

Canadian Electoral System

Socials 10

Electoral System

There are **6** stages of an election in Canada.

DISSOLUTION is the opening stage of an election. During this stage the Prime Minister asks the Governor General to dissolve the House of Commons. The session of parliament comes to an end, and MPs effectively lose their job.

ENUMERATION is the second stage of an election. During this stage the Chief Electoral Officer prepares a voter list.

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NOMINATION is the third stage of an election. Candidates are selected by political parties in each riding.

CAMPAIGNING is the fourth stage of an election. Candidates are given media coverage, and they campaign to promote their party platform.

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BALLOTING is the fifth stage of an election. Voters go to the polling station, and vote for a candidate to represent their riding in the House of Commons.

TABULATION is the sixth stage of an election. Votes are counted, and results are shared with the media. National results are usually published on election night, but individual ridings may take several days if there are recounts. Results from British Columbia come last!

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There are many political parties in Canada, but these are the most important at the federal level . . .

- **CONSERVATIVE PARTY**
- **LIBERAL PARTY**
- **NDP**
- **BLOC QUEBECOIS**
- **GREEN PARTY**

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MPs are selected based on a **FIRST PAST THE POST** electoral system.

This means that the candidate with the most votes in each riding is declared the winner. The party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons forms the government.

The government party does not need to have a majority of the popular vote!

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There are **3** types of government in Canada.

A **MAJORITY GOVERNMENT** occurs when a political party wins more than half of the seats in the House of Commons.

With party discipline, this government can pass legislation without needing support from the opposition parties.

Some Canadians want majority governments because they are more effective!

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A MINORITY GOVERNMENT occurs when a political party wins more seats in the House of Commons than any other political party, but not more than all the opposition parties added together.

This government has less power because it cannot pass legislation without support from the opposition parties.

Some Canadians want minority governments because they are forced to work with the opposition, and therefore they are more accountable to the people!

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A COALITION GOVERNMENT occurs when no political party wins more than half of the seats in the House of Commons. Under these conditions several parties join together, and select a Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers.

This government can be powerful, but it all depends on the ability of the coalition to work together.

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There are several methods that Canadians can use to influence their government

- **VOTE!**
- **PETITION** by sending a message to your MP, MLA, or City Councillor.
- Hire a **LOBBYIST**.
- Join a **SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**.
- Start a **MEDIA CAMPAIGN**.
- Appeal a government decision by taking **COURT ACTION**.
- Protest