

LESSON 7

MY CANDIDATES

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How are candidates elected in provincial elections? Who are my candidates and how do I choose between them?

SUMMARY

In a representative democracy, we elect individuals to represent us in our legislature and make decisions on our behalf.

In this lesson, students consider the qualities they look for in their Member of Provincial Parliament. Students learn about how representatives are elected in provincial elections. Looking at Ontario electoral district maps, students analyze the size of districts and representation, and take an in-depth exploration into their school's district. Afterwards, students discuss which issues matter to them and develop questions they want to ask the candidates in collaboration with the peers. In the culminating activity, students reflect on what they like or dislike about the candidates.

LEARNING GOALS

We are learning to:

- develop an understanding of our electoral system and the dynamic and complex relationships within our political system (Citizenship Education Framework – Structures);
- identify our electoral district;
- engage in an inquiry process to formulate questions, interpret, synthesize and critically analyze the candidates (Global Competencies – Critical Thinking & Problem Solving)
- use the inquiry process and concept of *perspective* to analyze the characteristics of the candidates and how they will respond to the same issues
- voice informed opinions on matters relevant to their community (Citizenship Education Framework – Active Participation)

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Below are some sample success criteria you can use or build upon. Co-creating success criteria with your class will allow students to have ownership over their learning and understand what successful learning looks like.

I CAN...

- explain how government is influenced by the actions of citizens (*significance*);
- name our electoral district and the candidates running for election;
- ask questions, compare responses and critically analyze the candidates;
- compare and contrast how different candidates or political parties may view and interpret the same issue;
- decide which issues are important to me and our community.

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CURRICULUM LINKS

Grade 5	Overall Expectations	Specific Expectations
Social Studies	<p>B2. Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate Canadian social and/or environmental issues from various perspectives, including the perspective of the level (or levels) of government responsible for addressing the issues (FOCUS ON: Perspective)</p> <p>B3. Understanding Context: demonstrate an understanding of the roles and key responsibilities of citizens and of the different levels of government in Canada (FOCUS ON: Significance)</p>	<p>B2.1 formulate questions to guide investigations into social and/or environmental issues in Canada from various perspectives, including the perspective of the level (or levels) of government responsible for addressing the issues</p> <p>B2.3 analyze and construct maps in various formats, including digital formats, as part of their investigations into social and/or environmental issues</p> <p>B3.4 describe different processes that governments can use to solicit input from the public</p> <p>B3.7 describe some different ways in which citizens can take action to address social and environmental issues (<i>e.g., by determining the position of their local candidates on various issues and supporting/voting for the one whose position they agree with;</i>)</p>
Oral Communication	<p>1. listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes;</p> <p>2. use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;</p>	<p>Point of View - 1.8 identify the point of view presented in oral texts and ask questions to identify missing or possible alternative points of view</p> <p>Clarity and Coherence - 2.3 communicate orally in a clear, coherent manner, presenting ideas, opinions, and information in a readily understandable form</p>
Reading	<p>1. read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;</p>	<p>Variety of Texts - 1.1 read a variety of texts from diverse cultures, including informational texts</p>

MINDS ON

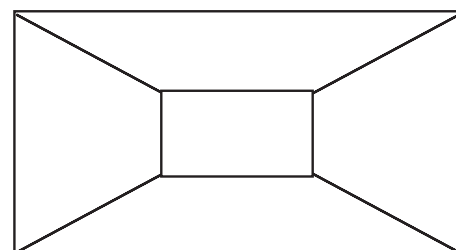
Placemat Strategy

1. Review the concept of a representative democracy. Citizens elect someone to represent them in the legislature and make decisions on their behalf.

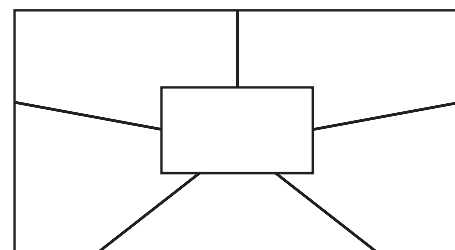
2. Through a Placemat activity, have students answer the question: What qualities or skills do I look for in my elected representative?

a) Divide the class into groups of four or five and provide each group with one large sheet of paper and a marker for each group member.

b) Instruct each group to divide its sheet of paper into sections, with an area in the centre and enough separate areas around the outside to match the number of members in the group, as illustrated below.



Four person group



Five person group

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c) Ask students to respond to the questions within their allotted space in one of the outside sections. Provide time for each student in the group to share their recorded responses with the group without discussion or debate from the other students.

d) Ask groups to decide, collectively, on the five most important/significant qualities and record them in the centre of the placemat — it is important that all group members agree on the top five items.

ACTION

My electoral district and candidates

1. Using the “Elections in Ontario” video and/or Slide Deck 7, review the election process in Ontario.

- The province is divided into smaller areas called **electoral districts**. The number of electoral districts will increase to 124 for the provincial election on June 7, 2018.
- Each electoral district has its own race, where interested individuals compete for the job of Member of Provincial Parliament. These individuals are called **candidates**.
- Voters can only choose one candidate on the ballot.
- The candidate with the most votes wins.

2. Find your school’s electoral district on the provincial map and write the name on the blackboard, chart paper or interactive whiteboard. If you do not know your school’s electoral district or do not have the printed wall map, visit the Elections Ontario website ([2018 General Election Maps](#)).

3. Compare the size and shape of electoral districts across the province. Specifically, compare an urban district to a rural district. Ask students to consider why there are differences and what those differences might reflect (e.g., population, geography, landmarks). If possible, use a physical geography map to further examine landforms and bodies of water.

4. Show students an individual map of the school’s electoral district, which can be found on the Elections Ontario website ([2018 General Election Maps](#)). Through a class discussion, answer the following questions:

- What is the size of the electoral district?
- How many people live there?
- Where is the school located?
- What are the boundaries of the school’s electoral district?
- What major landmarks or attractions are included in the school’s electoral district?
- What makes the electoral district unique?

Teacher Note: If time permits, compare your school’s electoral district area to another district from a different area of the province. Discussion questions: How do they compare and contrast? Do you think people living in other districts have similar concerns as your community? Why or why not?

5. On the blackboard, interactive whiteboard or a chart, list the candidates running for election and their party affiliation. Demonstrate to students where they can find this information by visiting the [Elections Ontario website](#). Give students a few minutes to fill out the related worksheet (Activity 7.1).

6. Divide students into groups and have them brainstorm possible questions to ask the candidates. Guiding questions for students:

- What do you want to know about the candidates before casting your vote?
- Which issues matter to you, your family and community?

7. As a class, narrow down the questions and pose them to candidates through Twitter, email, by conducting a phone interview, or you can arrange to have candidates to visit your class or organize an all-candidates’ debate (Handout 7.2). If candidates are not responsive, use media reports to analyze how they may respond to the questions.

CONSOLIDATION

Choosing a Candidate

Have a brief closing discussion about the candidates running for election, or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions.

- Which candidate would you support and why?
- What do you like or dislike about each candidate? Why?
- What would your ideal candidate believe in?
- If you ran for elected office, what messages would you use to attract voters?

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- To avoid any bias or partisanship, ensure that all registered candidates are invited to respond to questions, visit the school or take part in the all-candidates’ debate.
- If you plan to hold an all-candidates’ debate, please be sure to follow any procedures your Board of Education has in place and refer to Activity 7.2 for guidelines.

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ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

<i>Type of Assessment</i>	<i>Lesson Area</i>	<i>Guiding Questions for Teachers</i>
FOR LEARNING	MINDS ON	<p>Are students grouped so that they feel comfortable contributing?</p> <p>Are students critically thinking about the qualities and skills needed for community leadership?</p>
AS LEARNING	ACTION	<p>Are students looking at the map and asking good questions or making conclusions?</p> <p>Is student work on the activity sheet fully explained?</p> <p>Are students posing good questions to evaluate the candidates?</p>
OF LEARNING	CONSOLIDATION	<p>Can students make a choice that is right for them?</p> <p>Are students using examples or specifics to explain their choice?</p>

LEARNING FOR ALL

Individual Education Plans	<p>Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minds On – Make a list on the board of personality traits, qualifications and skills, so that students can choose ones important to them Group students so they are comfortable in sharing their ideas Show clips of past debates to help students understand the concept <p>Enrichment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group stronger students together so that they can challenge each other Have students help plan the all candidates’ debate. They can plan the format, contact candidates and invite media.
English Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide vocabulary for qualities a candidate might possess, translation sites Show clips of past debates to help students understand the concept
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss specific questions marginalized groups may have for the candidates Discuss specific challenges your community is facing <p>Indigenous Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly show students where First Nations reserves are in your electoral district Make links to First Nations and Treaty Maps Discuss possible questions Indigenous groups may have for candidates
Accessibility & Learning Space	<p>Minds On</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charts can be made available to students electronically Use other students as scribes, where needed

ACTIVITY 7.1: MY ELECTORAL DISTRICT

1. The name of my electoral district is: _____

2. Describe two things about your electoral district.

3. Write down the candidates running for election and their political party if they have one.

Candidate Name	Political Party

4. What election issues matter to my family, my community and me?

My Family	My Community	Me

5. Three questions I would like to ask my candidates.

ACTIVITY 7.2: FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING AN ALL-CANDIDATES MEETING

It is important when hosting an event at your school that things are run professionally and efficiently. Consider the following as you arrange your event.

PREPARATION:



- Decide on a time, date and location.
- Invite all candidates running in the electoral district to participate in the meeting/debate.
- Consider organizing the event with another participating school or videotaping, podcasting and/or live-streaming the event to share with other schools in your electoral district.
- Work with school staff to set up audio equipment and seating.
- Choose a moderator (teacher, student, community leader or journalist).

QUESTIONS:



- Determine the timing for questions and answers and whether all, some or one candidate will respond.
- Plan questions in advance and encourage other classes to submit questions to increase interest and engagement. Consider both personal and policy questions (e.g., Why did you decide to run? What makes you qualified for the job? What is the most important issue facing our province and/or electoral district?).
- Include quick-response questions or one-word answers (e.g., What is your favourite thing about our electoral district? Did you grow up in this electoral district? What is your favourite holiday?).
- Once questions have been selected, confirm which students will ask the questions.

FORMAT:



- Use a combination of short (i.e., 30 seconds or less) and longer responses (i.e., 2 minutes each). Make sure that the time limits are announced and monitored with a stopwatch.
- Establish an agenda and guidelines for the meeting to share with candidates and participating classes.
- Below is a suggested framework:
 - a) Introduction — The moderator should welcome the audience, introduce the candidates and detail the structure of the meeting (3 minutes).
 - b) Opening statements — Brief introductory statements from the candidates (2 minutes each).
 - c) Planned questions — Ask the pre-determined questions to the candidates (25-30 minutes).
 - d) Open questions — Give the audience an opportunity to ask final questions to specific candidates (10-15 minutes).
 - e) Closing statements — Final words from the candidates (1-2 minutes each).
 - f) Thank you — Plan a formal thank you from designated students (2 minutes).

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEBATE:



- Ensure a respectful, non-partisan environment.
- If a candidate declines, cancels or does not show up, respect their campaign schedule and ensure that students are aware that the candidate is running in the election but is unable to attend.
- Communicate expectations regarding behaviour and participation.
- You can invite parents/guardians or members from the community, but non-student audience members should NOT ask questions.
- Have students take notes during the debate to review next class.
- If possible, provide time for students to talk with the candidates after the meeting and offer some refreshments