

A Program for
Community Groups to
Inspire Citizen Engagement

Democracy Talks

Democracy Talks:

A Program for Community Groups to Inspire Citizen Engagement

This guide was made possible thanks to the vision and commitment of Samara Canada. Democracy Talks was initially created and incubated by Samara Canada. Ryerson University and the Democratic Engagement Exchange are deeply grateful to Samara Canada for these contributions and for their continued commitment to building a stronger democracy for all Canadians.

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North York
Community
House



Voire/Canada
Your/Constitution

The Democratic Engagement Exchange drives democratic engagement by building partnerships with academic institutions, community organizations and government agencies to create tools, and champion policies and programs that promote a more inclusive democracy.

For more information, visit <http://www.ryerson.ca/arts/about-arts/democratic-engagement-exchange/>



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Publisher: Faculty of Arts, Democratic Engagement Exchange

Writers: John Beebe and Madison Van West, North York Community House

Editor: José Ramón Martí | Designer: Geneviève Biloski | Photographer: John Beebe

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INTRODUCTION

CORE PURPOSE OF DEMOCRACY TALKS

Democracy Talks tools are designed to strengthen participants' political voice by motivating involvement, increasing knowledge and enhancing the skills required to be involved in Canada's democracy.

This booklet contains three types of tools to foster democratic engagement:

- Activities that support an entire session and develop a meaningful connection to democracy,
- Sparks that introduce ideas related to political participation as part of other activities, and
- Video guides that use storytelling to begin a conversation about political leadership and active citizenship.

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY TALKS

Designed to be used in a non-academic environment, Democracy Talks tools are developed with five principles in mind:

1. Based on the interests of participants
2. Involves conversation among participants and provides opportunities for all voices to be heard
3. Accessible and engaging for people from a wide range of backgrounds
4. Fun and meaningful for participants
5. Simple to deliver for facilitators



FACILITATOR'S ROLE

The facilitator's role is to:

- 1. Prepare all the materials**
- 2. Set up the space**
- 3. Establish a safe and welcoming environment**
- 4. Explain and conduct activities**
- 5. Encourage active engagement by all participants**
- 6. Maintain a pace that ensures activities are completed within the allotted time**

Facilitators are not required to be experts on Canadian politics or democratic institutions.

Democracy Talks



activities

PLAY DOUGH'S REPUBLIC

KEYWORDS

beginner, political voice, democracy, conversation

GOAL

To increase participants' interest in Canadian politics and democracy by providing an opportunity to engage in a meaningful conversation about issues that matter to participants and connecting their passions and concerns to Canada's democracy.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- What public policy issues they care about most,
- How other community members feel about these issues,
- What aspects of democracy they value most,
- How to discuss issues of concern to them in a non-partisan and supportive environment, and
- That their experiences and ideas are valued by others.

AUDIENCE

Age: 8 and above

Language: Shared conversational language

Prior political knowledge/experience: No prior political knowledge necessary

Group size: six participants or more

TIME

Average: 1.5 hours

Minimum: 50 minutes

Maximum: 2.5 hours

It is also possible to break up this activity into smaller components and deliver over several sessions.

MATERIALS

- ☒ Markers, pens or pencils
(enough for each group to have several)
- ☒ Chart paper
- ☒ Flipchart or whiteboard
- ☒ Masking tape
- ☒ Play dough (enough for each group to have four different colours)

Handouts (print enough for each participant to have one):

- ☒ “Issues: What Matters to You?” (choose either list or visual)
- ☒ “Creating My Ideal Democracy”
- ☒ “Principles of Democracy” (choose either list or visual)

SET UP

- ☒ Arrange room to allow small groups of 3-5 participants to work at a table
- ☒ Print enough handouts for each participant
- ☒ Ensure every participant has a marker, pen or pencil
- ☒ Prepare one set of play dough with four colours for every 3-5 participants



ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?</p> <p>Icebreaker:</p> <p>Ask participants to introduce themselves and answer <u>one</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your favourite food? (Best for groups with little or no experience discussing political issues) • If you could vote for anyone to be Prime Minister, dead or alive, who would it be? • What is your earliest political memory? (Best for groups with considerable political experience) • Describe a time you have made a difference. (Best for staff or groups that know each other well) 	<p>5-10 minutes</p> <p>Use this activity to encourage everyone to actively participate and listen.</p> <p>Encourage shy or uncomfortable participants to engage by responding positively to their participation.</p> <p>For groups larger than 20, divide into smaller groups of no more than 15 and have those groups introduce themselves to each other.</p>
<p>Individual Activity:</p> <p>Distribute the “Issues: What Matters to You?” handout (either list or visual, <u>not</u> both).</p> <p>Have each participant choose the four issues they consider most important to them. Encourage them to add an issue that is not already listed.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p> <p>Briefly review the issues with participants. The choices are intentionally open-ended.</p> <p>Encourage participants to clarify the meaning of these terms.</p>
<p>Small Group Activity:</p> <p>Organize participants into groups of 3-5 and have each group decide on the four issues most important to the group as a whole.</p> <p>Have groups write their top four choices on a piece of chart paper.</p>	<p>15 minutes</p> <p>This is the heart of the activity. Encourage participants to share their own experiences with issues they care about and note positive interactions among participants.</p> <p>If groups are struggling to reach consensus, encourage them to combine issues together.</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>WHAT MATTERS TO YOU</p> <p>Full Group Activity: Have each group report out and briefly explain their choices. Write down their responses on a whiteboard or flipchart.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p> <p>Write responses using the exact words of participants.</p> <p>Place checkmarks next to responses already shared.</p> <p>At the end, note similarities and differences in responses.</p>
<p>PLAY DOUGH'S REPUBLIC</p> <p>Individual Activity: Distribute the “Creating My Ideal Democracy” handout and the “Principles of Democracy” handout (either list or visual, <u>not</u> both). Have each participant choose the four principles they consider most important to them. Encourage them to add a principle if it isn't already listed.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p> <p>Review the directions with participants.</p> <p>Optional: Review definitions with the group prior to starting activity.</p>
<p>Small Group Activity: Organize participants into the same groups of 3-5 and have each group decide on the four principles most important to the group as a whole. Have groups assign one play dough colour to each principle. Have each group use the play dough to create a representation of their ideal democracy.</p>	<p>25 minutes</p> <p>This is the heart of the activity.</p> <p>If groups are struggling to reach consensus, encourage them to combine principles.</p> <p>Encourage groups to work collaboratively on their creation.</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>PLAY DOUGH'S REPUBLIC</p> <p>Full Group Activity: Have each group share and briefly explain their play dough creations.</p>	<p>15 minutes</p> <p>Encourage participants to take pictures of their creations and share them on social media using #DemTalks and @SamaraCDA.</p>
<p>Debrief Activity: Ask participants to look at the issues they identified as important.</p> <p>Ask them to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about our current democracy makes it possible for them to have their voice heard on the issues they care about? • What makes it difficult? • What changes would they make to the current system to make it easier to be heard? 	<p>10 minutes</p> <p>For groups with fewer than 15 people, conduct the debrief activity as a single group.</p> <p>For groups of 15 or more, divide participants into smaller groups of 8-12 and discuss the questions.</p>

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Simplify:

- Reduce the number of issues and/or principles for participants to choose from

Expand:

- Have participants rank their choices for issues and principles from most important to least important
- Have participants prepare short briefs on issues and/or principles of democracy
- Have participants organize top issues by responsible level of government
- Have participants write a short letter to an elected official explaining why they care about an issue

ESL:

- Provide and review vocabulary terms prior to activity
- Group participants by shared language backgrounds

Youth:

- Challenge youth to come up with new ways to represent ideal democracy (e.g. democracy manicures, democracy murals)
- Encourage each small group to choose one issue to research and present to group to take action

FAQS:

How can I make play dough?

Here is a simple recipe: <http://theimaginationtree.com/2012/04/best-ever-no-cook-play-dough-recipe.html>

Where can I buy play dough?

A local department store, such as Walmart, typically sells individual packs for as little as \$ 1.

What if participants find the issues too simplistic or don't agree on the meaning?

Encourage participants to be more specific and/or provide their own definitions for the issues.

The list is not comprehensive and is intended as a starting point.

What if I don't have 1.5 hours?

This activity can be completed over two sessions (Part I and Part II) or limit discussion during the choice of issues.



ISSUES: WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

Better housing

Better health care

Better education system

Better employment options

Better transportation

Neighbourhood safety

Better support for immigrants

Reducing poverty

Better support for Indigenous communities

Better support for LGBTQ communities

Gender equity

Cleaner environment

ADD AN ISSUE HERE:

ADD AN ISSUE HERE:

Circle the **FOUR** issues that are **MOST IMPORTANT** to you.
Add your own if you have an issue that is not shown below!

Better housing



Better health care



Better education system



Better employment options



Better transportation



Neighbourhood safety



Better support for immigrants



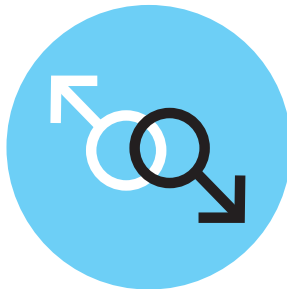
Reducing poverty



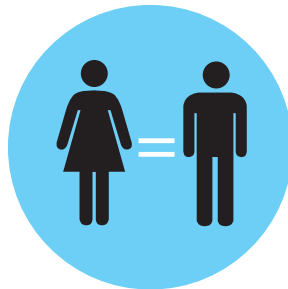
Better support for Indigenous communities



Better support for LGBTQ communities



Gender equity



Cleaner environment



Other

Other

Other

Other

CREATING MY IDEAL DEMOCRACY

DIRECTIONS

Step 1

From the list on the back of the sheet, **INDIVIDUALLY** choose the four principles that you believe are most important for a strong and healthy democracy.

If there is a principle not listed that you think is important, add it!

Step 2

AS A GROUP, choose the four principles that your group believes are most important for a strong and healthy democracy.

Write these four principles on the list.

Step 3

AS A GROUP, assign a play dough colour to each of the four principles that you chose.

Write the colour next to the principle on your list.

Step 4

AS A GROUP, take the colours of play dough that correspond to your principles and build something that represents your ideal democracy.

It can be a structure, machine, vehicle, animal or anything you like!



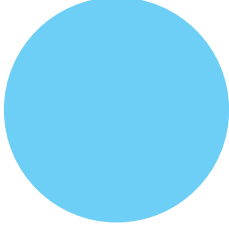
Step 5

Share your creation with the whole group.

Take a photo of your creation and share it with your friends and Samara Canada (@SamaraCDA) on social media using #DemTalks.

PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY

PRINCIPLES	DESCRIPTION	COLOUR
OPEN	People can find out what government is doing	
SHARED VALUES	Politicians share my values	
FAST	Government makes decisions quickly	
MONEY-SMART	Government spends money in a smart way	
FAIR	Government does not favour one group of people over another group of people	
INCLUSIVE	People feel included in politics	
UNDERSTANDABLE	People understand what government does and how it works	
AVAILABLE	People can talk to politicians if they want to	
PARTICIPATION	People can participate in politics	
OTHER	<i>What else is important for democracy?</i>	

<p>OPEN People can find out what government is doing</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>TRUSTWORTHY Politicians do what they say they will do</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>SHARED VALUES Politicians share my values</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>FAST Government makes decisions quickly</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>
<p>MONEY SMART Government spends money in a smart way</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>FAIR Government does not favour one group of people</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>INCLUSIVE People feel included in politics</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>UNDERSTANDABLE People understand what government does and how it works</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>
<p>AVAILABLE People can talk to politicians if they want to</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>PARTICIPATION People can participate in politics</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>OTHER What else is important for democracy?</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>	<p>OTHER What else is important for democracy?</p>  <p>COLOUR:</p>

WHERE IS YOUR VOICE THE LOUDEST?

KEYWORDS

intermediate, civic engagement, power, action, political voice

GOAL

To help participants understand options for using their voice to address issues that concern them.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- Options for having their voice heard on public policy issues,
- To evaluate options for expression,
- Which level of government and/or democratic institution is relevant to various issues, and
- The basic role of different forms of expression.

AUDIENCE

Age: 15 and above

Language: Shared conversational language

Prior political knowledge: Some knowledge is useful

Group size: Four participants or more

TIME

Average: 45 minutes

Minimum: 20 minutes

Maximum: 75 minutes



MATERIALS

- ☒ Pen or pencil for each participant
- ☒ Flipchart or whiteboard

Handouts

- ☒ “Where Is Your Voice the Loudest?” (enough for each participant to have one)

SET-UP

- ☒ Arrange room to allow small groups of 3-5 participants to work at a table
- ☒ Print enough handouts for each participant
- ☒ Ensure every participant has a pen or pencil
- ☒ Prepare one set of play dough with four colours for every 3-5 participants

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Icebreaker:</p> <p>Ask participants to introduce themselves and share one law they would like to change.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Individual Activity:</p> <p>Distribute the “Where Is Your Voice the Loudest?” handout and briefly review it with participants.</p> <p>Ask participants to choose an issue and circle the political activity where their voice would be loudest (would have the greatest impact on the issue they chose).</p>	<p>5-15 minutes</p> <p>Ask participants to choose an issue <u>before</u> completing the sheet.</p> <p>Respond to any questions about the political activities.</p> <p>Allow people to share ideas or ask each other questions.</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Small Group Activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize participants into groups of 3-5. 2. Have each group choose an issue. 3. Have each group rank the political activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From loudest to quietest, and • From easiest to hardest to do. 4. Have each group choose one activity they would carry out in order to have their voice heard on an issue. 	<p>20 minutes</p> <p>Encourage groups to complete the “other” category.</p> <p>Clarify that there is no “right” answer.</p>
<p>Full Group Activity:</p> <p>Have each group report out what activity they chose and explain their choice.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p> <p>Record responses on a flipchart or whiteboard.</p>
<p>Debrief/Closing Activity:</p> <p>Select one or two activities that participants chose and discuss how participants could make this approach particularly effective.</p> <p>For example, what would make a letter to the editor of a newspaper effective?</p>	<p>5 minutes</p> <p>For groups with fewer than 15 people, conduct the debrief activity as a single group.</p> <p>For groups of 15 or more, divide participants into smaller groups of 8-12 and discuss the questions.</p>

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Simplify:

- Assign participants an issue
- Have participants only rank activities from loudest to quietest
- Limit choices to those that apply to local issues

Expand

- Include more choices for activities
- Have participants research and complete one of the activities
- Discuss how different activities might be better at addressing certain issues
- Have participants complete Samara's political participation checklist (see pg. 83 or go to the link under Additional Resources)

ESL

- Review the three levels of government and roles of Premiers and Prime Ministers

Youth

- Discuss and compare youth engagement with engagement by older Canadians from Samara's Lightweights report

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Samara's political participation checklist: www.samaracanada.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/political-participation-activities-blank-checklist.pdf
- Student Vote: <http://studentvote.ca/>; www.youtube.com/studentvote
- Springtide Collective: www.springtidecollective.ca/three-minute-citizen
- TVO: <http://tvo.org/programs/civics-101>

WHERE IS YOUR VOICE THE LOUDEST?

RANK LOUDEST TO QUIETEST	POLITICAL ACTIVITY	RANK EASIEST TO HARDEST
	Email or write a letter to the Prime Minister	
	Email or write a letter to your Member of Parliament (MP)	
	Email or write a letter to your local city councillor	
	Organize a protest	
	Vote in an election	
	Speak at a local community meeting	
	Boycott or “buycott” a product	
	Join a political party	
	Write a blog about an issue	
	Join a protest	
	Meet with your Member of Parliament (MP)	
	Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper	
	Attend a public meeting with a local elected official	
	Join a group that shares your interest in change	
	Volunteer on a political campaign	
	Donate money to a group working on the issue	
	Talk to friends and neighbours in your community	
	Donate money to political party or candidate	
	Post messages on Facebook or Twitter	
	Make a YouTube video	

RANK THE POWER

KEYWORDS

intermediate, power, democracy, political voice

GOAL

Help participants explore their own understanding of power and of how political power is distributed in our democracy.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of the roles and relative power of political players and institutions,
- Increase understanding of the term “power” and “political power,” and
- Identify power within leadership roles that may not be recognized as power.

AUDIENCE

Age: 8 and above

Language: Basic English skills

Prior political knowledge: Some basic political knowledge is useful

Group size: 4-400, one facilitator per 20 participants

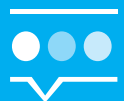
TIME

The amount of time required will vary considerably depending on the background of participants.

Average: 50 minutes

Minimum: 20 minutes

Maximum: 1.5 hours



MATERIALS

- ☒ Masking tape
- ☒ Markers
- ☒ Whiteboard or chart paper
- ☒ Scissors (if power cards are not pre-cut)
- ☒ Projector or screen with sound/speakers if showing Eric Liu TEDEd Power Video (see Variations)

Handouts:

- ☒ “Rank the Power” (enough for each participant to have one)
- ☒ One set of “Power Position Cards” for each small group (3-5 participants); use different colour paper for each group if possible

SET-UP

- ☒ Arrange tables for groups of 3-5 to sit around
- ☒ Print enough handouts for each participant
- ☒ Cut out “Rank the Power” cards

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Icebreaker:</p> <p>New group: Ask participants who they would want to be leader of Canada. They can choose anyone from history, living or dead, and from any part of the world. If there is time, ask them to explain why.</p> <p>Basic: Write “POWER” on a whiteboard or chart paper. Ask people how the word makes them feel.</p> <p>Advanced: Ask participants to recall a time when they have felt powerful.</p>	<p>8 minutes</p> <p>For groups with fewer than 15 people, have participants share their answers with the whole group.</p> <p>For groups of 15 or more, have participants share their answers in smaller groups.</p> <p>Be highly encouraging of all responses.</p>
<p>Individual Activity:</p> <p>Have each participant complete the “Rank the Power” hand-out individually.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p> <p>Depending on participants’ background, review the entries on the handout.</p> <p>Do not spend time discussing the nature of power. This comes later!</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Small Group Activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Put participants in groups of 3-5. Give each group a set of “Power Position” cards. Give each participant a “Me” card and ask them to write their name on it. Have each group place the cards in rank order from most powerful to least powerful. Groups should be prepared to explain their ranking. After a group has reached consensus and ranked their cards, have them place them along a common wall or table with responses from other groups. Have each participant put their “Me” card on the common wall or table. They can choose anyone from history, living or dead, and from any part of the world. If there is time, ask them to explain why. 	<p>20 minutes</p> <p>Participants should spend most of their time working in small groups to place the cards in order.</p> <p>The facilitator’s job is to encourage conversation among participants when they are ranking the cards by circulating and asking groups probing questions about their ranking.</p> <p>Encourage participants to consider and discuss different forms of power and different circumstances of power.</p>
<p>Full Group Activity:</p> <p>The facilitator leads a group discussion analyzing where participants have placed “Power Position” cards. Consider areas where there is agreement and areas where there are big differences.</p> <p>Ask participants to explain why they ranked the positions as they did.</p> <p>Optional: Ask participants to consider how their ranking might change if the question was about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada going to war • What is taught in school • What food you will eat for dinner <p>Give participants an opportunity to explain why they placed themselves where they did on the power spectrum.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p> <p>If the group is larger than 30, consider breaking into two or more sub-groups for the debrief.</p> <p>Use this as an opportunity to explain the various roles of positions listed on “Power Position” cards.</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Small Group Activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put participants in groups of 3-5. 2. Give each group a set of “Power Position” cards. 3. Give each participant a “Me” card and ask them to write their name on it. 4. Have each group place the cards in rank order from most powerful to least powerful. Groups should be prepared to explain their ranking. 5. After a group has reached consensus and ranked their cards, have them place them along a common wall or table with responses from other groups. 6. Have each participant put their “Me” card on the common wall or table. They can choose anyone from history, living or dead, and from any part of the world. If there is time, ask them to explain why. 	<p>20 minutes</p> <p>Participants should spend most of their time working in small groups to place the cards in order.</p> <p>The facilitator’s job is to encourage conversation amongst participants when they are ranking the cards by circulating and asking groups probing questions about their ranking.</p> <p>Encourage participants to consider and discuss different forms of power and different circumstances of power.</p>
<p>Debrief/ Closing Activity:</p> <p>Write “POWER” on a whiteboard or chart paper. Ask participants how the word makes them feel.</p> <p>Ask participants how they might increase their own political power.</p>	<p>7 minutes</p> <p>To the extent feasible, give each participant an opportunity to respond to the prompts.</p>



VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS:

Simplify:

- Reduce the number of power cards (i.e. make it only for your community)
- Drop the small group activity and have participants just complete the individual activity and debrief as a whole (works best with groups under 15 participants)

Expand:

- After completing the full group activity, provide more scenarios and move the cards around to reflect the new power for each scenario
- Ask participants to consider how the cards and power structure might be different for different countries
- Have participants watch Eric Liu's TEDEd animated video on how to understand power:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_Eutci7ack

ESL:

- Have participants prepare definitions of and backgrounds on each of the people/positions on the power cards prior to beginning the activity

Youth:

- Assign different positions to each participant prior to the activity and have them research that position
- Provide different scenarios and have them organize themselves so they are standing in order from most powerful to least powerful

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The Power Gap (Demos) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tkjz5JMCU1A
- Power (Demos) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFDcluwugNg

POWER POSITION CARDS

The Queen of England

Governor-General of Canada

Mayor of My City

Premier of My Province

City Councillor

Member of Parliament
(in Governing Party)

Member of Parliament
(in Opposition Party)

Member of Provincial
Parliament

Chief of Police

The People
(Residents of Canada)

Secretary-General
of the United Nations

Minister of National Defence

Minister of Finance

House of Commons

Senate

School Superintendent

Leader of the Opposition

My Teacher

My Parents

Police Officer

Supreme Court Judge

Drake

CBC Reporter

National Newspaper Editor

Me

Me

Me

Me

Me

Me

Me

Me

RANK THE POWER

- _____ Her Majesty the Queen of Canada
- _____ Governor-General of Canada
- _____ Prime Minister
- _____ Mayor of Toronto
- _____ Premier of Ontario
- _____ City Councillor
- _____ Member of Parliament (in Governing Party)
- _____ Member of Parliament (in Opposition Party)
- _____ Member of Provincial Parliament
- _____ Chief of Police
- _____ The People (Residents of Canada)
- _____ You
- _____ Minister of National Defence
- _____ Minister of Finance
- _____ Supreme Court Judge
- _____ Senator
- _____ School Superintendent
- _____ Leader of the Opposition
- _____ Secretary-General of the United Nations
- _____ CBC Reporter
- _____ National Newspaper Editor

POLITICAL ACT-IVISM

KEYWORDS

intermediate, political voice, power, action, civic engagement, youth

GOAL

To encourage participants to consider different ways of being involved in politics, and to practise getting involved by acting it out.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- What public policy issues they care about most,
- How other community members feel about these issues,
- How to discuss issues of concern to them in a non-partisan and supportive environment, and
- Discover ways to take action on issues that they care about.

AUDIENCE

Age: 10 and above

Language: Basic-Intermediate English

Prior political knowledge: Some knowledge is helpful

Group size: 10-25 participants

TIME

Average: 50 minutes

Minimum: 30 minutes

Maximum: 1.5 hours

Activities can be stand-alone or run as smaller activities over two sessions.



MATERIALS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ OPTIONAL: Paper, markers, other basic craft supplies to be used as props ☒ Pen or pencil for each participant | <p>Handouts
(enough for each participant to have one):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ “Issues: What Matters to You?” (list or visual) ☒ “Political Act-ivism” |
|--|---|

SET-UP

- ☒ Move tables to create an area that will act as a stage
- ☒ Arrange tables so that groups of 3-5 have space to work

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
ISSUES THAT MATTER	
<p>Icebreaker:</p> <p>Pass out the “Issues: What Matters to You?” sheet.</p> <p>Have each participant choose the four issues they consider most important to them. Encourage them to add an issue that is not already listed.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p> <p>The choices are intentionally open-ended.</p> <p>Encourage participants to clarify the meaning of these terms for themselves.</p>
<p>Small Group Activity:</p> <p>Organize participants into groups of 3-5 and have each group decide on one issue they all care about.</p> <p>Ask them to brainstorm three reasons this issue is important to them on the back of their sheet.</p>	<p>15 minutes</p> <p>This is the heart of the activity. Encourage participants to share their own experiences with issues they care about and note positive interactions among participants.</p> <p>If groups are struggling to reach consensus, encourage them to combine issues.</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>ISSUES THAT MATTER</p> <p>Small Group Activity: Hand out “Political Act-ivism” sheet to each participant.</p> <p>In small groups, ask them to choose one of the actions on the list (or another action not already listed) to take action on the issue they identified in the previous activity.</p> <p>Ask each group to create a short scene or tableau acting out how they would take action on the issue of their choosing.</p>	15 minutes
<p>Large Group Activity: Each group presents their scene or tableau.</p> <p>After each presentation, ask the audience to give feedback on what they liked about the performance.</p> <p>After each performance, ask the audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issue did you see them taking action on? • What other ways could someone take action on this issue? 	15 minutes
<p>Debrief:</p> <p>In a large group, ask participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you feel comfortable taking these actions in real life? Why or why not? • What would make it easier to get involved? • Why is it important that there are many different ways to take action? • How else can people get involved? 	10 minutes

ISSUES: WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

Better housing

Better health care

Better education system

Better employment options

Better transportation

Neighbourhood safety

Better support for immigrants

Reducing poverty

Better support for Indigenous communities

Better support for LGBTQ communities

Gender equity

Cleaner environment

ADD AN ISSUE HERE:

ADD AN ISSUE HERE:

Circle the **FOUR** issues that are **MOST IMPORTANT** to you.
Add your own if you have an issue that is not shown below!

Better housing



Better health care



Better education system



Better employment options



Better transportation



Neighbourhood safety



Better support for immigrants



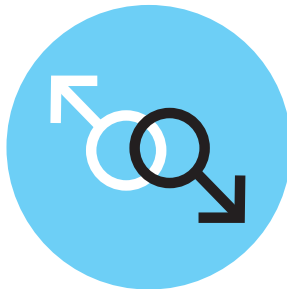
Reducing poverty



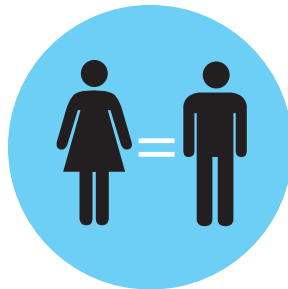
Better support for Indigenous communities



Better support for LGBTQ communities



Gender equity



Cleaner environment



Other

Other

Other

Other

In small groups, choose one of the political/civic actions on the next page and create a scene or tableau acting it out!

CREATING YOUR SCENE OR TABLEAU

What is your issue?

Why is this issue important to your group? List three reasons.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What changes do you want to see? How could things be better?

What action will you take? (Choose from the list on the next page or add your own!)

What roles will each group member play in your scene or tableau?

LIST OF ACTIONS	
1. Voting in an election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which candidate are you voting for? • What qualities or ideas do the candidates have?
2. Going to a protest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you protesting? • Where are you protesting? • Will there be speeches, marching, signs, etc.?
3. Writing an e-mail or letter to a politician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are you writing to? • What tone will your letter take (e.g. sad, serious, funny)?
4. Volunteering with an organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of organization is it? • What sort of tasks would you be doing?
5. Blogging/tweeting/Facebooking about an issue you care about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is your message reaching? • What tone does your message have (e.g. sad, serious, funny)?
6. Creating a petition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where will you go to get signatures? • Who will sign it? • Who will you send it to?
7. Meeting with a politician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are you meeting with? • What questions will you ask them?
8. Running for political office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What position are you running for? • What is included in your platform?
9. Other – how else might you get involved?	

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

KEYWORDS

intermediate, power, political voice, democracy

GOAL

The Political Spectrum exercise increases participants' knowledge of political positions and requires them to consider their own position on political issues.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- Where they fit on the political spectrum,
- Where other community members fit,
- Their positions on political issues,
- How to discuss issues of concern to them in a non-partisan and supportive environment, and
- That their experiences and ideas are valued by others.

AUDIENCE

Age: 12 and above

Language: Intermediate English literacy

Prior political knowledge: Some prior knowledge of the political system

Group size: Four participants or more

TIME

Average: 30 minutes

Minimum: 20 minutes

Maximum: 1.5 hours

PREPARATION

This activity works best with participants who have worked together and discussed difficult issues before. Establishing ground rules for effective and respectful discussion of political issues prior to this activity is beneficial.

Review "The Basic Political Spectrum" handout provided by Student Vote:

<http://studentvote.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/FED-SEC-EN-Handout-4.1.pdf>

MATERIALS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Small pieces of paper marked with an “X”
(enough for each participant to have one) ☒ Masking tape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handouts
(enough for each participant to have one): ☒ “Political Spectrum” (two-sided) |
|--|---|
-

SET-UP

- ☒ Arrange room to allow small groups of 2-3 participants space to work at a table
- ☒ Print enough handouts for each participant
- ☒ Ensure every participant has a pen or pencil
- ☒ On one wall, create a line using tape – this will be the group’s political spectrum
(the line could also be drawn on a whiteboard)

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Individual Activity:</p> <p>Ask participants to complete the survey on the “Political Spectrum” handout by considering an issue and then choosing which statement comes closest to representing their opinion on that issue.</p> <p>For example, if they strongly agree that taxes should be lower for everyone in Canada, they would write “1” under the “Your Choice” column. If, instead, they strongly agree that taxes should be raised on wealthy Canadians and corporations, they would write “5” under the “Your Choice” column. If they are neutral or don’t have an opinion, they would write “3” under the “Your Choice” column.</p> <p>When they have entered their choice for every issue, have them add up their total score and write it at the bottom of the page. Ask them to turn the page over and, using their total score, mark their position along the political spectrum.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Small Group Activity:</p> <p>In groups of 2-3, have participants discuss where they are positioned along the political spectrum. Ask them to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On which issues did they respond the same as their group members? • On which issues did they disagree? 	15 minutes
<p>Full Group Activity:</p> <p>Hand out small pieces of paper marked with an “X.”</p> <p>Give each participant a piece of tape and ask them to stick an “X” on their position along the political spectrum on the wall (made of tape or drawn on a whiteboard). Their position will correspond with their total score in the political spectrum survey.</p> <p>Discuss the different attributes of the political spectrum.</p> <p>More information can be found here: http://studentvote.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/FED-SEC-EN-Hand-out-4.1.pdf</p>	5 minutes

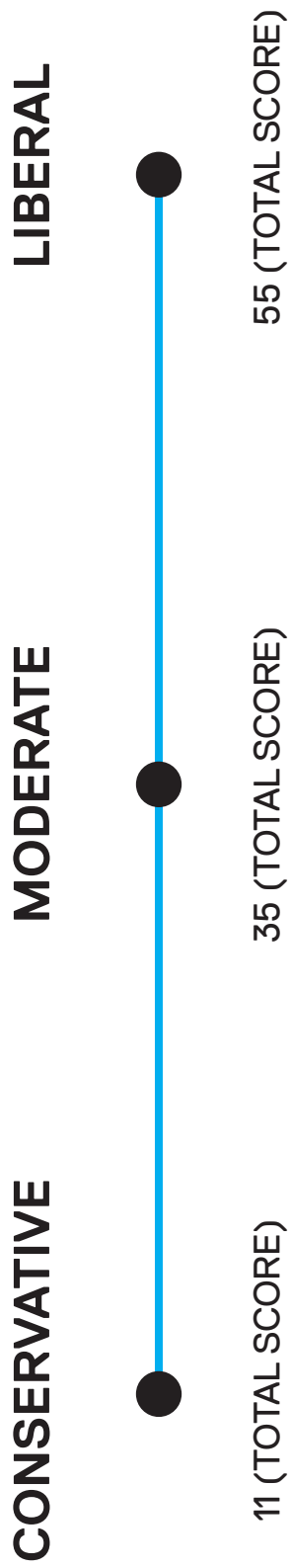
VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Expand:

- Research political parties to discover which parties align most with participants on different issues
- Have participants rank the issues in order of most important to least important according to them

ISSUE	1 STRONGLY AGREE 2 AGREE 3 NEUTRAL OR NO OPINION 4 AGREE 5 STRONGLY AGREE					YOUR CHOICE
Role of Government	Government's role should be limited. Government often causes more problems than it solves.	Government's role should be expanded. Government has an important role in solving problems.				
Economy	An unregulated free market is the best way to ensure a strong economy.	The economy needs to be regulated to grow and benefit everyone.				
Taxes	Taxes should be lower for everyone in Canada.	Taxes should be raised on wealthy Canadians and corporations.				
Immigration	Canada should reduce the number of immigrants it accepts every year.	Canada should increase the number of immigrants it accepts every year.				
Identity	It is more important to promote shared Canadian values.	It is more important to celebrate Canada's diversity.				
Foreign Policy	It is important for Canada to have a strong military to protect our interests.	It is important for Canada to support diplomatic solutions to international problems.				
Environment	Canada should protect jobs before protecting the environment.	Protecting the environment should be a high priority for Canada.				
Public Safety	Punishment for criminals should be increased to reduce crime.	Increasing rehabilitation services for criminals will reduce crime.				
Marijuana	Marijuana should never be legalized.	Marijuana should be legalized.				
Child care	The government should not support childcare services.	The government should make childcare affordable to all Canadians.				
Health Care	The private sector should play a larger role in providing health care services in Canada.	Health care should remain the responsibility of government.				

TOTAL SCORE: -----



WANTS AND NEEDS SPACESHIP

KEYWORDS

beginner, power, rights, conversation

GOAL

To encourage participants to understand the differences between wants and needs, and learn how our needs are connected to our rights.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about wants, needs and rights they are entitled to, and
- Practise advocating for what they need.

AUDIENCE

Age: 8-12

Language: Shared conversational language

Prior political knowledge: None

Group size: 10-20 participants

TIME

Average: 1.5 hours

Minimum: 40 minutes

Maximum: 2 hours



MATERIALS

- ☒ Chart paper (enough for each group to have one piece of paper)
- ☒ Markers

Handouts:
 ☒ “Wants/Needs Cards”
 (enough for each group to have one set of cards)

SET-UP

- ☒ Print and cut out “Wants/Needs Cards”
- ☒ Arrange tables so that small groups of 3-4 people can work together
- ☒ Put one piece of chart paper and one marker on each table

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
INTRODUCING WANTS AND NEEDS	
<p>Icebreaker: Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and share one thing they couldn’t imagine living without.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Small Group Activity: Introduce the idea of wants, needs and rights: Want: Something we would like to have. Need: Something we must have in order to survive, grow and develop. Right: Something we are morally and legally entitled to. Ask participants if anyone can give an example of each. Form small groups of 3-4, ensuring that there is an even number of groups (e.g. two, four, six, or eight groups). Hand out one set of wants/needs cards to each group. Ask them to create a T chart with the categories “Wants” and “Needs” at the top of their chart paper. In small groups, ask them to sort the cards into wants and needs. Ask them to add up to six additional wants/needs on the “OTHER” cards.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Large Group Activity:</p> <p>Read out the cards one by one and ask each group to say whether they put it as a want or need.</p> <p>If there is any disagreement, ask each group to explain why they think it is a want or need.</p> <p>Ask groups to share the “OTHER” cards they created.</p>	5 minutes
INTRODUCING WANTS AND NEEDS	
<p>Small Group Activity:</p> <p>Part 1: Instruct the groups to imagine they are astronauts and they are going on a year-long mission. Because of the size of their spaceship, the astronauts can only bring 20 items with them.</p> <p>Ask groups to choose the 20 items (from the wants/needs cards) that they would bring.</p> <p>Part 2: Instruct the group that they just heard from mission control that, due to the cost of fuel, they have to reduce the number of items astronauts can bring to 10.</p> <p>Ask groups to choose the 10 items (from the wants/needs cards) they would now bring.</p> <p>Have each group read out their 10 items to the other groups.</p> <p>Part 3: Instruct the groups that they just got word from mission control that, due to budget cuts, they are now only sending half of the number of missions, and the astronauts can only bring eight items.</p> <p>Ask groups to join the group nearest to them — creating half the number of groups — and work together in these new larger groups to decide on the eight most important items (from the wants/needs cards).</p> <p>Have each group read out their eight items to the other groups.</p>	45 minutes

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Debrief:</p> <p>In a large group, ask participants to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you decide which items were wants and which items were needs? • Are wants and needs different for different people? • Did you have to leave anything you felt was a “need” behind? How did that feel? • Why would some “needs” be protected as rights? 	<p>15 minutes</p>

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

ESL

- Spend time defining the terms and the items on the wants/needs cards

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

These activities were adapted from:

- www.etfo.ca/Resources/ForTeachers/Documents/Rights%20of%20the%20Child%20-%20Primary%20Lesson%20Plans.pdf
- www.e-activist.com/ea-campaign/action.retrievefile.do?ea_fileid=14113

WANTS/NEEDS CARDS

Fashionable clothes

Bicycle

Your own bedroom

Computer

TV

iPod

Fast food

Pokemon GO

Limousine

Clothing

Shelter

Healthy food

Protection from harm

Education

Health care

Fair treatment

Clean air

Opportunities to play

Clean water

Opportunities to share
your opinions

Family

Freedom of culture and religion

Public transportation

Internet

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

Democracy Talks



sparks

DEMOCRACY DINNER

KEYWORDS

beginner, political voice, power

GOAL

To encourage participants to practise sharing their political voice.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Share knowledge of political figures from different contexts,
- Consider different roles and qualities that can be found in political figures, and
- Get to know each other better.

AUDIENCE

Age: 12 and above

Language: Shared conversational language

Prior political knowledge: None required

Group size: Four participants or more

TIME

Average: 15 minutes

Minimum: 5 minutes

Maximum: 20 minutes

MATERIALS

Markers

Chart paper or whiteboard

SET-UP

Arrange room so that participants can see and hear each other

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Warm-up Activity:</p> <p>Have participants ask the person next to them: What is your favourite thing to eat for dinner?</p>	<p>1-2 minutes</p>
<p>Main Activity:</p> <p>Draw a large rectangle on a piece of chart paper. This will be your “dinner table.”</p> <p>Ask the group to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what political figure, from any time in history and anywhere in the world, they would want to have dinner with, and • what question they would ask that political figure if they could only ask one. <p>Have participants share their responses. As you go around the group, write the names of each political figure around the rectangle (the “dinner table”). Ask people to also share why they would want to have dinner with that person.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>
<p>Debrief:</p> <p>As a group, take a look at who is seated at the “dinner table.”</p> <p>Ask participants to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What qualities these figures have in common, • How these figures are different, and • Whether these figures would get along at this dinner. 	<p>1-2 minutes</p>

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Simplify:

This activity can be done in smaller groups without the visual of the “dinner table” – ask participants to answer and discuss the questions in groups of 3-4

WHO DOES WHAT? MATCH GAME

KEYWORDS

beginner, democratic knowledge, levels of government, responsibilities

GOAL

To encourage participants to consider how politics impacts their lives, and learn about government responsibilities

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the responsibilities of each level of government,
- Make connections between the personal and the political, and
- Consider who they can go to for support on different issues.

AUDIENCE

Age: 12 and above

Language: Basic-intermediate English

Prior political knowledge: Some prior political knowledge is helpful

Group size: Five participants or more

TIME

Average: 30 minutes

Minimum: 20 minutes

Maximum: 50 minutes

MATERIALS

Responsibility cards (words with images), one set for each group, and one for the facilitator

Levels of Government titles (i.e. Municipal, Provincial, Federal, Shared), one set for each group, and one for the facilitator

Answer key, one for facilitator

Tape

Projector

Speakers

Laptop

Copy of “Who Does

What?” or Internet connection: www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVE3OsR5W-0

Chart paper

Markers

SET-UP

- ☒ Tape one set of Levels of Government titles to the walls (i.e. Municipal, Provincial, Federal, Shared) – Remember to fill in your province and municipality!
- ☒ Arrange tables so that participants can sit in small groups

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Warm-up Activity</p> <p>Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and share either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their earliest memory about politics or government, or • Which person, from anywhere in the world and any time in history, they would elect to be Prime Minister and why. 	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Main Activity:</p> <p>Distribute one set of “Responsibility” cards and “Levels of Government” titles to each group.</p> <p>Ignoring the “Levels of Government” titles for now, ask each group to examine their set of “Responsibility” cards. As a group, ask them to determine which four government responsibilities most impact their life – e.g. Roads, Health Care, Immigration, etc. Have each group share back, while the facilitator records on chart paper.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>
<p>Main Activity:</p> <p>Distribute one set of “Responsibility” cards and “Levels of Government” titles to each group.</p> <p>Ignoring the “Levels of Government” titles for now, ask each group to examine their set of “Responsibility” cards. As a group, ask them to determine which four government responsibilities most impact their life – e.g. Roads, Health Care, Immigration, etc. Have each group share back, while the facilitator records on chart paper.</p> <p>After reporting on their group’s most impactful government responsibilities, have each group place each “Responsibility” card under the level of government that is responsible for it. If they are struggling, encourage them to make a best guess.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>

After groups are done, go through the exercise as a larger group, asking the group to tell you (the facilitator) where each “Responsibility” goes, and tape it on the wall under the corresponding level of government. Where there is disagreement, explore that until the group comes to a consensus. (Note: In groups of more than 15 participants, the large-group element of this exercise may take too long. In that case, skip directly to the video below).

Show the video Who Does What? Ask each group to correct their responses, and correct the responses on the wall.

Cool-down Activity:

Ask the group the following questions:

- Why is it important to know what each level of government is responsible for?

5 minutes

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Simplify:

- Show “Who Does What?” before having the groups place the “Responsibility” cards on the wall
- In smaller groups, you can print one set of “Responsibility” cards and give each individual 3-4 to place themselves

ESL:

- Spend time defining each Responsibility, and the Levels of Government



RESPONSIBILITY CARDS

National Security



Banking



International Relations



Citizenship & Immigration



Military



Postal Service



Laws



Environment



Police



Roads



Tourism



Parks



Property Tax



Libraries



Waste Management



Building Permits



Snow Removal



Transit



Social Assistance



Education



Licenses



Health Care



Water



Natural Resources



ANSWER KEY

FEDERAL

National Security
Defence/Military
International Relations
Citizenship & Immigration
Money/Banking
Postal Service

PROVINCIAL

Schools/Education
Health Care Delivery
Social Assistance
Natural Resources

MUNICIPAL

Libraries
Snow Removal/Transit
Building Permits
Property Taxes
Water
Waste Management

SHARED

Roads
Laws/Police
Environment
Parks/Tourism

And many more...!!!

LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

FEDERAL
(CANADA)

PROVINCIAL
(

LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

(MUNICIPAL)

SHARED

DEMOCRACY BINGO

KEYWORDS

beginner, civic engagement, action

GOAL

To encourage participants to think about the various ways we are all political actors in everyday life.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider different ways to be political,
- Share stories of taking civic action and connecting with community,
- Be active, and
- Learn to connect everyday activities to politics.

AUDIENCE

Age: 12 and above (can be modified for younger audiences)

Language: Basic to intermediate knowledge of English

Prior political knowledge: No prior political knowledge necessary

Group size: Eight participants or more

TIME

Average: 15 minutes

Minimum: 10 minutes

Maximum: 20 minutes

MATERIALS

- ☒ “Bingo” card (enough for each participant to have one)
- ☒ Pen or pencil (enough for each participant to have one)

SET-UP:

- ☒ Move tables and chairs to ensure there is space to move around the room freely

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Warm-up Activity</p> <p>Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and share either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their earliest memory about politics or government, or • Which person, from anywhere in the world and any time in history, they would elect to be Prime Minister and why. 	1-2 minutes
<p>Main Activity:</p> <p>Distribute “Bingo” cards to each participant.</p> <p>Ask participants to get up, move around the room and talk to each other about their political experiences. When participants meet someone who has completed an activity on the “Bingo” card, they put the person’s name in the corresponding square. When participants have completed five squares in a row (horizontally, vertically or diagonally), they yell “Bingo!”</p>	5-15 minutes
<p>Cool-down Activity:</p> <p>Ask the group the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think things like taking public transit or visiting the library are on this list of political activities? • Choose a square at random and ask those who carried out that activity to share their experiences. 	20 minutes

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Expand:

- Require participants to complete the entire card
- Ask them to only fill out a name if the person completed the activity within the last year
- Encourage participants to think about ways they can become more political. Have them choose one activity from the “Bingo” card that they have not done themselves and challenge them to complete it in the next month or year. Collect responses and follow up if possible.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

These activities were adapted from: <http://cmsnew.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Democracy%20Cookbook%20Part%202%20Recipes.pdf>

BINGO CARD

B	I	N	G	O
Talked about politics in a community program	Voted in an election	Contacted a political representative	Used the library	Went to a community meeting
Watched a political debate	Visited provincial legislative building (e.g. Queen's Park)	Used the school system	Talked about politics with friends	Encouraged someone to vote
Volunteered in your community or with a political party	Learned something new about the political system		Paid taxes	Talked about politics with someone under 18
Posted about politics on social media	Rode public transit	Read about politics in the news	Donated to charity or a political party	Signed a petition
Went to the doctor	Went to a march or demonstration	Talked about politics with family	Visited City Hall	Met with a political representative

STAND WHERE YOU STAND

KEYWORDS

beginner, political voice, conversation, power

GOAL

To practise thinking about and discussing controversial issues with others.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Engage with each other about difficult issues,
- Gain an understanding of the range of perspectives on political issues, and
- Consider alternative viewpoints from community members.

AUDIENCE

Age: 10 and above

Language: Shared conversational language

Prior political knowledge: None required

Group size: 5-20 participants

TIME

Average: 20 minutes

Minimum: 10 minutes

Maximum: 40 minutes

MATERIALS

- ☒ One paper sign that says “Agree”
- ☒ One paper sign that says “Disagree”
- ☒ Tape
- ☒ List of 4-5 questions to generate discussion (examples below)

SET-UP

- ☒ Tape “Agree” and “Disagree” signs to opposite walls

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Warm-up Activity</p> <p>Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and share something interesting that they recently read in the news, heard on the radio or saw on TV.</p>	<p>1-2 minutes</p>
<p>Main Activity:</p> <p>Inform the group that you will be making a series of statements about a variety of issues.</p> <p>Explain that the space between the “Agree” and “Disagree” signs is a spectrum.</p> <p>Once you have read the first statement, ask them to move towards either “Agree” or “Disagree” depending on how they feel about the statement. For example, if they strongly agree, they should stand very close to the “Agree” wall. If they are unsure, they should stand in the middle of the room.</p> <p>Once everyone is standing along the spectrum, ask a few people to explain why they are standing where they are. Be a neutral facilitator and attempt to hear a few different perspectives on each issue.</p> <p>Repeat with 3-4 statements. Sample statements can be found below, or tailor your statements to issues that you think would be meaningful to your group.</p>	<p>5-15 minutes</p> <p>Before starting, it may be necessary to establish group rules around having respect for each other and differing opinions. Some of the statements may bring out strongly held views.</p>
<p>Debrief:</p> <p>Bring the group back together and ask each participant to describe how it felt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to share their opinion publicly, and • how it felt to hear differing opinions. 	<p>1-2 minutes</p>

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Expand:

• With enough space in the room, add another element — how important is this issue to them? On the opposite walls from the “Agree” and “Disagree” signs, add “Important” and “Not important.” This creates a spectrum that includes their opinion as well as the importance they place on the issue.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

These activities were adapted from:

• <http://cmsnew.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Democracy%20Cookbook%20Part%202%20Recipes.pdf>

SAMPLE STATEMENTS

I believe that permanent residents should be allowed to vote in municipal elections.

I believe that we should spend more money on the military.

I believe that we should pay more taxes to improve public transit.

I believe that prescription drugs should be included in universal health coverage.

I think that someone should only be allowed to be Prime Minister for two terms (e.g. eight years), like in the United States.

I believe that Canadians should be allowed to vote at age 16.

I believe that wealthy people should pay more taxes than poor people.

I believe that the minimum wage should be \$15.

NAME THAT POLITICAL PERSON

KEYWORDS

beginner, political voice, civic engagement, action

GOAL

To encourage participants to think about the various ways we are all political actors in everyday life.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider the ways they have been political in their own lives,
- Share political experiences, and
- Learn about the political experiences of fellow community members.

AUDIENCE

Age: 16 and above (see Variations & Expansions below)

Language: Shared conversational language

Prior political knowledge: Minimal knowledge required

Group size: Ideal for 10-25 participants who already know each other
(e.g. ongoing groups, staff meetings)

TIME

Average: 15 minutes

Minimum: 5 minutes

Maximum: 20 minutes

MATERIALS

Pieces of paper (enough for each participant to have one)

Pen or pencil for each participant

SET-UP

Cut out small pieces of paper

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Warm-up Activity</p> <p>Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and share something interesting that they recently read in the news, heard on the radio or saw on TV.</p>	<p>1-2 minutes</p>
<p>Main Activity:</p> <p>Ask each participant to think about either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a time they took action on a political issue, or • a personal political goal. <p>Have them anonymously write it down on a small piece of paper and pass it to the facilitator.</p> <p>Once everyone has submitted a piece of paper, read them out loud, one at a time, and have the group guess who wrote it.</p>	<p>5-15 minutes</p> <p>Encourage everyone to make it unique and specific. Remind people that there are many ways to act politically – not just voting.</p> <p>If participants get stuck, offer some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My son had to encourage me to vote in the most recent election. I almost forgot! • I attended an environmental protest last July. • This will be my tenth year doing community work with newcomers. • This year I plan to run a marathon for charity.
<p>Debrief:</p> <p>Highlight that within the group there are many ways that people are political.</p> <p>Invite a few participants to share more about what they wrote.</p>	<p>1-2 minutes</p>

VARIATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Simplify:

- This activity can be done with younger audiences by changing the question (e.g. “What was a time you were a leader?”)

CIVIC RESOLUTIONS

KEYWORDS

beginner, civic engagement, political action, goal-setting

GOAL

To encourage participants to consider different ways of participating in politics and set goals for civic engagement.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about different ways to get involved in politics,
- Hear other community members' experiences of getting involved, and
- Set goals for ongoing political engagement.

AUDIENCE

Age: 14 and above

Language: Shared conversational language

Prior political knowledge: Some basic experience is helpful

Group size: 5-30 participants

TIME

Average: 20 minutes

Minimum: 10 minutes

Maximum: 30 minutes

MATERIALS

- ☒ "Political Participation Activities" checklist (enough for each participant to have one)
- ☒ Pens or pencils (enough for each participant to have one)

SET-UP

- ☒ Arrange tables and chairs so everyone can work at a table

ACTIVITY	TIME & TIPS
<p>Warm-up Activity</p> <p>Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and share either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their earliest memory about politics or government, or • which person, from anywhere in the world or throughout history, they would elect to be Prime Minister and why. 	1-2 minutes
<p>Main Activity:</p> <p>Pass out “Political Participation Activity” checklists to each participant.</p> <p>Have them take a few minutes to fill out the checklist. Let them know that everyone has different experiences with politics and so some people might have many more checks than others and that is okay.</p> <p>Once everyone has completed the checklist, ask if anyone would like to share an experience that came to mind as they were filling it out.</p> <p>After a few people have shared, ask everyone to find one activity they did not check off, or one activity they would like to do more of. Ask them to set a goal to complete that activity in the next year.</p> <p>Go around the group and have everyone share which activity they are planning to do in the next year.</p>	5-15 minutes
<p>Cool-down Activity:</p> <p>Ask the group the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are some of these activities easier than others? • What are some barriers to taking action? • What supports do you need to ensure that you meet your goal? 	1-2 minutes

Democracy Talks



videos

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Stream the animated video at www.samaracanada.com/a-day-in-the-life-video.

GOAL

To increase participants' understanding of the day-to-day responsibilities and real-life challenges of being a Member of Parliament (MP).

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about MPs' roles as legislators, representatives and service providers,
- Consider the conflicting issues and interests that MPs encounter when carrying out these roles, and
- Be reminded that MPs are people with lives and concerns outside of politics, including families and friends.

AUDIENCE

Age: 15 and above

Language: Basic English skills (English and French subtitles are available)

Prior political knowledge: None required

Group size: 5-35 participants

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions are intended to guide conversation after watching the video.

For participants with little knowledge of government, ask:

1. Would you want to be an MP? Why or why not?
2. What is the hardest part of being an MP? What is the best part?
3. Which role is the most important for an MP – Legislator, Representative or Service Provider?
4. How would you balance local interests and concerns with national ones?
5. If you were an MP, what issue would you want to work on most?

For participants with some knowledge of government, ask:

1. Cabinet Ministers are MPs that also serve as head of a government department. This added responsibility creates both benefits and challenges. What might be some of the benefits or challenges of being the Minister of Small Business and Tourism? Find a complete list of ministers here: www.parl.gc.ca/parliamentarians/en/ministries.
2. Priya has lunch with a member of the opposition party. Why would MPs from different political parties have lunch together? Do you have friends with political views that are different from your own?
3. While MPs almost always support their party when voting on legislation, MPs can discuss their concerns about legislation with party leaders during private caucus meetings or raise concerns when committees consider legislation. Why do MPs almost always support their party when voting on legislation? Do you think caucus meetings should be closed or open to the public?
4. One of the jobs of MPs is to represent the interests and concerns of constituents. However, often constituents do not all agree on an issue. What side should an MP support if constituents disagree on an issue? How should MPs determine how their constituents feel about an issue?
5. All MPs meet constituents who disagree with them on an issue. If you were an MP, how would you respond to a constituent who disagreed with you?



ACTIVITY 1 - PERCEPTION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENTS	TIME & TIPS
<p>Description: Many Canadians have a low assessment of politicians, including MPs. This activity addresses these perceptions and provides an opportunity for participants to change their perception in light of the information in the video.</p> <p>Materials: Pens or pencils, notecards or scrap paper, whiteboard or flipchart.</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before watching the video, ask participants to write “Before” on the top of a notecard or scrap paper. Then, ask participants to write down five words they would use to describe Members of Parliament. Collect the responses. Do not read them aloud. 2. After watching the video, ask participants to write “After” on the top of a notecard or scrap paper. Then, ask participants to write down five words they would use to describe MPs. 3. Write a list of “Before” and “After” terms on a whiteboard or flipchart and discuss the differences. 	<p>5-15 minutes</p>
ACTIVITY 2 - LOCAL VS. NATIONAL	TIME & TIPS
<p>Description: MPs often must balance local and national interests. This activity asks participants to consider how they might make difficult choices when facing competing issues and interests.</p> <p>Materials: “Support” and “Oppose” signs to post on walls</p> <p>Set-Up: Post “Support” and “Oppose” signs on opposing walls.</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <p>Present the following scenarios and ask participants to stand along a spectrum from “support” to “oppose” in response. Ask participants to explain their answers and discuss both the substance of the issue and the basis for making their decision. Ask if and how their decision would be different if they were an MP.</p>	<p>5-20 minutes</p>

ACTIVITY 2 - LOCAL VS. NATIONAL	TIME & TIPS
<p>Scenario 1:</p> <p>A new world-class sports arena has been proposed for international games to be held in your city. The sports arena is two blocks from your house and will take over a park you currently enjoy for walking your dog and playing games with your friends.</p> <p>Do you support the sports arena or oppose it?</p> <p>Scenario 2:</p> <p>The government has proposed new environmental regulations to reduce air pollution that has been linked to childhood asthma. The regulations could force the closure of a local factory and cause the loss of thousands of jobs.</p> <p>Do you support or oppose the new environmental regulations?</p>	5-20 minutes
ACTIVITY 3 - CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	TIME & TIPS
<p>Description: Have participants write to their MP or invite them to a meeting. Many MPs are glad to meet with classes or community organizations but they generally require significant lead time to plan.</p> <p>Materials: Pens or pencils, pieces of paper or postcards</p>	15-30 minutes

GLOSSARY

Amend: To change or improve something: for example, a piece of legislation.

Caucus: A group composed of all Senators and Members of Parliament from the same political party. Private caucus meetings are held regularly.

Committees: Are composed of both Government and opposition members. There are three basic types of committees:

1. Legislative committees, which examine bills after second reading in the House,
2. Standing committees, which study certain issues, documents, departments or estimates throughout the duration of the Parliament, and
3. Special committees, which are appointed to inquire into specific matters.

Constituency: The specific geographic area in Canada that a Member of Parliament represents in the House of Commons, also known as a riding or electoral district. During debate the Member is identified by the name of the constituency rather than by his or her own name.

Constituents: A person living in an area in Canada represented by an elected Member of Parliament.

Election: The process of choosing a representative by vote. In a federal general election, the voters in each riding elect one representative to the House of Commons. The person who gets the most votes represents the riding. Generally, the party that has the most members elected forms the Government.

Governing party: The political party that forms the Government because it had more of its members elected to the Chamber by the people than any other political party.

House of Commons: The elected Lower House of Parliament is composed of 338 Members representing all the ridings across Canada. Most of the laws passed by Parliament originate in the House of Commons. Members' duties include representing constituents' concerns, serving on committees, proposing legislation, participating in Commons debates and discussing and amending bills.

Interest groups: Groups of businesses, associations and people with a common interest who lobby the Government to promote that interest.

Legislation: The Acts passed by Parliament, which make up the law.

Legislator: An elected official who is responsible for drafting, amending and passing laws. In Canada, one of the responsibilities of Members of Parliament is to act as a legislator (see also: Representative and Service Provider).

Lobbyist: Lobbyists are individuals and groups who actively communicate with federal public office holders in an attempt to influence Government decisions. They are required under the Lobbyists Registration Act to register their activities, provide information on their clients and the subject matter of their lobbying activity, and adhere to standards of conduct for communicating with federal public office holders.

Member of Parliament (MP): This term can be used in two ways. It can refer to Members of both the Senate and of the House of Commons, reflecting the fact that the Parliament of Canada is a bicameral legislature. In common usage the term refers to a person elected to a seat in the House of Commons (an MP), who serves as a representative of one of the 338 ridings into which Canada is divided. In debate, Members are identified not by their own names but by the names of their ridings.

Minister: A Member of Parliament who is usually head of a government department. The Leader of the Government in the Senate is usually a member of

Cabinet.

Opposition member: A Member of Parliament who belongs to an opposition party.

Opposition party: The party or parties and independent members who do not belong to the governing party. The role of the opposition is to provide knowledgeable criticism of the Government and propose ways to improve its policies and legislation.

Political party: An organization of people with similar values and beliefs who seek to influence or control the government by winning elections.

Prime Minister: The leader of the party in power and the head of the federal Government.

Representative: An elected official who is responsible for ensuring that the interests and concerns of their constituents are considered. In Canada, one of the responsibilities of Members of Parliament is to act as a Representative (see also: Legislator and Service Provider).

Riding: Another word for constituency or electoral district.

Service Provider: An elected official who provides assistance to their constituents. In Canada, one of the responsibilities of Members of Parliament is to act as a Service Provider (see also: Legislator and Representative).

Speaker of the House: The Speaker presides over the House of Commons, ensuring that its rules and traditions are respected. The Speaker represents the House of Commons in dealings with the Senate and the Crown and is also responsible for the administration of the House and its staff. The Speaker has a diplomatic and social role in hosting visits by heads of state and heads of government who come to Parliament. The Speaker is elected to the position by other Members at the beginning of a new Parliament or when a vacancy occurs.

HOW TO BE AN EVERYDAY POLITICAL CITIZEN

Stream the animated video at www.samaracanada.com/how-to-be-an-epc-video.

GOAL

To introduce participants to the various ways they can get involved in a political issue.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about various types of political activities,
- Consider how they can use their skills and interests to create change, and
- Be able to connect their personal concerns to political action.

AUDIENCE

Age: 15 and above

Language: Basic English skills (English and French subtitles are available)

Prior political knowledge: None required

Group size: 5-35 participants

TIME

Average: 30 minutes

Minimum: 20 minutes

Maximum: 45 minutes

MATERIALS

Pens or pencils (enough for each participant to have one)

Handout

“Political Participation Activities” checklist (enough for each participant to have one)

ACTIVITY

Pass out the “Political Participation Activities” checklist and have participants go through it before watching the video.

While watching the video, ask participants to check off any activities that are mentioned by either Michelle or Luke. (Note: Only some of the activities are mentioned in the video.)

After watching the video, ask participants to:

- Report which activities they heard mentioned in the video,
- Suggest which of these activities Michelle should carry out and why, and
- Share which one of these activities seems hardest to them. Then, as a group, brainstorm how this activity might be made easier.

OTHER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before or after viewing the video, ask participants:

- If you could change one thing in your community, what would it be?
- Have you tried to change a political issue or government policy? What was that experience like? (If no one has any experiences to share, explore why not by discussing potential barriers to political engagement.)
- Would you rather work on local issues (e.g. public transit, public parks) or national issues (e.g. environment, immigration)?
- If you wanted to change something in your community, who would you turn to for support and why?
- How do these actions compare to voting?

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

1. The twittering classes: online discussion

- I circulated or reposted political information on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter
- I used email or instant messaging to discuss societal/political issues
- I blogged about a political issue
- I participated in an online group about a societal/political issue

4. Community revival: civic engagement

- I worked with others on an issue in my community
- I was active in a group or organization
- I donated to a political/societal cause
- I did voluntary work

2. Somethin' to talk about: off-line discussion

- I discussed a societal/political issue face to face or on the phone
- I wrote a letter to the editor about a political issue
- I made a public speech on a political issue
- I organized a public event or meeting about politics

5. In the system: formal engagement

- I contacted an elected official about an issue that concerns me
- I attended a political meeting
- I volunteered in an election
- I donated to a political party or candidate
- I am or have been a member of a political party

3. Taking it to the streets: activism

- I signed a petition
- I boycotted/"buycotted" a product
- I was part of a protest

If we missed a political activity that you think should be tracked in Samara's ongoing research on how Canadians participate in politics, let us know:

info@samaracanada.com



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