



Chalk Talk

Greetings | Feature | News | VOTING

PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Educators,

In October 1993, the Toronto Blue Jays won the World Series for the second time in two years. The next day my husband and I boarded a plane for Greece on a long-awaited trip that would take us to Athens, Santorini and Crete. A federal election was to be held a few days later so we made sure that we voted in the advance polls.

This was long before widespread availability of email, and the internet, and well before cell phones. At that time if you were travelling in Europe, the best way to get 'news' was to read the Herald Tribune. Before we left Canada, the national polls were showing that the race was too close to call, so it was with great interest that we waited to find out the results of what turned out to be a particularly memorable election.



We were on the island of Santorini, believed by some to be the site of Plato's legendary Atlantis. With its blue and white buildings and iconic windmills perched on sunbaked cliffs, this gorgeous semicircular shaped island surrounds and overlooks a live volcano which sits amid the glittering deep blue water of the Aegean Sea spewing smoke and sulphur. A six hour ferry ride from Athens, the Tribune is delayed by two days. Still unaware of the outcome of the election, we spent an afternoon on a quiet beach with one small restaurant.

When the owner and chief cook of the eatery noticed our Canadian flag pins, he became quite animated. Our Greek is almost non-existent but in English, he repeated — 'You, Canadian?'. We nodded 'Yes'. 'ELECTION', he exclaims. 'Yes, Election' we reply. Then he simply says — 'Two'. 'Two?' — what does this mean? 'Yes' he repeats, 'Canadian — Election — Two' and with this he holds out two fingers in what looks like the Peace or Victory sign, but he insists, 'TWO, just TWO'. Confused, we later stop at a newspaper stand in the middle of town to see if the Herald Tribune has arrived. It has. Its headline screams — CANADIAN ELECTION UPSET, RULING PARTY REDUCED TO 2 SEATS! Its pages were filled with political commentary from around the world.

Voting matters. It can change everything. This week's **Chalk Talk** features a variety of free classroom resources from Elections Canada. CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers. Visit our website at www.4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Your feedback is welcome.](#)

Mary Kovack

Elections Canada — Resources for Teachers



Voting is a learned behaviour that develops early in childhood. As educators, you play a crucial role in shaping their world and in instilling lifelong values, behaviours and responsibilities in Canadian youth that, in turn, influence them to become active citizens.

Elections Canada offers elementary, high school and ESL teachers, a [variety of educational resources](#), tools, activities, teachers' guides and historical information for students of all ages. With your guidance, these resources will spark their interest in voting and make voting a habit for future generations.

Order in print format or download from elections.ca:

- **Choosing our Mascot** simulation kit — Kindergarten to Grade 4
- **Canada at the Polls!** simulation kit — grades 5 to 12
- **I Can Vote!** voting guide — All levels and ESL
- **A History of the Vote in Canada** — Teachers' resource

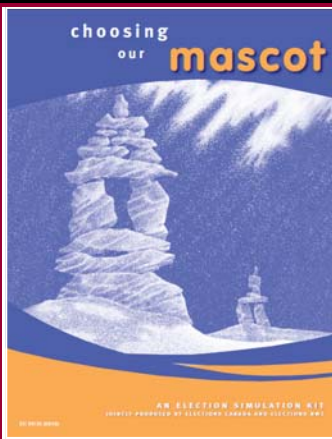
The [Youth](#) section of Elections Canada's website is loaded with information for students who want to know more about elections. They can look up the answers to election basics or dig deeper to find information on Canada's electoral system. Encourage them to go online and have a look around.



Elections Canada thanks you, as educators, for making these resources part of your curriculum, and we hope that these educational tools will encourage young people to develop a life-long habit of participating in Canadian democracy and shaping their world. If you have questions about these resources or wish to order them for use in your classroom, click [here](#), or call us at 1-800-463-6868.

For more information on individual resources, see the feature below.

It's never too early to start the discussion!



Choosing Our Mascot Election Simulation kit For Kindergarten to Grade 4

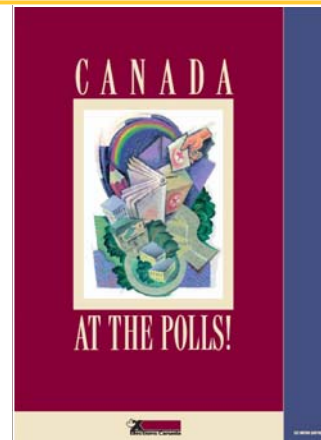
Choosing Our Mascot, developed by Elections Canada, Elections NWT and Elections Nunavut, introduces children aged 5 to 10 to the Canadian electoral process and the concept of voting. It provides a hands-on experience that teaches them what an election is and how to vote. The simulation is designed not only to show young people the impact of their vote, but also to underline the importance of respecting a person's right to exercise free choice. Five animals from the Canadian North have been chosen as the candidates in this election.

To [order](#) this resource, or to view online, click [here](#).

Canada at the Polls! Election Simulation kit and student council election guide For grades 5 to 12

By teaching young people about the electoral process, we hope they will not only learn the basic principles of Canadian democracy, but will also develop greater appreciation for exercising their democratic rights – including the right to vote. The “Guide for the School Election Officer” provides hands-on learning and an added opportunity to convey the importance of running a fair and transparent election within a system that impacts young peoples’ day-to-day lives. *Canada at the Polls!* is the product of successful co-operation between Elections Canada and professional educators.

To order this resource, click [here](#).



I Can Vote! A user-friendly guide to voting in Canada For all levels and ESL learners

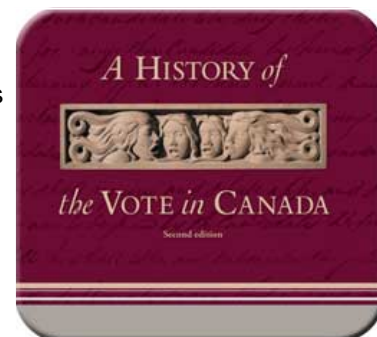
I Can Vote! makes the electoral process more accessible to all Canadians. This guide takes the mystery out of voting and shows that voting is all about choosing. Developed in close collaboration with educators, community groups, and ESL teachers and ethno-cultural specialists, *I Can Vote!* is divided into three sections. Section 1 is “Election words I need to know”; Section 2, “What elections are all about,” briefly outlines the electoral process; and Section 3, “Election day - I make a choice” provides a step-by-step guide on how to vote.

To download a PDF of this resource, click [here](#). To order this resource, click [here](#).



A History of the Vote in Canada Background resource

This history of the vote in Canada unfolds in four chapters. Chapter 1 examines this fascinating history from the era of British North America, as it evolved toward responsible government, until Confederation. Chapter 2 looks at the turbulent electoral period from 1867 to 1919, including shifts in control of the federal franchise between federal and provincial governments. Chapter 3 discusses changes in the franchise from the beginning of the modern era in electoral law, in 1920, through to 1981. The fourth and final chapter examines recent reforms in Canada's electoral system the adoption of the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. To order this resource, click [here](#). To download this resource, click [here](#).



Why Should I Vote?

Why is it important?

Why Is the Youth Vote Important?

- According to Elections Canada [research](#), only 37.4% of 18- to 24-year-olds voted at the 2008 general election. This means over 60% of young Canadians did not participate in selecting this country's government.



Educators ... Begin the discussion

- The right to vote is a fundamental democratic right that is protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It is the cornerstone of our democracy.
- When we vote, we choose the representatives who will make the laws and policies that govern how we live together.
- The legitimacy of a government lies in the fact that it is elected. Low voter turnout may call democratic legitimacy into question .
- While democracy involves much more than holding regular elections, voting is a powerful way to send a message to governments and politicians. The more votes, the more powerful the message is. In other words, every vote counts.

Compared to other forms of political participation, voting does not require a great deal of time or effort. In other words, it is one of the easiest ways to have a say in how your society is governed.

[Source: Elections Canada, Youth Resources]

Census at School Canada ... Be a part of it!

"Census at School gave the students the opportunity to 'connect' with the outside world. In our social studies curriculum, we discuss the importance of our roles in society." - Gr. 5 teacher, Ont.



Census at School is an international online project that engages students from grades 4 to 12 in statistical enquiry. The project began in the United Kingdom in 2000 and now includes participation from schools in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

Students in each participating country anonymously fill in an online survey in class. They answer non-confidential questions about topics such as their height, the time it takes to travel to school, and their favourite subject at school. The responses become part of a national database, which is later added to an international database that is maintained in the United Kingdom. To learn more, [click here](#).

**Teachers:
Get YOUR class
involved!**



To be added to this mailing list, please opt in by clicking [here](#)

To be removed from this mailing list, please opt out by clicking [here](#)

We are the Company for Education Communications. We specialize in developing, producing and evaluating school resources and award programs. Working in conjunction with Departments/Ministries of Education, school district/boards, associations, teachers and subject specialists across the country; we provide free, curriculum-based educational resources to Canadian classrooms.

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