Lesson Plan

Title: Elections and Voting

Author: Diane Vautour

Magazine Issue: This lesson is inspired by the articles "The Election Trail" and "Who Gets to Vote?" in the September 2024 issues of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids.*

Grade Level: 4, 5, 6

Themes:

- National Politics
- Other: Civics and Citizenship

Subject Area: Social Studies/Civics

Lesson Overview: How do elections work and who gets to vote? Students explore election facts using their initial thinking to guide them as they search for the facts to support claims in an anticipation guide. Then they examine some arguments for and against lowering the voting age and consolidate their learning by creating a product that convinces Canadians of the civic importance of voting.

Historical Thinking Concepts:

- Identify *continuity and change*

Background Information:

It won't be long before students in elementary school are able to help choose Canada's governments. It's a big responsibility. This lesson helps students learn basic facts about the history and process of Canada's elections, voting, and the responsibility of being an engaged citizen.

The Lesson Activity:

Activating

- Prepare an anticipation guide for students using the article "The Election Trail" in the Choosing Canada's Leaders issue of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids.* If you are not familiar with an anticipation guide, it is a learning strategy that is used <u>before reading</u> to activate students' prior knowledge and engage them in learning more about a topic. Write four to six short, declarative, thought-provoking statements about elections using

"The Election Trail" content to help you. Some statements should be true and some false. Include two sets of columns before and after the statement. One column should be labeled "Agree" and the other "Disagree." You can use the [Anticipation Guide Template](#) to help build this out.

Some examples of statements are:

» Anyone who is a Canadian citizen has always had the right to vote in Canadian elections.

» If you are under 18 years old, you cannot be added to any registry of voters in Canada.

» The Prime Minister of Canada has the power to call an election any time they want to.

» You need to have a certain amount of money in your bank account if you want to run as a candidate in a Canadian election.

» You must belong to a political party in order to run as a candidate in a Canadian election.

» There are rules about how much money you can spend on your election campaign.

» If you are not in Canada on election day, you can still vote.

» The party with the most votes wins the election.

» Anyone 18 years of age or older can vote in a Canadian election.

- Working in partners or small groups, students can compare their responses with one another. You can then lead a whole group discussion for students to share their thinking. After the group discussion, have students circle/indicate True or False in the last column.

Acquiring

- Direct students' attention to the statement about the mandatory voting age in Canada.

- As a class, review the list of reasons for and against lowering the voting age found on page 15 of *Kayak*.

- In partners or small groups, ask students to generate political issues teenagers could be concerned about at their age. They can write these issues on post-it notes and then post them in a visible location in the classroom or on small whiteboards or a digital shared file or app.

Some issues are:

>> children or youth rights

>> bullying

>> education (e.g. mandatory courses, graduation requirements, funding)

>> community safety

>> minimum wage

>> affordability

- In a whole group discussion, consider the issues students come up with and have students connect to the bigger discussion around the voting age.

- The article "It's My Right!" in the magazine discussing voting rights and responsibilities can be used to extend the discussion.

- If students generate more points against or for lowering the voting age, keep track of them in a visible location for students to reference.

- Ask students: Should the voting age be lowered to 16? The teacher can conduct a poll or vote in class or use a digital tool to survey the class. In a recent survey by Children First Canada, seven out of 10 kids said they were okay with the idea of lowering Canada's voting age to 16. Consider developing some numeracy skills by comparing the percentage of students in the class who favour lowering the voting age. Is it greater or lesser than 70%?

- Encourage students to participate in the issue's contest found on 31. Students can visit CanadasHistory.ca/VoiceYourVote to log their vote.

Applying

- Provide students with a fill in the blank paragraph to develop their opinion writing skills. Here is an example:

In my opinion, _____ is better than _____ because _____.
For example, _____. Furthermore, _____. Clearly, _____ is the worse option. I believe the best _____ is _____ for many reasons. The best thing about it is _____.
Also, _____ and _____. I think you will agree that _____. I prefer _____ because _____. For instance, _____. Also, _____. Finally, _____.*

*source

Extension Activity:

- Review and discuss the article "It's My Right!" on the rights and responsibilities of voting. This could be reading the story aloud as a class or students reading it together in small groups. In the story, Marianne did not grasp the importance of voting. There are many reasons her family shares with her to help change her mind.

- In partners or small groups, students can create a 30-second PSA/campaign/commercial/ad to encourage young people to vote using some of the reasons provided in the story and generating their own arguments as well.

- Provide time for students to generate a list of reasons and ideas for how to present them in a persuasive format for an audience of 18-year-old Canadian citizens. Students can perform their final products live in class, film them or audio record their products as well.

Name:_____

Date: _____

Elections in Canada

1. Mark whether or not you agree or disagree with each statement on the left side of the page before reading the article, "Election Trail."

2. After reading, go back and decide whether you still agree or disagree on the <u>right</u> side of the page.

3. Add in any relevant information under the statement that helps you to understand the content.

Agree	*Disagree*	Statement	<u>*Agree*</u>	<u>*Disagree*</u>
		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
		4.		
		5.		