

# CHV2O Unit 1: Citizenship and Government

## Activity 9: Political Parties of Canada

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### Overview

This activity focuses upon the major political parties in Canada and their fundamental beliefs and platforms relating to important contemporary issues. Students will describe the role of political parties in the parliamentary process and explain how this role changes in the formation of majority, minority, and coalition governments. Students will then complete a political questionnaire that will help them identify their own political values.

### Lesson

#### *What is a registered party?*

Since 1974, political parties have had the option of registering with the Chief Electoral Officer. Registration offers political parties status under the Canada Elections Act and brings with it certain obligations and benefits.

#### *Which political parties are registered?*

There are plenty of federally registered political parties in Canada. All of them have distinct views on social, political and economic issues. Some lean to the left side of the political spectrum while others lean to the right. Each party competes for seats in the House of Commons. The 5 most popular political parties are:

- The Liberal Party of Canada (<http://www.liberal.ca>)
- The Conservative Party of Canada (<http://www.conservative.ca>)
- The New Democratic Party (<http://www.ndp.ca>)
- The Bloc Québécois (<http://www.blocquebecois.org>)
- The Green Party of Canada (<http://www.greenparty.ca>)

#### *Minority, Majority and Coalition Governments*

The party that wins the largest number of seats in a general election forms the government. Its leader is asked by the Governor General to become **Prime Minister**. If the winning party comes out of the election with more than half the total seats in the House of Commons it is known as a **majority government** and it can easily pass its bills into law because it can depend upon support from more than half of the Members of Parliament.

If, however, the government in office before an election comes out of the election without a clear majority of the seats in the House of Commons, it is known as a **minority government**. It has the right to meet the new House of Commons and see whether it can get enough support from the minor parties to give it a majority. This happened in 1925-26, 1962 and 1972. If it can achieve enough support from minor parties to acquire a majority, this is known as a **coalition government**.

The current party standings in the House of Commons are:

Province / Territory	<a href="#">Lib.</a>	<a href="#">C.P.C.</a>	<a href="#">N.D.P.</a>	<a href="#">B.Q.</a>	<a href="#">G.P.</a>	Vacant	Total Seats
Alberta	4	29	1				<b>34</b>
British Columbia	17	10	14		1		<b>42</b>
Manitoba	7	5	2				<b>14</b>
New Brunswick	10						<b>10</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	7						<b>7</b>
Northwest Territories	1						<b>1</b>
Nova Scotia	11						<b>11</b>
Nunavut	1						<b>1</b>
Ontario	80	33	8				<b>121</b>
Prince Edward Island	4						<b>4</b>
Quebec	40	12	16	10			<b>78</b>
Saskatchewan	1	10	3				<b>14</b>
Yukon	1						<b>1</b>
<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>338</b>

## Assignment

1. What is a registered party?
2. What are the 5 most popular political parties?
3. How many seats are there in the House of Commons in total? Which party has the most seats in the House of Commons?
4. Explain what minority, majority and coalition governments are.
5. How many seats do you need to have a majority government? Hint - you need half of the total plus one. Is there a political party that currently has the required number of seats?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages to being a minority government?
7. Complete the following survey and research questions.

### Canadian Political Spectrum Survey

Political parties are created by people who share the same viewpoints on several important issues. Complete the survey, then add-up your answers to learn more about which party's ideas you support the most.

1. The government should use taxpayers' money to provide free daycare for all parents.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. The death penalty is wrong and should not be allowed under any circumstances

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Directors of big companies that pollute air and water should be personally fined and sent to prison.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Canada should allow any immigrant who wants to move to Canada to do so.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Canada's Native people should be given the land they were promised in treaties signed by with the government.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. If a factory is polluting our air and water, the government should close it down, even if it means that its workers would lose their jobs.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Our government should spend less money on our armed forces.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Laws should be passed and enforced that will make sure women receive the same pay as men when they do work of equal value.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. The United States should not be allowed to test its Cruise missiles in Canada.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. High school students should be allowed to take whatever courses they want; there should be no compulsory courses.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. If a person is poor, it is not his or her fault; the government should help such people by providing generous financial aid.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. The government should control the amount of rent landlords can charge their tenants.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. The laws should be changed to make rich people and big companies pay more taxes.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. The government should provide a mother with enough money to allow her to stay at home for a longer time after she has had a baby.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. A woman who has decided that she wants to have an abortion should be allowed to do so without having to get anyone else's permission.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. No person or government should be allowed to censor any book, movie, or piece of music.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

17. Artist, writers, and musicians are more important in our society than are business executives.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. Workers on strike do it for good reasons and deserve to have the public's support.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. The government should give more money to our universities and community colleges in order to keep students' fees as low as possible, even if it means raising our taxes.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

20. Canada should give more financial aid to poorer countries.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Its time to identify what political views you prefer according to the survey.

Add your answers to determine your total score \_\_\_\_\_

Consider the results. Those who fall to the left of the spectrum have high totals (75 - 100) and tend to be more liberal with their views. Those who fall to the right have low totals (20 - 45) and tend to be more conservative with their views. Those who fall in the center have 'average' totals (46-74) and tend to be more neutral with their views.



(20 – 45)



(46 – 74)



(75 – 100)

### ***Researching Canada's Major Political Parties***

1. Visit the official websites for each of the political parties below. List the name of each party's leader and the address of their national headquarters.
2. You must also identify the 5 most important platforms of each party.
  - a. The Liberal Party of Canada (<http://www.liberal.ca>)
  - b. The Conservative Party of Canada (<http://www.conservative.ca>)
  - c. The New Democratic Party (<http://www.ndp.ca>)
  - d. The Bloc Québécois (<http://www.blocquebécois.org>)
  - e. The Green Party of Canada (<http://www.greenparty.ca>)
3. Based on your research, which political party do you see as the best for Canada's future? What are that party's views on taxation, the environment, national defense, health care and relations with other countries?