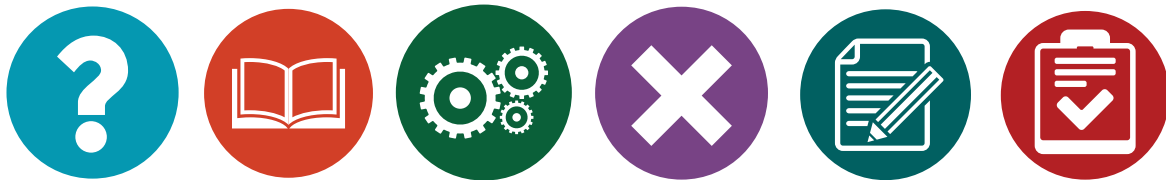


A Guide to Voting:

A literacy practitioner workbook for voting in the Canadian federal election



Civic literacy and voting:
Why does it matter?



Introduction for practitioners

How to use this guide

We created this workbook to help you engage your adult learners in civic literacy leading up to the next federal election. The information, links, and activities in this guide will help you talk to your learners about why voting is important and how they can participate in Canadian federal elections. Your learners can complete the activities in this guide independently or as part of their in-class learning.

Be sure to check out the [ABC Skills Hub](#), our online learning platform, for online versions of all the activities in this guide.

Here are some ways you can use the workbook and the online learning platform as teaching tools:

- Download and share the workbook with your learners for them to use at home
- Use the workbook in class to support your lesson plans, and share the downloaded PDF activities with your learners for them to use at home
- Use the workbook in class to support your lesson plans and direct your learners to complete the activities on their own on the *ABC Skills Hub*
- Direct your learners to complete the activities on their own on the *ABC Skills Hub*

Are you looking for more information?

Visit Elections Canada at elections.ca for more resources and links to help your learners prepare for the next federal election. To learn about other elections that may be happening in your community, contact your provincial or territorial government, your municipal government, and civic action organizations.

Have fun, and let us know what you think about ***A Guide to Voting: A literacy practitioner workbook for voting in the Canadian federal election!***

Your feedback is important to us! Please take a few minutes to visit [this link](#) and complete the practitioner survey to help us improve our civic literacy resources.



What is civic literacy?

Civic literacy is the knowledge and skills you need to help make the changes you want in your community. In Canada, civic literacy includes:

- ✓ **Voting** and knowing about Canada's political parties
- ✓ Knowing how the government works
- ✓ Knowing the rights and responsibilities of **citizens** and elected members of government

When you have strong civic literacy skills, you know how to make your voice heard by all levels of government—before, during, and after an **election**.



Voting words

Voting

Choosing a person or political party to lead the government, based on your ideas, beliefs, and goals.

Citizen

Someone who was born in Canada or who gained citizenship after moving to Canada. Canadian citizens have the right to vote in elections and to run as candidates in elections.

Election

The process of choosing a person or a political party to represent you in the government.



It's important for every Canadian to vote. Voting is how we let the country know our ideas, beliefs, and goals for the government.

How voting works

Voting in an election means choosing a **candidate** who will speak for you in the government. When you vote, you choose the candidate who you think will do the best job representing you and your ideas, beliefs, and goals. A candidate is usually a member of a **political party**.

Every vote is important. Even if the candidate you choose doesn't win, your vote shows all Canadians what's most important to you. Your vote can help shape the government's decisions.

In Canada, we vote at three levels:

- the municipal level: your town or city
- the provincial/territorial level: your province or territory
- the federal level: the whole country



Voting words

Candidate

A person who is running for an elected position. A candidate is usually a member of a political party. When a candidate isn't part of a political party, they're called "Independent."

Political party

A group of people who have the same ideas about how to run the country, or one of its provinces or territories.

This guide will help you learn about:



Why you should vote



How to register to vote



How federal elections work



How to vote

Why vote?

Voting is one way to make sure your voice is heard when the government is deciding what's important and what's not important to Canadians.

Here are some **issues** the government makes decisions about. Do you care about these issues?



Members of the government decide how much money the government will spend on each of these areas, and what laws apply to them. When you vote for a candidate or a political party, you're saying that you agree with their values and ideas for Canada. With your vote, that candidate and the political party they represent are more likely to win and put those values and ideas into action.

Sometimes, a political candidate wins an election by only a few votes.



Voting words

Issues

Important topics that people discuss.

Foreign policy

A country's plans and relationships with other countries.



Every vote counts—make sure yours is one of them!



To learn more about why voting is important, go to:

A history of the vote in Canada



Information on how voting has changed during Canadian history: elections.ca



Activity: Issues and political parties

When you vote for a candidate or a political party, you tell the government about what's most important to you. Knowing what issues are most important to you can help you decide which candidate or political party to vote for.

Here's a list of 8 issues that might be important to you. In the box next to each issue, write a number from 1-8: 1 means that this issue is the most important to you, and 8 means it's the least important issue to you. There's a space for you to make notes about why you think each issue is important. You can also add your own issue that's important to you.

Issue	Ranking (1-8)	Why is this issue important to you?
Health care 		
Education 		
Taxes 		
Environment 		
Economy 		
Foreign policy 		
Human rights 		
Security 		
Another issue		

Political parties

Each political party has different opinions about different issues. When you're deciding how to vote, it helps to know which political party has the same opinions as you about the most important issues. A political party's **platform** can help you decide whether you want to vote for them.

How many Canadian political parties can you name? Do you know each party's platform? On your own or in a group, see what you can learn about each political party online. Here's how:

1. In an internet browser, visit [Google.ca](https://www.google.ca)
2. In the Google search bar, type a **political party's name** + **platform** + **Canada**



Now try to answer these questions:

- What makes the political parties different?
- What things do they agree on?
- Which political party's platform is closest to your opinions?



Voting words

Platform

A political party's goals and opinions about major issues like education and health care.

A party's platform tells you what the party plans to do if they win the election.



How federal elections work

In Canada, you vote for a candidate to represent your **riding**. The candidate who gets the most votes becomes your **Member of Parliament (MP)**. Your MP represents you in the **House of Commons**, where they decide on federal laws.

Candidates are usually part of a political party. Each party has a leader. In a federal election, the leader of the party with the most candidates elected normally becomes the Prime Minister.

Who can vote?

In Canadian federal elections, you can vote if you:

- Are a Canadian citizen
- Are 18 years old or older
- Can prove your identity and address



Discussion questions:

- Have you voted in an election before?
- Where can you ask questions about elections, voting, or the Canadian government? Where would you look for answers?
- Do you think voting is hard? Why or why not?



To learn more about how elections work, go to:

The electoral system of Canada

A document for teachers that outlines Canada's political system and how elections work: elections.ca

Elections and democracy

Information and activities for classrooms, about the geography of elections, voting rights through time, information on federal, provincial, and territorial elections, and more: electionsanddemocracy.ca



Voting words

Riding

An area of the country like a community, region, or town that is represented by a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons. A riding is also called an electoral district.

Member of Parliament (MP)

The elected candidate for a federal riding.

House of Commons

The place in Ottawa where the 338 elected members of Parliament meet and vote on federal laws. It's also where they make important decisions about how to run the country.



Activity: Learn about your riding

It's important to know which riding you live in, so you can learn about your Member of Parliament (MP) and the candidates running in the election. Let's practice finding information about your riding and other ridings in Canada.

1. Go online and visit elections.ca, then search for "Voter information service."
You can also click on this link: [Voter information service](https://elections.ca/voter-information-service).
2. Search for your riding by typing your postal code in the search box.
3. Learn about your riding: Who is your MP? What are the borders of your riding?
You can write down some information in the space below.
4. Do you know the addresses or postal codes of your friends and family?
Learn about other people's ridings and write down the information below.

About my riding

My riding is called: _____

My MP is: _____

About my family and friends' ridings

_____ 's riding is called: _____

Their MP is: _____

_____ 's riding is called: _____

Their MP is: _____



To learn more about how elections work, go to:

Maps corner

Explore printable maps of Canada's electoral districts: elections.ca



How to register to vote

In order to vote in Canada, you need to **register** with Elections Canada. When you register, you let Elections Canada know who you are and where you live. They use this information to make sure you vote in the right riding and you only vote once.



Voting words

Register

Add your name to an official list of voters.

If you voted in the last election and haven't moved since then, you're probably already registered. But your voter information could be out of date if:

- You've moved
- You've never voted before
- You're going to school away from home

You might need to update your voter information to vote in the next election.

Save time on election day by making sure you're registered ahead of time.

Here's how to register:

- Visit www.elections.ca/register
- Double-check or update your address information by entering your name, birth date, and address
- Once you've typed in your information, you'll see a message that tells you if you're registered or not

If you're not registered, the Elections Canada website will give you some options for registering:

- Online
- By mail
- In person



How to register to vote (continued)

After the government **calls an election**, Elections Canada will send you a voter information card in the mail. This card tells you when and where to vote. You'll only receive a voter information card if you're registered to vote.



Can't register ahead of time or don't want to? That's fine. Bring the right identification (ID) with you to your **polling station**, and you can register on election day. It just takes a little bit longer. You can learn more about the right ID to bring with you on page 15.



Voting words

Calling an election

The government announces that there will be an election on a set date. The government must call an election between 37 and 51 days before the election happens.

Polling station

A place where you vote on election day. It's often a school or community centre in your area.



Need a hand?

Some people aren't comfortable registering to vote online. That's ok. If you're not comfortable registering online, here are some things you can try:

- Ask someone you trust to help you register online
- Once the election has been called, register in person at an Elections Canada office
- Before you vote, register in person at your polling station



To learn more about registering to vote, go to:

Get ready to vote

A checklist on getting registered before election day: elections.ca

Voter information service

A site that gives you all the information you need about your riding. Type your postal code in the search box and learn about your riding's borders, your MP, and where to find an Elections Canada office: elections.ca

Ways to vote

There are different ways to vote in a federal election:

On election day	Before election day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At your polling station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At an advance poll ✓ At an Elections Canada office ✓ By mail ✓ Special cases*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some hospitals and long term care facilities • At home

*See p. 12 or contact Elections Canada to learn more about voting at home or in hospitals or long term care facilities.

How do you decide which option is best for you?

Think about:

- **Your schedule:** When is it easiest for you to vote? Remember that by law, your employer needs to give you 3 hours in a row to vote on election day.
- **Your chosen candidate:** Have you already decided who you'll vote for? Or do you want more time to learn about the candidates?
- **Your accessibility needs:** Election workers are there to help you no matter where you vote. They have different accessibility tools and supports to make it easier.
- **If you like crowds:** Some people love crowds! Other people hate them. Voting in advance is usually a good way to avoid a crowd of people waiting to vote on election day.

How do you know where your polling station is?

It's on your voter information card, which you get in the mail if you're registered to vote. You can also find the location of your polling station by going to elections.ca, or calling **1-800-463-6868** (for TTY or teleprinter call **1-800-361-8935**). All you need is your postal code.



To learn more about ways to vote, go to:

FAQs on voting

These Frequently Asked Questions explain your rights as an employee to vote, and how employers must give you enough time to vote: elections.ca



Ways to vote (continued)

On election day, most people vote at their polling stations. You go to your polling station in your neighbourhood, usually a school, community centre, or apartment building. Your voter information card tells you where to find your polling station. All polling stations are open for 12 hours on election day.

You can choose to vote before election day:



At an advance poll: A special polling station in your community that will be open 10 days before the election, on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. You can vote at an advance poll from 8am to 8pm.



At an Elections Canada office: You can vote here until 5pm on the Tuesday before election day. Most Elections Canada offices are open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.



By mail: See the next page to learn more about voting by mail.



In some hospitals and long-term care facilities: If you're in a hospital or living in a long-term care facility, Elections Canada may be able to bring a mobile polling station to you.



At home: If you can't travel to a polling station or mark your ballot because of a disability, Elections Canada may be able to help you vote from home. You can phone Elections Canada toll free at 1-800-463-6868 (for TTY or teleprinter call 1-800-361-8935).

Plan ahead!

Be sure to plan ahead if you want to vote using one of these options:

- By mail
- In your hospital or long-term care facility
- At home

Contact Elections Canada as soon as the election is called — the earlier, the better! You can phone Elections Canada toll-free at **1-800-463-6868** (for TTY or teleprinter call **1-800-361-8935**) or visit their website at elections.ca.

Voting by mail



If you want to vote by mail, you can order a voting kit from Elections Canada once the election is called.

You need to leave enough time for your voting kit to reach you by mail, and for you to mail it back. Your voting kit will come with an envelope that already has the Elections Canada return address on it.

How do you order a voting kit?

- Visit an Elections Canada office in person, or online at elections.ca
- Ask about or search for “applying to vote by mail” and fill out the application form
- Return your completed form and proof of your identity and address to Elections Canada
 - * A printed photocopy of your driver’s license is an example of proof of your identity



If you submit your form in person at an Elections Canada office, Elections Canada will give you your voting kit right away. If you submit your form online, Elections Canada will mail the voting kit to you. Follow the instructions in the voting kit and send it back to Elections Canada with your completed ballot and a photocopy of your identification (ID).



Voting by mail (continued)

What is the deadline to vote by mail?

Look at the return address for Elections Canada on your ballot envelope.

Is the return address in Ottawa?

- If the return address **is** in Ottawa, your ballot needs to arrive by 6:00 pm Eastern time on election day.
- If the return address **isn't** in Ottawa, your ballot needs to arrive before the polls close in your riding on election day.

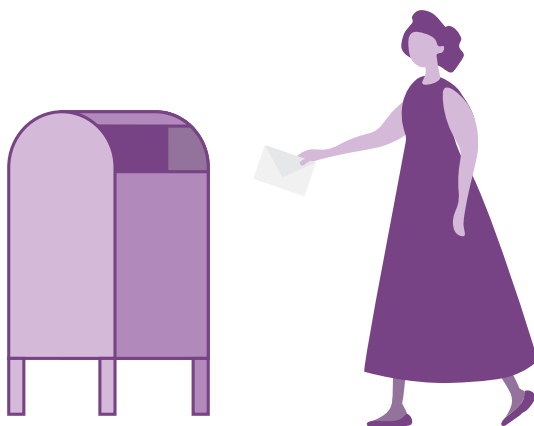
Be sure to mail your ballot to Elections Canada as early as you can so it will arrive in time. You're responsible for returning your ballot on time or Elections Canada won't count your vote.

Is it safe to vote by mail?

Yes, it's safe to vote by mail.

Here are some of the ways Elections Canada keeps your ballot safe:

- There are two envelopes. One envelope holds your ballot and doesn't have your identifying information on it. That envelope goes inside another envelope that does have your information on it.
- Elections Canada gives you a special identification number when you vote by mail. As soon as your ballot arrives, they make a note in their records that you've voted.





Types of identification you need to vote

On election day, you need to bring identification (ID) with you to the polling station. You need ID even if you've already registered to vote. If your ID doesn't show your current address, you can bring someone who knows you to confirm where you live. This person could be your neighbour, your roommate, your spouse, or your Personal Support Worker (PSW).

Do you have one of these pieces of ID?

- ✓ Driver's licence
- ✓ Any other Canadian government ID with your photo, name, and current address, like a provincial or territorial ID card



If you have one of these pieces of ID, you're ready to vote. Your ID is the only thing you need to bring with you to the polling station on election day.

What if you don't have any of the ID listed above?

Don't worry! You can bring two different pieces of ID instead. One needs to have your name on it. A piece of ID with your name on it could be:

- ✓ Your health card
- ✓ A prescription bottle
- ✓ Your library card

The other piece of ID has to have your name and address on it. It could be:

- ✓ A lease
- ✓ A utility bill
- ✓ A letter from a school
- ✓ An online bill that you can show it to an election worker on your phone
- ✓ Your voter information card

If you don't have a piece of ID from the first list, you can bring 2 pieces of ID from the second list.

What if you don't have a document with your address on it?

You can still vote! Bring someone who knows you and can confirm where you live. That person needs to bring photo ID with their name and address, and they have to be registered at the same polling station as you. If you're voting at a long-term care facility, an employee there can confirm where you live no matter where they're registered.



Activity: Types of identification (ID)

Plan A

Remember, when you go to a polling station with one of these pieces of ID, you don't have to show any other ID:

- Driver's licence
- Any other Canadian government ID with your photo, name, and current address, like a provincial or territorial ID card

But what if you don't have either of these pieces of ID? Let's try Plan B and Plan C.

Plan B

You can bring 1 piece of ID with your name on it, and 1 document with your name and address. What would you bring? Write your ideas in the table.

ID with my name on it	+	Document with my name and address
My credit card	+	My cell phone bill
	+	
	+	

Plan C

You can bring someone you know who can confirm where you live. Who would you bring? Remember, **the person you bring needs to have ID and they need to be registered at the same polling station as you.**

Someone I know

My neighbour, Lang



To learn more about types of ID for voting, go to:

Have your ID ready

A list of the many types of ID and documents that you can bring to a polling place:

elections.ca



What happens at the polling station?

Voting is a great way to let the country hear your voice. But if you're voting for the first time, you might not know what to expect. If you feel confused when you're at the polling station, election workers can help. Election workers can't make you vote for a candidate or political party you don't want to.

Here's what you'll do at the polling station on election day:

- Stand in line, or go right into the polling station. An election worker will be there to say hello and send you to the right table. Tell them if you need help and they'll make sure you understand what's going on.
- An election worker at your table will ask to see your identification (ID) so they can prove who you are and where you live. They'll check your name on the voters list if you registered, or they'll add your name to it if you aren't registered yet.
- The election worker will write their initials on a ballot, fold it, and hand it to you.
- Take your ballot behind a voting screen. Mark the candidate you want to vote for with an X or another clear mark. Don't use a mark that could identify you, like your initials. Fold your ballot back up.
- Go back to the election worker who gave you your ballot. They'll take it, tear off a tab, and hand it back to you.
- Put your ballot in the box at the table.



Congratulations! You just voted!

Accessibility in the voting process

Polling stations have tools and services to make sure voting is **accessible** to you. Every vote and every person is important to our elections, and Elections Canada works to make voting available to all Canadians.

When you get to your polling station, you can expect:



An automatic door opener, or an election worker who can help you open the door



Magnifiers



A tactile and Braille voting template that fits on top of a ballot



Large-print lists of candidates



Help marking your ballot



Large grip pencil



Voting words

Accessible

When people can use a service or product no matter what their needs are.

Want a Braille list of candidates?

It will be available at your polling station on election day.

Want sign language interpretation?

Call TTY or teleprinter 1-800-361-8935 or 1-800-463-6868 by the Tuesday before election day.

Can't leave home or vote by mail?

Elections Canada can send an election worker to your home so you can vote there. Call 1-800-463-6868 (for TTY or teleprinter call 1-800-361-8935) to find out more. It's a good idea to call Elections Canada as soon as you can.



To learn more about accessible voting, go to:

Accessibility

Information on additional accessibility tools and services: elections.ca

Plan your vote

Now you know a lot about how voting and federal elections work in Canada.

Let's make a plan:



Decide how to register

Would you rather register online, or would you rather have someone help you in person?



Get registered to vote

What identification (ID) do you need? Do you need someone to confirm where you live?



Decide where and when you'll vote

What voting option is the best fit for you? It might be different from how you voted last time. Remember to contact Elections Canada early if you want to vote in your hospital or long-term care facility, or at home.



Contact Elections Canada for accessibility help

Remember that they have all kinds of resources for you. Language and sign language interpretation will only be at your polling station if you ask for it in advance.



Decide who to vote for

What issues are important to you? Which candidate or political party in your riding is standing up for what you believe in?



Discussion questions:

- What's one new thing you learned about the voting process?
- What's one question you still have about voting in a federal election in Canada?
- Where can you go to learn more and find answers to your questions?



Activity: Practice election

Hold a practice election with a group of people! Follow the instructions below and use the ballots at the end of this activity to create your own election.

Before election day



1. Make a voters list

Add each participant to a voters list. If possible, have them register officially by showing the proper identification (ID) listed on page 15. This list will be your official voters list for the election. Write down any accessibility help that will let every voter participate in the election.



2. Create political parties and candidates

Divide everyone into three or more groups, and create your own political parties. Each party should work as a team to decide what's important to them, and to build their party's platform.



3. Host candidate speeches or presentations

Each political party should pick someone to act as their party leader. They'll be the candidate in this practice election. Each party leader can present their party's ideas to the whole group. Speakers can share what makes them different from the other parties.



4. Discuss and debate

Ask the group to think about which candidate and political party best represents what's important to them. Remember that voters can vote for any candidate.



5. Prepare the ballots

Pick a few people to be election workers and create the ballots. Write each candidate and their political party on the ballots. Fold each ballot so the candidate names are hidden. Use the sample ballots at the end of this activity to guide you. Make enough ballots for everyone, plus a few extras.



6. Prepare the polling station

Every election needs a place to vote. To set up your polling station, you'll need a voters list, a ballot box, folded ballots, and one or two election workers. The ballot box can be any container with a lid or cover. Make sure voters can fill out their ballots in private.



Practice election (continued)

Vote

1. Each voter comes to the polling station and says their name. If possible, they show their ID.
2. The election worker checks the voter's name off of the voters list, and hands them a folded ballot.
3. The voter takes the ballot to a private area and puts a mark next to their favourite candidate's name with a pencil.
4. The voter folds the ballot back up and gives it to the election worker. In a real election the election worker would tear off a part of the ballot, but for this activity you don't have to. The election worker hands the ballot back to the voter.
5. The voter places the ballot in the ballot box.
6. Give every voter a chance to vote. You're done!

Voting tip

If a voter makes a mistake, they can ask for a new ballot—but they can only do that once.

Count the votes

1. Remove all of the ballots from the ballot box.
2. Call out the selected candidate on each ballot, and write down the votes on a piece of paper.
3. Pile ballots by each candidate's name. Have a separate pile for spoiled ballots. Count the piles of ballots for each candidate and then count again to double-check.
4. Announce the winner, and celebrate with your new political leader!

Voting tip

If someone chose more than one candidate on a ballot, the ballot is **spoiled**. Don't count this ballot.



Voting words

Spoiled

A ballot is spoiled when there's a mistake on it, so the vote doesn't count.

A sample ballot

<p>----- DOE, John -----</p> <p>----- Independent/Indépendant -----</p>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>----- DOE, Sandra -----</p> <p>----- Political Affiliation/Appartenance politique -----</p>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>----- UNETELLE, Anne -----</p> <p>----- Political Affiliation/Appartenance politique -----</p>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>----- UNTEL, Pierre -----</p> <p>----- Political Affiliation/Appartenance politique -----</p>	<input type="radio"/>



Discussion questions:

- Was it easy or hard to cast your vote?
- Is there anything you would do differently if you were voting in a real election?

