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Overview

This toolkit was developed for Ontario Secondary students with a focus on the processes of political campaigns and elections in Canada. This toolkit is designed to be broken up over a period of five days, Module I over the period of two classes, and each proceeding Module will require only one class.

Goals

1. Engage youth in Canada's electoral system
2. Encourage more youth to vote
3. Help them to understand how their country's voting system works

Modules

I. Campaign and Elections Education

Includes information on the steps of a campaign as well as how elections are run in Canada. This section incorporates videos and a polling quiz to help students better understand the concepts before participating in the activities.

II. Plan your Campaign Activity

This activity involves writing a platform, designing a poster, and writing a brief press release about another student candidate. The teacher will be able to guide the students in the right direction by using the information they learned in Module I.

III. Campaigning in the Classroom

Campaigning in the class gets students up and about practicing their public speaking by discussing and trying to convince their classmates and teacher that their platform is the best.

IV. The Election

Students will participate in an election of the three candidates that have been chosen to move on from the Campaigning module. Reference to the rules of an election will be covered once more before students cast their ballots.

Module I: Campaign and Election Information

Day 1: A Political Campaign

Students need to understand how a campaign works in order to make informed decisions when it comes to the election or even later in life if they wish to enter into the world of politics. Many youth are refraining from voting because they do not know who to vote for or where they are situated within the political realm. This module is designed to increase their knowledge about the methods of campaigning and the work that goes into planning and running them.

After this part of the module students should be able to:

- Understand the basics of planning a campaign
- Understand the basics of running a campaign
- Pick an area of their interest and form a platform around it



What is a campaign:

A political campaign is an organized effort to secure the nomination and election of people seeking public office.¹ Campaigns help to inform voters of the issues that have the potential to affect their daily lives and how the candidate will attempt to fix the issues.

Why do you campaign:

To become an elected official running a campaign is essential because on Election Day it is all about name recognition and people are going to vote for you if they know what goals you want to accomplish in office.

When do you begin to campaign:

From the day of registration you are able to start your campaign but it is always good to be planning and preparing for your campaign so you are organized when you are allowed to formally campaign. Thus campaigns usually begin one year before the election but it is seen that being active in your community two years prior has a positive effect on your chances of being elected. It is in this time people can begin informing others of their intentions to run, they cannot however formally campaign until a couple of months before the election.

Two stages of a campaign:

1. Plan your campaign-

- Begin with what you want to accomplish in office because this will help you as a candidate decide where on the political spectrum you reside and help you start your platform.
- Writing your platform can be difficult if you are going to try and please everyone. A platform is about trying to appeal to the larger issues within your community, region, or country or you can even start small and champion that cause.
- When you are planning your campaign you have to think about everyone you will need to help you execute it. Even planning a campaign requires volunteers or workers to help organize and prepare for the actual campaign.
- Know your budget! Campaigns cost quite a bit of money and fundraising is necessary so practising asking for funds to run your campaign is a good idea.

2. Executing your campaign-

- Connect with your community! The more they see you involved helps to show them how much you care about them and the issues that affect them.

¹ Garth Stevenson, "Political Campaign," The Canadian Encyclopedia, October 13, 2016.

- Canvassing is a great way to introduce yourself to potential voters. It can be as simple as knocking on doors and attending street fairs or open houses around holidays.
- Keep everything you do simple! Do not make your campaign so complex that when you go to canvas you can't state your platform in 30 seconds because you lose people's attention if you start to get too in-depth.
- Being well organized and having great time management are key to running a successful campaign. Never overwhelm yourself.

Here is a resource for six simple steps to your campaign:²

1. Define the Victory

It's important that everyone agrees on the core goal or goals of your campaign. You also need to make sure the definition of your campaign's success is specific and actionable. What exactly are you trying to accomplish? How will you know that you've hit your goal?

2. Evaluate the Campaign Climate

Once you clearly define your campaign win, it's time to evaluate the climate in which you'll deploy your outreach. When you understand what's going on around your issue or audience, you can plan to maximize the positives and strengthen any weaknesses. Identify what's already working in your favor and what obstacles might cause your message to get lost or be misunderstood. Some questions to help you evaluate your issue's climate:

- Is your issue hot on the agenda or stuck in limbo?
- What is the current conversation around your issue?
- Who is the opposition and what is their agenda?
- Who else is working on this issue?
- What current events or opportunities can you use to your advantage?

3. Chart the Course

Lay out the series of milestones that you must hit on your way to reach your goal. Ideally, these steps should build off each other and indicate that your campaign is gaining momentum. Focus these milestones on the desired outcomes, rather than the tactics themselves. For example, if your campaign will reach out to local businesses to gain sponsors, your milestone should not be pitching these business owners. Rather, it should be that you reach your desired number of confirmed business partners for your cause.

4. Choose Your Influence Strategy

Along with each step, understand the decision makers who will determine your success. These may be voters, business partners, or public officials. Then, find out who will have the

² "The Just Enough Guide for Campaigners," Planning to Win, 2014.



most influence on these decision makers. These are the people you want to reach and activate to help your initiative gain momentum. Warning: avoid naming broad groups such as “the general public,” “voters” or “women.” Just as you did with your campaign goal, get very specific about your influencers so you have clear picture of the kind of person you need to reach to achieve victory.

5. Message for Impact

All campaigns benefit from a message platform that provides everyone in your organization with a consistent positioning statement. Keep in mind that a message platform doesn’t need to be rigid, nor does it need to be memorized, but it should provide the core concepts and talking points to serve as a guide for your spokespeople. A good message platform includes the following four points:

- explain the problem/need that currently exists or the situation that you are working to change
- specify what your campaign is working to accomplish
- describe how you recommend addressing the need or problem, along with the specific actions that decision makers need to take
- explain the result that a campaign victory will have and how it solves the problem you noted at the start

6. Manage Your Campaign

Once you outline the main tactics to achieve your goals, you still need to plan the day-to-day details to get it done. Each assignment should have a deadline/timeline, owner, metrics including outcomes, and a budget. When it comes to metrics, it’s important to think of ones that lead to outcomes. Once your campaign is underway, don’t forget to celebrate the small victories with your team to keep everyone motivated.

External links to important resources:

Link to [Spitfire Spark Change](#)

Link to a poll that will show where students are on the political spectrum: [Vote Compass](#)

Day Two: Elections

In Canada there are three different levels of government, municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal. The election processes for all three vary in rules and regulations. It is important for students to understand how elections work as they are a cornerstone of Canada's democracy. Elections have created historical movements and shape the future for all citizens.

After this part of the module students should be able to explain and understand how:

- Municipal elections work
- Provincial elections work
- Federal elections work
- Indigenous elections work

Here is a brief breakdown chart of the different election policies:

| | Municipal³ | Provincial⁴ | Federal⁵ |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| When are the elections? | Held every four years on the fourth Monday of October. | Held every four years on the first Thursday of June. | Held every four years on the third Monday of October. |
| Who is eligible? | -Canadian citizens who are 18 years or older -Must be a resident or property owner within the municipality | -Canadian citizens who are 18 years or older -Must be a resident in Ontario for six months before Election Day | -Canadian citizens who are 18 years or older -You do not need to reside in your electoral district |
| How do I know where to vote? | A list of places to vote will be detailed in local media or on your voter card | A Notice of Registration Card by mail will tell you when and where you can vote | Your voting information card will detail where and when you can vote |
| How many people do I vote for? | Varied (some areas have ranked ballot or a mix of at-large and ward councillors) | One | One |

³ "Ontario Municipal Elections," AMO - Ontario Municipal Elections, 2017.

⁴ "Voting in Ontario," Elections Ontario, 2017.

⁵ "Redistribution of the Federal Electoral Districts." Elections Canada. June 08, 2016.

Municipal Elections:

Municipal elections are held every four years and affect how your municipality is run. In a municipal election you are voting for your at-large or ward councillor(s) and the mayor or reeve of your municipality. Most large municipalities are divided into wards with the exception of Thunder Bay which is divided into both an at-large and ward constituency system.⁶ Small municipalities such as Fort Frances Ontario usually host at-large elections rather than wards. Although these rules are not binding it is up to the municipality how it decides to divide up community areas and responsibilities.

How is a constituency created?

Municipal councils are usually the ones to decide where the lines are drawn for the constituencies.⁷

What is an at-large system?

At-large means that all councillors are elected by every voter in the municipality. The Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) states that, "In an election, the voters choose among all candidates who are running in the election. If municipal council has 8 councillor positions, for example, the 8 candidates with the highest number of votes win the election and become the new councillors."⁸

What is a ward system?

Every municipality is different. Some wards may have two elected officials and others may only have one.⁹ Only those citizens who live in the ward can vote for the candidates in their ward. So according to the AMO, "if a municipality has 8 council members and 4 wards, 2 councillors will be elected from each ward. Each voter chooses 2 candidates from among the candidates running in that ward. In each ward, the two candidates with the highest number of votes will serve on municipal council."¹⁰

⁶ Andrew Sancton. *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2015), 188.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁸ "Ontario Municipal Elections," AMO - Ontario Municipal Elections, 2017.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2017.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2017.



The Status of the Mayor:

Mayors tend to be directly elected by the voters in municipalities across Canada save for some municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Even though mayors are seen as the heads of councils they do not truly have any control over areas such as administration and many only hold the same powers as that of their fellow councillors.

How does municipal government affect you?

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Roads | Parks | Building Permits |
| Taxes | Libraries | Garbage/ Recycling |
| Arenas/Stadiums | Community Centres | Events |
| Child Services | Police/Fire/Paramedic Services | Transit |

Provincial Elections:

Provincial elections are held every four years and determine how the province will be run for the duration of said government. In an Ontario provincial election the person you vote for is called a Member of Provincial Parliament (depending on the province or territory the name of the member of government will change as most are Members of Legislative Assembly). However, you do not directly elect the Premier as she or he will have been elected leader within the political party they represent. Each Member of Provincial Parliament belongs to an electoral district currently in Ontario there are 107 electoral district but this is going to change in 2018 to 122 ridings.¹¹

Follow this link to see where your electoral district is!

[Electoral Maps for Ontario](#)

How are the constituencies decided?

There are many processes that go into deciding the location and reach of ridings. Primarily at first it was based on population. However, this left many communities underrepresented as the Northern regions of Ontario have larger ridings due to the low population, which mean that the voices of the northern communities were being lost within the issues that affected the more populated communities in Northern Ontario.¹² Population along with geography are therefore the main determinants of where ridings are located.

What services does the province provide?

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Healthcare | Licenses (Driver's/Outdoor) | Education |
| Taxes | Childcare | Agriculture and Rural Development |
| Tourism, Parks and Recreation | Aboriginal Relations | Transportation |
| Environment and Sustainable Resource Development | Infrastructure | Culture |

What other services can you think of?

¹¹ "Electoral District Maps and Information." Elections Ontario . 2015.

¹² Keith Leslie, "Could new ridings improve service to First Nations communities ?" CBCnews, November 25, 2016.

Federal Elections:

Federal elections are also held every four years. The scope of the federal government in Canada is quite large as it must encompass the necessities that every province and territory requires. The federal government consists of 338 electoral constituencies and one candidate is elected from each. In federal elections just like provincial you get to vote for your Member of Parliament, but not the Prime Minister. She or he will have already been elected leader of their political party.

How federal constituencies are decided:

Once again population and geography play a major role in where constituency lines are drawn. When the decennial census is conducted and the population stats are updated the boundaries of a constituency can possibly change depending on how much the population has increased.¹³ All of which has to be in accordance, with the Constitution and Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.¹⁴

What services does the federal government provide?

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Justice | Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development | Natural Resources |
| International Cooperation and Development | Veterans Affairs | National Defence |
| Fisheries and Oceans | Public Works and Government Services | Labour |
| Foreign Affairs and International Trade | Canadian Heritage | Citizenship and Immigration |

What other services can you think of?

Video link for learning about Canada's Electoral System:

[Canada's Electoral System](#)

¹³ "Redistribution of the Federal Electoral Districts," Elections Canada, June 08, 2016.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2016.

First Nations Elections:

Elections on First Nations are held every two years and the methods vary between four different methods depending on the First Nation. The four different ways the chief and council can be elected are as follows:

1. Following the steps outlined in the Indian Act and the Indian Band Election Regulations
2. Using the new and optional First Nations Elections Act
3. According to a community's constitution as part of a self-government agreement
4. Using a community leadership selection process (also called "band custom")¹⁵

For a better understanding of the differences between the Indian Band Election Regulations and the First Nations Election Act follow the link listed below:

[Comparison Chart](#)

Community Election System:

The communities may do a conversion to a community election process if they hold their elections under the Indian Act election system and ask the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to issue an order that removes the First Nation from the application of the act's electoral provisions.¹⁶ These new codes are often very specific to the First Nation.¹⁷

Self Government Election System:

Self-governing First Nations are not under the Indian Act instead they establish their own laws and policies for their communities that incorporate their cultures and traditions, including leadership selection.¹⁸ Self-governing First Nations elect their leadership through individual election processes which differ depending on the First Nation and are often unique to that community.¹⁹

¹⁵ Government of Canada; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Leadership Selection in First Nations," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, October 19, 2016.

¹⁶ Ibid., 2016.

¹⁷ Ibid., 2016.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2016.

¹⁹ Ibid., 2016.

Module II: Plan your Campaign Activity

Day 3: Campaign Design

The campaign activity promotes learning through two different mediums. By preparing their own platform students will learn how to demonstrate their written capabilities. Creating a platform can help students learn how to condense their ideas making them powerful and to the point. Allowing students the freedom to design their platform as well encourages them to form their own opinions and use facts to support them. The poster portion of the activity draws on the student's visual creativity. Making a powerful and eye catching poster is a complicated process and will challenge your students to create a poster that is cohesive and gets their message across effectively.

After this module students will be able to:

- Write about an issue succinctly
- Create a cohesive and effective political poster



Designing a Campaign:

Preparing a Platform:

First have your students plan out their platform for their campaign pertaining to whichever school or local issue they care about. If they are having trouble deciding on an issue prepare some issues that they can pick from such as “Why high school students should never have to pay for textbooks” or environmental issues like garbage in local parks.

- Use the Six Simple Steps to Planning your Campaign, number 5 when teaching students how to write their platform.

Design a Poster:

Every student will have to design a bright eye catching poster that will include their slogan for the campaign. This can be an at home project for the class if the platforms take longer to complete.

Posters must include:

- Slogan
- Platform in point-form
- Colours they wanted associated with them

Students can get as creative as they would like with their platforms and posters as long as there is a clear message being displayed.

Examples of political poster can be found in the following links!

[Political Posters Canada](#)

[Political Posters: An Evolving Campaign Tool](#)

[CNN Poster Politics](#)

Module III: Campaigning in the Classroom

Day 4: Campaign Day

The lesson of this module is to get your students up and talking to each other about their platforms. It encourages them to step out of their comfort zones and embrace public speaking.

To begin have them individually come up and present their ideas and the poster they made. After the presentations are done if there is time have the students walk around and ask each other questions about their ideas.

Before the end of the class ask the students for three final volunteer candidates to run in the election tomorrow. If more than three students volunteer you can choose who runs or it can be settled by drawing straws or another form of random selection.

After this module students will be able to:

- Speak clearly about their platform and poster
- Enhance their public speaking abilities



Module IV: Election Day

Day 5: The Election

Acting out an election and going through the process in a learning environment prepares students for when they have to go to the polling station once they turn 18. If they begin to feel comfortable with elections and how they work it is more likely that they will vote once they are of age.

After this module students will be able to:

- Understand how an election works
- Go through the process of an election

Instructions for the day:

- For election day in your classroom arrange the desks so that there are some facing the back wall where you will put up the cardboard dividers.
- Set up the ballot box near the front next to the table where you as the teacher will be like an electoral officer collecting student information before they are able to vote. This can be just your attendance form.
- After all the votes are in collect the responses and tabulate the results announcing the winner of the election.



Reflection Activities:

To conclude the week here are some great reflection activities to bring together aspects of campaigns and elections.

Quiz:

-[Election Quiz](#)

Essay:

- Short reflection paper about what they learned through the process
- Short essay on Canada's Electoral process and the motions of it

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