

Canadian Youth Engagement E-Toolkit



A Simple Guide to Understanding
Canadian Civic and Political Matters



GLOCAL
FOUNDATION OF CANADA

YouCount.ca



E-TOOLKIT OVERVIEW



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INTRODUCTION**

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GLOCAL STAND FOR**

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**WHY WE CREATED AN
E-TOOLKIT**

OUR STORY

GLOCAL is a grassroots initiative formed by a group of young Canadians that saw challenges in our democratic platforms and decided to support residents in Canada to be globally aware and locally engaged.

Our goal is to work with and support our fellow Canadians in bringing about more inclusive, transparent, accessible, and engaging democratic participation with global a perspective.

GLOCAL STANDS FOR:

Global vision.

Local engagement.

Open mindedness.

Creative solutions.

Adaptive leadership.

Lifelong learning.

WHY WE CREATED AN E-TOOLKIT



To encourage Canadian youth to participate in democracy through engagement



To help Canadian youth understand civic and political matters by providing accessible, demographic-friendly information



To increase interest in Canadian politics among Canadian youth

PART 2:

CANADIAN POLITICS 101

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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

OVERVIEW

This part of the toolkit was created to support youth in accessing information related to Canadian Politics, in an effort to counter misinformation and the absence of trustworthy resources.

To be both efficient and informative, we have structured the general knowledge portion of the toolkit to include:

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT



THE PARTS OF PARLIAMENT



FEDERALISM



ELECTIONS AND VOTING

TOPIC #1: BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

The federal and provincial governments are divided into three branches.



Executive: The executive is the Prime Minister (or Premier) and Cabinet, who are all also members of the legislative branch. This branch makes key decisions relating to governance.



Legislative: This is the branch responsible for making laws. The federal legislature is bicameral (has two chambers), with a House of Commons and a Senate. Provincial legislatures are unicameral (only one chamber).



Judicial: Federal and provincial courts interpret laws and resolve disputes in their own jurisdictions. The highest federal courts hear appeals from all other courts, and resolve disputes between governments about the division of powers.

TOPIC #2: THE PARTS OF PARLIAMENT

In systems like Canada's, the legislative and executive branches meet in the same place: Parliament. Parliament has three parts: the Crown, the House of Commons and the Senate.



THE CROWN

The Crown is technically personified in the British monarch, currently Queen Elizabeth II, but in practice, the monarch has little to do with even the procedural side of government. The monarch's viceregal representative in Canada, the Governor-General, plays that role almost entirely. And while the G-G holds vast power in the Canadian system of government on paper, in practice the G-G is not permitted to use that power except on the advice of the Prime Minister or the Cabinet, because the PM and Cabinet are elected members drawn from an elected legislature, while the G-G is not elected. So the G-G's role is mostly ceremonial.

TOPIC #2: THE PARTS OF PARLIAMENT



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The House of Commons is the “lower” chamber of the legislature. The Prime Minister and the ministers of the Cabinet almost always come from this chamber, since it would be unlawful to have too many unelected members of the governing Cabinet, and unthinkable to have a Prime Minister who was not elected. The House is a “confidence chamber,” which means that the government (the PM and Cabinet) can only keep being the government if they have the confidence of the House. If they lose a vote on a budget bill or other money bill or lose an explicit non-confidence vote, they can lose the confidence of the House and be forced to resign as government, which means opposition parties may be asked to form a government, or there may be a new election.

TOPIC #2: THE PARTS OF PARLIAMENT



THE SENATE

The Senate is the “upper” chamber of the legislature, and has a different role than the House. It has fewer seats, and its members are appointed and not elected, which means a few things. Its powers are more limited than the House, since it would be seen as unfair for an unelected chamber to hold back the will of the House, which is elected by the people. It is also not a confidence chamber, so the government will not fall if the governing party loses any vote in the Senate. The Senate generally takes a slower and more detailed approach to political issues, and can refine legislation with specialist expertise the House often does not have access to or time to consult. Since its members are not elected they do not need to worry about campaigning for reelection, and can focus on unpopular or controversial issues that elected members might shy away from for fear of losing popularity.

TOPIC #3: FEDERALISM

The constitution accounts for two levels of government with responsibilities divided between them: the federal or national level, which deals with concerns that affect the whole country, and the provincial (and territorial) level which deals with things considered to be more regional in scope. In theory, the jurisdictions are watertight and the federal government cannot legislate in areas of provincial jurisdiction and vice-versa, but in practice, some policy areas, like healthcare, are complicated and require a lot of resources, so the governments cooperate on things like funding or administration. This division of powers into a national government and many subnational governments, and the ongoing process of interpreting and modifying that division of powers, is called federalism.

TOPIC #3: FEDERALISM

Examples of federal jurisdiction are national defence, criminal law and foreign policy.

Examples of provincial jurisdiction are education, health care and labour law.

In some areas, like natural resources or environmental policy, it is necessary for the federal and provincial governments to work together, because jurisdiction is muddy or because nothing is possible without cooperation; in many such cases, intergovernmental negotiation with Indigenous governments is also necessary.

Meanwhile, some areas of jurisdiction are divided between levels, such as marriage, which is defined at the federal level but solemnized and regulated at the provincial level, because provinces control family and civil law.

TOPIC #4: ELECTIONS AND VOTING



OFFICIAL CANADIAN BALLOT



WHO CAN VOTE?

Anyone over 18 on Election Day and who has Canadian citizenship can vote.

WHAT IS CANADA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM CALLED?

Canada's electoral system is called a Single-Member Plurality, or SMP. That means in every electoral district, or riding, there is only one seat in the House of Commons up for grabs, so you vote for one Member of Parliament. Whichever candidate gets the most votes, even if it's less than 50%, wins the seat (that's what the "plurality" part means).

TOPIC #4: ELECTIONS AND VOTING

□ HOW DOES CANADA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM WORK?

In Canada, you don't vote directly for the executive (in this case, the Prime Minister). A party leader is an ordinary MP and runs for a seat in a single riding like all the others. But when all the votes are counted and we know who won every seat, we can figure out how many seats in the House of Commons each party got. Usually, but not always, the party with the most seats will be asked by the Governor-General to form a government. If one party wins a majority of seats, this is easy; you have a majority government. If no party wins a majority of seats, the largest party might have the best chance of keeping the confidence of the House, but they will need support from other members to get over 50% of the votes on important bills like the budget. The G-G will ask the party leader (or leaders) most likely to be able to hold the confidence of the House if they can form a government. This is called a minority government. Because the government can fall if it loses support in the House, minority governments usually don't last as long as majority governments.

PART 3:
RESOURCES
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RESOURCES TO GET
YOU STARTED

WHERE TO SEARCH?

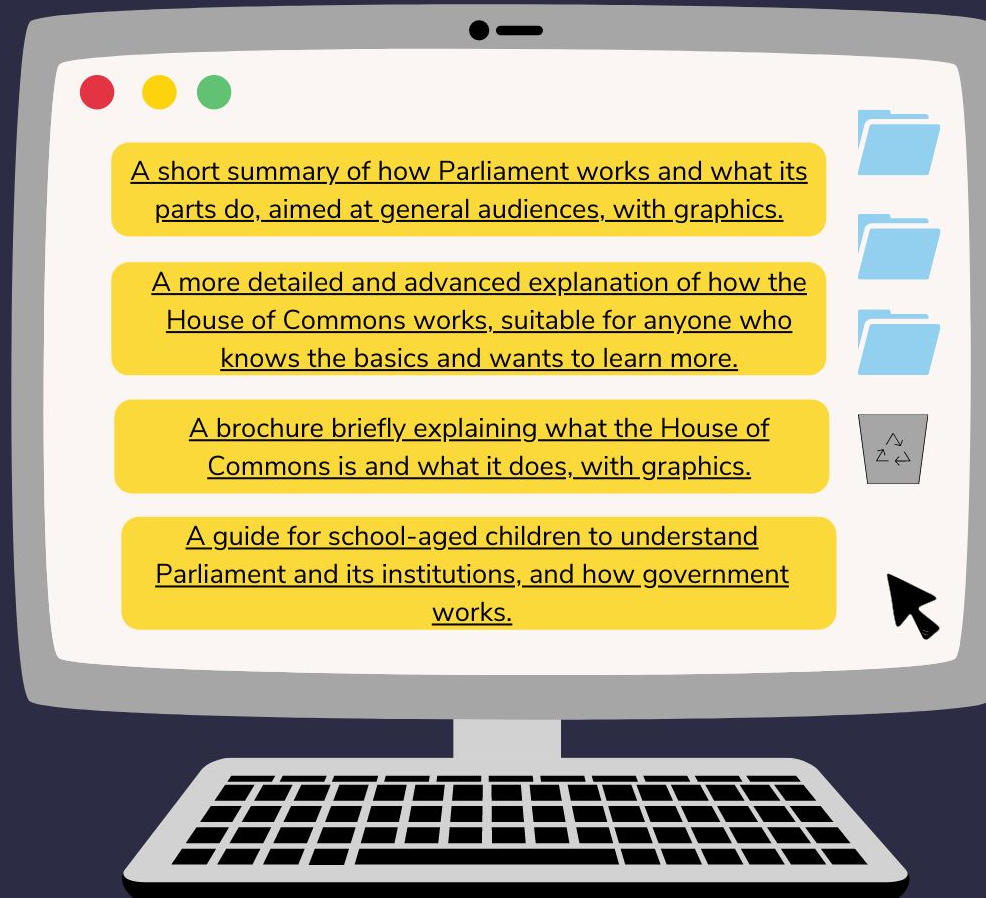
Now that you have gained insight into many political concepts, you likely have questions that are yet to be answered. This is your chance to branch out and learn more about topics of your interest. Visit the next page for some resources to get you started.

- Q Who is...
- Q Who is **in charge of passing the laws**
- Q Who is **my MP**
- Q Who is **in charge of the canadian military**
- Q Who is **my mayor**
- Q Who is **running in the election**



Remember to use credible sources such as government websites and well-supported academic resources when conducting your research.

RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED



A short summary of how Parliament works and what its parts do, aimed at general audiences, with graphics.

A more detailed and advanced explanation of how the House of Commons works, suitable for anyone who knows the basics and wants to learn more.

A brochure briefly explaining what the House of Commons is and what it does, with graphics.

A guide for school-aged children to understand Parliament and its institutions, and how government works.



PART 4: ENGAGEMENT

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**THE BENEFITS OF CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT**

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**SUGGESTIONS FOR
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

Canadian youth have an essential part to play in Canada's democracy and this role can be strengthened through civic engagement. In doing so, youth can gain knowledge, experience and a wide range of skills that will make them better informed for future democratic participation and voting. In the pages that follow, you will find a number of ideas on how to get involved as soon as possible!

VISIT YOUCOUNT.CA TO FIND OUT WHO REPRESENTS YOU AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <https://www.youcount.ca>. The website has a yellow background. On the left, the logo "YouCount.ca" features a red maple leaf above the ".ca". Below the logo is the text "Get Informed About Politics" followed by a horizontal line. A paragraph of text reads: "YouCount.ca is a non-partisan and not-for-profit platform for civic engagement. Its goal is to empower and support Canadian citizens and residents to navigate and participate in Canada's democracy with ease." Below this is the text "Find Your Political Representatives" followed by another horizontal line. At the bottom left is a search bar with the placeholder text "Enter your adress or postal code" and a location pin icon. To the right of the search bar is a dark button with the text "Search". On the right side of the page is a cartoon beaver wearing a brown hat, a red shirt, and a brown belt, holding a fishing net. A white hand cursor icon is pointing at the bottom right corner of the browser window.

WRITE A LETTER TO A POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVE

Did you know that GLOCAL sent a letter to the Queen with the intention of getting first-hand answers about the monarchy?

YOU CAN TOO!

Whether you have a question, inquiry, concern, or just want to voice your opinion you can do so by writing directly to your political representative.



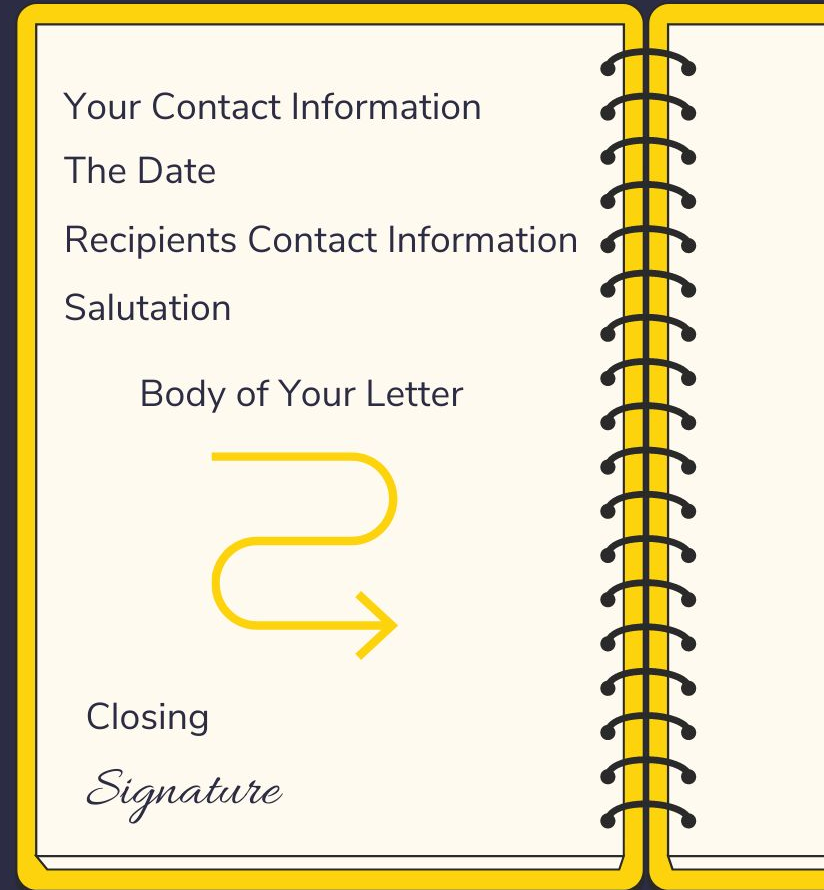
A GUIDE TO WRITING A LETTER TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

TIPS FOR WRITING:

Remain respectful when writing to your chosen representative.

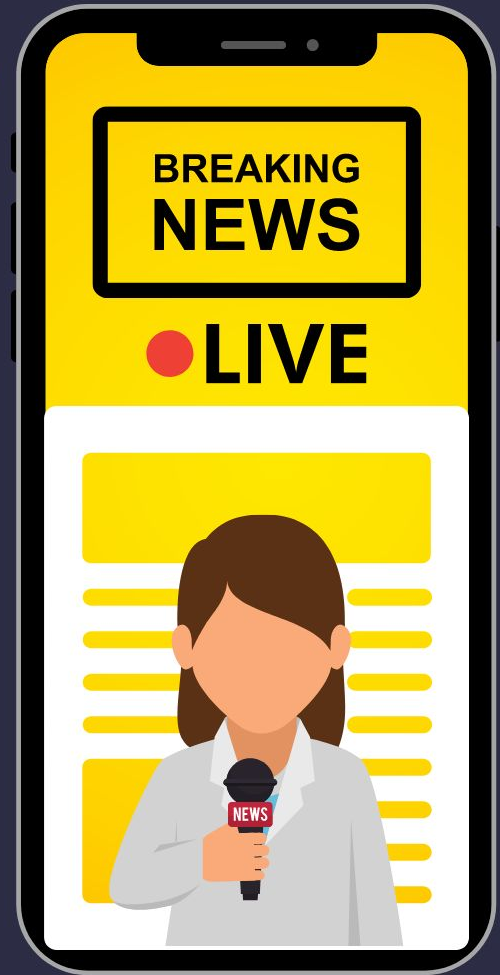
Follow proper letter structure, as outlined on the right.

Use formal salutations when addressing your chosen representative (reference <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/protocol-guidelines-special-event/styles-address.html>)

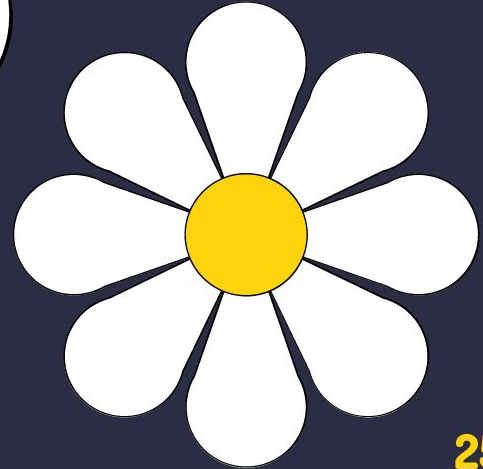
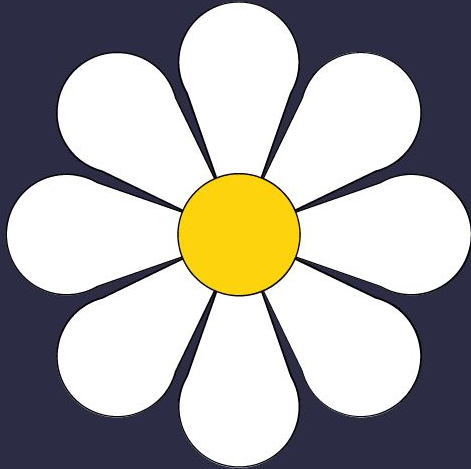


FOLLOW POLITICAL SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES AND NEWS OUTLETS TO STAY INFORMED.

Remember to always be critical about what you learn and read considering that misinformation is common in the digital age.



JOIN YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATIONS



VOLUNTEER FOR A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

Visit the website of your political party of choice and register to be a volunteer for a local campaign.



Hey! Did you hear the Federal Election was just called?



What do you say we get involved? Let's volunteer for our local politician.

I just checked the news, what a surprise!

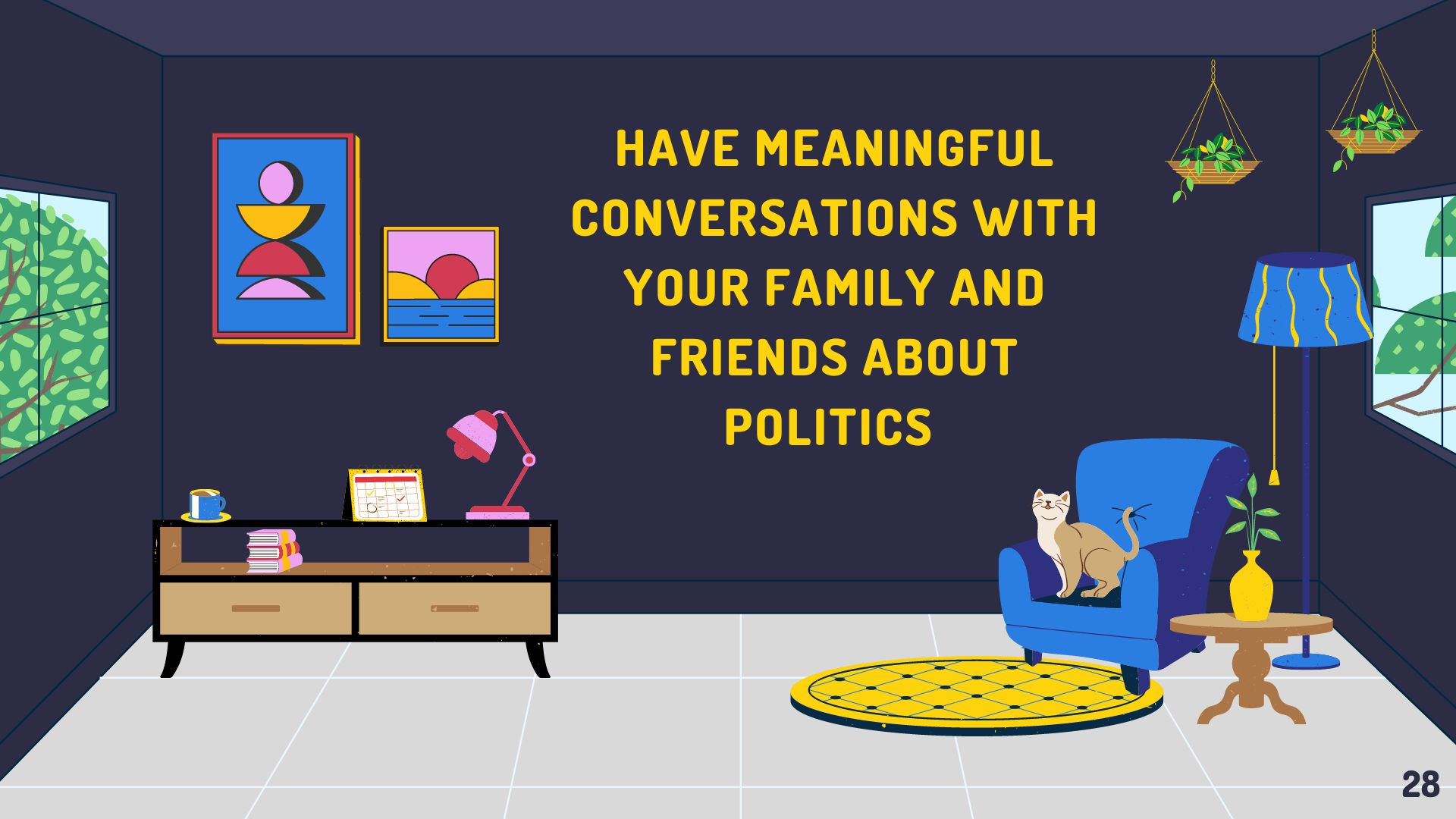


ENROLL IN SOCIAL STUDIES AND CIVIC COURSES

Most high schools in Canada offer a variety of courses related to politics so keep an eye out.



**HAVE MEANINGFUL
CONVERSATIONS WITH
YOUR FAMILY AND
FRIENDS ABOUT
POLITICS**



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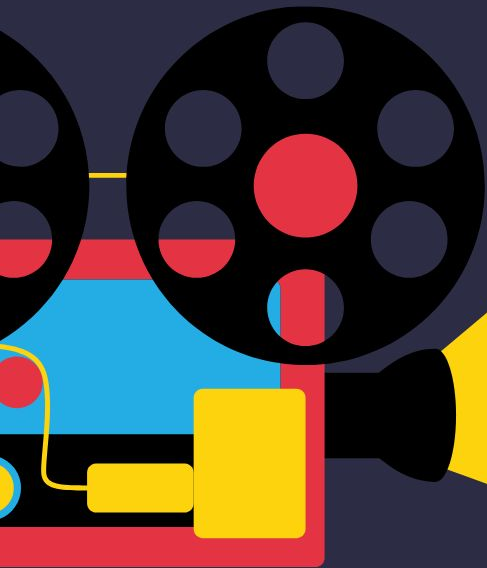
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