



POST-TOUR LESSON 2 **DEMOCRACY, OUR** **VALUES, OUR WORLDVIEW**

GRADES 9-12



Key Questions

- Why do we value democracy and choose it as our system of government?
- What does the importance we place on democracy say about our society's values and worldview?

Students will...

- Understand why we value democracy as a system of government.
- Make connections between what our society values, our worldviews, and our appreciation for and propensity to defend democracy.

Teacher Primer

Democracy is one way that countries can operate. Oftentimes, democratic societies defend their democracy ardently when it is threatened by internal or external sources. This connection between a society and its system of democracy can give us a glimpse into what a society values and a bit about its worldview, particularly the relationship between the governed and those who govern.

So, what does it say about our society that we value to pursue and protect our democracy? This lesson will have students look into important moments in Canadian history that involve democracy/democratic ideals. They will examine these moments to determine/extract learnings about Canadians' values and beliefs, and then consider what democracy means to them personally.

Set

Discuss with students the nature of democracy in Canada. Explain that the democracy we enjoy today has been a work in progress and there were times in Canadian history, not long ago, when Canada was a less inclusive place than it is now. However, there is still progress to be made in this area.

Development

To illustrate your point from the set about how Canadian democracy was never perfect but improved over time, there are many moments in Canadian history that you can choose to discuss. Below is a list of some of those events, along with a very brief explanation that might help you get the conversation started and keep it going:

Conscription Crisis (1917):

- Canadian government gave itself the right to force certain members of Canadian society into service in the war against Germany and her allies.

Wartime Elections Act and Military Voters Act (1917):

- Women in military service as well as female relatives of military men are allowed to vote.

Status Indian veterans allowed to vote (1924):

- Status Indian WWI veterans are allowed to vote in federal elections without having to give up their status or treaty rights.

Japanese-Canadian veterans in BC allowed to vote (1931):

- Japanese-Canadian veterans of WWI are allowed to vote in federal and provincial elections.

Dominion Franchise Act is passed (1934):

- Inuit and First Nations people living on reserve are disqualified from voting in federal elections.

Internment of Japanese Canadians (1942):

- Due to their potential connection to Japan, with whom Canada was at war in 1942, Japanese Canadians are put into camps to prevent them from engaging in sabotage. A similar situation happened with German/Austro-Hungarian/Turkish Canadians in 1914.

Development

Status Indian veterans allowed to vote (1944):

- Status Indian veterans and their spouses are allowed to vote in federal elections.

Chinese and South Asian people allowed to vote (1947):

- However, it would take until 1951 for all restrictions related to their voting to be lifted.

Dominions Elections Act is amended (1948):

- This change made race no longer grounds for exclusion in federal elections. However, Status Indians still had to give up their status and treaty rights to vote.

Inuit people are allowed to vote (1951):

- Inuit people are allowed to vote in federal elections.

First Nations people are allowed to vote (1960):

- First Nations people are allowed to vote in federal elections without giving up their status. They are still barred from voting in some provincial elections at this time.

Canadian Bill of Rights is passed (1960):

- This piece of legislation bound the federal government to guarantee civil rights and freedoms to Canadians.

Voting age is lowered to 18 (1970):

- Parliament passed legislation lowering the federal voting age from 21 to 18. This change increased the percentage of people eligible to vote.

Canada Act 1982 is passed (1982):

- This piece of legislation ended Britain's legislative jurisdiction over Canada, essentially once and for all making Canada truly "independent." That said, the Crown still plays a role in our democracy.

Development

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is passed (1982):

- This piece of legislation affirms that all Canadians 18 years and older can vote and can run in elections as candidates.

People with intellectual disabilities allowed to vote (1988):

- People with intellectual disabilities are allowed the right to vote after a challenge to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* worked its way through the courts.

What can be gleaned from the above events is that democracy in Canada was an evolution. Are there things that seem absurd to us today but were commonplace not that long ago?



Ask students if they had any reaction to any of the instances listed. For example, were any surprised that there was a time when certain groups could not vote or that certain groups were put into camps to "protect" Canada?

- Astonishment with the Canada of the past shows how our Canadian values have changed. Most Canadians would never consider reverting back to limiting access to democracy.

Using the “Canadian Democratic Events” worksheet, each student will choose one of the events listed to examine and consider in more depth. Determine a way to randomize/hand out/allow students to choose the event that they are to examine. This will depend on how the discussion went during the lesson. A simple way to do this is to quickly write shorthand versions of the events on the board for students to pick from. Hopefully an event from the discussion or just from seeing it on the board will pique their interest.

Development

When completing the "Canadian Democratic Events" worksheet, students should place a distinct focus on the "why and how" of the event. They should also consider why it is important to Canada's democracy/democratic values. In other words, what can the event teach us about how Canada's democracy was in the past and how it is today?

It is up to you to determine when the next assignment happens, as the length of time it takes your students to complete the "Canadian Democratic Events" worksheet is dependent on them as learners. Once they're finished, and as a final assignment of sorts for this entire group of lessons, hand out the "Why is Democracy Important" writing assignment. Explain the assignment to the students, encouraging them to draw on their learnings from lessons they've gone through already with you (or the tour that you may or may not have taken)!

Closure and Assessment

Give them adequate time, as you see fit, to complete the assignment.

- The assignment document has several pages for writing; print what you think you need for your students.

