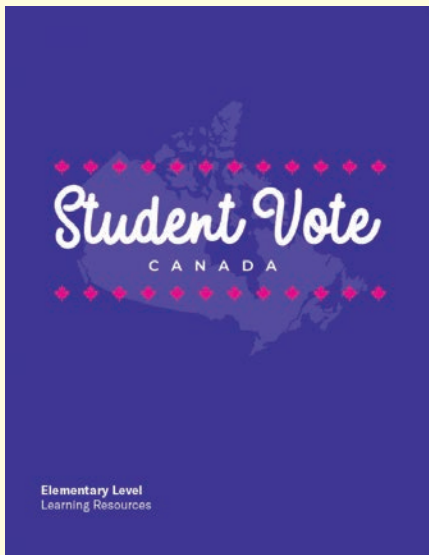


# STUDENT VOTE

## LESSON 2 – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



From increasing polarization to toxic discourse, and declining trust in our institutions, democracy is under threat around the world. In order to become engaged and effective citizens, students need to understand their rights and responsibilities. This lesson was developed by CIVIX and Elections Canada, as part of the Student Vote Canada program for the recent federal election. The activities are linked to Grade 5 curriculum expectations, including Social Studies and English Language Arts, but may be useful at any elementary grade.

Additional lessons, videos and online tools are available at [studentvote.ca/canada](http://studentvote.ca/canada).



### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What rights do I have as a Canadian?
2. What responsibilities go along with my rights?

### OVERVIEW

To be effective citizens, Canadians need to understand their rights and responsibilities.

In this lesson, students discuss the rights they have at school as an entry point to explore the rights and freedoms in a democracy. Students review the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and improve their understanding of its application by reviewing real-world examples. Then, students reflect on the responsibilities that come with our rights. In the Consolidation activity, students create a poster, pamphlet or video to remind adults about their right and responsibility to vote in the upcoming election.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- Describe the rights and responsibilities they have at school;
- Analyze examples of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- Make connections between rights and responsibilities; and
- Communicate the importance of voting in elections.

### TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- Please use the activities and combine them in a way that is appropriate for your class.
- Supplies/Needs: sticky notes for each student or access to Google Jamboard, Slide Deck 2, digital access to or copies of Activity 2.1, Handout 2.2 and Activity 2.3.
- All digital files, videos and slide decks can be found at: [studentvote.ca/canada](http://studentvote.ca/canada) (Classroom Resources).

## CURRICULUM

### STARTER

1. Review the idea of a “right” and provide some examples. Rights are things that we are morally or legally allowed to do or have. For example, you have the right to learn and receive an education.

2. Using a brainstorming strategy, have students consider the rights they have at school. This can be completed with paper sticky notes or an online tool, such as Google Jamboard, or through “Think-Pair-Share.”

a) Ask students to write down two to three ideas.

b) Review as a class and group similar ideas.

c) Co-create a list of rights that students have at school.

3. Explain the relationship between rights and responsibilities. A responsibility is a duty, obligation or an expectation of how you should act. For example, the right to receive an education comes with the responsibility to arrive at school on time and pay attention in class.

4. Co-create a list of responsibilities you have at school. You may want to review your school’s code of conduct for ideas. Afterwards, connect the specific student responsibilities back to the list of rights created by the class, making additions where necessary.

5. Have a whole class discussion. Guiding questions:

- How are rights and responsibilities similar/different?
- Why should you be aware of your rights and responsibilities?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Distribute Activity 2.1 to assess current knowledge about our rights in Canada. Have students complete the first column only (True/False).

2. As a class, review the seven categories of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and discuss real-world examples. You can use either Handout 2.2 and/or Slide Deck 2 to support this review.

3. Individually or in pairs, have students

review and update their answers on Activity 2.1 and fill out the second column (which category in the Charter does it apply to).

4. In pairs or small groups, ask students to consider the responsibilities that go along with specific rights using Activity 2.3. Afterwards, review as a class.

5. Have a closing discussion about rights and responsibilities, or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions:

- Which rights in Canada do you think are most important and why?
- What does it mean to be a responsible citizen?
- What does it mean to not be a responsible citizen?

### CONSOLIDATION

1. Using Slide Deck 2 (slides 17-19), review voter participation (turnout) statistics in federal elections. Discuss the following questions:

- What percentage of eligible Canadians do you think voted in the last federal election? Do you think older people or younger people vote more? Why?
- What did you notice about federal voter turnout? How would you describe the changes over time?
- How do levels of turnout compare among young and older voters? What are the consequences if some people vote and others do not?

2. Have students create a poster, pamphlet or video about the right and responsibility to vote in the upcoming federal election. It could be designed for a parent, guardian or someone new to voting. This poster can be done informally in a notebook, or as a larger assessment opportunity.

Co-create criteria with your class. Sample criteria for a poster/pamphlet is below.

- The tagline and/or graphics are used to capture interest.
- Headings are meaningful and appropriate.
- Information is helpful or accurate (e.g., date, eligibility requirements).

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Ask students to complete a scavenger hunt (Activity 2.4) using the Charter highlights (Handout 2.2). The purpose is to help students interpret the Charter and understand what it means for different groups. Give students time to complete it independently and then share their responses in pairs or small groups.

Student Vote Canada – Elementary Level Learning Resources.

### ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Guiding Questions for Teachers

**Starter:** Can students differentiate between rights and responsibilities? Can students understand why they should be aware of their rights and responsibilities?

**Activities:** Can students connect real-world examples to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*? Can students explain the responsibilities that go along with our rights?

**Consolidation:** Do their communication products demonstrate important details about the election and the right and responsibility to vote? Do graphics and visuals support the messaging of their communication products?

### ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

#### INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

##### Modifications:

- Support students’ understanding of rights with more real-world examples.

##### Enrichment

- Allow students to research the Charter in order to familiarize themselves with the advanced language.
- Students could prepare case studies that demonstrate a violation of rights and freedoms in Canada. Classmates can then decide if the issue is one that is solved by using the Charter.

### LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.



- right
- freedom
- responsibility
- election
- government
- mobility
- legal
- equality
- official languages

- Support students' understanding of rights with more real-world examples.
- Provide additional examples for the responsibilities handout (Activity 2.3) and/or work through them as a class.

#### **CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY**

- Students will come from different backgrounds and have different opinions on collective rights compared to the rights

of the individual. Not all students will agree with the rights in the Charter. Ensure a safe place for respectful discussion is maintained.

- Ask students to interpret the Charter and what it means for different groups in society (e.g., women, minority groups). Encourage thinking about how the Charter supports diversity and equality.
- Investigate rights and responsibilities in various social settings, inclusive of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and other diverse cultural groups.
- Remind students that new immigrants, adults who have difficulty reading, Language Learners, persons who are homeless, newly arrived refugees, and other specific groups may face challenges understanding or accessing the

election system. Keep the focus on ideas to increase access and the benefits our society gets from hearing different voices, not only on the disadvantages these groups face.

#### **ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATIONS**

- The artwork/media for the Consolidation activity can be created and shared in an entirely digital format. If physical productions are being created, ensure that enough materials are available to reduce the need for sharing.



### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A **right** is a legal entitlement or something that we are morally or legally allowed to do or have. Rights are often fought for and claimed (in courts or through protests) and less often simply granted. With all rights come responsibilities.

A **responsibility** is a duty or obligation. It is something you should do in order to respect and maintain certain rights.

All citizens living in a democracy have civil and political rights, which are usually articulated in a legal document as part of a constitution, such as a **bill of rights**. This document limits the powers of government, explains the freedoms that are guaranteed to all people and protects people from a government that might abuse its powers.

In Canada, our rights are protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Canada's Charter is widely admired around the world and is the constitutional document most emulated by other nations.

**The Charter has seven distinct categories:**

- **Fundamental freedoms** include the freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression including freedom of the press and other media; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association.
- **Democratic rights** include the right of every Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election, to be a candidate in an election, the requirement that federal, provincial and territorial governments hold elections at least every five years, and the requirement that elected representatives meet at least once per year.
- **Mobility rights** include 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.
- **Legal rights** include the guarantee that Canadians, when arrested, must be told of their right to see a lawyer and must be tried within a reasonable amount of time. Canadians are also guaranteed the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- **Equality rights** include the right of any Canadian not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or mental or physical ability.
- **Official language rights** include the right of all Canadians to use either English or French in communications with Canada's federal government.
- **Minority language education rights** include the rights for French or English minorities in every province and territory to be educated in their own language under certain conditions.