

LESSON 4: POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the relationship between beliefs and values, and positions on political issues?
- 2 How do the party's perspectives about the budget compare to one another?
- 3 Which issues and actions should be prioritized in Budget 2022?

OVERVIEW

In a democratic society, people have different beliefs and values, which influence their position on political issues and government spending.

In this lesson, students will examine the political spectrum and different views on economic issues. Afterwards, they will analyze the video responses from the political parties currently represented in the House of Commons about priorities for Budget 2022. In the culminating activity, students offer their own opinions through the 2022 Student Budget Consultation survey and analyze their views compared to other young Canadians.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- analyze the results from the 2021 Student Budget Consultation;
- explain left-leaning and right-leaning economic views;
- analyze budget priorities put forward by the government and opposition parties; and,
- express their opinions and insights for Budget 2022.

STARTER

As a class, review some of the results from last year's Student Budget Consultation using Slide Deck E. More than 6,000 students were surveyed between February and March 2021.

Discuss each set of results and ask students if they agree or disagree with the responses. Ask students to share any insights they have into the results and whether they think the results would be the same today.

Some highlights:

- The top five budget priorities among students were reducing student debt, ending systemic racism, increasing access to affordable medications, investing in affordable housing, and making job-related training more accessible and affordable.
- Most students agreed that the government should provide more support for businesses that have lost income due to the pandemic; however, only 40% believe that the government should incur more debt to address the pandemic.
- Students overwhelmingly supported expanding access to dental care, pharmacare and paid sick leave. They also wanted the federal government to increase health care transfers to provinces and territories as a whole.
- 45% said that the best way for the federal government to support young Canadians was to increase access to affordable post-secondary education.

ESSENTIAL LEARNING

1. Watch “[The Political Spectrum](#)” video as an introduction. Afterwards, use Slide Deck F (slides 2-9) to review the concept of the political spectrum and different sides of the economic scale.

- The political spectrum provides a way to characterize different views and beliefs, and to distinguish between actions on political issues and different ideologies.
- Left-leaning economic views = government can positively influence the economy, there is value in social services and a larger government, higher taxes may be necessary, inequality should be prevented, policies that might be considered bad for businesses (e.g., carbon tax, emission-reduction measures) but are intended to alleviate social or environmental problems, are important for the greater good.
- Right-leaning economic views = government intervention in the economy should be minimal, smaller government and fewer government services is the better approach, inequality is not a concern, governments should avoid large deficits (during normal economic conditions), strict regulation on businesses is not necessary because the free market provides sufficient incentives for businesses to pursue important social and environmental outcomes.

2. Using Slide Deck E (slides 10-16), review the results from the 2021 federal election and the different parties represented in the House of Commons. Next, watch the ‘[Party Perspectives](#)’ videos on the Student Budget Consultation website to introduce students to the different perspectives offered by Canada’s federal political parties in relation to the upcoming budget. With the exception of the Liberal Party video, these videos were filmed in late November and December. The Liberal Party video was produced during the recent election in response to a question on priorities.

The representatives featured belong to each party in the House of Commons, including:

- Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party of Canada)
- Erin O’Toole (Leader of the Opposition and leader of the Conservative Party of Canada)
- Jagmeet Singh (Member of Parliament and leader of the New Democratic Party)
- Amita Kuttner (Interim Leader of the Green Party of Canada)
- Gabriel Ste-Marie (Member of Parliament and Finance critic for the Bloc Québécois)

3. Afterwards, have students complete Activity 4.1 in groups or pairs. Students should summarize the priorities of each party and respond to the questions below. Alternatively, you could use a bulletin board activity. Print out an image representing each party and them on a bulletin board or chart paper. Have students place stick note responses around the image based on the prompts above.

- What were the key messages from each political party? How do they compare with each other?
- Based on their video message, can you figure out where the party is positioned on the political spectrum?

4. Introduce the purpose and process of the Student Budget Consultation survey.

- Students will be asked to respond to questions about spending decisions and budget priorities.
- Their opinions, along with thousands of other students throughout Canada, will be shared with the Department of Finance, and all political parties, so they can better understand what young Canadians want to see as the country moves forward during this critical time.
- After completing the survey, students will have a chance to preview some results pages to see where they sit on the political spectrum (economic dimension) and see how their views compare to other young Canadians on three specific questions.

5. Provide students with 15-20 minutes to fill out the 2022 Student Budget Consultation survey, and an additional 5 minutes to review some of the results and compare to other young Canadians.

TEACHER NOTES:

- *The online survey is compatible with smartphones and tablets.*
- *Background information and vocab definitions are provided within some questions to provide context and support critical thinking. Select 'Learn More' to see the background information.*
- *Paper copies of the survey are available on request. Please contact CIVIX by email at hello@civix.ca to coordinate timing.*

6. Have a closing discussion about participation in the consultation and the results of the political spectrum questions.

- Were you surprised about where you were placed on the political spectrum based on economic issues? Do you think it is accurate?
- Did you feel more strongly about some value statements than others? Explain.
- What life experiences and people have shaped your political views the most?
- Why do you think it is valuable to participate in government consultations?

For the last two questions, consider using a 'placemat' activity in small groups (4-5 students). Have students write down their individual responses in their own section of the chart paper or digital platform. Afterwards, have them discuss as a group and summarize the main ideas in the centre section.

CONSOLIDATION

Option 1:

Have students fill out the reflection card (Activity 4.2).

- Three things I learned about the federal budget and the economy in Canada;
- Two priorities I would like to see addressed in the 2022 budget; and,
- One way that this experience has developed my opinions or helped me better understand my own perspective.

Option 2:

Ask students to create a video pitch about their priorities for Budget 2022. Videos can be shown in class and shared with CIVIX to be visible to students across Canada. Send the videos to hello@civix.ca or share through social media (@CIVIX_Canada).

Students can also use Flipgrid to create video responses to the questions.

TEACHER NOTES

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.

ACTIVITY 4.1: 'PARTY PERSPECTIVES' VIDEO ASSIGNMENT

After viewing the [Party Perspectives videos](#), summarize the priorities of each political party.

Political party	Budget priorities and key messages	Position on the political spectrum

ACTIVITY 4.2: REFLECTION CARD

3-2-1 Reflection	
3	Three things I learned about the federal budget and the economy in Canada:
2	Two priorities I would like to see addressed in the 2022 budget:
1	One way that this experience has developed my opinions or helped me better understand my own perspective: