

## Democracy

"Democracy is a form of government that gives the people who are ruled by its laws and policies certain rights over the actions and careers of those in power."

A system of government in which people freely choose in elections who will govern them; the principles and ideals of such a government, including free speech and the rule of law.

## Lobbyist

"Institutions and groups also use lobbyists to deal with lawmakers."

A person hired to represent the interests of a pressure group by influencing policy decision makers in the group's favour.

## Ideology

"Canada is governed by one or more political parties... Most are organized around political and social principles – an ideology – that guide them in everything they do."

Political and social principles or beliefs.

## Direct democracy

"In the Greek city states, every eligible citizen participated directly by voting on all decisions that affected society. This was called direct democracy."

A system in which citizens vote directly on every issue.

## Representative democracy

"Instead, citizens in representative democracies such as Canada allow elected representatives to make decisions on their behalf."

A system in which citizens elect a politician who then makes decisions for them.

## Socialism

"Early socialism was a backlash against the industrial revolution and the resulting capitalist laissez-faire economy."

A political and economic system in which the means of production and distribution in a country are publicly owned and controlled for the benefit of all members of a society.

## Liberalism

"Liberalism began as a political theory that favoured individual freedom above all else."

: A political philosophy supporting individual freedoms and governmental protection of civil liberties.

## Conservatism

"Conservatism is less of an ideology than a stance taken against change, innovation and reform, and for maintaining established political and social institutions"

A political philosophy supporting traditional values and institutions and opposing sudden change.

## **Totalitarian**

“Totalitarian governments are authoritarian, as opposed to democratic, and control every aspect of life within a country – its culture, religion, government, and economy”

A form of government that uses intimidation, violence, and propaganda to rule all aspects of the social and political life of its citizens.

## **Authoritarian**

“Totalitarian governments are authoritarian, as opposed to democratic, and control every aspect of life within a country – its culture, religion, government, and economy”

A form of government in which one individual or small group holds all the power and directs the lives of citizens.

## **Communism**

Communist ideology is based on the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels... who believed that the ruling class should be overthrown by the working class.”

A social and economic ideology that believes property, production, and distribution of goods and services should be owned by the public, and that the labour force should be organized for the benefit of all members of society.

## **Fascism**

“Fascism was born after the First World War, a period of time that was particularly unstable. It originated in Italy under the leadership of Benito Mussolini.”

An authoritarian system of government that exercises complete power, suppresses opposition, often through use of force, and encourages nationalism and racism.

## **Political spectrum**

“A political spectrum is a visual used to illustrate how various political ideologies relate to one another.”

A linear visual used to illustrate political ideologies, from left to right.

## **Party platform**

“A party platform is a list of priorities and a plan for governing published by a political party.”

A list of priorities and a plan for governing published by a political party.

## **Patronage**

“Patronage refers to the giving, by premiers and prime ministers particularly, of offices and rewards in return for loyalty or favours to the party.”

A favour, often a government position, given in return for political support.

## **Senate**

“Members of the Senate are appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the prime minister.”

The second legislative body in Parliament consisting of appointed members whose role is to give sober second thought to the passage of bills.

## **Cabinet**

“The Cabinet initiates laws, and its ministers are responsible for the smooth running of government and the spending of public money.”

The group of ministers chosen by the prime minister who decide government policy, each Cabinet minister has a responsibility for a particular department.

## **House of Commons**

“Members of the House of Commons are elected by citizens in general elections.”

The first legislative body of parliament whose members are elected.

## **Cabinet solidarity**

“Publicly, Cabinet ministers must display full support for the prime minister and the decisions of the government. This show of strength is called Cabinet solidarity.”

The custom that Cabinet members must not show disagreement with government policies.

## **Order-in-Council**

“Orders-in Council make laws or regulations without the necessity of a parliamentary vote.”

An order signed by the Governor General (or Lieutenant-Governor in the provinces) on the advice of the prime minister (or premier) and Cabinet, allows laws and regulations to be passed without a parliamentary vote.

## **Royal assent**

“A bill becomes law... after it goes through three readings in the House of Commons, is amended by a committee, has three readings in the senate... and royal assent.”

The final stage a bill must complete before it is passed into law in which the Governor General (or Lieutenant-Governor in the provinces) signs or grants approval for the bill.

## **Lieutenant-Governor**

“Bills introduced in the provincial legislature must also undergo three readings and are passed into law by the Lieutenant-Governor who represents the monarch”

The provincial representative of the Crown appointed by the Governor General.

## **Party whip**

“The party whip makes sure that members of his or her party are in the House of Commons (or legislature...) for important votes and vote as the party requires.”

A member of the legislature assigned the specific role of ensuring all members of his or her party are present in the legislature to support party interests.

## **Party discipline**

“Whips have various ways to enforce discipline, but mostly they persuade their fellow party members to put the interests of the party first.”

All party members voting the same way, as one voice.

## Free vote

“Free votes allow members to vote on legislation according to their own conscience,”

Members vote according to their own conscience.

## Private member's bill

“Most bills are introduced by Cabinet ministers... If the member is not in the Cabinet, the bill is referred to as a private member's bill.”

A bill introduced into the legislature by a member of the legislature who is not a member of the Cabinet.

## Majority government

“A majority government can implement its policies and can govern without much compromise. But parties do not always win majorities.”

A government in which the ruling party has more than half of the total number of seats in the legislature.

## Minority government

“Minority governments have to compromise to stay in power.”

A government in which the ruling party has more seats than any other party, but the other parties combined have more seats than the government.

## Coalition

“Sometimes, several small parties oppose the government but, individually, none is strong enough to threaten it. When this occurs... they can form a coalition”

A formal alliance of political parties.

## Prorogue Parliament

“To prorogue Parliament means to suspend it for a period of time until the opening of another session.”

To suspend Parliament for a period of time upon the prime minister's request to the Governor General.

## Dissolve Parliament

“A parliament ends when the Governor General (or Lieutenant-Governor in the provinces) dissolves it, which is... done at the prime minister's (or premier's) request.”

: To call an end to a sitting Parliament, at the request of the prime minister (or premier) to the Governor General (or Lieutenant-Governor in the province); followed by a general election.

## Electoral district, riding, constituency

“Representation in the House of Commons is based on geographical divisions known as electoral districts, commonly called ridings or constituencies.”

A geographical area of a given size or population used as a unit in elections.

## **Voter apathy**

“One of the most worrying trends in Western democracies is that voter apathy, the reluctance of people to vote, is increasing.”

Reluctance or lack of interest in voting.

## **Nomination**

“Since the person’s nomination papers must have the leader’s signature, all candidates must be acceptable to the party leadership.”

Choosing a candidate to run for office.

## **Enumeration**

“Enumeration: A national list of voters is compiled.”

Process of compiling a list of voters.

## **Balloting**

“Voting or balloting: Eligible voters visit polling stations to register and cast their vote.”

Voting.

## **Tabulating**

“Tabulating: Votes are counted and a winning candidate is declared for each constituency or riding.”

Counting votes.