

# LESSON 13

## THE VOTING PROCESS

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

How do I vote in provincial elections? Why should I vote?

### SUMMARY

Voting in provincial elections is the way Ontarians express their choices for the future of their province. The right to vote comes with the responsibility to vote in an informed manner.

In this lesson, students share their views and opinions about participating in the voting process. Students review essential information about who, where, when and how people vote in provincial elections. In groups, students discuss their opinions on the leaders, candidates, issues and party platforms, and consider a way to rank these aspects in making their voting decision. In the culminating activity, students design a campaign styled poster, slide deck, speech or dramatic presentation aimed helping people understand how to vote and why.

### LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Use the concept of *political significance* to determine the importance of participating in elections;
- Use the inquiry process to interpret, analyze and communicate the requirements and steps in order to participate the voting process;
- Use the concept of *political perspective* to analyze how individual beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, can affect one's position on issues, candidates and political parties;
- Develop a sense of their civic self-image (Citizen Education Framework – Identity);
- Consider and respect others' perspectives (Citizen Education Framework – Identity);
- Become an active citizen by voicing informed opinions on matters relevant to my community (Citizen Education Framework – Active Participation).

### SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can assess the significance of voting in elections and consequences of not voting;
- I can understand the voting process well enough to cast my own ballot and communicate the information to others;
- I can analyze how individual beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, impact each person's *political perspective* and their voting decision;

- I can assess my own views of the election and have a better sense of my civic self-image;
- I can discuss the election in a respectful manner and appreciate others' perspectives;
- I can voice informed opinions on matters relevant to my community and province.

### CURRICULUM LINKS

#### CHV2O – Overall Expectations

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance

A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday contexts skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one's position on civic issues

C1. Civic Contributions: analyse a variety of civic contributions, and ways in which people can contribute to the common good

C2. Inclusion and Participation: assess ways in which people express their perspectives on issues of civic importance and how various perspectives, beliefs, and values are recognized and represented in communities in Canada

#### CHV2O – Specific Expectations

A1.1 formulate different types of questions to guide investigations into issues, events, and/or developments of civic importance

A2.2 demonstrate in everyday contexts attributes, skills, and work habits developed in civics and citizenship education

B1.2 describe fundamental beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain ways in which they are reflected in citizen actions

C1.2 explain how various actions can contribute to the common good at the local, national and/or global level

C2.1 analyse ways in which various beliefs, values, and perspectives are represented in their communities, and assess whether all perspectives are represented or are valued equally

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### MINDS ON

*Why vote?*

1. Why do people vote? Ask students to share their views and opinions about participating in the voting process through a whole class discussion.
2. Watch the video ‘Why Vote’ with your students to listen to different reasons why people believe voting is important.
3. Have a follow up conversation in small groups or as a whole class. Guiding questions:
  - Which opinions shared in the video resonate the most with you?
  - Over the course of the Student Vote activities, has your opinion changed about whether voting is important?
  - What is the significance of low levels of voter participation?
  - Do you think it is important that students practice voting before they turn 18 years old?

### ACTION

1. Explain to students that voting in government elections is done by **secret ballot**. Voters mark their ballot behind a privacy screen and your choice is concealed afterwards.

Using the Think-Pair-Share discussion strategy have students reflect on one or more of the following questions:

- Why is this secrecy important?
- What sort of consequences could develop if elections were held publicly?
- Why is it important to ensure a fair and impartial electoral process?

2. Using Slide Deck 13, discover some of the key aspects of the voting process in Ontario provincial elections.

- What is Elections Ontario? What is their role?
- Who is able to vote in provincial elections?
- What is the Voters List? What is the Ontario Register of Future Voters?
- Where do I vote?
- How do I vote? How do I mark my ballot?

3. Remind students that voting is more than just marking an ‘X’ on a ballot. It requires research, critical thinking and decision-making, and reflecting on your perspectives, opinions and civic self-image.

4. Ask students to reflect on their local campaign issues, party platforms, leaders and their candidates by filling out Activity 13.1.

5. Divide students into groups of five and have one student share their response to one specific question (questions 1-5) and provide time for group discussion. For the final two questions, invite all group members to share their perspectives.

6. Afterwards, facilitate a class discussion and allow students the opportunity to share their views. Some students may jump at the chance to share their opinions and even try to persuade others to adopt their ideas and choices. Others may opt for silence and prefer to keep their politics private.

*Teacher Note: This is a great opportunity to reinforce the choice for privacy and the importance of being respectful to others who hold diverse points of view.*

### CONSOLIDATION

In groups or individually, have students design a campaign styled poster, slide deck, speech or dramatic presentation aimed at promoting participation in the provincial election.

Ask students what message they would focus on to promote participation. Is it about making voting seem easy or improving attitudes towards participation? Which format would they use? Consider the following questions as you co-create criteria with students.

- What is your message and what is the intended consequence?
- Which images and words are most likely to have an influence on a person’s political perspective?

*Teacher Note: Recall the concepts of political significance and political perspective when developing the criteria:*

**Political significance:** explain how people, ideas and events contribute to political change in society.

**Political perspective:** identify the influence of beliefs/values on peoples’ political viewpoints and actions.

Afterwards, display the posters around the school or coordinate presentations for the rest of the classes in the school. Students could also share their work with their family and friends.

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### ASSESSMENT

1. Ask students to create a mind map showing the information, events, issues and people that have helped shaped their political perspective and ballot box decision. Afterwards, provide time for students to share their mind map with their peers.
2. Have students write an opinion piece where they agree or disagree with the statement: *Voting is both a right and a responsibility.*

Steps to writing an opinion piece:

1. Decide whether you agree or disagree with the statement
2. Think of reasons why you hold that opinion (try to come up with at least three), and an example from your own experience which supports each reason
3. Write an introductory paragraph, making sure it clearly states your opinion
4. Write at least one body paragraph which gives your reasons for your opinion and the examples from your own experience
5. Write a concluding paragraph which summarizes your opinion

*Teacher Note: Consult with your school's literacy lead or school board's literacy coach to access tips and supports.*

## ACTIVITY 13.1: PREPARING TO VOTE

Use the following questions to reflect on the different aspects of the election campaign and help you make your voting decision.

1. Which of the party leaders do you think would make the best premier and why?
2. Which local candidate do you think will make the best Member of Provincial Parliament and why?
3. Which party platform do you support the most and why? Which aligns with your priorities? Explain.
4. Which election issue is most important to you and why?
5. How does each party plan to address this issue? Which proposal do you agree with the most?
6. Rank the following considerations when making your final voting decision.

Aspect	Ranking	Rationale
The party leader		
The local candidate		
The party platform		
Proposal for a single issue		

7. Which information, events or activities related to the campaign helped shaped your views the most?