.

- Share strategies for “encouraging the vote” with a Returning Officer.
- Inform the Returning Officer of your students’ work. Through Elections Alberta, invite them to come to the classroom to talk to students about voter participation.
- Send examples of bookmarks or trading cards that the class selects for display in the community during an election year.

participation
commitment
engagement



Assess and Reflect

Ask students to reflect individually on the value of participation with families, and in schools and communities.

The products that students create in this learning sequence provide an opportunity for assessment of students’ understandings of participation and their own accountability, as well as that of individuals involved in governance. 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. 98)**:

- Use evidence from students’ T-Charts and Persuasion Maps to assess individual understandings of the importance of the electoral process and citizenship participation.
- Use observation evidence collected throughout the activities of the learning sequence to consider performance of process skills and group participation.
- Use the bookmarks or trading cards that students create to assess students’ ability to apply strategies for participation.

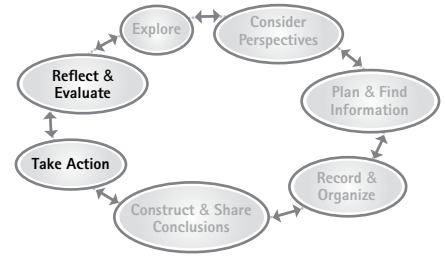
Have students reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned by responding to the following three statements:

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



Make It Matter

Provide time for students to implement their class project. Students who have completed projects can reflect on the impact they think their actions have had. Students who are still implementing projects should reflect on the effectiveness of their project work to date.



Encourage students 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. 151)** 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.



■ What Matters?

During the election, the Chief Electoral Officer must ensure that the electoral process happens according to the laws set out by the *Election Act*. However, the electoral process is not finished after the election.

The government, of course, starts or continues its work. Elections Alberta also has important work to complete.

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 must then prepare a final report on the election. He or she also identifies ways that the electoral process can be improved.

A democratic society is based on the belief that all citizens have a voice in decision-making. We hold elections to select our representatives. We encourage individuals and groups to voice their opinions and act on them. We can write to newspapers, participate in action groups and contribute to community events.

Even though kids cannot vote, you can participate in society in many different ways. You can provide their opinions in public forums such as the media and the internet. You can participate in youth groups and join political organizations. And increasingly, governments are working to ensure that youth voices are heard on issues that affect them.



How can you make sure your voice is heard?

Every day you make decisions and take actions that affect others. Even by choosing not to participate in something, you express your opinion and can affect others. Think about how you want to participate and the impact you would like to have on your family, friends, school and community.

Complete the personal action plan on the next page and make sure your voice is heard!



What matters most after an election?



Pause and Reflect

Kids under the age of 18 cannot vote, so how do they get a say? How can you make sure that your ideas and concerns matter?

What matters most to you as a citizen? How do you think you fulfil the responsibilities you have as a citizen?

Ideas for Action

- Make a commitment to vote by creating your own commitment card.
- Create a positive message or logo about participation and wear it on a t-shirt or baseball hat.
- Write a letter to a local newspaper or blog.
- Run for student council.
- Talk to your family about political decision-making.
- Go to **What Matters** on the **Building Future Voters** elementary webpage at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca for ideas, examples and inspiration.

Personal Action Planner

Actions I Would Like to Take	What I Need to Know	Possible Challenges and How I Might Overcome Them	How I Will Know I Am Successful

Backgrounders

BACKGROUND 1

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. In the Canadian parliamentary system, “government” has a limited and specific meaning.

Government refers to the team of elected representatives that have the most support of all representatives in the parliament or a provincial assembly. The government is responsible for providing leadership to make laws, and for the ministries that deliver programs and services mandated by those laws.

■ Provincial Government

The provincial equivalent of the parliament is called the legislature. Alberta’s legislature consists of a **unicameral** house, which consists of 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.

In the Legislature of Alberta, the monarch is represented by the **Lieutenant Governor**, the formal head of state. The premier and cabinet govern in the monarch’s name. The Lieutenant Governor is the Queen’s representative in Alberta. While the position is primarily ceremonial, the Lieutenant Governor has several duties, including opening and closing the legislature sessions and granting royal assent to bills passed by the government. A bill cannot become law without royal assent.

The Prime Minister appoints each Lieutenant Governor for a period of five years, and the federal government pays his or her salary. The Lieutenant Governor does not belong to a political party and is **impartial**, meaning that it does not favour one party or its policies over another’s.

■ British Roots of Government

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.

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.

Find Out More



Some of the information in this backgrounder is based on *The Citizen’s Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 9th Edition, accessed at www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf.

Teaching Democracy: What Schools Need to Do, by Joseph Kahne and Joel Westheimer, although written in 2003, presents a number of perspectives valuable in thinking about how to approach teaching democratic principles. Search for this article online.

An online module on parliamentary democracy from Athabasca University can be accessed at www.athabascau.ca/govn/parliamentary_democracy/introduction/options.html.

Integrate Technology



Find weblinks and additional information on the teacher webpage of the *Building Future Voters* website at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

■ Responsible Government

The Canadian system of government 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.

Responsible government has been part of the Canadian system since 1867, 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 and his government lost a vote of non-confidence.

Responsible government commonly refers to a government that is responsible to the people. In Canada, responsible government refers to an executive branch that depends on the support of an elected assembly. In Alberta, the premier and **cabinet** make up the executive branch. The premier is the leader of the political party that has elected more representatives to the Legislative Assembly than any other party. The premier appoints cabinet members from elected **Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)**. The executive branch is responsible for proposing, passing and administering laws.

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 budgets 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 **minority government** happens if a party holds fewer than half the seats in the Assembly. However, a party may be said to command a majority if they draw enough support from members of opposition parties. If a major policy or law is defeated, there may be a vote of **non-confidence**. The government must resign and call an election if it loses the non-confidence vote. 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

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.



Find Out More

A comprehensive history of the vote is available on the Elections Canada website at www.elections.ca.

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 www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/voting-in-canada-how-a-privilege-became-a-right.

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. Some students may require assistance in accessing the content of this website.

Integrate Technology



Find weblinks and additional information on the teacher webpage of the *Building Future Voters* website at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

Find Out More



Some of the information in this backgrounder is based on *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 9th Edition, accessed at www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf.

Some information is from a list of links to cabinet and ministries in 2016 at www.alberta.ca/ministries.cfm. Each ministry link provides a list of responsibilities, an overview of the minister and a letter from the premier that outlines the priorities and responsibilities of the ministry. Students can use this site, but some may require support in accessing and interpreting information.

The website of the current provincial government in Alberta can be accessed at www.alberta.ca. A comprehensive overview of departments and policies can be explored on this website.

The *Constitution Act of 1867* can be accessed on the Department of Justice website at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-1.html>.

BACKGROUNDER 2

Responsibilities of Provincial Government

The provinces' areas of responsibility, as defined in the *Constitution Act 1867* (previously the *British North America Act 1867*) include health, child welfare, municipal government, transportation, labour, property and civil rights and education. Each provincial government makes decisions regarding how it will carry out these responsibilities. This is often done by establishing **government ministries**, or departments, that look after each area of responsibility.

The provincial government also takes responsibility for its environment and resources. It has to look after its own **finances**, which include taxation and budgeting. The provincial government also provides many different services for the residents of the province, such as issuing birth certificates, making sure the public is safe and enforcing the laws.

Government ministries often look after consistent areas of responsibility, but they may change when the government in power changes. Ministries can also change when the leadership of the political party with the majority in the Assembly changes.

Students should be made aware that these departments reflect the approach of a political party to government, but also provide insight into what every provincial government in power must take responsibility for.

The following list provides a general overview of some main areas of responsibility of government ministries in place in 2016. Students should be made aware that the description of responsibilities that follows is excerpted from the government's current website and reflects the policies of the current government.

Advanced Education

Focuses on the province's adult learning system and financial supports for adult students

Post-Secondary

- Works closely with Campus Alberta partners and stakeholders to ensure students have the tools they need to succeed
- Funds public post-secondary institutions in Alberta, approves programs of study, and licenses and certifies private post-secondary institutions
- Supports accessible, affordable and quality advanced learning opportunities for all Albertans, including providing student aid and scholarships and bursaries to eligible students
- Develops ways for students to easily transition within the advanced education system

Adult Learning

- Funds education providers, including research

- Approves programs of study
- Licenses and certifies education providers

Student Funding

- Provides financial resources to Albertans to support their post-secondary education, including Student Aid Alberta, funding for apprentices and a wide variety of scholarships and bursaries

Apprenticeships and Trade

- Develops program standards with industry
- Counsels apprentices and employers
- Provides funding for approved programs
- Certifies apprentices and occupational trainees

Agriculture and Forestry

Focuses on developing the agriculture and food industry, sustaining the industry's natural resource base and encouraging the development of rural communities

The ministry is responsible for the policies, legislation, regulations and services necessary for Alberta's agriculture, food and forest sectors to grow, prosper and diversify; inspires public confidence in wildfire and forest management and the quality and safety of food; supports environmentally sustainable resource management practices; and leads collaboration that enables safe and resilient rural communities.

Culture and Tourism

Supports the development and sustainability of Alberta's cultural industries, tourism, arts, recreation, sport, heritage and the non-profit/voluntary sector

- Promote, develop and support programs and services that encourage Albertans to enrich their lives through culture and heritage, recreation and sport, tourism and events
- Support vibrant and inclusive communities, and contribute to improving the quality of life for Albertans and visitors
- Includes the following commissions and foundations:
 - Alberta Foundation for the Arts
 - Alberta Historical Resources Foundation
 - Government House Foundation
 - Alberta Sport Connection
 - Travel Alberta

Economic Development and Trade

Provides leadership on the government's economic development efforts and a single-door access to information and support for businesses and investors

- Supports businesses and private sector job creation



Find Out More

The *Canadian Encyclopedia* provides an overview of the responsibilities and powers of provincial government, including an historical perspective. The article can be found at www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/provincial-government/.

- Enhances access to capital for small and medium-sized enterprises
- Coordinates and leverages research and innovation to increase the commercialization of Alberta ideas and meet the needs of Albertans, from environmental stewardship to improved health outcomes
- Facilitates export development and investment attraction from targeted international markets
- Enhances Alberta's national and international presence
- Leads Alberta's negotiations on domestic and international trade agreements

■ **Education**

Supports students, parents, teachers and administrators from Early Childhood Services through Grade 12

- Develops curriculum and sets standards
- Evaluates curriculum and assesses outcomes
- Oversees teacher development and certification
- Supports special needs students
- Funds and supports school boards
- Supports Aboriginal and francophone education
- Oversees basic education policy and regulations

■ **Energy**

Assures sustained prosperity in the interests of Albertans through the responsible development and use of energy and mineral resource systems

- Manages the development of the province's non-renewable resources, including coal, minerals, natural gas, petrochemicals, conventional oil and oil sands and renewable energy (wind, bioenergy, solar, hydro, geothermal)
- Grants industry the right to explore for and develop energy and mineral resources
- Establishes, administers and monitors the effectiveness of fiscal and royalty systems
- Promotes energy efficiency and conservation by both Albertans and industry
- Encourages additional investment that creates jobs and economic prosperity

■ **Environment and Parks**

Leads the achievement of desired environmental outcomes and sustainable development of natural resources for Albertans

- Alberta Recycling Management Authority
- Alberta Used Oil Management Association
- Beverage Container Management Board
- Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund
- Environment Appeals Board

- Environmental Protection and Enhancement Fund
- Land Compensation Board
- Land Stewardship Fund
- Land Use Secretariat
- Natural Resources Conservation Board
- Surface Rights Board

■ **Executive Council**

Ensures effective strategic planning and coordinated policy development across government, and engagement of Albertans

- Supports strategic planning, coordinated policy development and informed decision-making for the Government of Alberta
- Helps ministries communicate and engage with Albertans and tell Alberta's story around the world

■ **Health**

Sets direction for healthcare in Alberta, allocates health funding, administers provincial programs and provides expertise on communicable disease control

- Improved health outcomes for all Albertans
- The well-being of Albertans is supported through population health initiatives
- Albertans receive care from highly skilled health care providers and teams, working to their full scope of practice
- A high quality, stable, accountable and sustainable health system

■ **Human Services**

Works to improve the quality of life for Albertans through the delivery of respectful, adaptive supports and innovative, prevention-focused programs and policy

Human Services is responsible for the following areas:

- Abuse & Bullying
- Adoption
- Alberta Supports
- Disability Services
- Family & Community
- Financial Support
- Foster & Kinship Care
- Guardianship & Trusteeship
- Homelessness
- Working in Alberta

■ Indigenous Relations

Works with Aboriginal communities, federal government, industry and other stakeholders to enhance the quality of life of Aboriginal people in Alberta

The Ministry has a number of sections that work with Aboriginal leaders, communities, organizations and other levels of government to support development and implementation of programs and policies that affect Aboriginal people in Alberta:

- First Nations and Métis Relations
- Consultation and Land Claims
- Aboriginal Economic Development
- Policy and Planning
- Grants and Funding

■ Infrastructure

Responsible for planning and building public infrastructure in Alberta, such as schools and hospitals, to meet the needs of a growing economy and population

- Takes responsibility for:
 - ➔ Infrastructure planning, and building and managing government-owned infrastructure
 - ➔ The administration of water/wastewater and other municipal infrastructure grants
 - ➔ The Natural Gas Rebate Program

■ Justice and Solicitor General

Works to ensure Alberta has the most innovative and accessible justice system in Canada, and the province's communities are among the safest in the world

- Promotes safe communities for Albertans, including fair and independent prosecutions
- Facilitates access to justice, including a fair and accessible civil and criminal justice system for Albertans, accessible justice services for Albertans and an innovative, effective and efficient justice system
- Provides legal and strategic services to government, including strategic legal advice and counsel to government to achieve Government of Alberta outcomes to achieve their objectives through provision of effective legal and related strategic services

■ Labour

Focuses on meeting the needs of employees and employers, building a skilled workforce, and maintaining safe, fair and healthy workplace

- Ensures Alberta work sites are fair and equitable, most employers and employees are protected by and must comply with employment standards

laws

- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) works in consultation with industry to help prevent work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities
- Provides services and information to help immigrants before and after they arrive in Alberta, and for employers hiring international workers
- Encourages the increased employment of Aboriginal people, youth and mature workers; tracks Labour Market Information to help employers, industry groups, workers and others understand workforce trends
- Ensures workers have the skills and training needed to succeed in the workplace

Municipal Affairs

Invests in families and communities through local government, public safety, affordable housing and public libraries to help Albertans reach its full potential

- Assists municipalities in providing well-managed, collaborative, and accountable local government to Albertans
- Administers a safety system that strives to ensure appropriate safety standards for the construction and maintenance of buildings and equipment
- Manages the network of municipal and library system boards to provide province-wide access to high-quality public library services for Albertans
- The Alberta Emergency Management Agency is responsible for coordinating a comprehensive, cross-government, all-hazards approach to managing emergencies in the province
- The Municipal Government Board is an independent, quasi-judicial board that conducts hearings and renders decisions on such matters as property assessment, and provides recommendations to Cabinet on matters defined under the Municipal Government Act, such as contested annexations
- The New Home Buyer Protection Board (NHBPB) hears appeals of decisions issued by the New Home Buyer Protection Office. Board members are appointed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs
- The Safety Codes Council is a corporation established under the Safety Codes Act that reviews safety codes and standards and supports the Ministry's administration of the act
- The Special Areas Board manages about 2.6 million acres of public land in the province's three Special Areas and provides municipal services, such as construction and maintenance of local roads and parks, and emergency and protective services, to the dryland region in eastern Alberta
- The seven Improvement Districts, located primarily in the National Parks, provide limited administrative services, such as budget preparation, and in the case of Improvement District No. 9 fire protection and ambulance services

■ Seniors and Housing

Creates affordable housing options for Albertans most in need and helps Alberta's aging population lead healthy and independent lives

- Provides a number of programs and services to support seniors in Alberta; this information is also helpful for caregivers and those Albertans who will be needing these services in the near future
- Ensures Albertans of modest means have access to affordable housing that meets their basic needs
- Supports a mix of existing and new housing options for families, individuals, seniors and Albertans with special needs
- Delivers capital grant programs to increase the Province's supply of affordable housing
- Monitors housing agreements related to affordable housing units
- Ensures the operations of the 36,000 provincially-owned and/or supported social housing units are managed effectively
- Manages the delivery of rent supplement programs and other grant initiatives

■ Service Alberta

Responsible for services including registries, land titles, consumer protection and the Alberta Queen's Printer

- Provides licensing and registry services for consumer, business and property transactions
- Delivers shared services to ministries such as mail delivery, printing and copying documents, technical support for computers, telephones and faxes.
- Supports, regulates and enforces high standards of consumer protection and business practices in the Alberta marketplace
- Works with ministries to achieve cost savings in information technology and business processes, and reduced duplication of services across ministries
- Provides information management and privacy support to public bodies in administering Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation
- Streamlines processes and promotes innovation in providing seamless, secure and accessible services to Albertans.
- Ensures computer systems across government operate in the same way, protecting Albertans' personal information, providing online security and saving money through efficient procurement practices
- Manages the government's vehicle fleet in a safe, reliable and cost-effective manner
- Leverages Alberta SuperNet, a province-wide, high-speed network to connect Albertans with government, learning and health services and to enable rural development across Alberta

- Administers shared services to government in accounts payable and receivable, revenue and capital asset management, collections, payroll, employee benefits and reporting, electronic payment systems and business re-engineering and innovation

■ **Status of Women**

Leads government's work to improve gender equality in Alberta

- Women's Equality and Advancement from Human Services
- Women in Leadership – this program helps to increase women's leadership in the Government of Alberta

■ **Transportation**

Works to provide a safe, innovative and sustainable world-class transportation system that supports Alberta's economy and quality of life

- Roads and Highways
- Drivers and Vehicles
- Traffic Safety Plan
- Commercial Transportation
- Grant Programs
- Technical Resources
- Consulting and Contracting

■ **Treasury Board and Finance**

Responsible for economic analysis, budget planning and providing a coordinated and disciplined approach to the management of government spending

- Budget development and reporting
- Economics and fiscal policy
- Treasury management (see provincial borrowing and banking and payment security)
- Government accounting standards, financial management policies, performance planning and reporting;
- Tax policy and administration;
- Financial sector regulation and policy (regulating insurance, pensions, financial institutions and Alberta's capital market); and Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission

■ **Corporate Human Resources**

Hiring, training and administration for Alberta's public service and support for human resource administration within provincial government departments

Corporate Human Resources (CHR) provides advice on human resource administration to other provincial government departments.

Find Out More

Find maps of each electoral division on the Elections Alberta website at <http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca/>.

Elections Alberta also provides a search for MLAs by first or last name at www.elections.ab.ca/voters/whos-my-mla/.

Information on MLAs can also be found in the telephone directory under Government of Alberta or by calling the legislature information line at 427-2826. They will let you know your MLA's name, address and telephone number. This information is also easily accessed online at www.assembly.ab.ca.

Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)

Members of the Legislative Assembly represent all of the people who live in the electoral division in which they were elected, whether those people are eligible to vote, voted for another candidate or did not vote at all. MLAs are responsible for helping their constituents with problems or concerns.

In the Legislative Assembly, MLAs share the views of their constituents by introducing bills and debating and discussing concerns with other MLAs. An MLA communicates with other elected members and various government ministries. MLAs perform most of their duties in their constituencies. Here they listen to the problems, questions, ideas and opinions of the people who live in the electoral division they represent.

MLAs also deal with **special-interest groups**, which are organizations and groups that promote specific views and actions. Groups and organizations that are concerned about issues, such as the environment, bullying, mental health or education, can meet with an MLA, who may support their cause by proposing a new law or resolution in the Legislative Assembly or by writing a letter to a government ministry.

In addition to meeting with their constituents, MLAs spend time becoming informed about matters of public interest, preparing speeches and going to meetings to talk about policies and issues.

MLAs often have to take a stand on issues and decisions, and the perspective or view they support depends on the platforms of the political party to which they belong, their constituents' points of view and their own personal beliefs. Through public meetings, day-to-day contact and local media forums, MLAs gather information from as many constituents as possible. They then discuss the issue in private meetings, called **caucus meetings**, with other MLAs from the same party.

The caucus members decide as a group what their party's position will be. Voting in the Assembly tends to be along party lines, according to what the caucus decided beforehand. However, MLAs may vote as they see fit rather than according to their caucus's position. If some MLAs feel that the caucus's position does not reflect what their constituents want or that it would not be beneficial to the people who live and work in their electoral division, they can, and sometimes do, speak against the position of their caucus.

Cabinet ministers are MLAs who are in charge of specific government ministries and can influence ministry policies and programs. Ministers may remain as ministers but not MLAs when the Legislative Assembly has been dissolved for an election. As well as representing their constituents, ministers are ultimately responsible for the policies and actions of the ministry they lead.

Private government members are often called **backbenchers** because in the Legislative Assembly they sit in the back rows, behind the cabinet ministers. However, the correct term for any member who is not in cabinet is "private member." A private government member is an MLA who belongs to the governing party.

Private members sit on cabinet policy committees and can sponsor government **bills**, proposals for laws that will be discussed and debated before becoming law.

In addition, private government members, as well as opposition members, introduce their own bills. These are called **private bills**.

The role of an **opposition party** is to analyze and critique government activity, propose improvements and present itself to the public as an alternative to the party in power. Opposition parties often assign some of their MLAs to be critics of specific departments. Together, opposition critics are called a **shadow cabinet**. For example, an environment critic discusses issues with the Minister of Environment, suggests alternative policies and priorities and keeps these issues public. Opposition critics, like the ministers they shadow, hear concerns and ideas from various persons and interest groups from anywhere in the province.

■ Committees of the Legislative Assembly

MLAs also serve on various committees. Committees of the Legislative Assembly are made up of MLAs from various parties. When it is in session, the whole Legislative Assembly, which includes all MLAs, meets to study the details of proposed laws and spending programs.



Did You Know

MLAs may also be part of smaller committees studying more specific issues. Standing Committees of the Assembly involve MLAs from various parties represented in the Legislative Assembly.

Citizens may attend these meetings, and transcripts of their proceedings are posted on the Legislative Assembly's website, www.assembly.ab.ca.

The chair of each standing or special committee presents a report to the Assembly. Reports usually include what the committee found and what they would like the Assembly to do. The Assembly does not have to do what a report recommends, but if it does, the government introduces a bill or motion containing the recommendations.

■ Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

The Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund consists of nine Members of the Legislative Assembly, including three Members who are not members of the governing party. It reviews and approves the annual report; receives and reviews the quarterly reports on the Fund's operations and results; holds public meetings with Albertans to report on investment activities and results; and reports to the Legislative Assembly on whether the mission of the Fund is being fulfilled.



Did You Know

There are many different individuals and groups that a minister has to deal with. For example, the Minister of Energy must be responsible to constituents as well as deal with all matters related to that ministry. Below is a partial list of people who the Minister of Energy might have to deal with:

- Technical staff in the Department of Energy and the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board
- Natural gas, oil, electricity, mineral and petrochemical developers, producers and retailers
- Transporters of energy (e.g., pipelines, electrical transmission)
- Environmental and other nongovernment organizations
- Advocates of alternative energy sources
- Technical experts in industry and academia
- Committees and other groups formed to address energy matters
- MLAs from opposition parties, particularly the critics of the Energy department
- Energy and mining representatives from federal, provincial or territorial and municipal governments
- People in the energy field from other countries
- Representatives from the media
- Individual consumers and taxpayers from across the province

Find Out More

This information is from the Alberta Legislative Assembly website and reflects committees of the Assembly in 2016. Further information on government committees can be found at www.assembly.ab.ca/committees/about.html.

■ **Legislative Offices**

The Standing Committee on Legislative Offices is an all-party committee consisting of 11 Members of the Legislative Assembly. The committee approves the budgets of the Officers of the Legislature, including the Auditor General, the Child and Youth Advocate, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Ethics Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Ombudsman, and the Public Interest Commissioner, and also reviews the salaries of the Officers on an annual basis. The committee can entertain Officers' requests regarding proposed changes to legislation and forward the recommendation to the appropriate ministry. However, it is important to note that the committee does not have the mandate to approve changes to legislation.

■ **Public Accounts**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is an all-party committee consisting of 15 Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Committee reviews the reports of the Auditor General of Alberta and the public accounts of the province.

■ **Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing**

Meets when the Assembly refers an issue to it. This committee deals mainly with matters of privilege. Privilege means the rights members have because they are MLAs, such as the right to express a controversial view in the Assembly without being sued or prosecuted. This committee is essentially a House rules committee.

■ **Private Bills**

The Standing Committee on Private Bills is an all-party committee, consisting of 15 Members of the Legislative Assembly, that reviews all petitions for private bills and reports to the Assembly on that review. The Committee hears from the petitioner and any other persons interested in the bill and reports to the Assembly.

■ **Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

The Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future is an all-party committee consisting of 15 Members of the Legislative Assembly. It may meet to review a Bill or to consider an issue referred to it by the Assembly, and can also meet on its own initiative to consider issues within its mandate. The mandate of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future relates to the areas of Agriculture and Forestry, Advanced Education, Infrastructure, Economic Development and Trade, Culture and Tourism, and Labour.

■ **Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

The Standing Committee on Families and Communities is an all-party committee consisting of 15 Members of the Legislative Assembly. It may meet to review a Bill or to consider an issue referred to it by the Assembly, and can also meet on its own initiative to consider issues within its mandate. The mandate of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities relates to the areas of Health, Human Services, Justice and Solicitor General, Education, Seniors and Housing, Service Alberta and Status of Women.

■ **Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

The Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship is an all-party committee consisting of 15 Members of the Legislative Assembly. It may meet to review a Bill or to consider an issue referred to it by the Assembly, and can also meet on its own initiative to consider issues within its mandate. The mandate of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship relates to the areas of Environment and Parks, Transportation, Municipal Affairs, Treasury Board and Finance, Energy, and Indigenous Relations.

■ **Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

The Special Standing Committee on Members' Services is an all-party committee consisting of 11 Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Speaker is traditionally the Chair of this committee, which approves the annual estimates of the Legislative Assembly Office and may modify regulations, orders or other directives governing the office's financial and personnel administration. The committee also sets Members' allowances, constituency office allowances and Members' benefits and establishes human resource, informatics and financial management policy for the Legislative Assembly Office.

■ **Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee**

The Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee has been appointed to review the *Election Act*, the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*, the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, and the *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act*. This is an all-party committee consisting of 17 Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The Committee must report to the Assembly one year after commencing its review.

BACKGROUND 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. In Alberta, Bill 21, or the *Election Amendment Act of 2011*, established a fixed, three-month period in which provincial elections will be held 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 87 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* 9th Edition, accessed at www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf.

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/resources/legislation/.

Integrate Technology



Find weblinks and additional information on the teacher webpage of the *Building Future Voters* website at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

Find maps of each electoral division on the Elections Alberta website at <http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca/>.

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:

- 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 and Returning Office staff 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. Electoral reform, centred on the idea that Canada needs a system that allows for more proportional representation in the House of Commons, has received increasing attention.

One voting system under consideration 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. An additional voting system is **preferential voting**, in which voters can rank candidates in order of preference. This system is used in Australia. A change at the federal level may also influence provincial elections.

Political Parties

When a group of people have similar needs or 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, Wildrose, 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

Most of Alberta's political parties have their own websites, with information about their activities and events. You can also find contact information on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/parties-and-candidates/parties/.

■ 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 and often welcome questions. Candidates compete for votes and a chance to explain their party's policies is a valuable opportunity. Voters thus 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 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.

Find Out More

The responsibilities of Election Officers are described on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/about-elections-alberta/.

Information for candidates and political parties can be found at www.elections.ab.ca/parties-and-candidates/.

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

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 of the Lieutenant Governor 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 Election Day is on the 28th day. **Nomination day**, the date by which all candidates must be nominated, is the 10th day after the date of the Writ of Election. Advance polls are held on the Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the full week preceding Election 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 on election day
- The place, date and time for the announcement of the official results
- The name, address and phone number of the Returning Officer 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 and additions 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

Elections Alberta also provides resources for individuals involved in the electoral process on the Resources section of their website at www.elections.ab.ca/resources/. Additional resources can be found at www.elections.ab.ca/parties-and-candidates/forms-and-guides/.

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 a candidate at each polling station or Registration Officer's table. Scrutineers may watch election procedures at each polling station or Registration Officer's table during polling hours and during the unofficial count after the polling station is closed.

Each candidate may appoint, in writing, not more than four 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. However, a scrutineer may attend more than one polling station or Registration Officer's station throughout their day. Scrutineers must also take the Oath of Secrecy at each polling station or Registration Officer's station they observe before performing their duties. They must also sign the scrutineer's code of conduct.

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.
- **Advance polls** are established by the Returning Officer in each electoral division. These polls can be used by anyone who believes they will be absent from their polling station on polling day. Election officers, candidates, official agents or scrutineers can also use advance polls if their official duties 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 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the full week preceding polling day. The dates and locations are published by the Returning Officer in one or more newspapers, on the Elections Alberta website and in the Returning Officer's office.
- **Mobile polls** can be established by the Returning Officer for places like seniors' homes 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 candidate 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 that 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 on their own. 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 and destroyed.
- The Poll Clerk marks the Poll Book to show the voter has voted.

Legislative amendments from the *Election Accountability Amendment Act, 2012* were implemented for the first time in the 2015 general provincial election. Some of these changes included:

- Students studying away from home, within Alberta, were permitted to choose the place they reside for their studies as their ordinary place of residence for voting purposes.
- Electors were permitted to inspect nomination papers filed by candidates in their electoral division on application to the returning officer.
- Persons aged sixteen or seventeen were permitted to be appointed as poll clerks.
- Returning officers were permitted to appoint information officers at each polling place to assist electors and maintain peace and order.
- Scrutineers were no longer required to reside in the electoral division in which they were appointed; scrutineers were required to comply with a code of conduct established by the Chief Electoral Officer.
- Where an elector was unable to access the polling place due to physical incapacity, the poll clerk and other election officer(s) were authorized to bring the ballot box to some other place on the polling place site.

Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta (2016). Remarks of the Chief Electoral Officer. *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the May 5, 2015 Provincial General Election*. Elections Alberta: p. 16.

BACKGROUND 4

Integrate Technology



Find weblinks and additional information on the teacher webpage of the *Building Future Voters* website at www.buildingfuturevoters.ca.

Find Out More



Elections Alberta provides a number of detailed reports on election results and statistics on their website at www.elections.ab.ca.

Statistics Canada provides articles on civic engagement and political participation in Canada:

Turcotte, M. (2015). *Political participation and civic engagement of youth*. Statistics Canada.

www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2015001/article/14232-eng.htm

Turcotte, M. (2015). *Civic engagement and political participation in Canada*. Statistics Canada.

www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015006-eng.htm

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 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.

Issues 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 2015 elections, both in Alberta and federally, brought some unexpected changes and highlighted some emerging issues.

The sources that follow provide a sampling of perspectives and statistics on issues related to voter engagement and participation.

"While the conduct of the 2015 election was generally a success, it was apparent that a system anchored in the 19th century is no longer suited to meet Canadians' expectations. Electors want more accessible and convenient election services, whether in person or online, and real-time digital information."

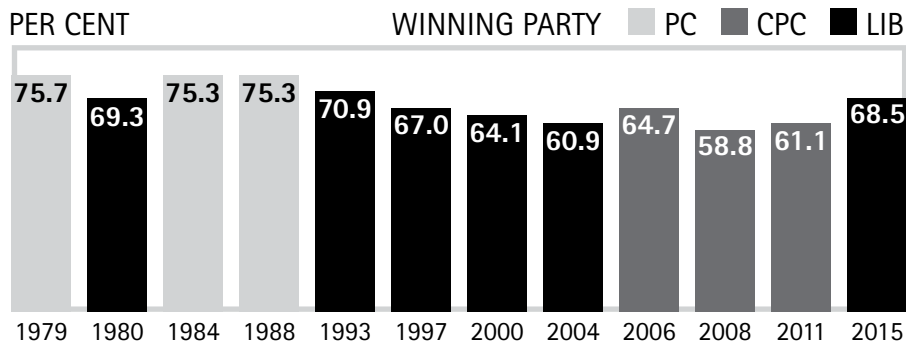
Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada (2016). *Report on the 42nd General Election of October 19, 2015*. Elections Canada: p. 7.

"A significant re-write of the legislation needs to be undertaken to ensure an enabling legislative structure rather than a prescriptive legislative structure for elections that protects the key principles of fairness of process, accessibility for all stakeholders and integrity of the results while ensuring that it is written in plain language that is easy to understand and interpret for all interested parties."

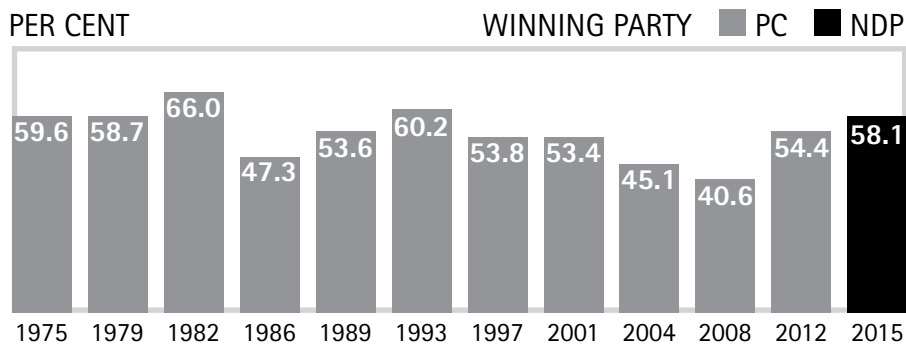
Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta (2016). Remarks of the Chief Electoral Officer. *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the May 5, 2015 Provincial General Election*. Elections Alberta: p. 2.

Canadian Voter Turnout in Federal Elections

In 2003, the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (PC) joined to form the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC).



Alberta Voter Turnout in Provincial Elections



Find Out More

A comprehensive analysis of the 2015 federal election can be found online, in the University of British Columbia publication *Canadian Election Analysis: Communication, Strategy and Democracy*. This publication includes numerous articles about the 2015 election campaign, the media and political communication, campaign issues, public opinion polls and voter behaviour. Find this publication at www.ubcpres.ca/canadianelectionanalysis2015/CanadianElectionAnalysis2015.pdf.

The Conference Board of Canada provides a comparison of international rankings for voter turnout across 15 countries, current as of 2013. Go to *Voter Turnout* at www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/society/voter-turnout.aspx.

"Since 2000, Canadians have gone to the polls six times to elect a prime minister. That's a lot of federal elections in a period of just 15 years (four in the last decade), and the Canadian electorate has made their burnout evident. Voter turnout has been abysmal in recent elections, reaching a historic low in 2008, when just 58.8% of registered voters showed up on election day. More troublingly, voter apathy has been disproportionately concentrated amongst the youngest eligible voters – in the 2011 election, less than 40% of Canadians aged 18 to 24 cast a vote. Maybe young people were too disillusioned to go to the polls, or just didn't feel that their choices could make a difference. But, for whatever reason, the majority of young Canadians did not feel an urgency to vote.

This year was different. Leading up to the election it felt different. Social media abounded with political content. Young Canadians urged their peers to vote strategically, promoting websites like strategicvoting.ca and voteswap.ca. Election selfies trended on Twitter, and nearly 450,000 people RSVP'd to a "Stephen Harper Going Away Party" on Facebook. Young people also got the message, from a variety of sources, that their votes were important. Elections Canada made an active effort to break down barriers for youth voters, opening 71 advance-voting stations at university campuses and youth centers across the country. John Oliver, host of comedy talk show "Last Week Tonight", urged Canadians to go to the polls (when is the last time American media took an interest in Canadian politics?). And prominent local comedian, Rick Mercer, gave an impassioned speech on national radio, telling Canadians "if young people show up to vote; it will change everything."

Mercer was right. The election results that trickled in on the night of October 19, 2015, were historic for a number of reasons. The election saw a massive swell in voter turnout. Nearly 70% of registered Canadians voted – the highest turnout for a federal election since 1993. While the exact voter breakdown has yet to be released, a sizable youth vote is believed to be a major factor behind the resounding Liberal Party victory."

Dorfmann, J. (November 4, 2015). *The Power of Young Voters: Canada's Historic Election*. Harvard International Review. <http://hir.harvard.edu/power-young-voters-canadas-historic-election/>

"This study, which was based on data from the 2013 GSS, has shown that younger people are less likely to vote than older individuals and are also less likely to report that they intend to vote in the next election. Younger people also tend to be less interested in politics than their older counterparts. These trends, however, conceal a relatively high degree of engagement in other activities. For example, many young Canadians are politically and civically engaged, but in different ways. The youngest of them—those aged 15 to 19—were the most likely of all age groups to be members of or participants in groups, organizations or associations. They were also the most likely to participate at least once a week in group activities or meetings.

Youth aged 20 to 24 are among the most engaged of all in political activities such as signing petitions and participating in demonstrations or marches. Young university students stood out in particular, as they had the highest participation rates for almost all these types of activities. In short, when alternative ways of participating in political and civic activities are considered, it is clear that a significant portion of young individuals are interested in public affairs.

However, the proportion of politically inactive individuals—those who did not participate in any political activity in the past 12 months and who were not highly likely to vote in the next election—was larger among youth. The lower voter turnout among younger individuals promises to be a topic of interest and concern in the coming years."

Turcotte, M. (2015). *Political participation and civic engagement of youth*. Statistics Canada. www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2015001/article/14232-eng.htm

Find Out More



Find a range of information, from a survey of 1000 Canadians aged 18 to 25, about the recent history of youth engagement in Canadian politics and the consequences of increased voting rates in *The Next Canada: Politics, political engagement, and priorities of Canada's next electoral powerhouse: young Canadians* (2016), commissioned by the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. <http://abacusdata.ca/the-next-canada-politics-political-engagement-and-priorities-of-canadas-next-electoral-powerhouse-young-canadians/>

Reasons for not voting by age group

	18 to 24 years (%)	25 to 34 years (%)	35 to 44 years (%)	45 to 54 years (%)	55 to 64 years (%)
Everyday life or health reasons	47	48	47	44	44
Too busy	28	30	30	22	17
Out of town	13	11	11	12	14
Illness or disability	5	6	7	10	14
Political reasons	38	40	42	44	43
Not interested in politics	33	33	34	34	34
Electoral process-related reasons	11	8	6	7	6
All other reasons	4	5	5	5	6

Find additional statistics for other age groups in this source.

Statistics Canada (February 22, 2016). *Reasons for not voting in the federal election, October 19, 2015: Reasons for not voting by age group and sex*. www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160222/t002a-eng.htm

Electoral Reform

Alternative electoral systems to FPTP can be grouped into three broad families: majority systems; proportional representation systems; and mixed electoral systems.

In majority electoral systems, the winning candidate is the individual who gets a majority (over 50%) of the votes cast. This system can be designed in different ways. For example, the system could allow voters to rank the candidates running in their electoral division in order of their preference. If no candidate receives a majority of votes on the first count, the lowest candidate is dropped and the second-preference votes for that candidate are assigned to the respective remaining candidates. This process continues until one candidate receives the necessary majority. Another example is a system in which there are two election days, generally weeks apart. In this type of electoral system, if no candidate receives a majority of votes in the first round, there is a second election with only the top two candidates from the first election result. The candidate with the higher number of votes in the second round is elected. This type of system is used in Australia and France.

Proportional representation (PR) systems seek to closely match a political party's vote share with its seat allocation in the legislature. PR systems tend to vary and the method for calculating seat distribution can range from simple to complex. Proportional representation systems are not based on single-member constituencies. Citizens generally vote for more than one candidate or for a political party. Sweden uses this type of system.

Mixed electoral systems combine elements of a plurality or majority system with elements of proportional representation. Citizens in a riding cast two votes: one to directly elect an individual member to serve as their representative, and a second for a political party or parties to fill seats in the legislature allocated according to the proportion of the vote share they receive. Japan and New Zealand use a mixed electoral system.

Government of Canada (online). *Electoral Systems Factsheet*. www.canada.ca/en/campaign/electoral-reform/learn-about-canadian-federal-electoral-reform/electoral-systems-factsheet.html



Find Out More

The Government of Canada provides information and an opportunity to participate in the consultation process on electoral reform at www.canada.ca/en/campaign/electoral-reform.html.

Macleans provides an article that explains the choices between the current electoral process and four options that other countries use.

Shendruk, A. (June 16, 2016). *On electoral reform, what are Canada's options?* Macleans. www.macleans.ca/politics/making-sense-of-electoral-reform-what-are-canadas-options/

FairVote provides a perspective on electoral reform in *Why Proportional Representation? A look at the evidence* at www.fairvote.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Why-PR-Review-of-Evidence-updated-version-2016-01-13.pdf.

The Library of Parliament provides a comprehensive overview of electoral reform options in *Electoral Systems and Electoral Reform in Canada and Elsewhere: An Overview*, found at www.loppar.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2016-06-e.html?cat=government.

In many countries across the world, voting is not only a right. It is considered a duty that governments enforce through mandatory voting.

In Canada, retired politician Mac Harb is an advocate of compulsory voting.

Writing in the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, the former Liberal MP and senator recalled that mandatory voting was introduced in Australia in 1924.

“Now, Australia has consistently boasted a turnout of over 90 per cent,” Harb wrote. “Compulsory voting in Belgium dates back to 1893. Currently, voter turnout in Belgium is over 90 per cent.”

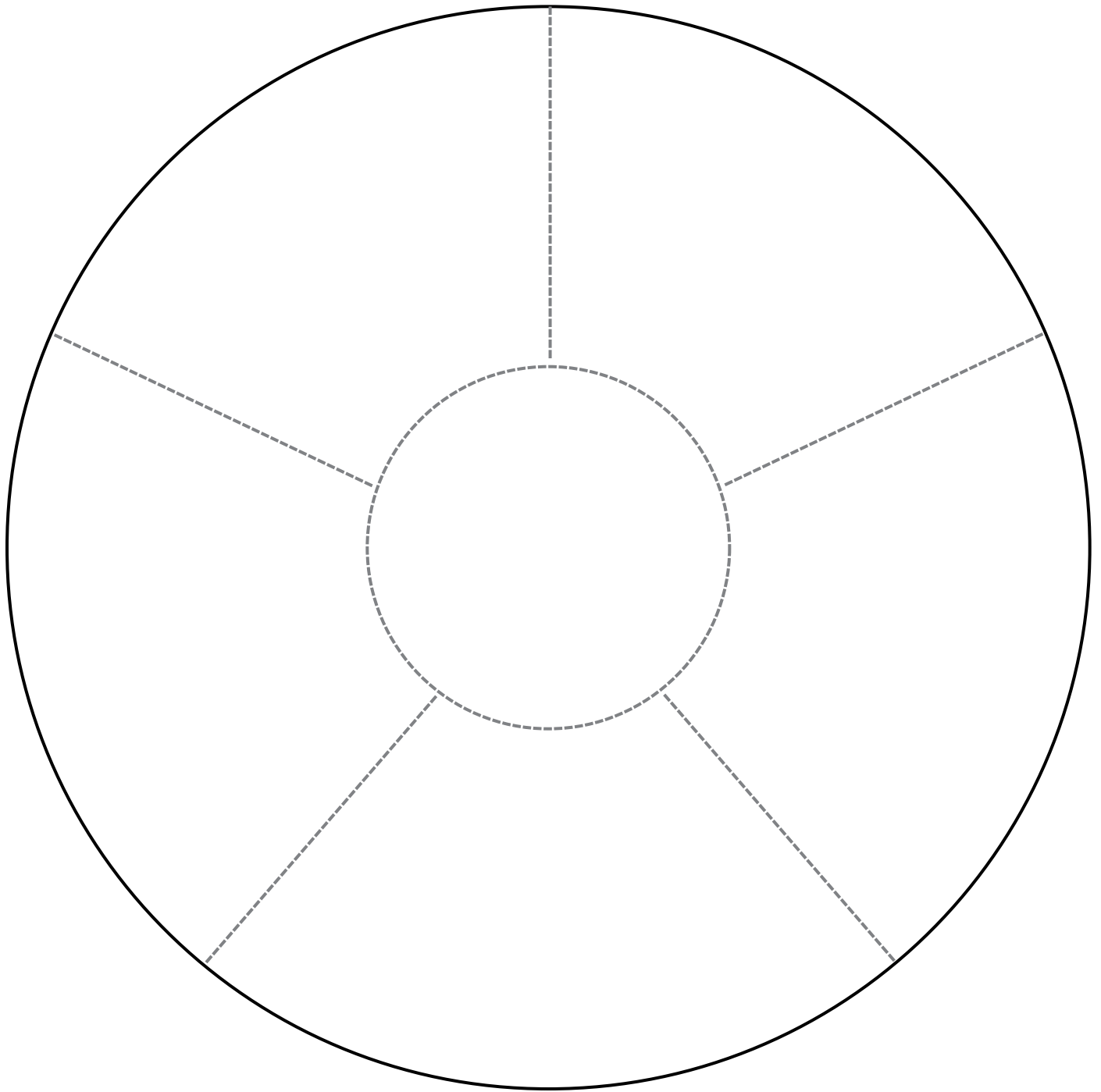
“The most recent election in the European Union revealed the tremendous power of mandatory voting legislation and the pro-voting culture it brings along,” Harb continued. “Member states with mandatory voting during the last European Union elections had remarkable turnouts, with 90.8 per cent in Belgium, 89 per cent in Luxembourg, and 71 per cent in Cyprus, as compared with countries with no compulsory voting, voter turnout was only 42.7 per cent in France, 45.1 per cent in Spain and a mere 38.8 per cent in the United Kingdom.”

Pablo, C. (October 7, 2015). *Is it time for mandatory voting?* The Georgia Straight. www.straight.com/news/551946/it-time-mandatory-voting-canada

Graphic Organizers

T-Chart

Wheel Chart

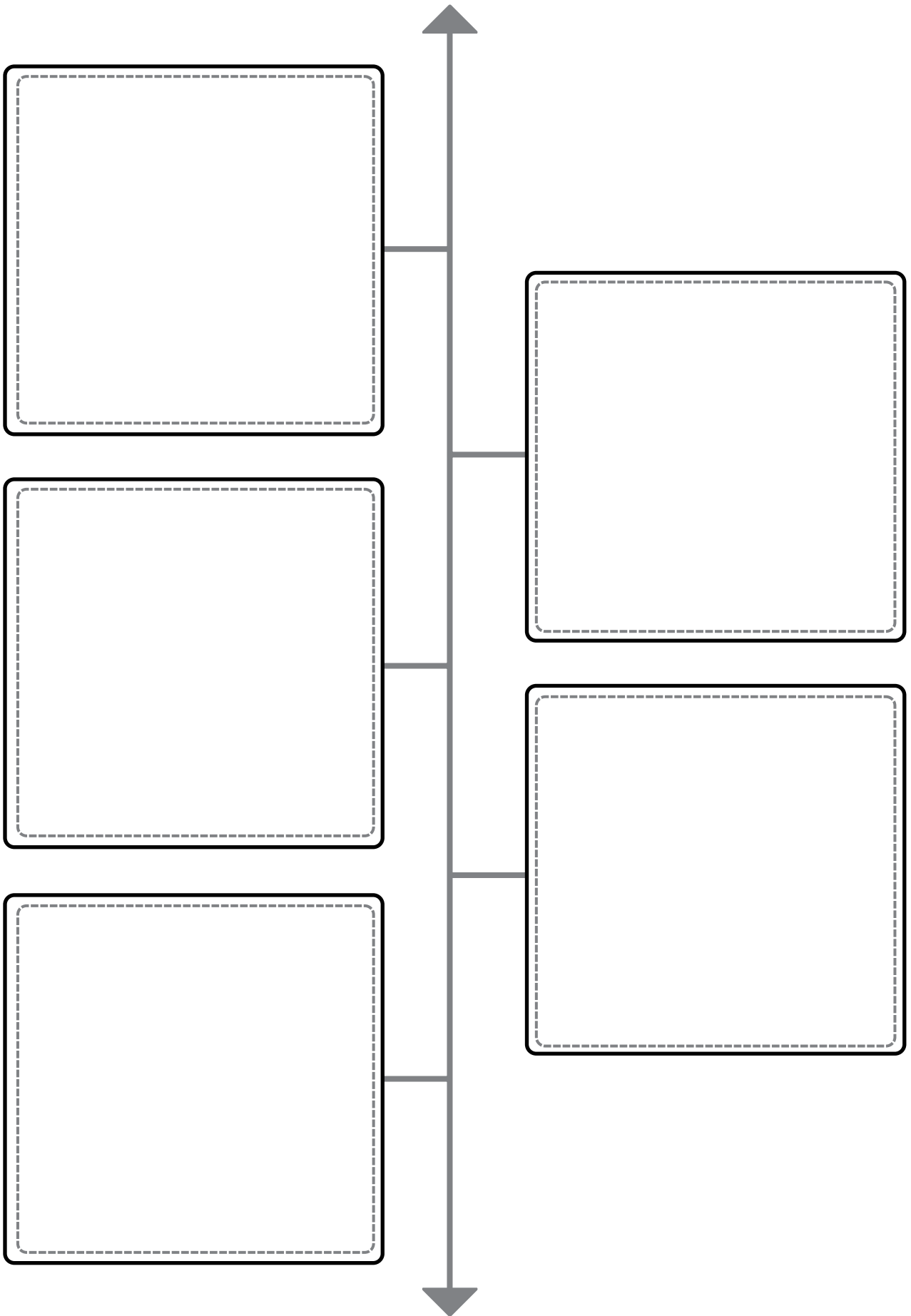


KWHL Chart

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

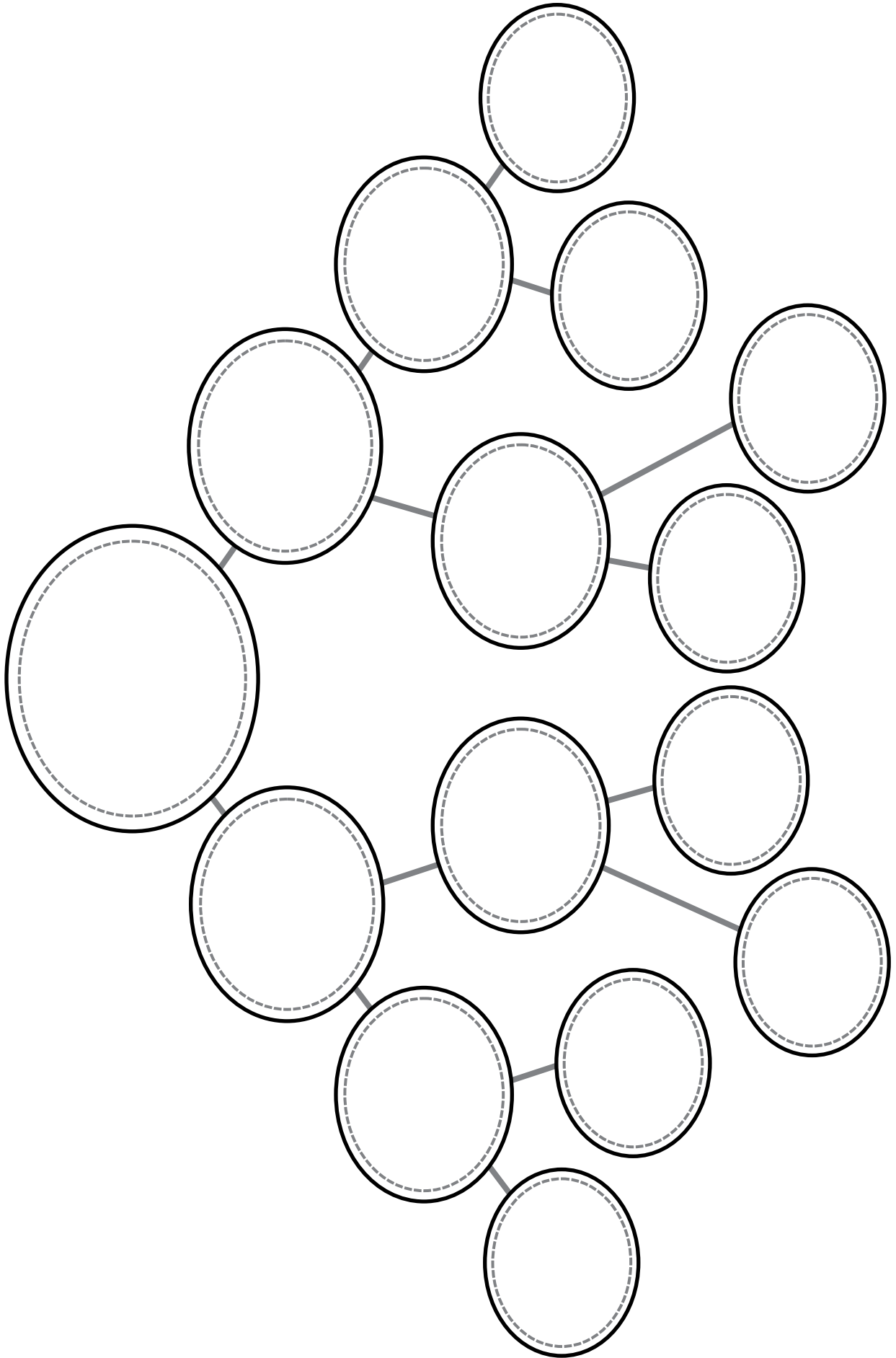
Storyboard

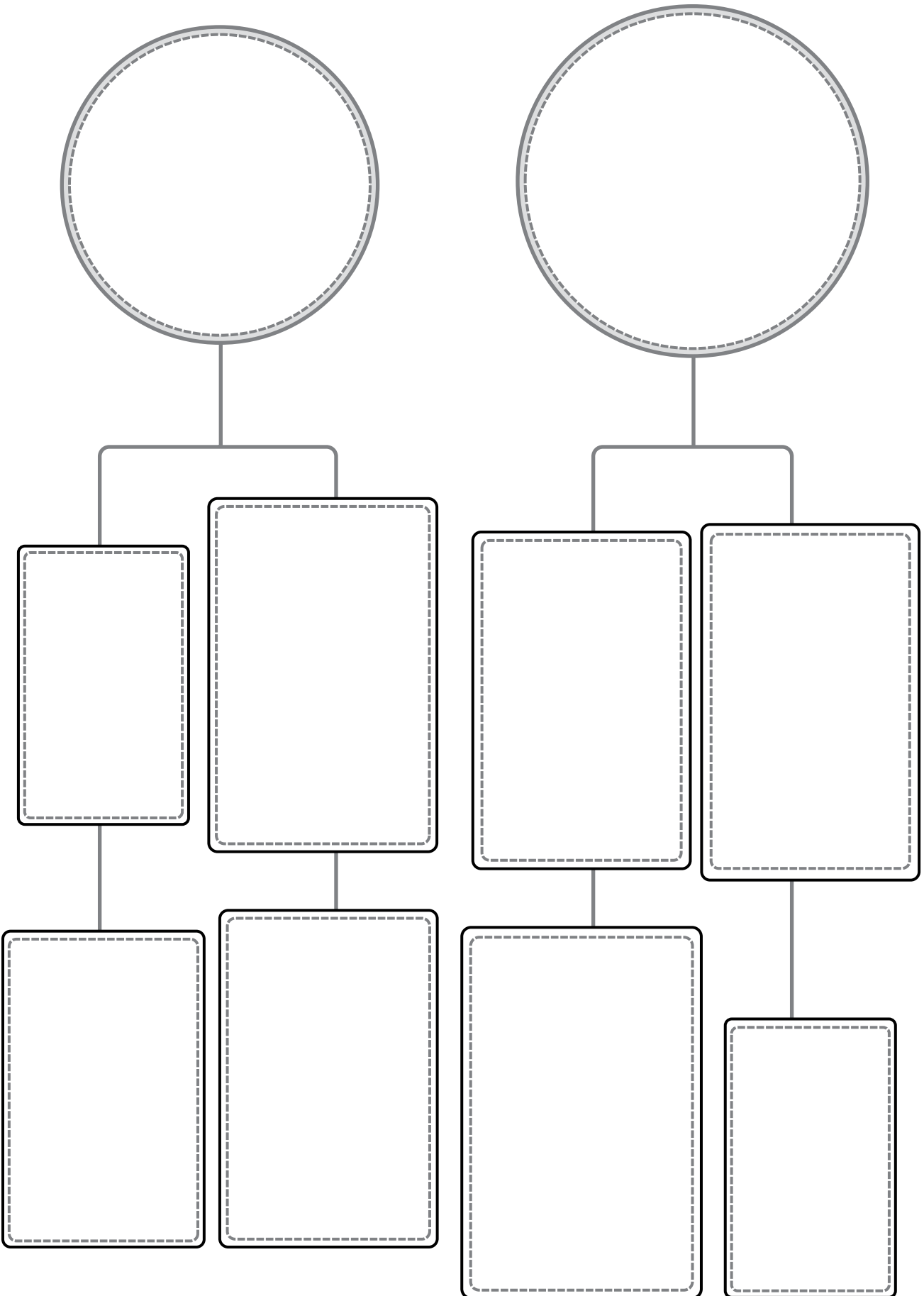
Timeline



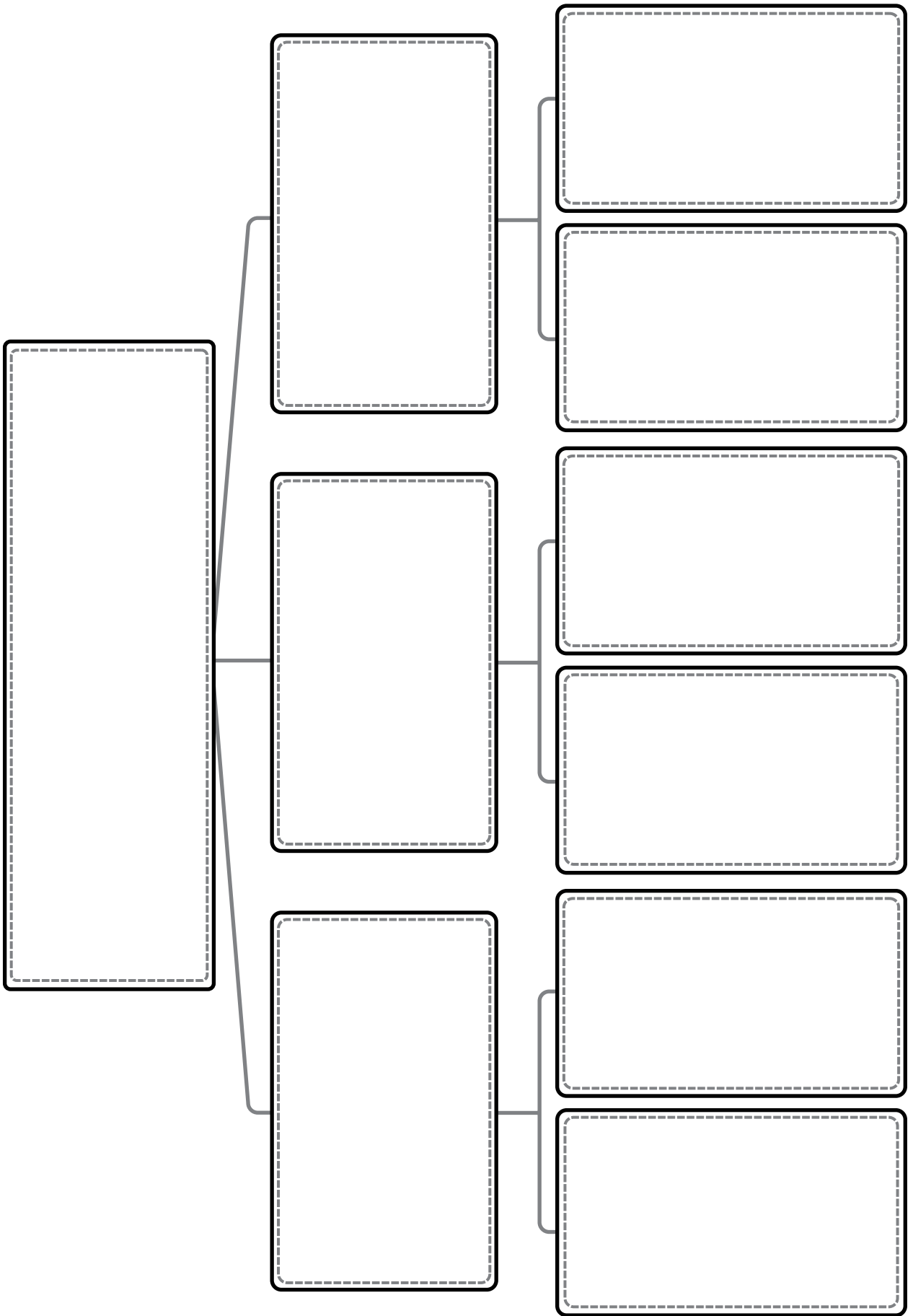
Triple T-Chart

Mind Map

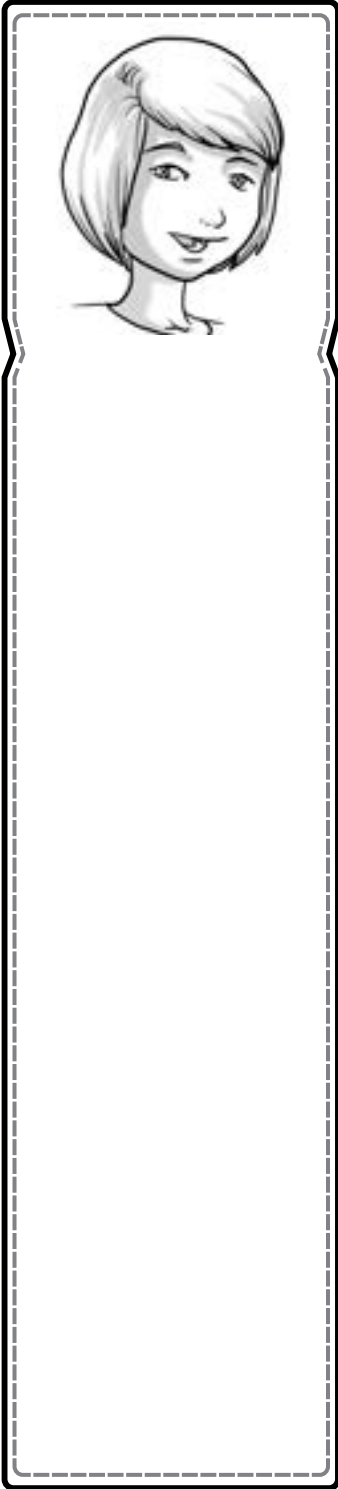
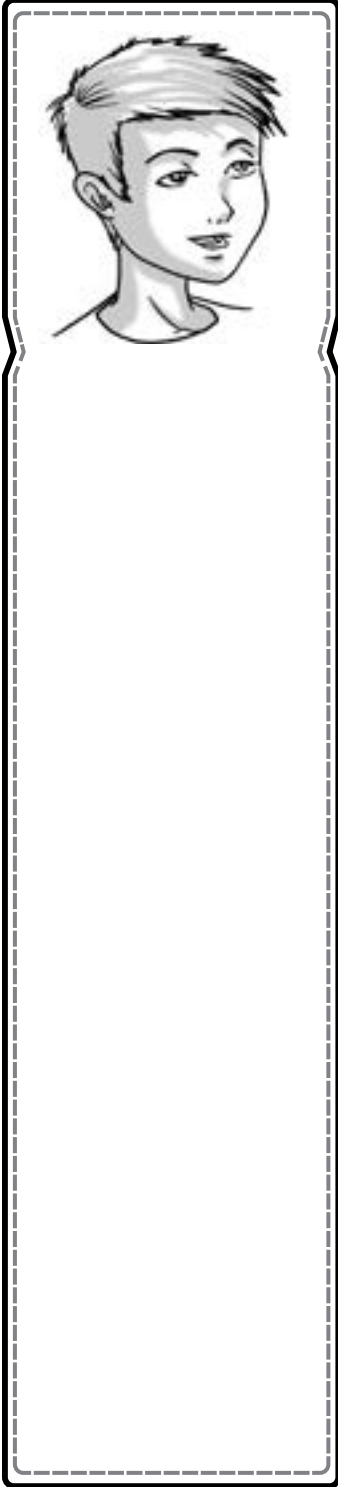




Persuasion Map



Bookmarks



Trading Cards

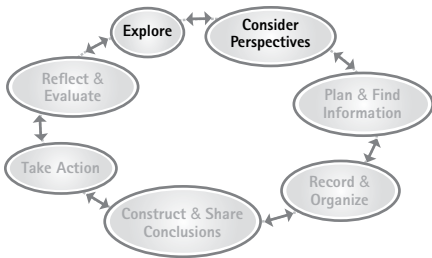
A blank trading card template. It features a rounded rectangular shape with a solid black border. At the top, there is a horizontal header area divided into two sections: a small square on the left and a larger rectangular box on the right. The main body of the card is enclosed in a dashed line, indicating where to place an image or drawing.

A blank trading card template, identical to the one on the left. It features a rounded rectangular shape with a solid black border. At the top, there is a horizontal header area divided into two sections: a small square on the left and a larger rectangular box on the right. The main body of the card is enclosed in a dashed line, indicating where to place an image or drawing.

A blank trading card template, identical to the ones above. It features a rounded rectangular shape with a solid black border. At the top, there is a horizontal header area divided into two sections: a small square on the left and a larger rectangular box on the right. The main body of the card is enclosed in a dashed line, indicating where to place an image or drawing.

A blank trading card template, identical to the ones above. It features a rounded rectangular shape with a solid black border. At the top, there is a horizontal header area divided into two sections: a small square on the left and a larger rectangular box on the right. The main body of the card is enclosed in a dashed line, indicating where to place an image or drawing.

Project Planners



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 action project.

What would you like to change? Describe the purpose of your project.

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

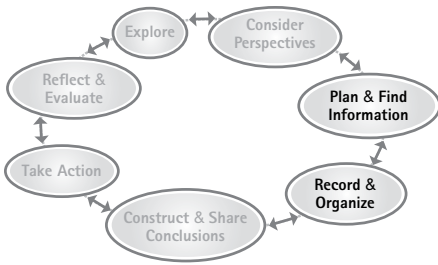
For example, if your project involves helping make your neighbourhood safer or cleaner, identify a specific goal like organizing monthly safety meetings for parents and students, or holding a neighbourhood cleanup day twice a year. If your project involves making your school more aware of the problem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

What resources will you use to reach the project goals?

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

If you are working with a group, list all project group members and respond to the questions. If you are working alone, answer the questions for yourself.

- 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?



- 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 action project? What information is important and relevant to the project?

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 online information 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.

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:

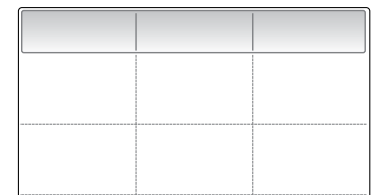
Organize Research

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

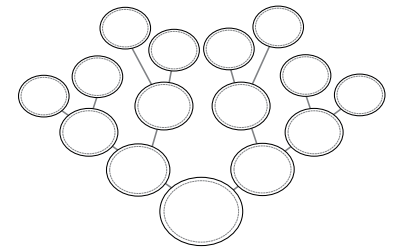
Group Member	Responsibilities (Area or Topic)	Tasks and Specific Jobs	Target Date

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

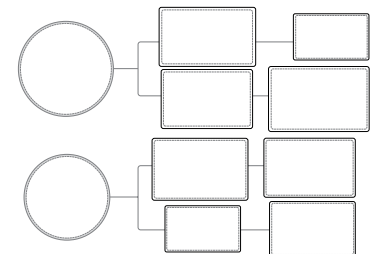
Triple T-Chart

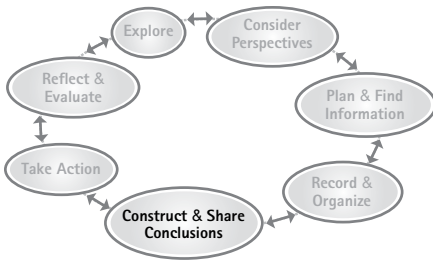


Mind Map



Flow Chart





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.

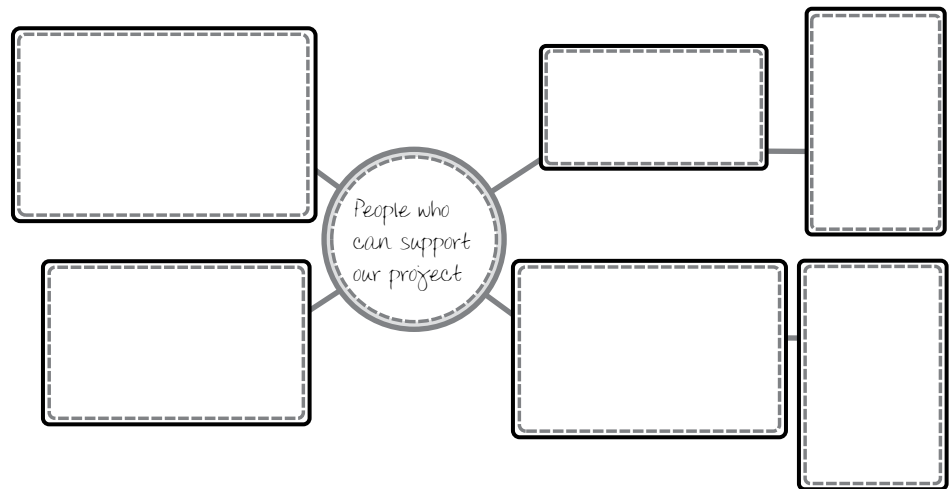
- Use a mind map to start identifying people you think can support your project.
- Describe what they can do in the second layer of the map.
- Identify other people who could contribute to your project.



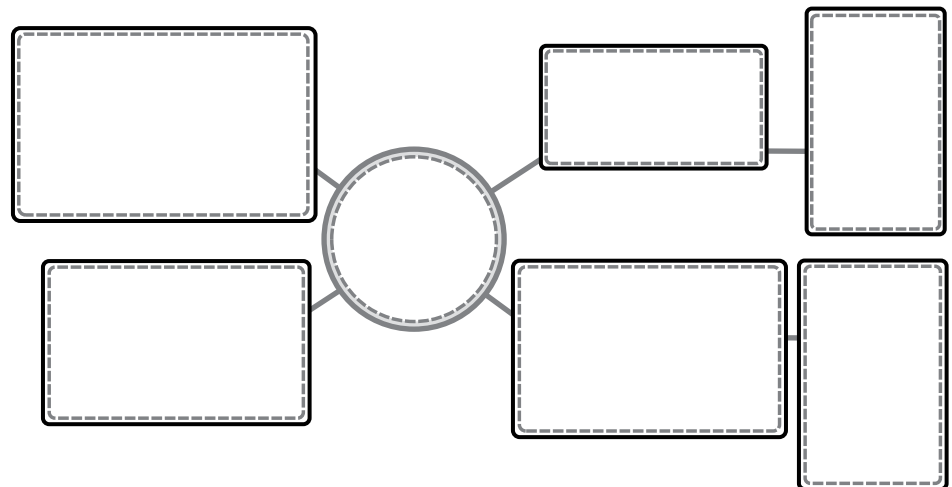
Communicate and Implement

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

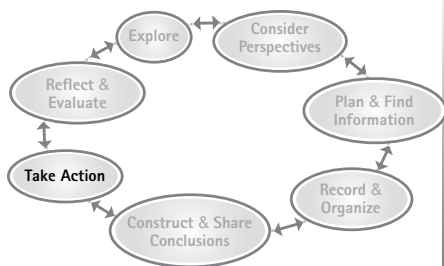


What progress have you made? Summarize the actions you have taken so far in the flow chart below. What are the next steps?



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

What is most important to know about our 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 action project? What would happen if we implemented these solutions?



What will we do with what we have learned?

What would happen if...?

How can we contribute?

How can we make a difference?

What should we do next?

Activity Ideas

- Create posters
- Plan a social media campaign
- Plan a day of action in the community or school
- Hold a workshop
- Create a video advertisement
- Distribute pamphlets
- Organize a local student day of action
- Start a youth council
- Start a student newsletter
- Start a website
- Create a game with a message
- Organize a student festival



Plan for Action

By now, you should be well on your way to implementing your action project. Revisit and review your project goals, and use the chart below to break down the steps you can take. What activities best fit your goals and the resources you have available to you?

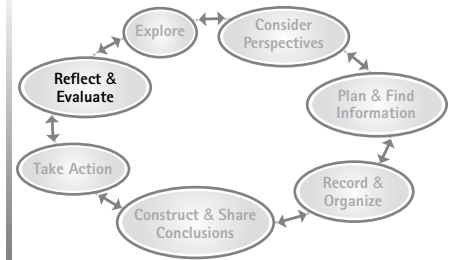
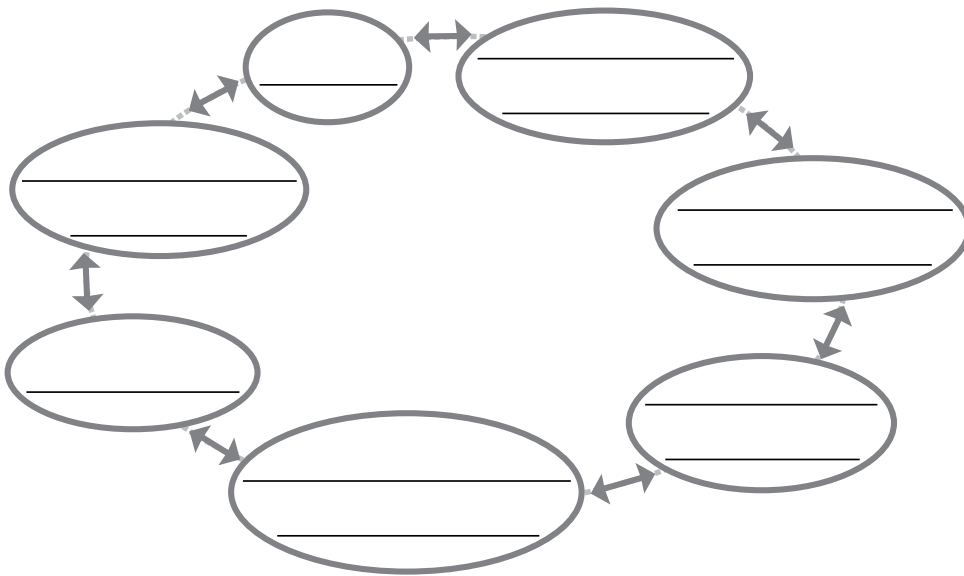
Activities	Resources	Who and When

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 are affected
- Satisfaction from team members
- Other projects that have been inspired from your work



Curriculum Connections

Notes

Alberta Education is working to develop a student-centred provincial curriculum that will enrich student's lives and prepare them for careers in a diversified economy. Provincial curriculum will be developed and available for use through a digital platform, the Curriculum Development Application (CDA).

Outcomes that are current at the date of publication are supported by this resource and provided in this Appendix. However, this resource is consistent with the identified focus of future curriculum development, which will be student-centred and will:

- Keep pace with issues, topics and themes that are of concern to many Albertans. This includes topics like climate leadership, financial literacy, mental health, sexual health and consent, online citizenship and many more
- Reflect the importance of inclusion, diversity and pluralism
- Include Francophone perspectives, history and contributions
- Include enhanced mandatory content about First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing, perspectives, experiences, languages and cultures, in historical and contemporary contexts, including residential schools and treaties for all students in Alberta
- Focus on learner outcomes that support the development of 21st century competencies as well literacy and numeracy across curriculum

Alberta Education (online). *Curriculum Design and Process*. <https://education.alberta.ca/curriculum-development>

MAKE IT MATTER

What difference can I make?



Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p>What difference can I make?</p> <p>An introduction to participation and the impact of taking action</p>	<p>6.1.1 recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) recognize and respect the democratic rights of all citizens in Canada (C, I) • (4) value citizens' participation in a democratic society (C) <p>6.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) critically evaluate ideas, information and positions • (3) re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue • (4) generate original ideas and strategies in individual and group activities <p>6.S.4 demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) propose and apply new ideas, strategies and options, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to decision making and problem solving • (2) consider multiple perspectives when dealing with issues, decision making and problem solving <p>6.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) demonstrate the skills of compromise to reach group consensus • (2) work collaboratively with others to achieve a common goal ▶ (3) record group brainstorming, planning and sharing of ideas by using technology <p>6.S.6 develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) demonstrate commitment to the well-being of their community by drawing attention to situations of injustice where action is needed <p>6.S.7 apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) formulate questions to be answered through the research process • (6) formulate new questions as research progresses <p>6.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) express opinions and present perspectives and information in a variety of forms such as oral or written presentations, speeches or debates • (2) express reasons for their ideas and opinions, in oral or written form • (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives

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 study are infused throughout the Social Studies program of study and are indicated by this symbol ▶.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 1

Why does democracy need participation?



Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p>Why does democracy need participation?</p> <p>An introduction to the concepts of democracy, representation and participation</p>	<p>6.1.1 recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) recognize and respect the democratic rights of all citizens in Canada (C, I) • (3) recognize the influence of historical events and legislation on democratic decision making in Canada (TCC, PADM) • (4) value citizens' participation in a democratic society (C) <p>6.1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of democracy by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) What is democracy (i.e., justice, equity, freedoms, representation)? (C, PADM) • (2) What are the similarities and differences between direct and representative democracy? (PADM) • (3) What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens living in a representative democracy? (C, PADM) <p>6.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) critically evaluate ideas, information and positions • (3) re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue • (4) generate original ideas and strategies in individual and group activities <p>6.S.2 develop skills of historical thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (3) explain the historical contexts of key events of a given time period • (4) use examples of events to describe cause and effect and change over time <p>6.S.4 demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) propose and apply new ideas, strategies and options, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to decision making and problem solving • (2) consider multiple perspectives when dealing with issues, decision making and problem solving ➤ (7) use graphic organizers, such as mind mapping/webbing, flow charting and outlining, to present connections among ideas and information in a problem-solving environment <p>6.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) demonstrate the skills of compromise to reach group consensus • (2) work collaboratively with others to achieve a common goal <p>6.S.7 apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) formulate questions to be answered through the research process • (4) draw and support conclusions based on information gathered to answer a research question • (6) formulate new questions as research progresses <p>6.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) express opinions and present perspectives and information in a variety of forms such as oral or written presentations, speeches or debates • (2) express reasons for their ideas and opinions, in oral or written form • (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives

C Citizenship

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TCC Time, Continuity and Change

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LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

Why does provincial government matter?



Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p>Why does provincial government matter?</p> <p>An exploration of the roles of provincial government and representatives in a democracy</p>	<p>6.1.1 recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) recognize and respect the democratic rights of all citizens in Canada (C, I)• (4) value citizens' participation in a democratic society (C)• (5) value the contributions of elected representatives in the democratic process (PADM) <p>6.1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of democracy by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (3) What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens living in a representative democracy? (C, PADM) <p>6.1.5 analyze the structure and functions of Alberta's provincial government by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) How is the provincial government structured? (PADM)• (2) What are the responsibilities of the provincial government (i.e., laws, taxes, services)? (PADM)• (4) What are the differences between the responsibilities of a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and a cabinet minister? (PADM) <p>6.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (4) generate original ideas and strategies in individual and group activities➤ (5) seek responses to inquiries from various authorities through electronic media <p>6.S.3 develop skills of geographic thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) construct and interpret various types of maps to broaden understanding of topics being studied (i.e., historical, physical, political maps) <p>6.S.4 demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) propose and apply new ideas, strategies and options, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to decision making and problem solving• (2) consider multiple perspectives when dealing with issues, decision making and problem solving• (3) collaborate with others to devise strategies for dealing with problems and issues➤ (7) use graphic organizers, such as mind mapping/webbing, flow charting and outlining, to present connections among ideas and information in a problem-solving environment <p>6.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (2) work collaboratively with others to achieve a common goal➤ (3) record group brainstorming, planning and sharing of ideas by using technology <p>6.S.7 apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (2) formulate questions to be answered through the research process• (3) use graphs, tables, charts and Venn diagrams to interpret information• (4) draw and support conclusions based on information gathered to answer a research question• (5) include references in an organized manner as part of research• (6) formulate new questions as research progresses➤ (8) access and retrieve appropriate information from the internet by using a specific search path or from given uniform resource locators (URLs)

Inquiry Context

Learning Outcomes

6.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:

- (1) express opinions and present perspectives and information in a variety of forms such as oral or written presentations, speeches or debates
- (2) express reasons for their ideas and opinions, in oral or written form
- (6) organize information gathered from the internet, or an electronic source, by selecting and recording the data in logical files or categories
- (7) communicate effectively through appropriate forms, such as speeches, reports and multimedia presentations, applying information technologies that serve particular audiences and purposes

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

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LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

If I could vote, would I?



Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p>If I could vote, would I?</p> <p>An investigation of structures and functions within the electoral process</p>	<p>6.1.1 recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) recognize and respect the democratic rights of all citizens in Canada (C, I)• (4) value citizens' participation in a democratic society (C) <p>6.1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of democracy by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (3) What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens living in a representative democracy? (C, PADM) <p>6.1.5 analyze the structure and functions of Alberta's provincial government by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (4) How are representatives chosen at the provincial level of government (i.e., electoral process)? (PADM) <p>6.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) assess significant local and current affairs from a variety of sources, with a focus on examining bias and distinguishing fact from opinion• (2) critically evaluate ideas, information and positions• (4) generate original ideas and strategies in individual and group activities➤ (5) seek responses to inquiries from various authorities through electronic media <p>6.S.4 demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) propose and apply new ideas, strategies and options, supported with facts and reasons, to contribute to decision making and problem solving• (2) consider multiple perspectives when dealing with issues, decision making and problem solving• (3) collaborate with others to devise strategies for dealing with problems and issues➤ (7) use graphic organizers, such as mind mapping/webbing, flow charting and outlining, to present connections among ideas and information in a problem-solving environment <p>6.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) demonstrate the skills of compromise to reach group consensus• (2) work collaboratively with others to achieve a common goal➤ (3) record group brainstorming, planning and sharing of ideas by using technology <p>6.S.7 apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) determine reliability of information filtering for point of view and bias• (2) formulate questions to be answered through the research process• (3) use graphs, tables, charts and Venn diagrams to interpret information• (4) draw and support conclusions based on information gathered to answer a research question <p>6.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (1) express opinions and present perspectives and information in a variety of forms such as oral or written presentations, speeches or debates• (2) express reasons for their ideas and opinions, in oral or written form• (5) listen to others to understand their perspectives

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
	<p>6.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ (3) analyze significant current affairs ➤ (5) use selected presentation tools to demonstrate connections among various pieces of information ➤ (6) recognize that information serves different purposes and that data from electronic sources may need to be verified to determine accuracy or relevance for the purpose used

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 study are infused throughout the Social Studies program of study and are indicated by this symbol ➤.

LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

What matters most after an election?



Curriculum Connections

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
<p>What matters most after an election?</p> <p>A focus on ways to stay involved in the political process after an election</p>	<p>6.1.1 recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) recognize and respect the democratic rights of all citizens in Canada (C, I) • (4) value citizens' participation in a democratic society (C) <p>6.1.2 demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of democracy by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (3) What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens living in a representative democracy? (C, PADM) <p>6.1.6 analyze how individuals, groups and associations within a community impact decision making of local and provincial governments by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) How can individuals, groups and associations within a community participate in the decision-making process regarding current events or issues (i.e., lobbying, petitioning, organizing and attending local meetings and rallies, contacting elected representatives)? (C, PADM) • (3) In what ways do elected officials demonstrate their accountability to the electorate (e.g., respond to constituents, participate in local events, represent and express in government meetings the concerns of constituents)? (C, PADM) <p>6.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) assess significant local and current affairs from a variety of sources, with a focus on examining bias and distinguishing fact from opinion • (3) re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue <p>6.S.4 demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) collaborate with others to devise strategies for dealing with problems and issues ➤ (3) select and use technology to assist in problem solving ➤ (4) solve issue-related problems, using such communication tools as a word processor or e-mail to involve others in the process <p>6.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) work collaboratively with others to achieve a common goal ➤ (3) record group brainstorming, planning and sharing of ideas by using technology ➤ (4) extend the scope of a project beyond classroom collaboration by using communication technologies, such as the telephone and e-mail <p>6.S.6 develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) demonstrate commitment to the well-being of their community by drawing attention to situations of injustice where action is needed

Inquiry Context	Learning Outcomes
	<p>6.S.7 apply the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (4) draw and support conclusions based on information gathered to answer a research question ➤ (11) reflect on and describe the processes involved in completing a project <p>6.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) express reasons for their ideas and opinions, in oral or written form ➤ (7) communicate effectively through appropriate forms, such as speeches, reports and multimedia presentations, applying information technologies that serve particular audiences and purposes

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