

Lesson 5: Active Citizenship

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 What does it mean to be an active citizen?
- 2 How can we influence public support for a cause or proposal?
- 3 How would I persuade others to take action to address an issue I care about?

OVERVIEW

Being an active citizen means getting involved in your community and finding ways to help shape the future of your country.

In this lesson, students discuss the meaning of active citizenship. Next, students will listen to Canadian youth discussing activities they have taken to advocate for issues they are passionate about. In a format of their own choosing, students select one issue they care about and create a persuasive message to raise awareness or convince governments, groups or individuals to take action to help address the issue.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain the concept of active citizenship
- identify different examples of being an active citizen
- analyze the motivations and actions different young Canadians have taken to address social issues
- create a persuasive message to advocate for an issue or proposal

Starter

1. Using the summary and highlights available on the [Student Budget Consultation site](#), review the results of last year's Student Budget Consultation survey (conducted in advance of Budget 2023). More than 5,000 Canadian youth voiced their opinions through the public consultation and the results were shared with the Department of Finance.

TEACHER NOTE:

The results from the current Student Budget Consultation – including those of your students – will be shared in a similar fashion around the release of Budget 2024.

Ask students to analyze the findings from last year's consultation, with a focus on the issues students considered their top priorities. Which findings are most interesting? Do you think the results will be similar or different this year? Why?

2. Ask students to reflect on and discuss the major issues they explored during their participation in this year's Student Budget Consultation. Were there any issues you were particularly passionate about? What are other ways to share your opinions about issues that matter to you?

Essential Learning

1. Introduce the concept of **active citizenship** and brainstorm a list of examples of how someone can be an active citizen. Consider having students complete a Frayer Model (Activity 5.1) independently or in pairs to support their understanding.

Active citizenship involves working for the common good in local, national and global communities, including voicing informed opinions on social issues, taking on leadership roles, collaborating with others to solve problems and participating in your community.

Some examples of being an active citizen include:

- Voting in elections
- Making calls or writing to elected representatives about issues you care about
- Participating in constructive discussions (listening to others' ideas and offering their own ideas)
- Participating in public consultations, meetings, committees and councils
- Contributing in ways to improve your community or helping others (volunteering, donating to causes, advocating for others)
- Being active on social issues or speaking out against injustice (raising awareness, protesting, signing petitions)

2. Watch videos from several Canadian youth discussing actions they have taken to advocate for issues they are passionate about, and sharing their own advice on how young Canadians can be active citizens.

- [Noah Irvine – Mental health awareness](#)
- [Shahaddah Jack – Community building and social activism](#)
- [Jaden Braves – Climate change and public education](#)
- [Eva Wu – Supporting Northern communities](#)
- [Rylan DeCoste – Rural representation](#)
- [Denise Lee – Environmental conservation and sustainable development](#)
- [Alex Deans – Technological innovation](#)
- [Megan Gibson – Empowering women and girls](#)

Depending on the time available you could focus on a few or all of the videos, or assign certain videos to be viewed independently.

While watching the videos, ask students to write down an interesting comment and explain why it is significant or important for them.

3. Use the 'Save the Last Word' discussion protocol to allow students to discuss their choices from the videos.

a) Divide students into groups of three. Assign one student the role of timekeeper.

b) Invite one student to share their selection and its significance to them with the rest of their group (1-2 min).

c) Afterwards, have the other two students respond to the first speaker (1-2 minutes each), building on what has been said (e.g. areas of agreement, differences, related insights). No interjections are allowed during this process.

d) The first student is then given the “last word” and is able to respond to the others. Consider providing prompts (“I like what ___ had to say about...”, “I hadn’t considered ___ that way before.”)

e) The activity repeats until each student has had the chance to go first and last.

CONSOLIDATION

Through a method of their own choosing, ask students to select one issue they care about and create a persuasive message to influence public support or convince governments, groups or individuals to take action to help address the issue.

Students could film a video to share on social media, write a message to their elected representative(s), pen an op-ed for a local newspaper, create a poster or any other form of their choosing.

Consider reviewing tips for crafting persuasive messages (Handout 5.2). Students could also share their draft messages with a peer and ask for feedback, before completing their final product

EXTENSION

Contact CIVIX to arrange for a meeting between students and your Member of Parliament, so that they can discuss the issues that matter to them.

Rep Day is designed to facilitate discussion about current issues while also developing a better understanding of and sense of trust in the people and institutions within our democracy.

Rep Day meetings are timed to correspond with the parliamentary break weeks and generally consist of informal Q&A-style discussions with students from grades 4 to 12. These non-partisan, informative meetings typically last around one hour long

To register for this program and receive additional learning resources, visit: repday.ca