

## Lesson 4: Political Perspectives

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the relationship between beliefs and values, and positions on political issues?
- 2 How would you describe your political views?
- 3 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 2024 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 [‘The Political Spectrum’](#) video to introduce the key concepts. Afterwards, use Slide Deck F (slides 2-9) to review 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 [2024 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](mailto:hello@civix.ca) to coordinate.*

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

### Suggested prompts:

- Which statement or viewpoint did you feel most strongly about?
- Which life experiences 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

Have students fill out the reflection card (Activity 4.1). Students can also use Flipgrid to create video responses to the questions.

- Three things I learned about the federal budget and the economy in Canada;
- Two priorities I would like to see addressed in the 2024 budget; and,
- One way that this experience has developed my opinions or helped me better understand my own perspective.

#### 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.*

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

*"Party Perspectives" video*

1. Watch the "[Party Perspectives](#)" video to get a sense of the budget priorities of the federal political parties, and what they expect will be included in Budget 2024. The video features the perspectives of political insiders representing three parties: Amanda Alvaro (Liberal commentator), Laryssa Waler (Conservative commentator) and Kim Wright (NDP commentator), and is moderated by youth journalist Wyatt Sharpe.

#### TEACHER NOTE:

*A political insider or 'pundit' is a person who offers their opinion or commentary on issues related to politics, based on their past experiences working in politics, from a partisan perspective. They may or may not still be officially affiliated with political parties.*

2. Have a class discussion:

- What are the key similarities and differences between the party perspectives?
- Have any of these perspectives influenced your views?
- What other perspectives would you like to hear in advance of Budget 2024, and where might you find them?