

Lesson 4: Political Perspectives

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 How can I analyze different perspectives about government spending and taxation?
- 2 What priorities and policies do I want to see addressed in Budget 2025?
- 3 Who or what has shaped my political views?

OVERVIEW

People have different beliefs and values, which influence their views on political issues, government spending and taxation.

In the introductory activity, students take a position on whether a smaller government is better than a larger government using a *Four Corners* protocol. Next, students review the concept of the political spectrum, and explore right-leaning and left-leaning views associated with the economic dimension. Afterwards, students participate in the consultation survey and reflect on the learning from the program activities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- differentiate between left-leaning and right-leaning economic views;
- practice critical thinking and decision-making skills related to government spending and taxation;
- analyze influences on their political views.

Starter

Students participate in a *Four Corners* discussion protocol to explore 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 move to the corner that best represents their viewpoint.
- d) Once students are in their corners, ask students to share the reasons behind their choice.
- e) Afterward, invite students to change sides if they are influenced by someone else’s thinking.

Essential Learning

1. As a class, watch the '[The Political Spectrum](#)' video and use Slide Deck E to review the purpose of the political spectrum and different sides of the economic dimension.

- The political spectrum provides a way to characterize different views and beliefs, and to distinguish between different political ideologies and actions on political issues. It can be a helpful tool to analyze our own perspectives about government and society.
- The spectrum can be viewed with two distinct dimensions: social and economic. The economic scale is often defined by the wide range of opinions on taxation, government debt and the role of government in addressing social issues.
 - Left-leaning views believe the government can help strengthen the economy and support people by investing in healthcare, housing and public safety. These policies might mean higher taxes, but it can reduce inequality and solve social or environmental problems, even if it is challenging for some businesses.
 - Right-leaning views support a smaller government with fewer services and less involvement in the economy. They believe inequality isn't a major issue, governments should avoid debt, and businesses don't need strict rules because the free market encourages them to address social and environmental needs on their own.

2. Review the purpose 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.
- 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 see what matters most to young Canadians as they develop their platforms for the 2025 federal election.

3. Provide students 15-20 minutes to fill out the [2025 Student Budget Consultation survey](#) online.

- The online survey is compatible with smartphones and tablets.
- Background information and definitions have been included to support student understanding.
- You can view a PDF of the survey on the 'Teaching Tools' page of the website.

3. Have a closing discussion about political perspectives regarding Canada's federal budget and participating in government consultations. Alternatively, ask students to prepare a written reflection.

- Have your views about government spending and taxation changed during the course of the project? Explain.
- What have you learned about yourself and your views? What or who do you think has shaped your political views the most?
- Why do you think it is valuable to participate in government consultations?

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 2025 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 which issue(s) they would like political parties to address in their party platform for the upcoming federal election. Videos can be shown in class and/or shared with CIVIX to be visible to students across Canada.

Send the videos to hello@civix.ca or share through social media (@CIVIX_Canada).