

# LESSON 7

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN A DEMOCRACY

### GUIDING QUESTION

What rights and responsibilities do I have in a democracy?

### SUMMARY

Citizens living in a democracy have guaranteed rights and freedoms, and these rights come with responsibilities.

In this lesson, students discuss the rights they have at school in a Placemat Activity. Together they create a class charter and reflect on the responsibilities that go along with their rights. Students review the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and then create a Mind Map to draw relevant connections to their lives. Afterwards, students consider the responsibilities associated with the rights and freedoms they have in Canada. In the 'Consolidation' activity, students reflect on low voter turnout and the significance of voting in elections.

### LEARNING GOALS

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

- Work in a collaborative and critically thoughtful manner with their peers to discuss, clarify, and compare perspectives about the rights and responsibilities they have at school;
- Use the concept of *political significance* to guide investigations into their rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen;
- Use the concept of *political significance* to analyze connections between the Charter and their own life, and compare the views of others;
- Use the concept of *objective and results* to assess the impact of related to personal and societal rights and the responsibilities (Citizenship Education Framework – Attributes).

### SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can work collaboratively with my peers to discuss and compare perspectives about the rights and responsibilities we have at school;
- I can explain the *political significance* of our rights and responsibilities in Canada;
- I can create connections between the Charter and how it impacts my own life;
- I can use the concept of *objective and results* to explain the importance of being a responsible citizen.

### 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

B3. Rights and Responsibilities: analyse key rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, in both the Canadian and global context, and some ways in which these rights are protected

*CHV2O – Specific Expectations:*

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

A1.4 interpret and analyse evidence, data, and information relevant to their investigations using various tools, strategies, and approaches appropriate for political inquiry

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

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

B3.1 demonstrate an understanding that Canada's constitution includes different elements, and analyse key rights of citizenship in the constitution, with particular reference to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

B3.2 analyse key responsibilities associated with Canadian citizenship

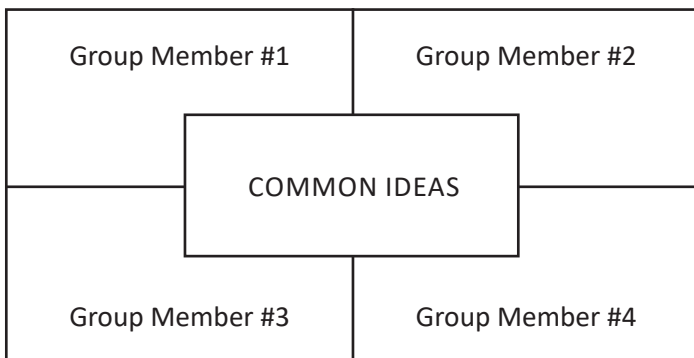
## LESSON 7: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN A DEMOCRACY

### READINESS

In advance of the lesson, survey five people who are eligible to vote in elections in Canada and ask about their voting habits and attitudes (Activity 7.1). What does the information collected tell you about attitudes towards voting?

### MINDS ON

1. Discuss the concept of a 'right' and ask students to brainstorm a list of rights they have at school. A right is a legal entitlement or a protected freedom. Some examples include the right to an education, the right to a safe space and the right to make your own friends.
2. Divide students into groups of four. Give each group a piece of chart paper. Ask students to take a few minutes to think about their rights and responsibilities as a member of their school community. Have each student write a list of rights that should be guaranteed to every student in their school.



1. Have each group list the common ideas in the centre of the chart paper. Afterwards, have the class walk around and read each group's common ideas or review them as a class.
2. Create a class charter taking the common ideas amongst all groups and ask students to consider the responsibilities that go along with each right.

### ACTION

1. Using Slide Deck 7 and Handout 7.2, review the rights and freedoms we have in Canada. Guiding questions:

- What is the Constitution of Canada?
- What is the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*?
- What are the seven sections of the Charter?
- How have our rights evolved over time? What is universal suffrage?

2. Have students construct a Mind Map to display which aspects of the Charter are relevant to them. Each branch should extend to a section of the Charter (e.g., Fundamental freedoms) and split into smaller branches for the specifics or examples that relate to their life (e.g., speak freely, social media posts, friendships).

3. Give students time to walk around and observe their peers' Mind Maps before comparing and discussing aspects of the Charter that relate directly to them.

Guiding questions:

- Is there a common thread among students?
- Do a majority of students consider the same aspects of the Charter as the most pertinent? Why or why not?
- What influences our perspectives?

4. In pairs or small groups, have students consider the responsibilities that go along with their rights. Have students fill out Activity 7.3 (I have the right to.... but I have the responsibility to...).

### CONSOLIDATION

Watch the '[Right to Vote](#)' video with your students and have a closing discussion about voter turnout. Alternatively, students could write a reflection on one or more of the following questions.

- Why do you think some people do not vote? What is the significance of low levels of voter participation?
- Should people be fined if they do not vote? Why or why not?
- At what age do you think people are responsible enough to vote?

### ASSESSMENT IDEA






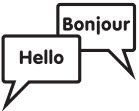

Analyze the results of the voting survey (Activity 7.1) completed in the 'Readiness' section.

## ACTIVITY 7.1: 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 <b>federal</b> election? If not, why?					
Did you vote in the last <b>provincial</b> election? If not, why?					
Did you vote in the last <b>municipal</b> election? If not, why?					
<i>"It is essential to vote."</i> Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?					

# HANDOUT 7.2: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE *CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS*

	Highlights	Examples
 <p><b>Fundamental Freedoms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom to worship in the religion of their choice or to not worship at all</li> <li>Freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression (within limits)</li> <li>Freedom of the media to report on anything in Canada</li> <li>Freedom to meet as a group in private or publicly provided that the meeting is non-violent and peaceful</li> <li>Freedom to associate or to befriend anyone they choose</li> </ul>	<p>You cannot be punished for your religious beliefs.</p>
 <p><b>Democratic Rights</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you are a citizen and 18 years of age or older, you have the right to vote in elections or be a candidate in an election</li> <li>The requirement that governments must hold elections every five years or less</li> <li>The requirement that elected representatives meet at least once each year</li> </ul>	<p>You can run for political office and vote when you turn 18.</p>
 <p><b>Mobility Rights</b></p>	<p>The right of every Canadian to choose to live and work in any province or territory in Canada. Canadians also have the right to live in, leave or re-enter Canada whenever they choose.</p>	<p>You can visit another country and come back when you choose.</p>
 <p><b>Legal Rights</b></p>	<p>The guarantee that Canadians, when arrested, must be told of their right to see a lawyer and must be taken to court within a reasonable amount of time. Canadians are also guaranteed the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.</p>	<p>You will receive a fair trial if you are accused of a crime.</p>
 <p><b>Equality Rights</b></p>	<p>The right of any Canadian not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical ability.</p>	<p>You cannot be excluded from an activity because of a disability.</p>
 <p><b>Official Languages of Canada</b></p>	<p>The right of all Canadians to use either English or French in communications with Canada's federal government and some of Canada's provincial governments.</p>	<p>You can send a letter to your Member of Parliament in English or French.</p>
 <p><b>Minority Language Education Rights</b></p>	<p>The right of French or English minorities in every province and territory to be educated in their own language.</p>	<p>You can attend an English or French school based on your language anywhere in the country (with some exceptions, depending on the province or territory).</p>

## ACTIVITY 7.3: OUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For each of the following rights from the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, identify a corresponding responsibility. Add three more rights to the list and include the associated responsibilities.

I have the right to....	...but I have the responsibility to
Speak freely	<i>not say things that would be hurtful or disrespectful to others.</i>
Join with fellow citizens in a march or rally	
Worship in the religion of my choice, or not to worship at all	
Be friends with or associate with whomever I choose	
Vote in an election (when I am at least 18 years of age)	
Be treated fairly regardless of my race, background, religion, gender, age, or mental or physical ability...	