

Lesson: What do I think?

Big idea

Political perspective is a concept of political thinking. Everyone has different beliefs and values, as do various groups, including different governments, in local, national, and/or global communities. These views can oppose each other and affect how people, groups and governments act and make decisions. These beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, can affect one's position on or response to issues of civic importance. Reflecting on one's beliefs and values and life experiences can help people figure out their political perspective. The political spectrum is a system to characterize and classify different political positions in relation to one another. People's beliefs and values are unique and can fall anywhere along the spectrum. Often, it depends on the issue. It is very likely that people will change their views many times as they figure out their political identity.

Curriculum connections

A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance

A1.4 use the concepts of political thinking when interpreting and analyzing evidence, data, and information relevant to their investigations; evaluating and synthesizing their findings; and formulating conclusions, predictions, and judgments about issues, events, and/or developments of civic importance

B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one's position on civic issues

B1.1 describe some civic issues of local, national, and/or global significance, and compare the perspectives of different groups on selected issues

B1.5 communicate their own position on some issues of civic importance at the local, national, and/or global level, explaining how their position is influenced by their beliefs/values

Learning goals

I am learning to:

- understand the political spectrum
- understand the concept of political perspective
- identify how my beliefs, values and lived experiences affect my political perspective

Success criteria

I can:

- analyze how my beliefs and values developed and how they affect my perspective on political issues
- identify the position of Canada's political parties on the political spectrum and explain the beliefs/values that underpin these parties
- summarize my political perspective in a political profile

Inquiry question

What do I think?

Required materials

1. Appendix A Student handout – [Political survey](#)
2. Appendix B Student handout – [My political perspective](#)
3. Digital tool – [CBC News Vote Compass](#)
4. Appendix C Student handout – [The big political questions](#)
5. Appendix D Student handout – [My political profile](#)

Minds on

1. Distribute a copy of the student handout, [Political survey](#) (Appendix A) to each student. Review the instructions and give students enough time to respond to the questions and calculate their score.
2. The teacher will then use the scores to organize the class into small groups or partnerships. Try to match students who have different scores – for example, a student with the highest score should be paired with a student with a low score.
3. Ask the small groups or partners to discuss the statements on the survey and try to determine whose response is right or to come to a consensus on each statement. Is it possible? Who is actually right?
4. Post the definition of political perspective below in a visible location:
 - a. Political perspective is a concept of political thinking. Everyone has different beliefs and values, as do various groups, including different governments, in local, national, and/or global communities. These views can oppose each other and affect how people, groups and governments act and make decisions.
 - b. These beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, can affect one's position on or response to issues of civic importance.

Activity

1. Explain to students that they already have a political perspective. It is shaped by their beliefs and values. Beliefs and values are shaped by many factors such as where you live, your family, friends, and your life experiences.
2. Consider having students complete the [CBC News Vote Compass](#) activity if technology allows for it at the school. Students can also complete this at home prior to the lesson if possible.

Teacher note:

- *This online tool was developed by Vox Pop Labs in collaboration with CBC News and Société Radio-Canada.*
- *If this lesson is being taught during an election year (provincial or federal) the tool will highlight the election information (i.e. the relevant political parties and leaders).*
- *The tool requires students to enter a postal code and riding; students can use the school's information for this purpose.*
- *It is best for students to complete this tool individually. It can be completed on personal devices. If technology in the classroom is a challenge, students can be tasked with doing this at home BEFORE this lesson and bringing the results to school to be ready for this lesson.*
- *Students can select "DON'T KNOW" for the questions regarding political parties and leaders at the end and SKIP the information questions as well.*
- *Encourage students to email a copy of their results to themselves to help them with the consolidation task.*

- *Consider going through the statements as a class beforehand to clarify any questions but don't select responses accurately – for example, students may need clarification on concepts, events and terms used in the statements.*
3. Show students the [The big political questions](#) (Appendix C) handout. Explain to students that many of the questions in the CBC Vote Compass fall under these general topics. Read through the questions together and ask students to think about how they respond to the questions. Conduct a whole class discussion where appropriate.
 4. Distribute a copy of [My political perspective](#) (Appendix B) to each student and allow them time to complete each part of the worksheet individually. Students should have their Vote Compass results with them to reference as well as the Big Political Questions handout. This may take students some time as they reflect on who they are and the communities to which they belong.

Teacher note: *Emphasize the note to students at the beginning of the handout (see below).*

Student note: *It is very likely that you will change your views many times as you figure out your political identity.*

Consolidation

My political perspective (Appendix B) – using their learning from this lesson, students will complete their investigation into who they are and their political identities. Students should finalize their thinking to create a fuller picture of their beliefs/values and perspective.

Assessment

The teacher can partner students or create small groups for students to peer assess their **My political perspective** (Appendix B). The teacher can optionally provide written feedback on the student’s final version to gauge student learning.

Extension activity

Students can complete the worksheet, **My political profile** (Appendix D).