



Preparing to vote

ACTIVITY



60 minutes
approximately

Federal, provincial and municipal: Which level of government does what?

This activity teaches voters in training about the different levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) and their respective jurisdictions. In addition, they will be encouraged to continue their reflections on the issues affecting the current elections.

OBJECTIVES

Understand the jurisdictions belonging to different levels of government

Reflect on issues associated with the upcoming elections

LINKS TO THE QUÉBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM

Subject area: Social sciences

Competence: Cycle 1: Construct his or her consciousness of citizenship through the study of history

Cycle 2: Strengthen his or her exercise of citizenship through the study of history

Broad area of learning: Citizenship and community life

Focus of development: Promotion of the rules of social conduct and democratic institutions

MATERIAL REQUIRED

- ✓ Internet access
- ✓ Copies of the headline sheet (to be cut out)
- ✓ Copies of the Voters in Training activity sheet

ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

Ask participants to think of a time when they had to work as part of a team, whether at school or at home. Ask them the following questions:

- Did you have to assign different tasks to different people?
- How did you decide who would do what?

Government also requires teamwork. Tasks and responsibilities are divided among different levels of government. Each level of government has an important role to play. Can your voters in training name all three levels of government?

A BIT OF THEORY

Our political system includes three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. They share powers or jurisdictions. When casting a vote, it's important to understand the jurisdictions of each level of government. Indeed, electors need to know what type of election they're voting in and what jurisdictions an elected candidate will be responsible for.

Federal and provincial jurisdictions

The Canadian Constitution defines the division of powers between the provinces and territories and the federal government. Some jurisdictions are exclusive, but others are shared between the federal and provincial governments.

Examples of federal jurisdictions:

- National defence (Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police)
- Postal services
- Money and banking
- Indigenous affairs
- Foreign affairs and trade
- Criminal law
- Employment insurance
- Citizenship
- Passports
- Air, sea and rail transportation
- Telecommunications and broadcasting

Examples of provincial jurisdictions:

- Education
- Hospitals and health care
- Administration of justice
- Civil law
- Vehicle registration and driving licences
- Recreational or sport fishing licenses
- Labour (employment standards, health and safety)
- Birth certificates
- Lotteries
- Highway signage

Examples of shared (federal and provincial) jurisdictions:

- Agriculture
- Immigration
- Transportation
- Culture
- Environment

Municipal politics play an important role in our democracy. At this level, elected officials are responsible for issues that are closest to the community. Québec municipalities hold elections every four years, on a fixed date: the first Sunday in November. In each municipality, electors choose officials to represent the population.

Examples of municipal jurisdictions:

- Urban planning and development
- Public transit
- Housing, including social housing
- Assistance for the homeless
- Social and community development
- Municipal parks and recreation
- Libraries
- Public safety (police and fire services)
- Residual materials management (garbage collection, as well as waste recycling and reuse)
- Local roads (e.g., street maintenance and snow removal)
- Water and sewer services

SUGGESTED STEPS

1. Referring to the section titled “A Bit of Theory,” introduce participants to the different levels of government and their respective jurisdictions.
2. Divide the larger group into teams of three or four participants. Next, give each team a set of 15 headlines and an activity sheet.
3. Ask the teams to sort the headlines into three areas of jurisdiction (federal, provincial, municipal).
4. When all the teams have finished, review the work completed with the larger group.
5. After, ask participants to pursue their discussions within their teams and complete the activity sheet.
6. Have each team share its thoughts with the entire group.
7. Next, ask participants the following questions:
 - Did you have trouble finding issues that affect your municipality?
 - Why is it important to vote at the municipal level?
 - What could you say to encourage people close to you to vote in the next municipal elections?



HEADLINE SHEET

Print one page per team and cut out the headlines.

Raccoons overrun multiple neighbourhoods due to garbage strike	New legislation to regulate cryptocurrencies?	Public invited to park development co-creation workshop
Public consultations on development of new secondary Program	Armed Forces lend a hand in response to spring floods	Government allocates millions to new employment insurance program
New academic year brings university tuition changes	<i>Free Mondays</i> – student discount on public transit this summer	Report recommends changes to regulations on cell phone charges
Historic land agreement signed with a First Nation	Bottle drive to support new homeless shelter	Sports centre expansion plans unveiled
Sharp increase in online orders during the holidays expected to bring postal delays	Minimum age for driving license increasing to 18 on January 1	Increased mental health funding will reduce wait times



HEADLINE SHEET ANSWER KEY

Print one page per team and cut out the headlines.

Raccoons overrun multiple neighbourhoods due to garbage strike	New legislation to regulate cryptocurrencies?	Public invited to park development co-creation workshop
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ACTIVITY SHEET

Now that you know more about the different levels of government and their respective jurisdictions, continue your team discussions about issues that are in the center of the upcoming elections. After all, such discussion is primordial to make an informed choice!

As a team, brainstorm a list of issues that are important to you.

Review your list of issues and select the one that your team considers most important. Discuss and complete the following table:

Most important issue for us	
What should be done to improve the situation?	
How can we help improve the situation?	



**Broaden
Your
Horizons**

Recognize the role of government in your community!
The next time you visit a park, a museum, a post office or any other public place, try to determine which level of government is responsible for it.