



Chalk Talk

Greetings | Feature | Young Voters

PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Educators,

The electoral system in the U.S., unlike the Canadian parliamentary one, is based on holding federal elections every four years. I've been watching American elections all my life and it seems to me that the campaign period between elections is getting longer and longer. And when you factor in the



mid-term elections for senators and House representatives, it seems that there is no break in campaigning at all -- barely time to govern and legislate in between.

On the other hand, our system can -- and sometimes does -- create more opportunities for Canadians to go to the polls. Once an election is called, eligible voters have a period of about 5 to 6 weeks to make up their minds. As citizens of this great country, it is incumbent on us to be informed voters who take part in our democracy by voting regularly. We must also lead by example. Research has shown that parents are very instrumental in their children's decision on whether to become voters when they grow up. Modelled behaviour, discussion of issues and being taken along to watch the process are good ways to make young people want to participate.

Equally important is the role played by educators. Research has shown that experiential learning, where students participate in simulated or "mock" elections and other activities, is highly effective at creating interest in politics and predicting future voting habits.

Voting is our civic duty. It matters. The results of elections reflect our values and help shape Canada's future. There are still too many Canadians who do not exercise this most democratic of rights, especially young people. This week's **Chalk Talk** features free classroom resources and programs from **Elections Canada**.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers. Visit our website at www.4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Your feedback is welcome.](#)

Mary Kovack

Elections Canada



SPARK INTEREST IN VOTING IN YOUR CLASSROOM

We provide the tools!

As educators, your role is more crucial than ever in showing the relevance of our parliamentary and democratic institutions to students -- the voters of tomorrow.

Elections Canada offers elementary, high school and ESL teachers **free** educational resources, all designed to make your work a little easier.



You already know the importance of **experiential** learning. In fact, our two new studies on youth and democratic participation found that experiential learning increases political knowledge and interest among students and political discussion at home -- and it shows that that these are important factors linked to voting. The research underscored the importance of educators like yourselves in preparing youth to participate in the democratic process.

The [Student Vote Program Evaluation](#) draws lessons from the Student Vote Program for the 2011 federal election, an innovative civic education initiative that provided students with the opportunity to participate in a parallel election at school. The evaluation showed that the program increased students' political knowledge, interest and sense of civic duty -- key factors associated with the likelihood of future voting. It also had positive effects on teachers and parents.



The [National Youth Survey](#), which was conducted following the May 2011 federal election, is the most comprehensive study yet of the democratic participation of 18 to 34 year-olds. It calls attention to the motivational and access barriers that young Canadians experience in exercising their right to vote.

For more information on the free products, programs, resources and initiatives sponsored by Elections Canada, see *below*.

Educational Products — Elementary Level

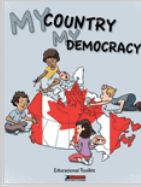


Choosing Our Mascot

Audience: Kindergarten to Grade 4

Description: Election simulation kit

Have your students choose a classroom mascot. The kit includes instructions on how to conduct a mock election, activity booklets and election materials.

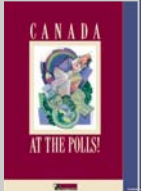


My Country, My Democracy *NEW!*

Audience: Kindergarten to Grade 4

Description: Interactive learning activities guide

Divided into three levels of difficulty, this tool kit provides a variety of activities and interactive learning ideas to allow students to increase their sense of the wider Canadian community and their understanding of Canadian citizenship.



Canada at the Polls!

Audience: Grades 5 to 8

Description: Election simulation kit and student council election guide

Want your students to experience the democratic process? Running a student council election? This kit contains a step-by-step guide and materials for electing a student council or conducting an election simulation, including tally sheets, a ballot box, a voting screen, and more.



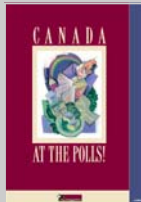
Voting Rules! *NEW!*

Audience: Ontario Grade 5 (or elementary-level Social Studies across Canada)

Description: Civic education program

Developed in partnership with Elections Ontario, *Voting Rules!* is a civic education program that teaches students about democracy, voting, elections, government and active citizenship through experiential lessons in an engaging graphic novel format.

Educational Products — Secondary Level



Canada at the Polls!

Audience: Grades 9 to 12

Description: Election simulation kit and student council election guide

Want your students to experience the democratic process? Running a student council election? This kit contains a step-by-step guide and materials for electing a student council or conducting an election simulation, including tally sheets, a ballot box, a voting screen, and more.



Voting Rules! *NEW!*

Audience: Ontario Grade 10 (or elementary-level Civics/Social Studies across Canada)

Description: Civic education program

Developed in partnership with Elections Ontario, *Voting Rules!* is a civic education program that teaches students about democracy, voting, elections, government and active citizenship through experiential lessons in an engaging graphic novel format.

Educational Product — E.S.L., Low Literacy



I Can Vote!

Audience: All levels, ESL, low literacy

Description: Teaching resource

I Can Vote! takes the mystery out of voting and shows that voting is all about choice. It is intended for literacy classes and the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program but can be used in any venue as a plain-language introduction to the electoral system and government in Canada.

Educational Resources



A History of the Vote in Canada

Audience: Teachers and secondary school students

Description: Background resource

This 150-page, full-colour book is a great background resource for any teacher. It recounts how Canadians acquired the right to vote and how they overcame obstacles in exercising this right.



The Electoral System of Canada

Audience: Teachers and secondary school students

Description: Background resource

Ever wonder what happens behind the scenes at Elections Canada? *The Electoral System of Canada* explains how Canadian elections are run and describes key aspects of the federal electoral process.



Maps Corner

Description: Maps of Canada's provincial and territorial electoral districts and regions

Searching for a visual way to explain how federal elections take place? Check out the Maps Corner to find provincial and territorial maps with the federal electoral boundaries and voting results from past elections.



Classroom Posters

Description: Background resources for educators and students

Elections Canada has two informational posters for the classroom: the *Voting Rules! Democracy in Canada* poster and the *Vox Populi – The Evolution of Electoral Democracy in Canada* poster.



Online Resources

Description: Background resources for educators and students

Elections Canada's website has a wealth of informational resources that can be used for content for social studies and civics lessons or as research sources for student projects and assignments. These include backgrounders on the political process, results from past general elections and the list of officially registered political parties. Visit www.elections.ca to access these great background resources.

Annual Initiatives



CANADA'S DEMOCRACY WEEK

(September 15–22, 2012)

A great way to kick off your civics or social studies class in September!

What is Canada's Democracy Week?

[Canada's Democracy Week](#) is an Elections Canada civic education initiative that engages youth and teachers in hands-on learning activities. It builds on the United Nations' International Day of Democracy (September 15) to celebrate and raise awareness of democracy and civic engagement.

How can I participate?

This September, you can participate by:

- ✓ using our "Democracy" [lesson plans](#) for elementary- and secondary-level classes;
- ✓ encouraging your students to enter the [National Youth Challenge](#)!
- ✓ hosting a celebratory event at your school;
- ✓ teaching your students about democracy and the role they play as active citizens;
- ✓ highlighting Canada's democratic achievements and traditions

What is the National Youth Challenge?

Looking for a class activity that combines civics and social studies with technology and media arts? If so, get your class involved in the [National Youth Challenge](#).

The Challenge is a creative student-focused project that you can do in your civics, politics, history, law and social studies classes. It uses art and social media to get young Canadians thinking and talking about democracy.

Encourage your students to participate – they can win great prizes!

Where can I find out more?

Visit democracy-democratie.ca for lesson plans, Canada's Democracy Week activities and more information on the Challenge. Visit frequently for updates!

For more information and to order

Online

www.elections.ca (click on "teacher" under "I am a:")

or

bit.ly/election-education



By phone

1-800-463-6868 (TTY 1-800-361-8935)



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We are the Company for Education Communications. We specialize in developing, producing and evaluating school resources and award programs. Working in conjunction with Departments/Ministries of Education, school district/boards, associations, teachers and subject specialists across the country; we provide free, curriculum-based educational resources to Canadian classrooms.

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