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RULES AND GOVERNMENT



Governance is the system of practices and processes that a community or group uses to organize themselves and make decisions. Governance models determine who has authority or a voice in making decisions, how decisions are made and who is accountable for them. There are several different governance or leadership styles, such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.

Autocratic governance, also known as authoritarian leadership, is characterized by one person having complete control over all decisions with minimal input from other group members. **Democratic** governance involves collective decision-making and the sharing of tasks and responsibilities, and regular leadership changes with participation from many group members. **Laissez-faire** is the absence of an organized leadership style; there is no authority and group members are responsible for all community goals and decisions.

A **government** is made up of the people, institutions and practices put in place to manage the land, resources and people living within its borders. Various types of government exist in the world.

Governments can be compared by their governance model, the number of people who have access to power, the rights and freedoms granted to citizens, and the existence of **rule of law** (the principle that all people and institutions are subject to and accountable to law that is fairly applied and enforced). There are three basic government types: autocracy, oligarchy and democracy.

An **autocracy** is a type of government where political power is concentrated in the hands of one person who rules without restriction. There is no rule of law and citizens are not consulted on the decisions and affairs of the country. An autocracy can be a dictatorship or an absolute monarchy.

In a **dictatorship**, the dictator or ruling group exercises power through control of a mass movement, a political party or the military (e.g., North Korea, Zimbabwe). Dictatorships often come to power through a military takeover (also known as a coup d'état). Power is then maintained without the consent of the people through a one-party state where political opposition is forbidden. Dictatorships generally restrict individual civil and political rights and usually do not have any independent media.

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An **oligarchy** is a type of government where power rests with a small number of people, generally individuals who are rich and powerful, often due to family lines, wealth or prominent political or military connections (e.g., China, Venezuela). People living under oligarchic rule usually have some rights and freedoms.

A **democracy** is a type of government where a majority of the people are included in political decision-making. In a **direct democracy**, citizens themselves vote for or against specific proposals or laws (e.g., Switzerland). In an **indirect** or **representative democracy**, citizens elect political representatives to make decisions on their behalf (e.g., Canada, United States of America). In democratic countries, citizens have protected civil and political rights such as freedom of speech and religion, freedom of association, and the right to participate in free and fair elections, and run for political office. There are many different types of representative democracies around the world.

A **monarchy** is a form of government where a monarch (king or queen) or royal family holds political power that is inherited and usually lasts until death (e.g., Sweden, United Kingdom). The power of ruling monarchs can vary; in an **absolute monarchy**, a monarch (or dictator) retains full political power over a state and its people (e.g., United Arab Emirates), whereas in a **constitutional monarchy**, the role of the monarchy is more symbolic (e.g., Canada). In a constitutional monarchy, the authority of the monarch is severely limited by a constitution, which includes the principles and laws of a nation or state, defines the powers and duties of the government and guarantees certain rights to the people living within it. A constitutional monarchy has a democratically elected government with a government leader, and a monarch who remains the head of state and performs ceremonial duties.

A **republic** is a sovereign state, country or government without a monarch where all members of government are elected (including the head of state), and the democratically elected government holds all political power (e.g., United States, France). Similar to a constitutional monarchy, the government in a republic exercises power according to the rule of law and it often has a constitution.

Canada's system of government is a **parliamentary democracy** and a **constitutional monarchy**. We elect members to represent us in our federal parliament and our provincial and territorial legislatures, and the political party with the most elected representatives, usually forms government. The British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, is our head of state, represented by the Governor General at the federal level. Every act of government is done in the name of the Queen, but the authority for every act comes from the Canadian people through the Constitution. The Constitution of Canada is the highest legal ruling in the country and includes laws, decisions by judges, agreements between federal and provincial governments, traditions and our civil and political rights (the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*).

A **consensus democracy** uses a consensus decision-making model while developing legislation and aims to be more collaborative and inclusive by taking into account a broad range of opinions, as opposed to decisions made by majority rule. The Northwest Territories and Nunavut both have consensus governments where a group of individuals without any political party affiliation share political power.

GUIDING QUESTION

Why do we need government? What are different types of decision-making? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of government?

OVERVIEW

A government is made up of the people, institutions and practices put in place to manage the land, resources and people living within its borders.

In this unit, students reflect on rules and laws in their community. Students review different decision-making models and explore their strengths and limitations through dramatic presentations of real life examples. Students discuss the purpose of government and review basic government types. Afterwards, students reflect on why we need government and what it means for them as citizens.

LEARNING GOALS

We are learning to:

- develop an understanding of rules in the community (Citizenship Education Framework – Structures);
- develop an understanding of power dynamics and recognize the different ways people make decisions (Citizenship Education Framework – Structures);
- participate in teams by establishing positive and respectful relationships, developing trust and acting cooperatively and with integrity (Global Competencies – Cooperation);
- understand the impact of the type of government system we have in Canada (Concepts of Thinking – Significance);
- understand the political and social forces, their interconnectedness, and how they affect individuals, societies and countries (Global Competencies – Citizenship).

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SUCCESS CRITERIA

I CAN...

- describe rules in my community and understand why they are important;
- analyze different ways that governments or groups make decisions and interpret the consequences;
- participate in teams by establishing positive and respectful relationships, and acting cooperatively;
- explain the type of government system we have in Canada;
- analyze the interconnectedness of government, and how it affects individuals and societies.

CURRICULUM LINKS

	<i>Overall Expectations</i>	<i>Specific Expectations</i>
Social Studies	Grade 5 B3. Understanding Context: demonstrate an understanding of the roles and key responsibilities of citizens and of the different levels of government in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit governments (FOCUS ON: <i>Significance</i>)	Grade 5 – B3.1 describe the major rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship in Canada (<i>e.g., rights: equal protection under the law, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to vote; responsibilities: to respect the rights of others, to participate in the electoral process and political decision making, to improve their communities</i>) Grade 5 – B3.5 describe different processes that governments can use to solicit input from the public
Oral Communication	1. listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes 2. use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes	1.3 identify a variety of listening comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after listening in order to understand and clarify the meaning of oral texts 2.3 communicate orally in a clear, coherent manner, presenting ideas, opinions, and information in a readily understandable form
Writing	1. generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience	1.4 sort and classify ideas and information for their writing in a variety of ways 1.5 identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop several linked paragraphs, using a variety of strategies
Media Literacy	3. create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques	3.2 identify an appropriate form to suit the specific purpose and audience for a media text they plan to create, and explain why it is an appropriate choice 3.4 produce a variety of media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques

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MINDS ON

Alien Encounter

1. Ask students to imagine they are aliens visiting planet Earth for the first time. They are trying to make sense of how society functions by observing the community surroundings, the behaviour of people, their interactions with one another, and society's general order and organization. It might seem strange that cars drive on the right side of the road (traffic laws), children go into a building each day to work without pay (school) and adults exchange coloured paper for food (money). Explain to students that, without understanding the process and reasons for decisions, our society would seem confusing or unfair.

2. As a class, make a list of rules or behaviours in your community that students think might seem strange to an outsider (alien). Questions to prompt discussion:

- How would you explain our society to someone new?
- How or why do you think these rules and behaviours came to be?
- Who makes these rules and decisions?
- Upon reflection, are there any laws or traditions that seem outdated, old-fashioned or inappropriate?

3. 'Elbow Partner' activity: *Be an Alien*. Have one student take on the role of the alien, the other the human. The human explains a rule on the class list to the alien. The alien can ask questions and make suggestions to improve the rule. Then have students swap roles and repeat.

ACTION

1. Ask students to consider decision-making processes at the school. Are students involved in making decisions? If so, how? Do you have a leadership group or student council? How are they chosen? What decisions do they make? (e.g., planning of a spring/winter carnival, dance, graduation).

2. Pose any of the following questions and lead a class discussion. Use a graphic organizer (Venn diagram, T-chart, KWL) to chart the responses.

- How do people make decisions in a group?
- What are different methods for making decisions?
- How can making decisions be challenging, especially with many people? (e.g., ordering a pizza with toppings and ingredients that will meet both the preferences and dietary restrictions of all students).
- What factors contribute to a positive decision-making process?
- What factors contribute to a negative decision-making process?

3. Review the three decision-making models on Activity 1.1 (autocratic, democratic, consensus). To explore the strengths and limitations of the different decision-making models, divide students into groups and have each group prepare a skit for one of the scenarios (Activity 1.1). At the end of each skit, have the rest of the class choose the best decision-making model for the scenario (autocratic, democratic or consensus) and provide a reason.

Alternatively, students could fill out the activity sheet and discuss the answers as a class afterwards.

4. Discuss the concept of government and the need for rules and laws in society. Guiding questions:

- What types of rules and decisions are needed for people living in a community (e.g., education/schools, roads and traffic laws, health care/hospitals)?
- Who is responsible for making decisions in the community?
- What would happen if there was no government responsible for creating laws and providing services to the community?

5. Using the accompanying slide deck and/or the 'Government and Democracy' video (2:26 min), review some basic government types and how they can be compared (e.g., democracy, dictatorship, monarchy). Connect the government types to three decision-making terms: autocratic, democratic, consensus.

CONSOLIDATION

Have a brief closing discussion about different types of government or decision-making models, or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions:

- Why do we need government?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of government?
- Why is it important to you that Canada have a certain type of government?
- What would your life look like if Canada had a different type of government?
- Make a list of situations when you would use each of the decision-making models.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- The unit is not necessarily meant to be covered entirely in one period. Please use the activities and combine them in a way that is appropriate for your class.

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ASSESSMENT

Type	Unit Area	Guiding Questions for Teachers
FOR LEARNING	MINDS ON (Elbow Partner Activity)	Are students able to explain a rule they follow and respond to questions about it?
AS LEARNING	MINDS ON (Elbow Partner Activity)	Are students able to think critically about rules they follow each day?
	ACTION Activity 1.1	Are the students able to depict the situation in a skit? Are the students able to use appropriate terms? Are the students comfortable distinguishing between the types of governments?
OF LEARNING	CONSOLIDATION	Are students using appropriate terms? Are students referencing different types of decision-making models or government types? Are students using specific examples in their oral or written reflections?

LEARNING FOR ALL

Individual Education Plans	Modifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use terminology that students can easily understand. • Provide videos and vocabulary early for review. • Ensure you link to prior knowledge and interests. Enrichment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to think globally and make connections to their thinking. • Modify terms, tasks to include more challenging and interest-based terminology.
English Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide terms and definitions the night before (Handout 1.2). • Provide advance access to the video. • Ensure that subtitles are on during the video. • Encourage students to make connections to their other languages.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a variety of examples from countries around the world during discussions. • Ensure that you include countries and cultures that have meaning for your students. • Ensure that you are open and encouraging to diverse viewpoints your students may share. Indigenous Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus decision making processes are excellent examples to discuss.
Accessibility and Learning Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodations may be needed for dramatic presentations in Activity 1.1. Ensure your space is large enough and consider scenarios in advance.