



LESSON PLAN

POLITICAL PARTIES

Recommended for Grade 10
Duration: Approximately 60 minutes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Parliamentary Roles: www.ola.org/en/visit-learn/about-ontarios-parliament/parliamentary-roles

LEARNING GOALS

This lesson plan is designed to engage students in the political process through participatory activities and a discussion about the various political parties. Students will learn the differences between the major parties of Ontario and how they connect with voters, and gain an understanding of the important elements of partisan politics.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

(10 minutes)

Canada is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy, founded on the rule of law and respect for rights and freedoms.

Ask students which country our system of government is based on. Canada's parliamentary system stems from the British, or "Westminster," tradition. Since Canada is a federal state, responsibility for lawmaking is shared among one federal, ten provincial and three territorial governments. Canada shares the same parliamentary system and similar roles as other parliaments in the Commonwealth – countries with historic links to Britain.

In our parliament, the Chamber is where our laws are debated and created. There are some important figures who help with this process. Some are partisan and some are non-partisan. What does it mean to be partisan/non-partisan? Who would be voicing their opinions in the Chamber?

A helpful analogy is to imagine the Chamber as a game of hockey, where the political parties are the teams playing and the non-partisan roles as the people who make sure the game can happen (ex. referees, announcers, score keepers, etc.)

EXPLANATION

(5 minutes)

Political Parties:

- A political party is a group of people who share the same political beliefs.
- There are currently over 20 registered political parties in Ontario. Most candidates in an election run under the banner of one of the registered political parties.
- The political parties currently represented in Ontario's Legislative Assembly are: the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, the New Democratic Party of Ontario, the Ontario Liberal Party and the Green Party of Ontario.

What are some political parties that students are familiar with?

ACTIVITY: GET TO KNOW THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN ONTARIO

(35 minutes)

Individually or in groups, ask students to go to the Elections Ontario website to find all the registered political parties in the province:

<https://finances.elections.on.ca/en/registered-parties>

- Do they recognize any of the parties?
- What do they know about them?
- Are there any parties that stand out? Why?

Ask students to research the political parties and to check their websites to find out more about them.

Distribute Activity Sheet #1 (found below) and ask students to fill out the activity sheets for each of the parties represented at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, noting down main points and differences between each party.

www.ontariopc.ca

www.ontariondp.ca

ontarioliberal.ca

gpo.ca

CONSOLIDATION/GROUP DISCUSSION

(5-10 minutes)

After reviewing party websites, the class can discuss the following:

- Share some of the key messages they found (were these similar to what their peers found?)
- Share similarities and differences of the political parties
- Why do you think there are so many registered parties but only four represented in Ontario's legislature?
- Is there a party that aligns with your vision of government in Ontario?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: CREATE YOUR OWN POLITICAL PARTY

Organize students into small groups and distribute Activity Sheet #2 (found below)

Each group will create a political party to reflect their values. They will start by determining current important issues and reflecting on the best way to address common issues as a party. As a group, discuss what they liked or did not like about the established parties. Each group will be asked to prepare a short presentation to outline a mission statement and 2-3 platform points for their political party.



ACTIVITY SHEET #1

DISCOVERING ONTARIO'S POLITICAL PARTIES

Four political parties are represented at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.
Refer to each party's website and explore the pages to discover more about them.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario - www.ontariopc.ca

The New Democratic Party of Ontario - www.ontariondp.ca

The Liberal Party of Ontario - www.ontarioliberal.ca

The Green Party of Ontario - www.gpo.ca

PARTY	WHAT IS A KEY MESSAGE THAT THE PARTY PROMOTES ON THEIR WEBSITE?
Progressive Conservatives	
NDP	
Liberals	
Green	

WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENCES THAT YOU NOTICED BETWEEN THE PARTIES?

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WHAT ARE SOME SIMILARITIES THAT YOU NOTICED BETWEEN THE PARTIES?

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ACTIVITY SHEET #2

CREATE YOUR OWN POLITICAL PARTY!

CREATE A POLITICAL PARTY

As a group, think of a catchy name that's easy to remember; develop a persuasive political platform and maybe even a marvelous motto!

Here are some things to consider as a group to create a strong party that aligns with your values:

What are the most important issues?

- What do you think is the most important issue that Ontario is facing right now?
- Ex. Deficit, poverty, climate change, education, etc.

What do you like about other parties?

- Policies you agree with
- Logo design, motto, party colour
- Specific MPPs
- Etc.

How would your party be different from the existing ones?

- Can't be an exact copy of another party
- What demographic groups do you want to reach?
- What are the demographic trends in your area?

WHY SHOULD WE VOTE FOR YOUR PARTY?

As a group, prepare a 2-5 minute presentation to give to the class

This presentation can be a speech or an ad campaign, but it must include:

- A mission statement
 - A mission statement is a concise paragraph outlining the main goal of your party
- Provide 2-3 key platform points for your party
 - A platform point is a plan of action for a political party if elected as government. Usually a party will highlight an issue and explain how they will solve it.

The point is to convince the public (your class) why they should vote for you! Be creative, and use things such as a motto and a name that reflects the party's values to create a unique party identity (colour, target audiences, etc.). Refer to things that caught your attention from the political parties you explored.

**THE
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