

Monarchy

a nation or community in which the supreme power is invested in a single person known as the monarch.

Political Party

an organization formed for the purpose of gaining political power.

Member of Parliament

representative elected by constituents of an area to the House of Commons. The Prime Minister then chooses his cabinet from the elected MP's.

Cabinet Member

the executive group of MP's selected by the Prime Minister in order to lead specific responsibilities. (ex. Minister of Environment, Health, Foreign Affairs etc.)

Senate

The upper house of the Canadian Parliament composed of 105 senators appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. Its role is to provide “sober second thought” to the House of Commons.

Riding/Electoral District

A geographical area that is represented in the House of Commons by a Member of Parliament

Lobby Group

An interest group that seeks to influence political decision and advocate a certain cause.

Media

the means of communication such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines that reach or influence people widely

Governor General

The Governor General is the representative of the Queen of Canada. The Governor General is selected by the Prime Minister and appointed by the Queen. The role lasts for 5 years and is mainly ceremonial but extremely powerful.

Constitutional Monarchy

A form of government in which a monarch acts as head of state within the parameters of the constitution.

Sovereign

The sovereign refers to the head of state, king or queen of Canada. The sovereign in Canada is currently Queen Elizabeth II.

Demographic

A statistic that characterizes human population (ex. age, sex, income, religion, education, status etc.)

Political Spectrum

A way of representing different political positions by placing them upon one or more axes each symbolizing independent political dimensions.

Conservative

The political party led by Stephen Harper that currently forms the Government of Canada.

Bias

Partiality of favouritism in a person or issue.

What are the three branches of Canada's system of Government?

The three branches are a) Judicial b) Executive c) Legislative.

Compare and Contrast the Senate and the House of Commons.

Both of these are houses in the government that perform the task of reading and approving laws. The House of Commons is the first reading followed by the “sober second choice” the senate. MP’s elected for each riding sit in the House of Commons whereas the senators are simply appointed and hold the seat until age 75. Bills have to pass through both houses and be approved by the Governor General to become laws.

How is a law made?

There is an extensive process dedicated to creating laws. It can take upwards of 6 months to a year. Firstly, a cabinet member sees a problem and suggests a bill. Then the bill is sent to the House of Commons where there are three readings of the bill. If approved the bill then travels to the Senate where it must also be read three times and approved. If that happens the Governor General must give “royal assent” (her signature) on the bill for it to become a law.

What is popular vote?

Popular vote is the total percent of votes that a party receives all across Canada.

Explain the term “Riding”.

A riding is a geographical area contain approximately 100 000 people. Canada is divided into 308 ridings. Each riding votes for an MP who can then become Prime Minister. Voters do not vote for the Prime Minister.

Campaign

A race between candidates for elective office.

Parliament

A legislative assembly in certain countries.

What does "triple E" stand for and what does it mean?

Triple E stands for elected, equal and effective. It is talking about senate reform. Elected: If senators are elected they will represent US and not just work for the Prime Minister. Equal: Every province should have EQUAL representation by population. Effective: They need a job that serves a PURPOSE other than to babysit the house of commons.

What is the Supreme Court?

The supreme court is the highest judicial body within the jurisdiction's court system.

Bill

A statute in draft before it becomes law.

What is Royal Assent?

Royal assent is the symbolic final stage of the legislative process by which a bill becomes law.

Cabinet

A body of persons appointed by a head of state or Prime Minister to head executive departments of the government and act as official advisers.

Constituent

A member of constituency; a citizen who is represented in government by officials for whom he or she votes for.

Prime Minister

The person who holds the position as the head of government (apart from the Queen or Governor General)

Vote of Non-Confidence

A motion in the House of Commons, meaning the government has lost the confidence of the House. An election must be drawn, or the PM must resign.

Majority Government

The governing party holds the majority (50%+) of seats in the legislature.

Quality of Life

Your personal satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the cultural and/or intellectual conditions under which you live.

Official Opposition

The political party with the most power, apart from the party in power.

Minority Government

The party with the most seats in legislature, but that does not have the majority of the seats.
(50% or more)

Executive Branch

A branch of government containing the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

Legislative Branch

A branch of government containing the House of Commons and the Senate (responsible for making laws).

Judicial Branch

A branch of Canadian Parliament responsible for the administration of justice.

Senate Reform

Changes in the Senate based around the “Triple E” platform. (Equal, Effective & Elected)

Representation by Population

A method by which seats are added to the House of Commons in such a way as to vary with the population. Ex. The higher the population of a province, the more seats will be allocated.

Law

A collection of rules imposed by authority.

Constitution

A fundamental law, determining the basic political principles of a government.

Governance

The act of governing

House of Commons

a collection of elected MP's responsible for making decisions about proposed laws (bills) that come through the house. There are three readings of each bill.

Senator

An appointed representative who makes decisions about important issues in the senate