



WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN ELECTION?

Suggested time: 1 hour

What's important in this lesson: To gain an understanding of how elections are conducted and how our representatives are elected in Canada.

Complete these steps:

1. Complete the Student Handout: WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN ELECTION?.

Hand in the following to your teacher:

1. Hand in to your teacher your completed handout WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN ELECTION for checking and then record your results in the Course Checklist with the appropriate information.

Questions for the teacher:



WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN ELECTION?

Along with information given in this worksheet, you will also need to read pages 130 – 138 in your textbook *Citizenship: Issues and Action* in order to answer the following questions.

1. Fill in the blanks: _____ are always working to increase their _____ and prepare for the next _____. A general election at the federal level formally begins when the _____ calls on the _____ to “dissolve _____ “. This means ending the Parliament that is currently underway. A federal election must be held at least every _____ years, but can be held sooner if the _____ believes it is necessary – or if the government part has lost an _____, such as a vote on its proposed _____.

All federal elections are carried out under the authority of the _____. Individual ridings are organized by _____. As soon as the chief electoral officer is notified that Parliament is dissolved, he or she prepares _____, the official documents to set the _____ in motion. This is the beginning of intense activity by _____ employees, _____ and their candidates, _____, and _____ and the media.

2. How can we participate? - There are a number of ways we can participate in political parties and elections. List **four** “Volunteer Jobs in an Election Campaign”:



3. Put the following **eight** statements in correct order:

- ___ The winning party celebrates its victory.
- ___ You receive an Election Information Card that confirms your name is on the list of electors.
- ___ The Deputy Returning Office checks your ballot and then drops it in the ballot box. Then counts the ballots at the end of the day.
- ___ The Deputy Returning Officer hands you a folded ballot.
- ___ On Polling Day, you go to your Polling Station. Present your Elector Information Card. The Poll Clerk confirms you are on the Voting List.
- ___ An Enumerator visits your home during the election period to find out the names of people in your house who can vote.
- ___ the Deputy Returning Officer calls the headquarters of the candidates with the results.
- ___ Behind a voter's screen you vote by secret ballot by marking an "X" in the circle to the right of the name of the candidate you prefer.

4. **Winning the Election** – On election night, after everyone has voted, government officials count the ballots. Every election in Canada has officials to watch over the process and to ensure it is completed according to the rules and regulations. They make sure:

5. Sketch a copy of the ballot that is located in top left hand corner on page 138.

6. What is **first past the post (FPTP)**?



7. Consider how this system influenced the outcome of the election shown in Infosource 4-21. In the Ontario riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, in the provincial election of 1999, more people voted _____ Mike Brown than voted _____ him. However, he had _____ votes than any other single candidate, and by the system we use in _____, he won the election. The party that wins the _____ is also the one that is the _____. In other words, the party that _____ the most _____ in Parliament, usually forms the government.

Therefore, it is necessary to know how many seats are available to win in order to find out who will form the government and what kind of government it will be. There are three kinds:

Majority Government – when a party has won **more than fifty percent** of the seats available.

Minority Government – when a party has won the most seats, but does **not** have over fifty percent.

Coalition Government – when two parties join together to form the government (usually this will give them **over fifty percent**)

Keep in mind where each party sits on the political spectrum – a right wing party will rarely align with a left wing party. Usually a centre party will join with either the left or the right.

Let's say they are **300** seats available in the House on Commons.

8. How many seats does a party need to form a majority government? _____

Let's look at some actual federal election results. Read over the tables on the next page and answer the questions that follow.

*Note: As Canada's population has grown, so have the number of seats available in the House of Commons. This is called: **representation by population – the principle that representation should be based proportionally on population.***



1917 Federal Election

Government	Opposition
152 Union (Conservatives plus some Liberal MPs)	84 Liberal MPs
Total: 152	Total: 84

1979 Federal Election

Government	Opposition
136 Progressive Conservatives MPs	114 Liberal MPs 26 New Democratic Party MPs 6 Social Credit MPs
Total: 136 MPs	Total: 146 MPs

2000 Federal Election

Government	Opposition
155 Liberal MPs	60 Reform MPs 44 Bloc Quebecois MPs 21 New Democratic Party 20 Progressive Conservative 1 Independent
Total: 155	Total: 146

2005 Federal Election

Government	Opposition
135 Liberal MPs	99 Conservative MPs 54 Bloc Quebecois MPs 19 New Democratic Party MPs 1 Independent
Total: 135	Total: 173

9. How many seats were in the House of Commons in 1917? _____

10. What parties joined to form the Union government? _____

11. The Union government of 1917 is an example of what type of government?
(Majority, Minority or Coalition) _____

12. How many seats were in the House of Commons in 1979? _____



13. How many seats did the Progressive Conservatives win? _____
14. How many seats did all the other parties win? _____
15. What type of government did the PCs form in 1979? _____
16. How many seats were in the House of Commons in 2000? _____
17. Which party formed the government in 2000? _____
18. What type of government was formed in 2000? _____
19. How many seats are in the House of Commons now? _____
20. Which party forms the current government? _____
21. Which party is currently the official Opposition? _____
22. What type of government do we currently have? _____