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Canadian Governments Curriculum Map

Here is everything you need to teach your students about Canada's governments. Introduce the unit with a fable that provides insight into the need for good and fair government, and progress through a comprehensive study of government in Canada. Twenty-two lesson plans and more than 75 reproducible worksheets and information pages may be used in any order to suit the unique needs of your classroom.

Topics include: Federal, provincial and territorial governments, How the three levels of government function and interact, The electoral process, How a bill becomes a law, Constitution and charter of rights and freedoms, Immigration and becoming a Canadian citizen.

Introduction:

- At A Glance – List of Skills and Learning Expectations
- About the Resource
- List of Resources
- List of Vocabulary
- Teacher Planning Suggestions
- Topic Introduction Lesson

Lesson Plans:

The twenty-two lessons include learning expectations, discussion ideas where applicable, answers, reading passages and follow-up worksheets.

Lesson One: What is a Government?

- Students will understand the common elements found in any type of government.

Lesson Two: Kinds of Governments

- Students will become more familiar with the different forms of government found in countries around the world.

Lesson Three: Canada's Government

Students will:

- become more aware of the style of government that governs Canada.
- have a better understanding of the many terms pertaining to our government.

Lesson Four: Our Parliamentary Government

- The students will become more aware of the different components of Canada's Federal Government and how each one functions.

- a) The Governor General
- b) The Prime Minister
- c) The Cabinet
- d) Our Parliament
- e) The Senate
- f) The House of Commons
- g) Speakers of the House
- h) Sergeant-at-Arms
- i) The Usher of the Black Rod
- j) Parliamentary Pages

Lesson Five: The Opening of Parliament

- Students will understand the traditions and the order of events that take place during the Opening of Parliament.

Lesson Six: A Working Day in the House of Commons

Students will:

- become more aware of the daily organization and functions of the Federal Government in the House of Commons.
- become more familiar with the responsibilities and duties of a Member of Parliament.

Lesson Seven: What Does a Member of Parliament Do?

- Students will learn the tasks and jobs performed by a member of parliament.

Lesson Eight: National Political Parties

- Students will learn about the four main political parties in Canada.

Lesson Nine: How Are Political Parties Formed?

- Students will learn how political parties are organized and formed, how they raise money, the important characteristics of a good leader and more!

Lesson Ten: Who Are the Backbenchers?

- Students will learn what the parties who are the backbenchers. ***Lesson Ten and Lesson Eleven need to be completed together.***

Lesson Eleven: What Role Does the Opposition Play in our Government?

- Students will learn the role the opposition plays. ***Lesson Ten and Lesson Eleven need to be completed together.***

Lesson Twelve: What is the Civil Service?

- Students will learn why the civil service is important to government, who are civil servants, and how they help cabinet members.

Lesson Thirteen: What is the Rule of Law?

Students will:

- have a better understanding of the meaning of the word “law.”
- have a better understanding of the process used by the Government to establish laws.

Lesson Fourteen: How Does a Bill Become a Law?

- Students will learn how laws are made.

Lesson Fifteen: How Does Canada's Environment Shape Its Government?

Students will

- become more aware that Canada's geographical features, historical events, varied cultures, natural resources, values, and beliefs affect government policies and responses to peoples' demands.
- have a better understanding that Canada's extreme diversity is often difficult to govern.

Lesson Sixteen: How Do We Get the Government to Listen to Our Demands?

Students will

- learn about the various ways people communicate their feelings with the government about its decisions or actions.
- know that Canada is a democratic country.

Lesson Seventeen: What is an Election?

Students will:

- be able to identify and describe the electoral process in Canada.
- understand the procedures and organization completed during a Canadian election

Lesson Eighteen: Confederation

Students will:

- understand the history of the birth of Canada and its Government.
- have a better understanding of the problems that had to be overcome to form Canada's Government.

Lesson Nineteen: Canada's Constitution and Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedom 1982

Students will be:

- more aware of Canada's Constitution and what it means.
- more knowledgeable of their rights and freedoms as stated in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982.

Lesson Twenty: Canadian Citizenship

Students will:

- be aware of the rights and responsibilities that accompany their Canadian Citizenship.
- have a better understanding of the process and steps an immigrant must take in order to become a Canadian Citizen.

Lesson Twenty-One: Provincial/Territorial Governments

Students will:

- understand different aspects of Provincial and Territorial Governments.
- become aware of the responsibilities of Provincial and Territorial Governments

Lesson Twenty-Two: Local or Municipal Governments

Students will:

- have the opportunity to explore their own local government and municipality.
- be exposed to the various leaders of their local government.

Learning About Our Community (Booklet) may be used by students to complete an independent study of their community. The pages may be reproduced and collated to make individual student booklets.



What Role Do They Play in the Government?

What Role Does the Opposition Play in Our Government?

What is the Civil Service?

Discussion:

Reproduce the information sheet called “*Who are the Backbenchers? What Role do They Play in the Government?*” page 90, or put the information on an overhead or display on a Smart Board. Discuss the information with your students. Have them locate answers to the following questions.

1. Who are called “backbenchers?” (*elected members of the governing party that are not in the Cabinet*)
2. Where do they sit in the House of Commons? (*They sit in seats behind the Cabinet Ministers.*)
3. Who do the backbenchers represent? (*They represent the people who elected them.*)
4. How do they represent their constituencies? (*They express their feelings in party “caucus” meetings held every week.*)
5. What happens if a backbencher does not agree with a government bill? (*He/she will vote against his/her own leaders; may resign from the party; it depends on the backbencher and the party*)
6. How are backbenchers important? (*Answers may vary. Possible Answers: They help to keep the Ministers in line; prevent bills from passing that may hurt the people; keep the leaders honest and truthful; do important committee business.*)

✓Answers

Who are the Backbenchers?: (page 91)



1. The backbenchers are members of the governing party who are not in the Cabinet.
2. Backbenchers sit directly behind the seats of the Cabinet Ministers.
3. They need them to support and vote for the policies that they have proposed.
4. A backbencher wants to support the policies of the government but he/she must not let his/her party adopt policies that will upset the people who elected him/her.
5. A backbencher expresses his views and feelings in the party “caucus” (meetings) held for the party members in the House of Commons and in the Senate every week.
6. A backbencher may vote against his own leader and sometimes he/she may even resign.





The members of the governing party who are not in the Cabinet are called “*backbenchers*” because their seats in the house are behind those of the Cabinet Ministers. Cabinet Ministers must convince the other members of their party in the House of Commons that the policies proposed by Cabinet are the

right ones. The backbenchers want to be able to support the Government or Cabinet policies. They do not want to see their party defeated; on the other hand they do not want to see the party adopt policies that go against the wishes of the people who have elected them. One way the public can reach the decision makers is through their elected representatives. The elected members make the public’s views known in the weekly party “*caucus*” meetings of all the party members in the House of Commons and the Senate. The elected members also have opportunities to discuss policies and problems with the ministers concerned. If backbenchers do not agree with a Government proposal they will vote against their own leaders. Sometimes if they disagree very strongly they may even resign from the party.



Answer each question with a sentence

1. Who are the backbenchers?

2. Where do these members sit in the House of Commons?

3. Why do the Cabinet ministers need the backbenchers’ support?

4. Why is a backbencher’s job difficult sometimes?

5. How does a backbencher make his supporters’ views or feelings known?

6. What happens if a backbencher disagrees with a government policy?



**Discussion:**

Read and discuss the information on the reproducible entitled, “*What Role Does the Opposition Play in Our Government*” found on page 92 with your students. Discuss the questions below

1. Who is the Opposition Party? (*party with the second highest number of seats in the House of Commons*)
2. What is the leader called? (*Leader of the Opposition*)
3. What is the major objective of the Opposition Party? (*to keep the government in check and working for the good of Canada; to convince the people that the leading party should not be running the country*)
4. When can the Opposition Party criticize the government and make it look bad to Canadian citizens? (*during Question Period every afternoon*)

Activity Follow-Up: Page 92

Have the students write written answers to the questions in sentences.

✓Answers**What Role Does the Opposition Play in Our Government?:** (page 92)

1. It has the second largest number of seats in the House of Commons.
2. Answers may vary.
3. To keep the government in check.
4. To keep the government in check.
5. The Opposition Party enjoys the Question Period. During this period the Opposition can ask the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers questions on issues and bills.





The “*Opposition Party*” is described as the government-in-waiting and its leader is a potential Prime Minister. The Opposition Party has the second largest number of seats in the House of Commons and its leader is called the “*Leader of the Opposition*.”

He or she and the leaders of the other opposition parties sometimes try to put the government on the defensive. They have many opportunities to do so, for the rules of the House of Commons permit lengthy debate on every Government bill. Opposition members are also allowed in “*standing committees*” and are in a position to look closely at the smallest detail of a bill.

The major objective of the Opposition Party is to keep the Government in check. They try to convince the public that they and not the Government should be running the country. In order to achieve this objective, the Opposition Parties make great use of the hour known as “*Question Period*.” This period takes place every afternoon when the House of Commons meets. During this time the Opposition controls what goes on in the House of Commons. The Opposition questions the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers on almost any topic they wish. Ministers are frequently trapped into making statements that have not been thought out carefully. They frequently demand information on whether decisions are made or not on certain issues. Frequently the Opposition points out the differences between what a Cabinet Minister has said and what the Prime Minister has said on the same subject. Sometimes the Opposition brings forth information that has been researched which suggests that the government is not being honest in what it says.



Answer the following questions with sentences.

1. Why is the opposition party important?

2. Who is the opposition in our federal government today?

3. What is the main purpose of the Leader of the Opposition?

4. What is the major purpose of the opposition party?

5. What part of each daily session does the opposition party enjoy and enthusiastically participate in? Tell why.

