

Lesson 4: Political Perspectives

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ❶ What is the relationship between beliefs and values, and positions on political issues?
- ❷ What are your political views?
- ❸ Who or what has shaped your political views?

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. As part of the program's culminating activity, students offer their own opinions and priorities through the 2023 Student Budget Consultation survey and analyze their views compared to other young Canadians. Afterwards, students use a Carousel Brainstorming protocol to reflect on their political views and the value of participating in government consultations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain left-leaning and right-leaning economic views;
- evaluate their views about government spending and position on the political spectrum;
- analyze what has shaped their political views.

Starter

Use a *Four Corners* discussion protocol to introduce the idea that people have different values and viewpoints. This activity requires students to take a stand on a specific topic and defend their position.

- a) Place signs in the four corners of the room: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree"
- b) Present students with the proposition: "Lower taxes and fewer government services is better than higher taxes and more government services."
- c) Give students some time to think about their answer individually and then ask them to choose the corner that best represents their opinion.
- d) Once students are in their corners, ask students to share the reasons behind their choice.
- e) Afterwards, encourage students to change sides if they are influenced by someone's arguments.

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 dimension.

- The political spectrum provides a way to characterize different views and ideologies, and to distinguish between different actions on political issues.

- 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. Review the process of the Student Budget Consultation survey.

- Thousands of students from across Canada will be asked to respond to questions about government spending and budget priorities through an online survey.
- After completing the survey, students will have a chance to find out their position on the political spectrum (economic dimension) and see how their views compare to other young Canadians.
- The results of the Student Budget Consultation will be shared with the Department of Finance, and all political parties represented in the House of Commons, so they can better understand the priorities of young Canadians.

3. Provide students with 15-20 minutes to fill out the 2023 Student Budget Consultation survey, and an additional 5 minutes to review some of the results and comparison data. Ask students to write down 2-3 statements that they most strongly agree with on a piece of paper (to be used in the debrief activity).

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.*
- *Paper copies of the survey are available on request. Please contact CIVIX by email at hello@civix.ca to coordinate timing.*

4. Debrief on the activity using a *Carousel Brainstorming* protocol. This protocol helps students notice differences and similarities between their own insights and those of their classmates.

Suggested prompts:

- Which statement or viewpoint did you feel most strongly about?
- What life experience and people have shaped your political views?
- Why do you think it is valuable to participate in government consultations?
- What's your biggest takeaway from participating in the Student Budget Consultation?

a) Set up stations and assign each station a question, printed or written on a piece of paper. Provide chart paper at each station for students to record their comments.

b) Divide students into small groups. Give each group a distinct coloured marker to code the responses and assign each group to a different station.

c) Let students know they will be rotating through the stations, responding to the prompts at each one with their assigned colour. Encourage them to read through the responses that have come before theirs before adding their own thoughts.

d) Rotate groups through the stations. Give students 3-5 minutes at each to write down responses. Continue until each group has visited each station.

e) Reconvene as a group to debrief the activity. Ask students to reflect on their answers, and the process of looking at other students' responses. Reference the chart paper with recorded student responses to help pull out similarities and differences to aid discussion and promote further reflection.

CONSOLIDATION

Option 1:

Have students fill out the reflection card (Activity 4.1).

- Three things I learned about the federal budget and the economy in Canada;
- Two priorities I would like to see addressed in the 2023 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 views related to Budget 2023. 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.