

LESSON 3: THE POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the conditions of a recession?
- Which public policy issues should be prioritized in the post-pandemic economic recovery?
- What would I like to see addressed in Budget 2021?

OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the social, economic and health inequalities in society and emphasized the needs of marginalized populations. How can Canada build a stronger, better and more inclusive economy during the recovery period?

In this lesson, students learn about economic downturns and examine different public policy issues to prioritize during the post-pandemic economic recovery. In the culminating activity, students reflect on what they want to see addressed in the upcoming budget.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- describe the circumstances of economic downturns;
- compare and analyze different viewpoints about priorities for the post-pandemic recovery; and,
- demonstrate critical thinking skills and decision-making skills about fiscal priorities.

STARTER

Ask students to share any knowledge they have about previous economic downturns, such as the Great Depression (1929-1939) or the Great Recession (2007-2009). What were the circumstances? What challenges were faced? How long did they last?

The following resources could be consulted for additional context:

- “The Great Depression in Canada,” The Canadian Encyclopedia – <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/great-depression>
- “Recession of 2008–09 in Canada,” The Canadian Encyclopedia – <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/recession-of-200809-in-canada>

ACTIVITY

1. Using Slide Deck D, review the following terms: recession, GDP, depression and economic recovery.

- **Recession** refers to a significant decline in economic activity that lasts several months or years. Key indicators include a rise in unemployment and decrease in gross domestic product (GDP).

- **Gross domestic product (GDP)** measures the value of all goods and services produced in a country over a quarterly or annual basis. Experts declare a recession when a nation's **GDP** falls in two consecutive quarters (three-month periods).
- A **depression** is longer and more severe recession, usually lasting many years. The Great Depression lasted a decade.
- **Economic recovery** is the stage following a recession that is characterized by a sustained period of increasing economic activity. Typically, during an economic recovery, GDP grows, incomes rise and unemployment falls.
- Governments usually announce **stimulus packages** to help kick start the recovery that involve investments in various sectors and across all business activities.

2. Discuss the current pandemic and messaging around the economic recovery.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a global recession affecting economic activity in countries around the world.
- The pandemic has highlighted the social, health and economic inequalities in society and emphasized the needs of marginalized populations.
- Governments, political parties and organizations around the world are using phrases such as “build back better” or “build back stronger” as they pitch their ideas about where to invest money in the road to recovery. The underlying message is that we don’t have to go back to the old normal. We should think strategically about how we can create a more equitable and prosperous future.

3. Using the *Key Issues* videos posted on the Student Budget Consultation website, explore the perspectives of advocates speaking about important public policy issues and priorities for the post-pandemic economic recovery.

Use Handout 3.1 to review the *Key Issues* discussed, and speakers, along with a short summary of the key arguments presented. Depending on available time, students can focus on a few or all of the ten issues discussed. Using a tool such as Flipgrid, students could respond to the Key Issues videos with their own video responses.

Teacher note: Flipgrid is a website that allows teachers to create "grids" to facilitate video discussions. Each grid is similar to a message board where teachers can pose questions, and their students can post video responses that appear in a tiled grid display.

Alternatively, you could assign the videos as an independent activity, using Activity 3.2.

4. Afterwards, debrief as a class. Guiding questions:

- What did you learn or find interesting from the videos?
- What evidence did speakers use to validate their opinion?
- Did you notice common themes across different speakers? What were they?
- Which speaker did you agree with the most and why?
- Why is it important that we hear different perspectives?
- Are there other issues you think should be addressed that were not mentioned?

CONSOLIDATION

Using the *Key Issues* videos as inspiration, have students share their opinion about priorities for the post-pandemic recovery through a written article or video message.

Suggested steps:

- a) Decide which issue or issues are most important to you.
- b) Think of reasons why you hold that opinion. Include research where possible and include one example from your own experience that supports your opinion.
- c) Write an introduction that clearly states your opinion.
- d) Write at least one body paragraph, which gives your reasons for your opinion.
- e) Write a concluding paragraph that summarizes your opinion.