

ESL Education Program Student Workbook



ESL

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THE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IN CANADA

There are three levels of government in Canada; each administers specific responsibilities.

The Federal Level

The federal parliament is located in Ottawa, Canada's capital city.

The federal government is responsible for things that affect Canada as a country, like citizenship, money/currency, and national defense/the army.

The leader of our federal government is the Prime Minister.

What is his or her name? _____

The Provincial/Territorial Level

There are 10 provinces and 3 territories in Canada.

Ontario's parliament, also called the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, is located in Toronto.

The provincial government is responsible for things that affect Ontario as a province, like drivers' licences, health care, education, and marriage.

The leader of our provincial government is the Premier.

What is his or her name? _____

The Municipal/Local Level

Each city or town has its own local government.

The municipal government is responsible for local issues, like local roads, public parks, fire services and local police.

The leader of a municipal government is usually called a mayor.

What is the name of your municipal leader? _____



ACTIVITY

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?



List each responsibility under the appropriate level of government.

RESPONSIBILITIES

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Army | Foreign Affairs | Public Transit |
| Birth Certificates | Garbage Pick-up | RCMP |
| Canada Post | Healthcare | Recycling |
| Citizenship & Immigration | Libraries | Road Signs |
| City Parks | Local Police | Snow Removal |
| Criminal Law | Lottery | Tourism |
| Driver's License | Marriage Certificates | Transportation |
| Education | Money | |
| Firefighters | OPP | |
| Fisheries | Provincial Parks | |

LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

FEDERAL

PROVINCIAL

MUNICIPAL

RIDINGS IN ONTARIO



A riding, constituency, or electoral district is a geographic area usually defined by population. During an election, eligible voters will elect a candidate in their riding who will represent all the people who live in that area. There are 124 ridings in Ontario.

At the federal level of government, the candidate with the most votes becomes their Member of Parliament (MP). The leader of the party with the most MPs will become the Prime Minister of Canada. At the provincial level of government, the candidate with the most votes becomes their Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). The leader of the party with the most MPPs will become the Premier of Ontario. At the municipal level of government, eligible voters elect a candidate as their city councilor and they also select their mayor. This system of election is different than the federal and provincial levels.

WHO ARE MY REPRESENTATIVES?

(1) What is the name of your provincial riding?

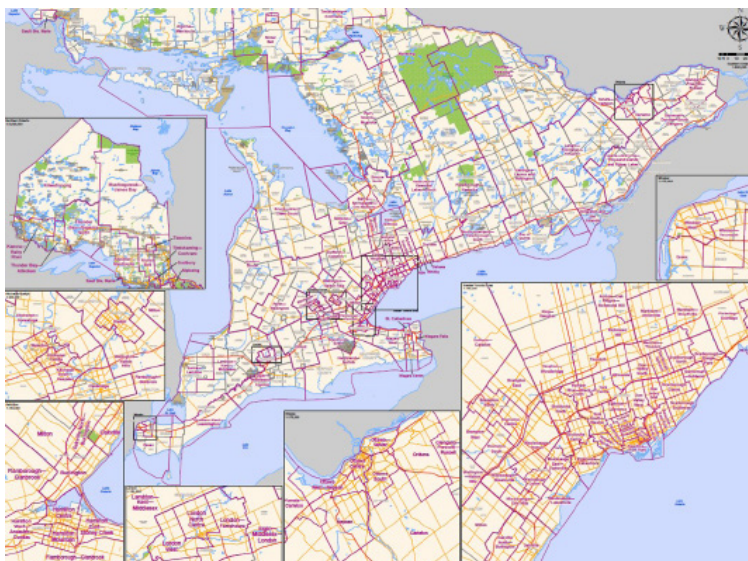
(2) Who is the MPP for your riding?

(3) What political party does your MPP belong to?

(4) Is your MPP a member of the government or the opposition?

(5) Who is the MP for your riding?

(6) Who is the City Councilor for your area?



To find your riding, call Elections Ontario at 1-888-668-8683 or visit their website: www.elections.on.ca. You must know your mailing address or postal code to find this information.

MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) are elected by the people of Ontario to represent them at the provincial parliament. During an election, eligible voters will elect a candidate in their riding or electoral district. The candidate with the most votes becomes their MPP.

MPPs work in the Legislative Chamber, in the Legislative Building at Queen's Park in Toronto, and in their ridings near the people they represent.

In the Legislative Building ...

MPPs sit in the Legislative Chamber where they:

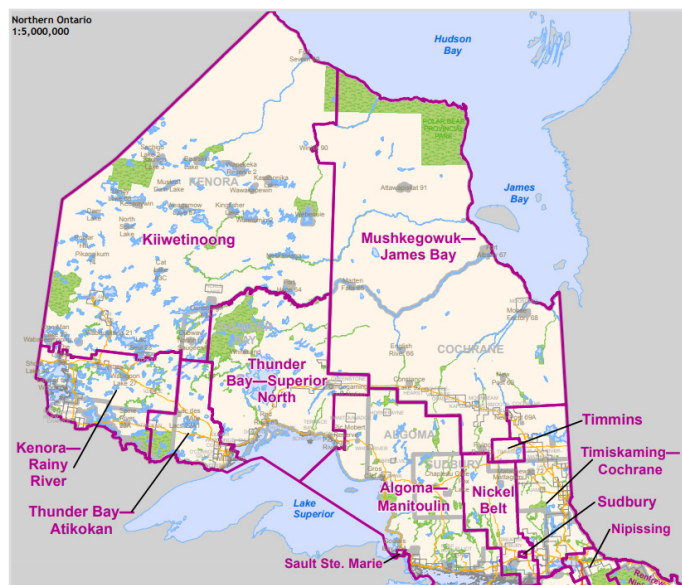
- Discuss, debate, vote and pass laws
- Speak about events in their riding
- Ask questions to the government Ministers about issues and concerns in Ontario and their communities
- Read petitions* from people in their riding
- Take part in committee meetings that study bills carefully before they become laws



In their Riding...

MPPs work in their riding and in their communities, where they:

- Meet with the people they represent and help solve their problems
- Go to events in their communities, such as fundraisers or community picnics
- Present awards
- Meet with interest groups in their communities



Did you know...?

*A petition is a request from people in Ontario asking the Legislative Assembly to do something or to change a decision that has already been made. It includes the signatures of the people who are making the request.

POLITICAL PARTIES



In Ontario's Parliament, each MPP belongs to a political party. After a provincial election, the political party with the most MPPs will form the government. The political party with the second highest number of MPPs is called the official opposition. If fewer than twelve members are elected from the same party, they will sit collectively in opposition, however they will not be recognized as an official party in the Legislature. Right now, there are 4 political parties represented in Ontario's Parliament.

POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS IN ONTARIO



Doug Ford
Progressive
Conservative Party



Andrea Horwath
New Democratic
Party



John Fraser
Interim Leader
Liberal Party



Mike Schreiner
Green Party



After a provincial election, the party with the most MPPs forms the government.

Which party is the government in Ontario? _____

The party with the second highest number of MPPs is called the official opposition.

Which party is the official opposition? _____

How many Members belong to the Liberal Party? _____

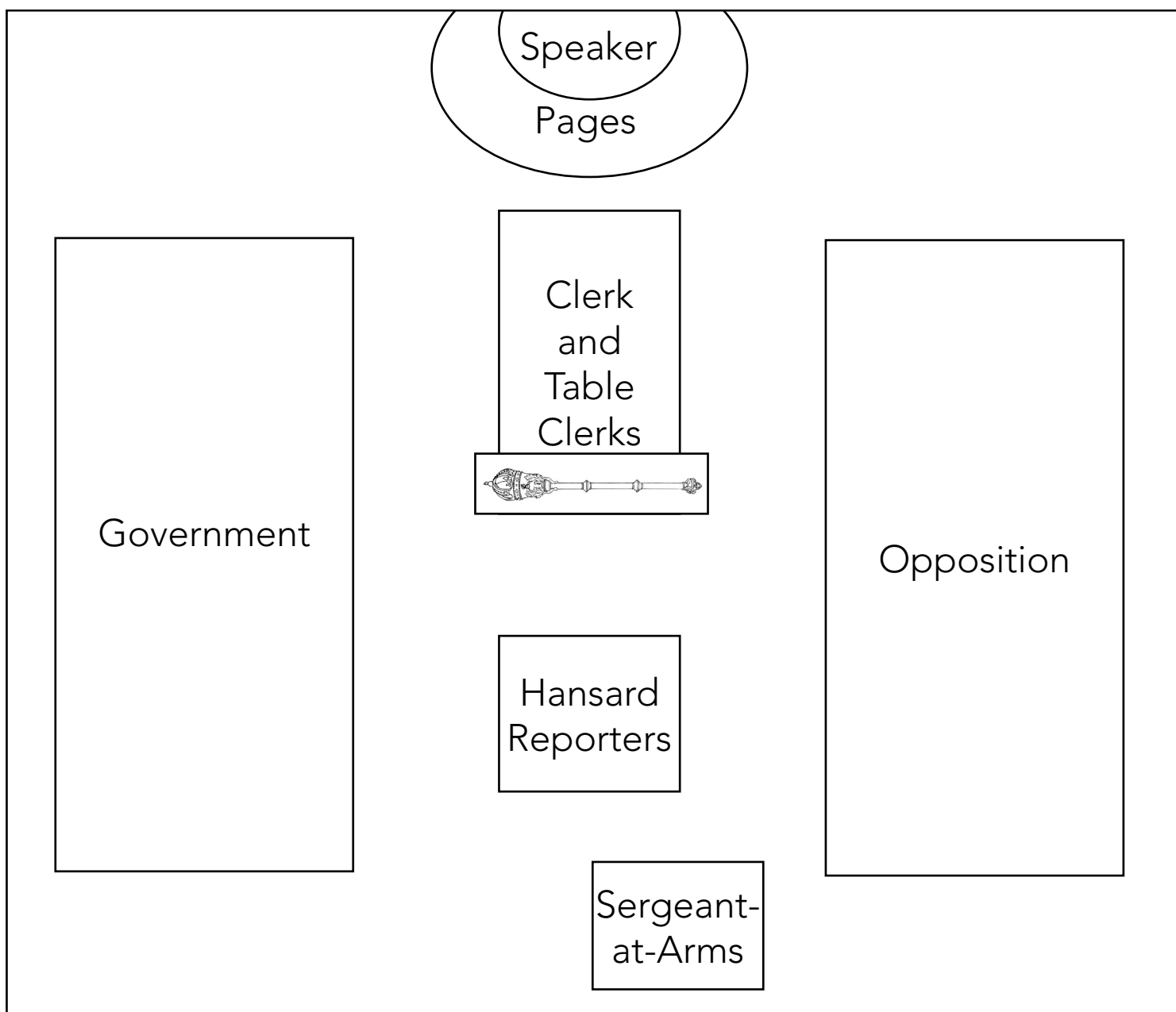
How many Members belong to the Green Party? _____

How many Independant Members are currently seated at the Ontario Legislature? _____

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER SEATING PLAN



MPPs and various House Officers sit in the Legislative Chamber when the House is in session. The Speaker sits on a throne like chair on the Speaker's dais at the front of the Chamber, facing all the Members. The government always sits on the right side of the Speaker, while the official opposition sits on the left side, closest to the Speaker, with their Leader seated across from the Premier. Other opposition MPPs are also seated on the left side of the Speaker. When there is a large majority, some government MPPs can be seated on the opposition side.



ROLES IN PARLIAMENT

To make sure each meeting of parliament is run fairly, there are a number of neutral roles that need to be filled. The people that fill these positions do not vote or participate in debates. They are non-partisan.



The Speaker

The Speaker is an MPP and is elected on the first day of parliament by all MPPs. The Speaker does not take part in the debates and oversees each meeting in the Chamber. He gives MPPs permission to speak, enforces the rules of parliament and makes sure that the business of the Chamber happens in an orderly manner. The Speaker will only vote in the case of a tie.



The Sergeant-at-Arms

The Sergeant-at-Arms is in charge of the security of the Chamber and the Legislative Building. The Sergeant-at-Arms is also the guardian of the Mace. The Mace symbolizes the authority of the Speaker to oversee the Legislature, and must always be present during all legislative meetings.



The Clerk

The Clerk is the Principal Officer of the House and is the person who advises the Speaker and MPPs on the rules of parliament. The Clerk counts the votes in the House, monitors time during the debates. After a provincial election, the Clerk swears-in the new MPPs.



The Hansard Reporters

In the Legislative Chamber, the Hansard Reporters use a computer to record the first few words that a recognized MPP says, and all the interjections said during meetings of parliament. Hansard is the official record.



The Legislative Pages

The Pages are in Grades 7 and 8. They are selected from across Ontario and must have high marks in school. In the Legislative Chamber, they deliver messages and learn how the provincial parliament works.

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO



Canada became a country in 1867 and is a sovereign nation. It is a constitutional monarchy and has ties to Great Britain. In the system of constitutional monarchy, The Queen rules symbolically; in reality the power belongs to parliament. Therefore, although The Queen 'opens' parliament each year and laws are passed in Her name, The Queen herself plays no part in determining decisions made in the Legislature.



Canada and The Queen

Canada's Head of State is Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen has representatives that carry out her duties. At the federal level in Ottawa, the Governor General represents The Queen. In each province, the Lieutenant Governor is her representative.



The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

As The Queen's representative in Ontario, the Lieutenant Governor carries out many of The Queen's responsibilities. For example, they open and dissolve sessions of Parliament, and they give Royal Assent to bills – this is the last step before a bill becomes a law. The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell is Ontario's current Lieutenant Governor.

ACTIVITY

WHO AM I?



PARLIAMENTARY QUIZ

I am in charge of security in the Chamber. I carry the golden Mace, the symbol of the Speaker's power and authority.

Who am I? _____ - _____ - _____

I record the beginning of every statement and all the interjections that any MPP says during the meeting in the Chamber. I am responsible for the official record of Parliament, which anyone can read on the Internet or in public libraries.

Who am I? _____ / _____

We are the youngest people who work in Ontario's parliament. We are grades 7 and 8 students who deliver messages in the Chamber. To qualify, we must have high marks and be active in our communities.

Who are we? _____ / _____

We are elected to represent the people who live in Ontario. We represent the concerns of the people living in 124 ridings.

Who are we? _____ / _____ / _____ /

In Canada, there are three administrative levels of government: federal, provincial, and municipal. I am the leader for the provincial level of government in Ontario.

Who am I? _____ / _____

ACTIVITY

WHO AM I?



I am the Premier of Ontario. My name starts with the title 'Honourable'.

Who am I? _____ / _____ / _____

I am the Head of State of Canada. I am represented by the Governor General at the federal level of government, and by the Lieutenant Governors in each of the provinces.

Who am I? _____ / _____ / _____

I am the representative of The Queen in Ontario. In my role, I open each session of parliament, I provide the Royal Assent needed for bills to become law, and I announce the end of a session of parliament.

Who am I? _____ / _____

I chair each session of parliament. I make sure MPPs follow the rules in the Chamber and give them permission to speak when it is their turn. I am not allowed to take part in debates and I only vote when there is a tie.

Who am I? _____ / _____

I know the rules of parliament and give advice to the Speaker and the MPPs. I count the votes on a bill.

Who am I? _____ / _____

HOW ARE LAWS MADE?



A law starts as an idea.

The idea is presented as a bill by Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) to the Legislative Assembly. The bill must complete some steps before it can become a law.

What are the steps?

Each of the following steps gives MPPs a chance to think about the bill. They can also suggest how to make it better or more effective by debating.

Step 1: First Reading

First Reading takes place when a bill is presented in the Legislative Chamber. The MPPs must decide if they want to accept the bill and talk about it again at a later time. If the bill is accepted, the Clerk reads the title of the bill out loud to the MPPs. The goals of the bill are explained.

Step 2: Second Reading

At the Second Reading, MPPs talk about the general ideas of the bill during a debate that continues over a few days. Each member is allowed to speak only once during the debate. When the debate is finished, members decide if the bill should move to the Third Reading stage. The bill may also be sent to a committee where it will be examined by a small group of MPPs.

Step 3: Committee Stage

A committee is a small group of MPPs. They check each detail of the bill very carefully. MPPs can make changes to each part of the bill. A change to a bill is called an amendment. The committee stage can last a few days or a few months. When the committee is finished, the bill is brought back to the House for the Third Reading.

Step 4: Third Reading

Third Reading allows the MPPs to debate the bill for the last time. After the debate, the Speaker calls for a final vote. If most of the MPPs vote for the bill to become a law, it is passed on to the Lieutenant Governor for Royal Assent.

Step 5: Royal Assent

Royal Assent is given when the Lieutenant Governor signs the bill on behalf of The Queen. When this is done, the bill becomes a law.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Get informed and be involved

All Canadians have the right to be informed. No matter what our age, we can familiarize ourselves with the candidates running for election in our ridings, learn about the political parties, and investigate the issues facing our communities. There are many ways to get involved.

Visit

When parliament is in session, members of the public are welcome to watch the proceedings from the public galleries in the Chamber. For more information about sessional dates and times visit the Legislative Assembly website www.ola.org.

Watch

Sessions of the Legislature are broadcast via cable TV across Ontario. You can also watch live streaming of all House proceedings plus an eight-day rolling archive of Question Period on the Assembly's website under Legislative Business » Video.

Read

You can obtain copies of Hansard, the word-for-word printed record of the daily proceedings in the Chamber and in committees on the Assembly's website under Legislative Business » House Documents.



Find your MPP

If you're not sure who your MPP is, visit the Elections Ontario website at www.electionsontario.on.ca. You can identify your riding or electoral district with your home address. Once you know your riding, then you can find your MPP.

Connect with your MPP

Your MPP is your representative and will listen to your concerns and ideas. When you share your thoughts, you can help make an impression on your MPP and perhaps the activities and policies of the provincial government. There are several ways you can contact your MPP. You can write a letter, send an email, or meet your MPP at his or her office.


For information regarding elected MPPs, we invite you to visit the Legislative Assembly of Ontario website at www.ola.org.

Present at a Legislative Committee

A committee is made up of a small group of Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) from all political parties and is responsible for discussing bills in detail. Members of the public can share their thoughts and ideas about a bill during committee meetings. Most committee meetings take place in Ontario's Legislative Building, but some committees travel throughout Ontario so that more people can attend the meetings. Anyone can have their voice heard at a committee meeting – either in person or through their MPP.

Start a petition

A petition is a request that the Parliament of Ontario take some specific action to redress a public grievance. Any resident of Ontario can ask an MPP to present a petition for them. Since the government is required to provide a response within 24 sitting days of the presentation of the petition, the issue will be noticed. The action requested must be within the scope of the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and the request must be clear, temperate, proper, and respectful.



Visit the Legislative Assembly web site www.ola.org
for more information about our programs and resources.



Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Parliamentary Protocol and Public Relations Branch
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www.ola.org