Canada’s Federal Political System

Parliament

Parliament is a group of people who represent the entire population of a country. In Canada, Parliament is made up of three parts: the Governor General, the Senate and the House of Commons.

1. What do you already know about Canada’s government?

Who is involved (e.g., people, departments)?

Where is the government?

What does the government do?
2. Find definitions for the three levels of Canadian government and rewrite them in your own words.

**Where to Start on the Web**


Federal government

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Provincial/territorial governments

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Municipal governments

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____________________
____________________
____________________
### 3. Read the information provided in How a Bill Becomes a Law and fill in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step #1</th>
<th>A bill is created by __________________________ because __________________________ __________________________.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The bill is examined by __________________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The first reading is when __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The second reading is when __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The committee stage is when __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The report stage is when __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The third reading is when __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step #2</td>
<td>The bill is examined by __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step #3</td>
<td>The bill becomes a law when __________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use this information sheet and tool:
- [ ] Strategies for Reading Non-narrative Texts
- [ ] Building Vocabulary I
4. In Canada’s federal government, power and responsibilities are divided into three branches: the executive, legislative and judicial. Follow the steps below to create a poster that shows the structure of the federal government, including:

- the names of the three branches
- the names of the parts of each branch
- a list of the responsibilities of each of the three branches.

**Step one:** Look for information about the structure of the three branches of Canadian government.

**Step two:** Organize the information you collected and plan your poster.

**Step three:** Create your poster and present it to your class. Answer any questions your teacher or classmates have.

5. Based on what you have learned about making laws and the tool, Canadian Government, write notes about how the three branches of federal government work together. Use the making of and enforcement of laws as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch of Government</th>
<th>Role in the Making of and Enforcement of Laws</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6. In Canada, there is a process to elect people to government positions to represent people living across the country. Work with a group to gather information about how Canada’s federal government representatives are elected and answer the following questions. Write a report, using the information you find.

a. What are electoral districts or ridings? How many ridings are there in Canada?
b. How are the boundaries of electoral districts decided?
c. What is the name given to a federal representative elected to represent a riding?
d. How many votes does a federal representative need to win an election?

Who leads the federal government?

After an election, the party with the greatest number of elected representatives becomes the governing party. The leader of the governing party becomes the Prime Minister of Canada and chooses Members of Parliament (MPs) from his or her party to lead or run government departments. This group of MPs is called the Cabinet.

Adapted from the Elections Canada Web site

Official Opposition

The official Opposition is the party with the second largest number of MPs.

Use these tools and information sheets:

- Note Taking II
- Information Summary I
- Reports
- Steps for Creating a Report
- Report Planner

Where to Start on the Web

http://www.elections.ca/index.html
7. Fill in the following charts, based on the currently elected Canadian federal government.

Where to Start on the Web

Prime Minister:
- His or her political party (governing party):
- Number of MPs who belong to the governing party:
- Describe the role and responsibilities of the Prime Minister:
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet members:

Leader of the Opposition:
- His or her political party (official Opposition):
- Number of MPs who belong to the official Opposition:
- Describe the role and responsibilities of the leader of the Opposition:
- Describe the role and responsibilities of MPs in the official Opposition:
### Senators

- are appointed by the Governor General, at the request of the Prime Minister
- must reside in the province from which they are nominated
- are expected to take an interest in the regional impact of legislation and policies
- can also adopt informal constituencies and focus their attention on groups or regions whose rights and interests are often overlooked, such as the young, the poor, seniors and veterans
- can keep their positions up to age 75
- meet weekly with MPs and other senators from their own political parties to discuss current issues and policies.

### Members of Parliament

- are elected by people from the constituency in which they live
- are expected to take the interests of constituents into account as they carry out their responsibilities
- respond to telephone calls and letters from constituents with problems they want taken up with government departments and agencies
- must be re-elected at least every four years
- meet weekly with senators and other MPs from their own political parties to discuss current issues and policies.

8. Using a Venn diagram, show the similarities and differences between senators and Members of Parliament. Use the information above and find information from other sources.

**Use this information sheet and tool:**
- [Steps for Using Venn Diagrams](#)
- [Venn Diagram](#)