

CANADA VOTES

2019

FEDERAL ELECTION





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INTRODUCTION

This Federal election teacher guide contains answer keys and suggestions for additional activities. We have also included a separate section with basic information about the Federal government.

The student activities section presents basic information followed by guided activities. These activities reinforce the information and allow the students scope for further exploration. The activities are also an opportunity for expanded classroom work. They have graduated levels of difficulty. The most complex activities are in this guide. This makes the materials useful both at senior elementary and all high school levels. Some students may find the work challenging. Pairing students is one way to deal with this issue.

Lower grades may require additional guidance. Even the more difficult activities can be used as group work, both as research or group presentations or as the basis for class activities. Regardless, you can adjust and adapt the activities to make them easier, harder, or add more depth as suits your class.

The reading level of this kit is about grade 8-9. Reading levels of students at any one grade can vary widely. Typically, in an unstreamed Grade 9 classroom, reading levels may range from grade 4 to senior high school.

The student resource is divided into sections by topic. Each section starts with a brief outline of the basic facts, followed by a series of activities. You may use the sections in any order, or use all or some of the sections, whatever approach is most suitable for your classroom.

Each section can be the basis for a stand-alone lesson plan. You may want to use the material in one section for a single lesson or build the week's activities around it. The activities can be done in class to introduce a class discussion. They can be used as homework, or for individual or group research. You can further enhance the learning with the additional activities and suggestions in this guide.

This resource includes research, written and spoken word activities. There are also alternative expressions of learning, such as art and media presentations. Activities may also be used as the basis for essays or projects, or individual or group class presentations. Considering how tight timelines in today's classroom are, many of these activities can be assigned as homework. You can also use the activities presented as a culminating activity.

The written activities often suggest students exchange their work with others. That permits peer editing, and collaborative rewrites. Students often learn more from teaching others than by researching and studying on their own. Monitor student interactions to ensure that they are both civil and respectful.

One spoken word activity suggestion: some activities ask students to explain how they stand on an issue. They could present their answer as an oral presentation and add a PowerPoint presentation. Some students might like to present their ideas in the form of a poem or rap. Poetry Slams are popular and could be worked into some of these activities. For more media savvy students, preparing a video or an audio or video blog might generate enthusiasm.



ELECTIONS AND OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Answer Key

1. She is also the Queen of Canada. Most currencies carry images of Heads of State or historical figures.
2. Since the Queen does not live in Canada, someone must represent her here on a daily basis. That is the Governor-General. His or her duties are largely symbolic. The key duties are to sign legislation into law (Royal Assent), and on advice from the Prime Minister, call elections and appoint the Prime Minister after elections. The Governor-General takes no action unless on advice of the Prime Minister. This is an opportunity to explain the role of tradition in the parliamentary government. The Sovereign and her Governor-General on paper have real power. For example, the Sovereign or Governor-General could withhold Royal Assent for legislation. The Sovereign or Governor-General could also dismiss the Prime Minister and government, appoint others to be Prime Minister and form the government without an election. By tradition, they do not use these powers.
3. The Head of State in Canada is the Sovereign or her representative, the Governor-General. The Head of Government is the Prime Minister, who actually runs the government. Other countries use a similar approach. France and Germany have a President as Head of State with largely symbolic powers. The Head of Government is the Prime Minister or Chancellor. The American form of government combines those positions into one, the president.
4. Responsible Government means that the executive branch of government is responsible to parliament. The government must answer for its actions to parliament. Governments stay in power only as long as they have the approval of the majority of members of parliament.
5. The change to a fixed date for elections happened under the previous Harper government. They passed a revised Canada Elections Act. Since May 2007 general elections are held the third Monday of October every four years.
6. Under the original rules for elections, the government could call an election at any time. This allowed them to pick election times that would give them an advantage among the voters. The opposition parties argued that this was unfair and should be changed. A further minor advantage of fixed dates was that it allows provinces to schedule their elections so that they would not overlap. Most provinces now also have fixed date elections.
7. The inherent difficulty with the new Election Act is that the old rules for calling elections still apply. The government can still call an election whenever it deems it advantageous. It must still call elections if it loses a vote of confidence or a vote on a major financial bill.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- If time permits, have students look up the King-Byng Affair. It was one of the last times a Governor-General made decisions on the running of the country. It is one way to explain why the Sovereign or her representatives today do not take an active role in government.
- Although not directly on topic, students could also debate the issue whether Canada should still support the monarchy. Do we need a Queen or King? What alternatives could we consider?
- The number of ridings has increased over the years. In

1867, there were 181 federal ridings in four provinces. Today there are 338 ridings in 10 provinces. While new provinces needed new ridings, why has the government added ridings to existing provinces? Would it not be simpler to fix the number of MPs and redraw riding borders? What are the rules for the size of ridings?

- We elect MPs. Why don't we elect the Senate?
- In American elections, claims of voter fraud have been made. What steps does Elections Canada take to assure that the vote is legitimate?



THE VOTE

Students may have difficulty understanding that a candidate could win an election without receiving more than half the votes cast in a riding. Use this simple example to explain: Imagine there are 10 voters to elect a candidate in a riding. Four political parties run candidates. The candidate for Party A receives four votes. Party B's candidate receives one vote. Candidates for Party C two votes and for Party D three votes. The candidate for Party A received the most votes and wins the election, even without having received a majority of the votes.

If you then consider that voter turnout is usually less than two thirds of those eligible to vote, you can have a government elected by fewer than 40% of eligible voters.

Getting Elected

1. By 1920 the government made the right to vote universal, but continued to exclude aboriginal people and some visible minorities. The original election act considered race a reason for withholding the right to vote. Among those effected were immigrants of Japanese and Chinese origin. Political leaders of the day argued that because they were not of British origins, they could not truly understand British feelings or aspirations. Thus, they withheld their right to vote. (They also made it very difficult for Asian people to immigrate to Canada). People of Chinese origins finally received the right to vote in 1947, and Japanese in 1949. Until 1960, aboriginal people could only vote if they gave up their "Indian Status". Only after 1960 were all aboriginal people allowed to vote, without giving up their native status. Black individuals were technically British subjects and as such always had the same rights to vote as anyone else. Before 1920 a black man who could meet property qualifications could vote. When women gained the right to vote that included black women. However, difficulties regarding registering to vote and racism at times made exercising these rights difficult.
2. Elections in Canada before the 1920s were not the strictly controlled, fair and legitimate affairs that modern elections are. With voting by show of hands, buying votes was not uncommon. Originally, the provinces produced voters lists, even for federal elections. Some voters were deliberately left off and many dubious voters added. It took a long time to eliminate the various corrupt practices. The secret ballot was one major step in that direction.
3. You could use this question to introduce the concept of fairness in voting rights.
4. The voting rights discussion would lead right into this question. Originally, one had to be twenty-one or older to vote. Now it is 18 or older. Some argue that 16 - 17-year-olds are better educated and more aware of politics in this country than ever before. There's no right answer to this question. It has the potential for an interesting debate.
5. You probably won't need any special equipment for this activity. Most cell phones can make videos, and video editing software is available free on the internet. This is a chance for your students to become creative. Students can write the script and draw the storyboard, all before shooting the commercial.
6. Answers will vary. The letter writing is an opportunity to make students aware that newspapers also allow the public a voice through the Letters to the Editor.
7. Answers will vary. Depending on the sophistication of your class you could compare the presidential systems of government in other countries. In the parliamentary system, prime ministers are elected as simply another Member of Parliament. They become Prime Minister because they were chosen by members of their party to be party leader. In presidential systems, the candidate for president runs for that specific position.



AN ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

The list of smaller parties without seats is not complete. Consider having students complete the list. Have them compare the platforms of these parties to the major parties.

Consider having a debate of the merits of a minority government. We have had several in the past, and some critics think they can be very productive.

Some students are interested in music or poetry. Have them produce a rap song supporting a reduced voting age or presenting the struggle for the right to vote. Rap music originally was a form of protest song combining poetry and music, and ideally suited to this topic.

Voting Systems - An optional topic

If time permits, have students examine some alternatives to the FPTP voting system. Smaller parties like the NDP and Green Party often receive fewer seats in parliament than their popular support would suggest. There are ways of voting that give all political parties a more even chance and make it more likely that all voters' voices will be heard. Here are two examples.

Australia uses the Ranked Ballot system. Voters don't pick just one candidate from the ballot. Instead, they rank all candidates on the ballot in order of preference. There is only one vote held; alternative choices are right on the ballot. If no candidate wins 50% +1 votes, the candidate with the fewest first choice votes drops from the ballot. The votes for second choice on the dropped candidate's ballots are added to the remaining candidates' ballots. That process continues until one candidate has 50% +1 of the votes.

New Zealand and Germany use the Mixed Member Proportional system. Voters cast two ballots, one for the local candidate, and a second one for a party. Candidates win seats under the FPTP system. However, a separate group of seats is set aside. The parties fill those seats with candidates they chose. They are seated in proportion of the popular vote each party received. For example, under this system, our Green Party would have received an additional 10 seats, to reflect the percentage of the national vote.

A referendum on introducing the Ranked Ballot System for Ontario was rejected in 2007. Attempts to change the voting system in several other provinces were also rejected by voters.

Our "First Past the Post" voting system may become an election issue this time. At the previous election, Prime Minister Trudeau had as part of his election platform a promise to change the system. If there's time in class, you might want to consider a debate on the advantages and disadvantages of our system compared to the Ranked Ballot and Mixed Member Proportional systems.



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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Our voting system has one major advantage: it is easy to explain. Write a brief letter to someone new to our country, explaining our voting system.
2. In the last two elections, the winning party became the government with over half the seats in the House of Commons but received 40% or less of the votes across Canada. Two smaller parties, the NDP and the Green Party received fewer seats than the percentage of the popular vote would suggest. How can the system be made fairer?
3. Use the Elections Canada, Toronto Star, and Maclean's Magazine websites to explain alternative voting systems. (Maclean's Magazine, June 16, 2016)
4. In your work groups, divide the list up and have each group research one voting method. Create posters which explain the advantages and disadvantages of that system.
5. France has run-off elections when a candidate wins but does not receive 50% + 1 of the total votes cast. The candidate with the lowest number of votes drops off the ballot, and there is a new vote. This is repeated until the first candidate wins 50% + 1 of the votes in that riding. This system is simple to understand. What reasons might governments have for not wanting to use such a system?

(www.elections.ca; www.thestar.com; www.macleans.ca)





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Elections

1. The main reason other parties objected to the idea of the governing party being able to call elections at any time was that the party in power could pick a time for the election that was most advantageous to themselves.
2. Student answers will vary. The key points to look for are: a fixed date removes the element of advantage that choosing a date for election would give the governing party. For all parties, that fixed date means they can prepare well in advance of the election. That allows for pre-election campaigning and advertising as well as fundraising.

Political Parties

1. The student activity contains a definition from the Canada Election Act: *“an organization one of whose fundamental purposes is to participate in public affairs by endorsing one or more of its members as candidates and supporting their election.”*
2. When defining “Party Platform” students should understand that the platform is a way for a party to gather voters support. It would also be an opportunity to discuss the fact that a political platform is merely aspirational. It is not a promise that the elected party will actually have to keep.
3. Answers will vary from school to school.
4. This activity can be completed by students in groups, in pairs or individually. The activity could also become a homework project.

An additional activity: have students select one political party and draw an election poster for that party.





THE ISSUES IN 2019

1. Any of the headings could become a major issue in the election. Certainly, each political party will have a position on every one of these topics. Students can source their information from their local newspaper, various other media, and online sources. They should also look at the official party web sites, party advertising, and any public statements by candidates or party leaders.
2. This asks students to examine the issues further to decide which ones are the most important to them and to each party. They should outline the arguments surrounding each issue.
3. This is the summary activity. Students will consolidate the information about the party platforms and present that information in the form of a chart or table.
4. The answers will be largely a matter of opinion. During the actual election the amount of money anyone can donate to any one party or candidate is limited. However, prior to elections, parties can fundraise with few restrictions. Some would argue that sizable donations from any one group might influence a party.

There's an opportunity for an additional discussion at this point. The funding of election campaigns has been an issue of some controversy. Corporate and special interest group donations may have a significant influence on the stands a political party takes on issues. Discuss the influence of money on political parties, and the idea that election campaigns should be funded from the public purse.

Issues in Detail

These activities expand on political platforms and election issues. They are presented in no particular order. These issues are evolving over time. Have students monitor the news to update the issues and the parties' stand. Each issue could be used for a classroom debate or as individual or group research projects.

Students can obtain basic information about the pipeline issue using any search engine with the keywords "pipelines Canada". They can find information on "Cap and Trade" the same way. For statistical data such as the GNP or national debt, direct students to the Statistics Canada website.

Writing editorials or columns can be used as an exercise in persuasive writing. Students can edit each other's work, write opposing ideas, even use the editorial or column as the basis for a debate.

Making Choices

This is an opportunity for the class to discuss which candidate and party they prefer. The Vote Compass website allows students to see which party's ideas aligned most closely with their own preferences.

It is also an opportunity to discuss how to pick a candidate or party. The student activity section gives some suggestions on how to do that.

The culminating activity would be to hold a mock election in the class. Have the work groups prepare posters for each political party explaining why the party deserves their vote. Follow that with a class discussion on the content of those posters and which party might better serve the interests of the voters. Conclude the activity by holding a secret ballot vote. If other classes are interested, consider having a mock vote for the entire school. Each work group could prepare posters for one party. With permission, they could display them around the school before the mock vote.

It would be interesting to see how support for the different parties compares to the actual vote in the Federal election.



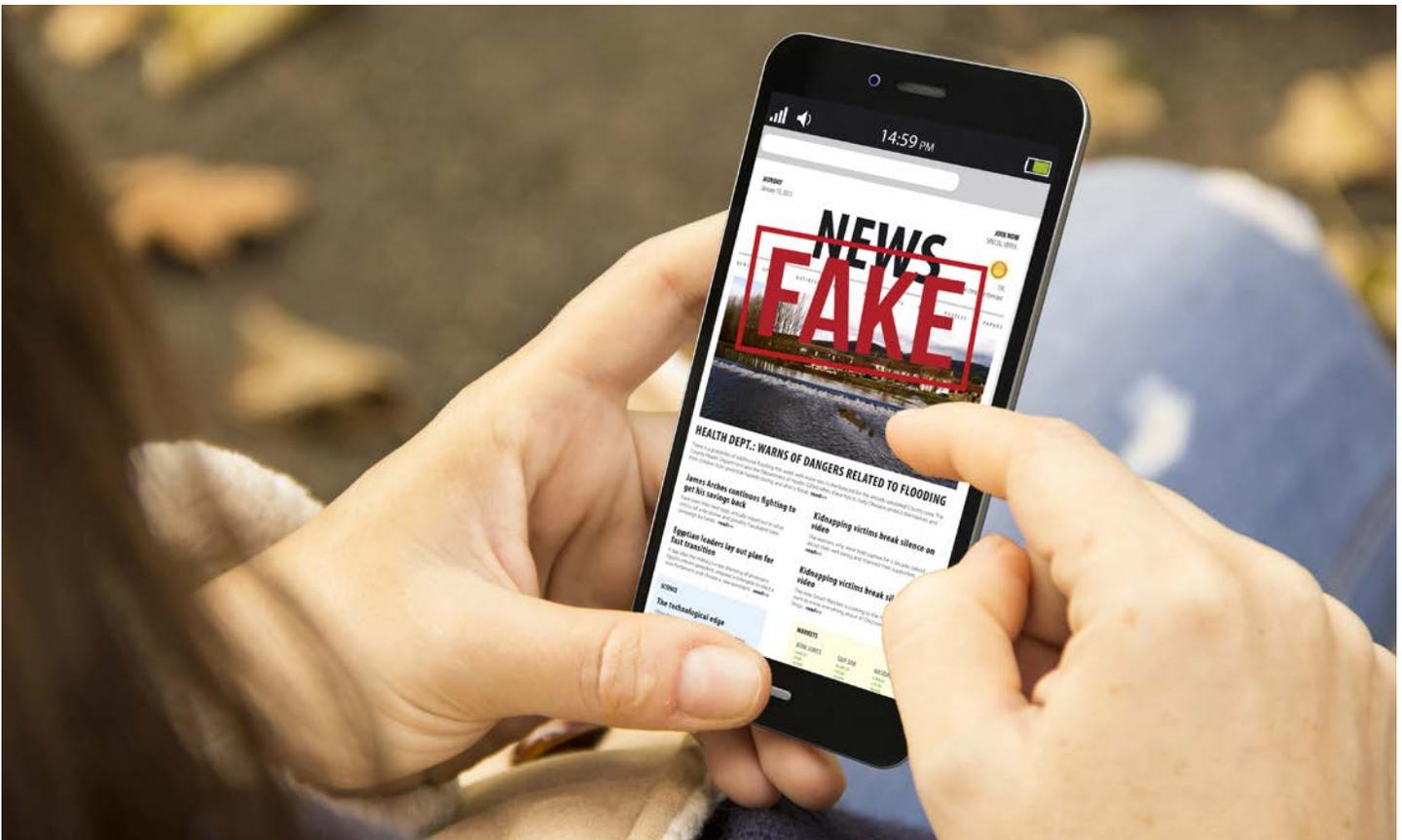
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Fake News

The activities in this section give students some tools for identifying fake or misleading news and news sites. Fake news has become an increasingly significant issue in several countries. There is little doubt that some groups have attempted to interfere with the election process. They either try to disrupt the process, or influence voters towards or away from a candidate or party. There is every reason to suspect that this will happen in the current Canadian election.

In addition to the suggestions in the activities, have students search online (including social media platforms) for the name of a party or candidate and examine the sites that are listed in the search results. They will find both official party websites, as well as postings favouring or opposing other candidates and parties. Have them examine some of the sites opposing a candidate or party. Find out who's responsible for the posting, and what their credentials are. That may be an opportunity to look at bias or misleading information. It is also an opportunity to use the various fact-checking websites to verify the posted information.

Reading the URL of websites is one way to evaluate legitimacy. The .org, .gov, and .edu websites are generally trustworthy. They are respectively organization, government, and educational institution websites. URLs for websites in other countries usually end in country initials. Some of these may not be trustworthy.





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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

These forms will help summarize where parties stand on various issues.

ISSUE	PARTY PLATFORM
	Bloc Quebecois
	Conservative Party of Canada
	Green Party of Canada
	Liberal Party of Canada
	New Democratic Party
	Other Party:



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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Party Platform

Party: _____

ISSUE	POSITION



RUNNING FOR ELECTION - A SIMULATION

This simulation will show students how to organize a political campaign, create a political platform, and run for election. Students will run for the position of member of parliament for the local area. The group and individual student work, at least in part, should be done in class. That will allow you to provide some direction and guidance. Some work can also be done as homework. The timelines suggested are flexible and can be adjusted as required. As preparation, discuss with your class how parties prepare a platform, and how elections work.

Consider running the simulation twice. That will allow students a chance to try different roles. After the simulation, ask students to write a brief report about what worked in the simulation, how it could be improved or how they would change it. Such a review will show you how well they understood the materials and the simulation.

THE ELECTION GAME

Three Riding Associations

Select three groups of four students. Each group forms a party riding association. They will select a candidate from their group and organize the election campaign.

Each riding association will:

- Elect the person who will run for their party.
- Discuss and prepare a platform of at least three ideas that they think will attract voters. Have the groups browse news stories about current or past elections for ideas and visit political parties' websites. Their platform should include issues important to all Canadians. It could include lowering the voting age to 16, gun control, immigration, environmental issues such as banning single use plastics.
- When the platform is completed, the candidate prepares a speech with the help of the group to present their campaign ideas to the class.
- The riding association will prepare at least one election poster promoting their platform.
- The riding association will prepare flyers or brochures to hand out to other students to promote their platform.





RUNNING FOR ELECTION - A SIMULATION

THE REMAINDER OF THE CLASS WILL BE:

An Advertising Agency: (6 or more)

- Three teams of two or more students who will each work with one party to write and shoot a video ad promoting that party.

An All Candidates Meeting Organizer (1 student)

- One student will organize and chair an all-candidates meeting, where the candidates promote their platform. They could also argue that the other candidates' platforms are not as good as they seem. The voters (the class) ask candidates to justify their platform.

Class newspaper reporters: (3 or more)

- They will attend and report on the all-candidates meeting for the three parties.
- The reporters will also interview the candidates in class, questioning them about their platform.
- The reporters will then write a newspaper-style story about their interview and share those with the class.

Polling stations staff: (3 or more)

- They will select one Returning Officer to run the polls and two poll clerks. They will prepare a voters list. All students are eligible to vote, but they must register with the polling staff before voting day. The students must show some ID to be put on the voters list.
- Polling station staff will prepare the ballots, ballot boxes, and count the votes during the election.

The remaining students:

- They are interested voters. They should research the candidates' platforms. They should look for errors or contradictions in the platforms.
- They attend interviews and speeches from candidates and ask questions about the platform.





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RUNNING FOR ELECTION - A SIMULATION

TIMELINE:

Day One (60 minutes)

- Students divide into groups and work on preparing their roles.

Day Two (60 minutes) (In class preparation work.)

- Candidates prepare and distribute handouts and put up posters.
- Polling staff prepare the voters' list and make ballots and a ballot box.
- All students register on the voters list and research the candidates' platforms.

Day Three - The Campaign: (2 x 45 minutes)

- In the morning, the candidates will make a speech to the class about their platforms.
- The reporters write stories for or against any platform issues presented, and hand them out to the class. All students continue to research the candidates' platforms.
- In the afternoon, the class has an all-candidates meeting. The candidates debate the issues and the class has a chance to ask questions.

Day Four - Voting Day: (60 minutes)

- The polling station holds the vote. All voters must be checked off on the voters' list.
- Each candidate appoints a scrutineer to watch the counting of the ballots.
- The Returning Officer reports the results of the vote to the class.

Follow-up exercise:

- Have the reporters run a class discussion, where students can explain what worked in the various campaigns, and why they voted for a candidate.
- With three candidates, it is likely no one candidate received a majority of votes. Discuss how the FPTP vote makes it difficult for any one candidate to win a majority of the votes when there are three or more parties running. The discussion could be an interesting way to introduce voting system options.

TEST YOUR POLITICAL PROWESS



ACROSS

1. Runs for election
5. Longterm weather
6. Electoral district
7. Where we govern
9. Member of Parliament
11. How we vote
13. How we pay for government

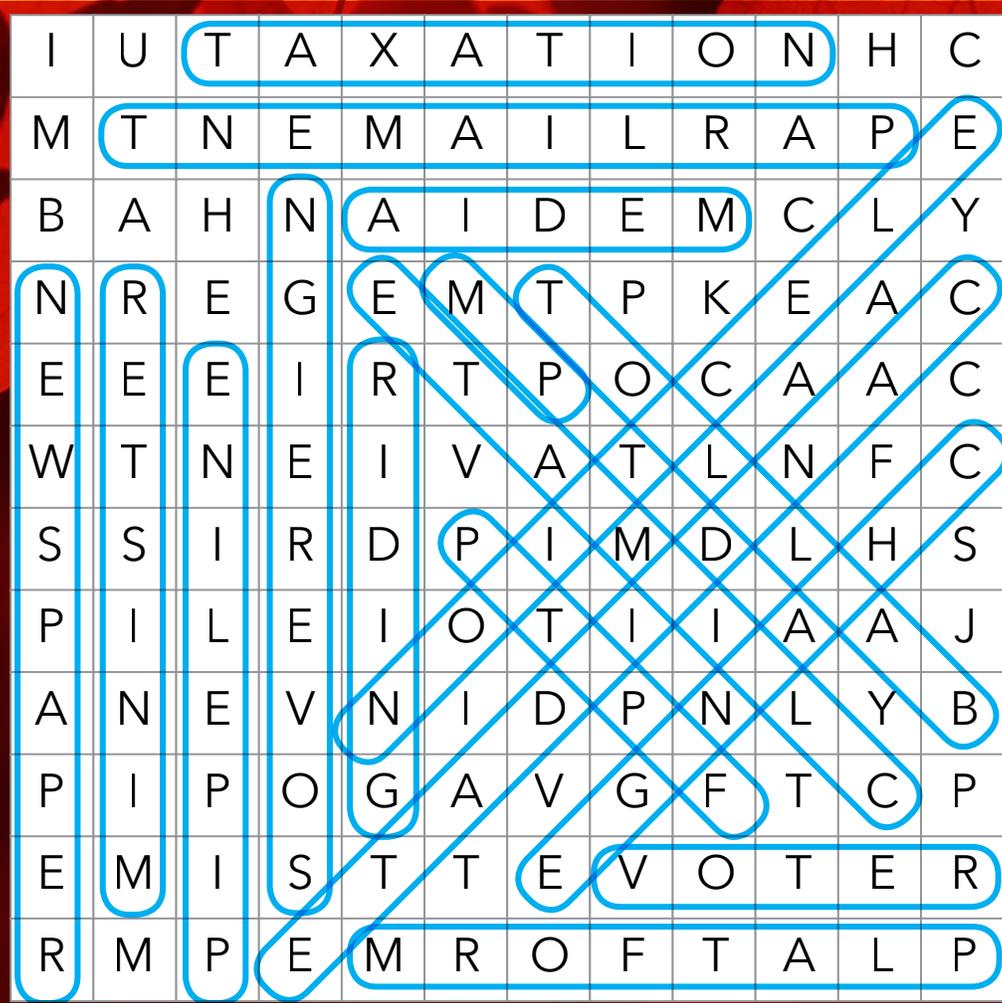
15. Our current voting system

17. Climate ...
18. King or Queen
20. Small party
21. Election issue out west
22. Political party

DOWN

2. The Toronto Star for example
3. A form of news, not.
4. Prime ...
6. Riding
8. Source of information
10. Election promises
11. Quebec party
12. Current governing party
14. How we get our government
16. People who choose
19. Political party

VOTE 2019 WORD SEARCH



FIND THE WORDS LISTED BELOW

BALLOT

CLIMATE

FPTP

MP

PIPELINE

SOVEREIGN

CANDIDATE

ELECTION

MEDIA

NEWSPAPER

PLATFORM

TAXATION

CHANGE

FAKE

MINISTER

PARLIAMENT

RIDING

VOTER