

LESSON 6

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How does the provincial government work? How does voting influence government?

SUMMARY

The provincial government is separated into three branches: legislative, executive and judicial. The branches work together to serve all Ontarians.

In this lesson, students explore the role of each branch and get a better understanding of the areas of responsibility of the provincial government. Students deepen their understanding about how government affects them and how political decisions impact local, national or global communities, and reflect on how they can influence government by voting in elections.

LEARNING GOALS

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

- Understand how a parliamentary democracy works;
- Use the concept of *objectives and results* to understand how election results can impact the workings of government and resulting political decisions;
- Work in a collaborative and critically thoughtful manner (Citizenship Framework – Attributes);
- Use the concept of *stability and change* to analyze how and why political institutions and government policies change over time or why they remain the same;
- Develop positive attitudes towards voting and civic engagement (Citizenship Framework – Attributes);
- Use the concept of *political perspective* to analyze the way in which a person's beliefs and values can affect their voting preferences and their opinion about voting.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain how the provincial government is structured in Ontario;
- I can assess the difference between a majority and minority government and the idea of responsible government;
- I can collaborate with my peers to present information about a government ministry;
- I can analyze how governments make decisions which impact citizens;
- I can express my opinion about voting in government elections.
- I can analyze the way in which a person's beliefs and values can affect their voting preferences and their opinion about voting.

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

B2. Governance in Canada: explain, with reference to a range of issues of civic importance, the roles and responsibilities of various institutions, structures, and figures in Canadian governance

CHV2O – Specific Expectations

A1.5 use the concepts of political thinking when analysing and evaluating evidence, data, and information and formulating conclusions and/or judgments about issues, events, and/or developments of civic importance

A1.7 communicate their ideas, arguments, and conclusions using various formats and styles, as appropriate for the intended audiences and purpose

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

B2.2 explain, with reference to issues of civic importance, the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government in Canada and of key figures at each level

B2.3 describe, with reference to both the federal and provincial governments, the functions of the three branches of government in Canada and the roles/responsibilities of key positions within governments, and explain how the branches help ensure political and social stability in Canada

LESSON 6: PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

MINDS ON

1. Reinforce the concept that our political system is based on political parties. Members of Provincial Parliament are most often members of a political party. Political parties consist of a group of people that share similar political views and ideologies, and work together to accomplish their goals.

2. Review Ontario's major political parties and show students the election results from the 2011 and 2014 provincial elections (Handout 6.1). Ask students to infer which party formed government and how they know. Can any conclusions be drawn from comparing the two election results and how it may influence the workings of the legislature?

3. Explain to students that Ontario elementary and secondary students have voted in parallel elections during general elections since 2003. Review the Student Vote results from the 2011 and 2014 provincial elections (Handout 6.2) and compare them to the general election results.

Guiding questions:

- How do the Student Vote results compare to the general election?
- How does one's political perspective impact voting decisions?
- Why is it important that young voters participate in the electoral process?

ACTION

1. Review the concepts of parliamentary democracy, responsible government and branches of government. Use the following questions and support tools to review this information (Slide Deck 6, 'Parliamentary Democracy in Ontario' video).

- What is a parliamentary democracy?
- What is the separation of powers in the provincial government? What is the role of each branch?
- What is the principle of responsible government?
- What is a majority or minority government?

2. Look back again at the past general election results (6.1) and Student Vote results (6.2) to review the concepts of majority and minority governments. Divide students into small groups and assign each group a different provincial government ministry. Task each group with presenting information about their ministry to the rest of the class through a skit, role play or interactive presentation.

Students could use one or more of the following questions as their focus.

- What do they do and why? How do they aim to help people?
- What type of programs or services do they offer?
- What are some recent announcements or legislation?
- How are you, students, families or your community impacted by these new announcements or legislation?

Teacher Note: This activity can be completed using Handout 6.3 (descriptions of Ontario government ministries) or by reviewing the Ontario government website – www.ontario.ca/page/ministries (The layout and information may differ between ministries).

3. Prior to beginning of the task, discuss what makes a good presentation and write down a list of criteria. Considerations: creativity, effort, knowledge of the content, knowledge-transfer, etc.

CONSOLIDATION

Based on the group presentations or a review of Handout 6.4, ask students to rank the government ministries in two ways with different considerations.

- Rank the top five ministries in order of importance to your life.
- Rank the top five ministries in order of importance for your family or the community at large.
- How do the rankings differ? What is the significance for election results?

ASSESSMENT IDEAS

A) Take home survey - Survey five people who are eligible to vote in elections in Canada and ask about their voting habits and attitudes (Activity 6.4: Voting Survey). What does the information collected tell you about attitudes towards voting?

B) Exit Card – What did you learn about provincial government? What else do you want to know?

HANDOUT 6.1: 2011 & 2014 GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

| Registered Political Parties | 2011 GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------|-------------|--------------|
| | Seat Count | Seat % | Valid Votes | Popular Vote |
| Ontario Liberal Party | 53 | 49.5% | 1,622,426 | 37.6% |
| Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario | 37 | 34.6% | 1,527,959 | 35.4% |
| Ontario NDP | 17 | 15.9% | 980,204 | 22.7% |
| Green Party of Ontario | 0 | 0.0% | 126,567 | 2.9% |
| Other affiliations* | 0 | 0.0% | 53,982 | 1.3% |

| Registered Political Parties | 2014 GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------|-------------|--------------|
| | Seat Count | Seat % | Valid Votes | Popular Vote |
| Ontario Liberal Party | 58 | 54.2% | 1,863,974 | 38.7% |
| Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario | 28 | 26.2% | 1,508,811 | 31.3% |
| Ontario NDP | 21 | 19.6% | 1,144,822 | 23.7% |
| Green Party of Ontario | 0 | 0.0% | 232,536 | 4.8% |
| Other affiliations* | 0 | 0.0% | 70,404 | 1.5% |

* *Canadians' Choice Party, Communist Party of Canada (Ontario), Family Coalition Party of Ontario, Freedom Party of Ontario, Independent, No Affiliation, Northern Ontario Heritage Party, Ontario Libertarian Party, Ontario Confederation of Regions Party, Paramount Canadians Party, Party for Human Rights in Ontario, Party for People with Special Needs, Paupers Party of Ontario, People First Republic of Ontario, Reform Party of Ontario, Socialist Party of Ontario, The Only Party, The Peoples Political Party, Vegan Environmental Party*

Source: Elections Ontario

HANDOUT 6.2: 2011 & 2014 STUDENT VOTE RESULTS

| Registered Political Parties | STUDENT VOTE 2011 | | | |
|---|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Seat count | Seat count | Valid Votes | Popular Vote |
| Ontario NDP | 41 | 38.3% | 88,375 | 26.6% |
| Ontario Liberal Party | 39 | 36.4% | 86,083 | 25.9% |
| Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario | 25 | 23.4% | 69,779 | 21.0% |
| Green Party of Ontario | 2 | 1.9% | 54,653 | 16.4% |
| Other affiliations* | 0 | 0.0% | 32,613 | 9.8% |

| Registered Political Parties | STUDENT VOTE 2014 | | | |
|---|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Seat count | Seat count | Valid Votes | Popular Vote |
| Ontario NDP | 33 | 30.8% | 43,686 | 26.8% |
| Ontario Liberal Party | 62 | 57.9% | 52,780 | 32.4% |
| Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario | 11 | 10.3% | 30,075 | 18.4% |
| Green Party of Ontario | 1 | 0.9% | 12,809 | 14.5% |
| Other affiliations* | 0 | 0.0% | 12,809 | 7.9% |

* *Canadians' Choice Party, Communist Party of Canada (Ontario), Family Coalition Party of Ontario, Freedom Party of Ontario, Independent, No Affiliation, Northern Ontario Heritage Party, Ontario Libertarian Party, Ontario Confederation of Regions Party, Paramount Canadians Party, Party for Human Rights in Ontario, Party for People with Special Needs, Paupers Party of Ontario, People First Republic of Ontario, Reform Party of Ontario, Socialist Party of Ontario, The Only Party, The Peoples Political Party, Vegan Environmental Party*

HANDOUT 6.3: ONTARIO PROVINCIAL MINISTRY DESCRIPTIONS

Advanced Education and Skills Development

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development ensures that Ontario has the best higher education and training system to provide high-quality education and relevant skills possible to prepare people for good jobs that will improve the competitiveness of Ontario's economy.

Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs works to improve food safety, preserve the environment and strengthen Ontario's rural communities. The Ministry seeks create a better business environment to promote and market Ontario's agricultural food products to increase jobs in rural communities. Leading-edge research and innovation helps improve farming techniques and protect the environment.

Attorney General

The Attorney General ensures a fair, effective and accessible justice system for all Ontarians. The ministry administers Ontario's statutes, conducts criminal proceedings, provides legal advice to the government, coordinates court services, ensures safe communities and improves the lives of victims of crime and their families.

Children and Youth Services

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services integrates many Ontario children and youth programs and services to give children the best start in life, prepare them to become productive adults and make it easier for families to receive the services they need for all stages of a child's development. The Ministry is also responsible for adoption, child protection and childhood support for special needs youth.

Citizenship and Immigration

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration is committed to the full participation of all Ontarians – no matter how long they have been citizens of the province. The Ministry celebrates the accomplishments of Ontarians, promotes a sense of belonging, promotes volunteer action, helps newcomers settle and become productive members of society and promotes accessibility for all Ontarians.

Community and Social Services

The Ministry of Community and Social Services promotes inclusive communities by helping people achieve their potential, build independence and improve their quality of life. The Ministry helps adults with developmental disabilities live more independently and contribute to society, enforces child and spousal support, promotes workplace accessibility and helps Ontarians recover from hardship.

Community Safety and Correctional Services

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services ensures that Ontario's communities are supported and protected by law enforcement and public safety. The Ministry is responsible for the province's correctional services, public safety and security and policing services.

Economic Development and Growth

The Ministry of Economic Development and Growth helps create a strong, innovative economy that provides jobs and security for all Ontarians. The Ministry offers programs, services and tools businesses need to compete in the quickly-changing and continuously modernizing global economy.

Education

The Ministry of Education works to make Ontario's publicly funded education and child care systems the best possible, where all children and students can achieve personal success. The Ministry manages the province's educators, students, teachers, principals, schools, boards, child care providers and service system managers to ensure good outcomes for all children in terms of the provincial curriculum.

Energy

The Ministry of Energy is responsible for promoting the development of a safe, reliable, secure and environmentally sustainable energy supply. The Ministry develops energy policy framework for Ontario's energy providers, promotes a sustainable energy supply and promotes energy conservation.

Environment and Climate Change

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change works to protect, restore, and enhance the environment to ensure public health and environmental quality. The Ministry seeks to provide cleaner air, water, land and ecosystems for Ontario through clear and stringent laws, standards, and regulations.

Finance

The Ministry of Finance works to establish an environment that ensures a dynamic, innovative and growing economy. The Ministry administers tax statutes, tax credits and benefit programs. The Ministry is also responsible for the province's budget, financial policy, government financing and debt management. The revenues collected by the ministry help fund the province's other programs.

Francophone Affairs

The Ministry of Francophone Affairs ensures that Franco-Ontarians have access to provincial government services in French so that they can fully contribute to the social, economic and political life of the province while still preserving their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Government and Consumer Services

The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services helps deliver government services to the people of Ontario. The Ministry is responsible for the government's workforce and technology resources. The Ministry focuses on modernizing and improving front-line public services while ensuring a fair, safe and dynamic Ontario marketplace.

HANDOUT 6.3: ONTARIO PROVINCIAL MINISTRY DESCRIPTIONS

Health and Long-Term Care

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is responsible for administering the health care system and providing services to the Ontario public through programs like health insurance, drug benefits, care for the mental health issues, long-term care, home care, public health and disease prevention. The Ministry regulates the province's hospitals and nursing homes.

Housing

The Ministry of Housing works to build more affordable and social housing, seeks to end homelessness in the province and supports the full range of housing needs for people across the province. The Ministry helps strengthen local housing markets and provides support for low-income and special-needs tenants.

Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is responsible for improving social conditions, providing economic opportunity and sustainability and creating stronger relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Ontario. The Ministry works to improve the government's awareness of Indigenous Peoples and help them gain better access to Ontario's programs, services and information.

Infrastructure

The Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for planning and setting priorities for the Ontario government. It works with other ministries to make strategic investments that will benefit key public sectors. The Ministry makes smart investments so that the ministry is transparent, open and fair and the investments made deliver the intended results.

Intergovernmental Affairs

The Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs supports the premier and other ministries in advancing Ontario's intergovernmental and international priorities. The Ministry provides strategic advice on intergovernmental relations, international affairs, ensures that the federal government treats Ontario fairly in terms of health care, climate change, immigration and child care and enhances Ontario's international image.

International Trade

The Ministry of International Trade promotes new economic, business and cultural partnerships across Canada and around the world. The Ministry also strengthens Ontario's growth and competitiveness through trade policy.

Labour

The Ministry of Labour develops and enforces labour legislation and protects safe, fair and harmonious workplaces to ensure the social and economic well-being of Ontarians. The Ministry sets and enforces workplace standards.

Municipal Affairs

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs seeks to create an Ontario with safe and strong communities with healthy local economies, abundant green space and a high quality of life. The Ministry also helps local governments plan, manage and invest for the future.

Natural Resources and Forestry

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry maintains Ontario's provincial parks, forests, fisheries, wildlife, natural resources, land and water so it is used and preserved sustainably. The ministry works to provide healthy, sustainable ecosystems with safe drinking water and increased economic opportunities in the resource sector. The ministry promotes renewable energy and outdoor recreation.

Northern Development and Mines

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines promotes northern economic and community development. The Ministry coordinates the delivery of programs and services in Northern Ontario, specifically in regards to making the minerals sector healthy, competitive and sustainable.

Research, Innovation and Science

The Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science supports world-class research, commercialization and innovation taking place across Ontario through a range of programs, services and funds.

Seniors Affairs

The Ministry of Seniors Affairs helps to improve the quality of life of Ontario seniors and supports public education efforts for and about older Ontarians.

Status of Women

The Ministry of Status of Women partners with various organizations to take action on issues of concern to women.

Tourism, Culture and Sport

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport provides tourism and recreation experience to Ontarians, as well as visitors to the province. The Ministry sustains a customer-focused tourism industry that helps improve our quality of life, increases pride in our communities, and increases economic growth. The Ministry develops and encourages creation, innovation and participation in the arts and other cultural institutions.

Transportation

The Ministry of Transportation works to move people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably throughout the province – and the world – to make Ontario a globally competitive economy with a high quality of life. The Ministry seeks to increase transit ridership, promote road safety and help make trade easy and accessible.

Treasury Board Secretariat

The Treasury Board Secretariat focuses on strengthening the openness, transparency, and accountability of government and works to get the best possible value for money, and improve the services that the people of Ontario rely on.

ACTIVITY 6.4: VOTING SURVEY

Survey five people who are eligible to vote in elections in Canada. They must be at least 18 years old and Canadian citizens. Choose people who are a variety of ages and from more than one family is possible.

| | Person 1 | Person 2 | Person 3 | Person 4 | Person 5 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Age | | | | | |
| Did you vote in the last federal election? If not, why? | | | | | |
| Did you vote in the last provincial election? If not, why? | | | | | |
| Did you vote in the last municipal election? If not, why? | | | | | |
| <i>"It is essential to vote."</i> Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree? | | | | | |