Lesson Starters
Canadian Government Structure

Grade Level: 6–8

Subject: Social Studies

Channel: Canadian Government

Instructional Strategy: Vocabulary Scavenger Hunt

Possible Learning Objectives

- Understand the branches and structure of Canada’s federal government.
- Identify the steps by which laws are proposed and passed in Canada.
- Understand the structure of Canada’s provincial governments and their relationship to the federal government.
- Define and use key terms such as bill, executive, federal, judicial, legislative, local, parliament, prime minister, and province.

Teacher Notes

For Starters…
Ideas from DE to Kickstart Learning

Canadian Government: Vocabulary Scavenger Hunt

As you begin this lesson, display the following words: cabinet, executive, federal government, governor general, House of Commons, judicial, legislative, local government, minister, National Health, parliament, prime minister, province, provincial government, public service, queen, Senate, and territory. Have students work in pairs to discuss words whose meaning they know. Then, reconvene as a class. As needed, clarify any unfamiliar terms. Explain that you will play two video segments that include these terms, and students should clap the first time they hear each term used. Begin playing the segment “The Structure of Canada’s Government,” pausing after you hear the first clap. Discuss the first vocabulary word students heard and what it means, and have students relate the definition to Canada’s government. Repeat this process each time a word is used for the first time. Then, play the video segment “How Government Works,” following the same process to identify the vocabulary words. After you have finished playing the video, have students explain how the different branches, people, and institutions within Canada’s government function together. Clarify any terms or roles students struggled to explain or understand before watching the segments.

How Laws Are Made: ABC Summaries

As you begin this lesson, have students briefly tell what they know about the process by which laws are made in Canada. Assign each student a letter of the alphabet; depending on class size you may have to assign students more than one letter. Then, tell students they will watch a video that gives further information about how laws are made. Explain that they will have to use their assigned
letter to summarize something they learned. Play the video segment “How Laws Are Made,” directing students not to take notes but instead to focus on what they are watching. Play the video a second time, allowing students to take notes. Afterward, give students a few minutes to craft their summary statements. Reconvene the class to have students share their summaries.

**Provincial Governments: Fact Sheet**

Have students view the video segments “The Structure of Canada’s Government” and “The Provincial Government.” Afterward, discuss with students the structure and responsibilities of Canada's provincial governments. Display the following questions: How is the structure of provincial governments similar to that of the federal government? How are they different? Which people hold the most important roles within provincial governments? What services are provincial governments responsible for maintaining? How do they obtain money to fund these services? How would your life be different if there were no provincial governments? Discuss the answers together as a class. Then, invite students to work in small groups in Studio to create a fact sheet about provincial governments. Explain to students that their fact sheet should present information in a clear, organized way, so that a person unfamiliar with Canada's government could read it and easily understand the role of provincial governments. Host a session in which students present their fact sheets to the class.

**Target Vocabulary***

- **bill** – a draft of a law presented to a legislature for enactment; also: the law itself (the Gl bill)
- **cabinet** – a group of people who give advice to the leader of a government
- **executive** – belonging to the branch of government that is charged with such powers as diplomatic representation, superintendence of the execution of laws, and appointment of officials and that usually has some power over legislation (such as through veto) — compare judicial, legislative
- **federal** – of or relating to a form of government in which power is shared between a central government and individual states or provinces
- **governor general** – one who governs a large territory or has deputy governors under him or her
- **House of Commons** – the lower house of the British and Canadian Parliaments
- **judicial** – belonging to the branch of government that is charged with trying all cases that involve the government and with the administration of justice within its jurisdiction — compare executive, legislative
- **legislative** – belonging to the branch of government that is charged with such powers as making laws, levying and collecting taxes, and making financial appropriations — compare executive, judicial
- **local** – relating to or occurring in a particular area, city, or town
- **minister** – a person who represents his or her own government while living in a foreign country
- **National Health** – the public system of medical care in Britain that is paid for by taxes
- **parliament** – the supreme legislative body of a usually major political unit that is a continuing institution comprising a series of individual assemblages
- **prime minister** – the official head of a cabinet or ministry, especially the chief executive of a parliamentary government
- **province** – any one of the large parts into which some countries are divided
- **public service** – work that someone does as part of a government
- **queen** – a female monarch
- **Senate** – the smaller of the two groups of people who meet to discuss and make the laws of a country, state, or province
- **territory** – an area of land that belongs to or is controlled by a government

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