

Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which everyone has certain rights that are balanced by responsibilities. Citizens have the right and responsibility to choose the people who govern them.

A **democratic system** is one in which citizens have a voice in decision making. There are four main principles to think about when talking democracy, equity, freedoms, justice and representation.

Rights – in a democracy, are things specifically allowed, and they provide protection to the people of a country by their government. In a democracy, it's the government job to protect our rights and freedoms.

Responsibilities – Responsibilities are the duties of an individual or group in our society. It is something that you are expected to do. In Canada with every right, there is a responsibility. Some of the responsibilities in society include obeying the laws, paying taxes, voting, speaking up about discrimination and injustice, and being involved in your community.

Four Pillars of Democracy

Justice – fair treatment of individual and groups. Upholding just, fair and equitable treatment, and providing due reward in accordance with honour, standards, or laws. Justice means we have a system to make sure that everyone is treated fairly. If a citizen or government makes a decision that is not fair there will be consequences.

Equity – treating people fairly; sometimes accommodations need to be made so that things will be equal or fair for everyone. Being fair and just!

Freedoms – are about things the government and others are not allowed to stop you from doing. Freedoms, in a democracy, mean that people can act without interference from others or the government.

Representation – in a representative democracy citizens elect their representatives to govern and make decisions on their behalf. In Canada we choose people who form the government and they make decisions for us. These representatives have a responsibility to listen to the needs of all citizens. We choose our representative by voting for them. *La Grande Paix de Montreal* is an early example of representation.

Direct and Representative Democracy

Direct democracy: a way of making decisions in which everyone in a group votes (no representatives are involved). **All citizens are involved** in decision making.

- E.g. Athenian society

Representative Democracy: citizens elect people to represent them in government. These people make decisions **on behalf** of citizens.

- E.g. Canadian society

Similarities between Direct and Representative Democracies:

- People are involved in decision making
- Citizens are voting
- Pillars of democracy: representation, justice, freedom and equity

Differences between Direct and Representative Democracies:

- In direct democracy, the people who vote make the decisions. No representatives are involved and every citizen has a vote. Ex: Ancient Athens
- In representative democracy, decisions are made by people elected by the people they represent.
 - Representatives are accountable (held responsible) for communicating with their people, making decisions on their behalf, and working to help them.
 - Ex: modern Canada

Charter of Rights and Freedoms

- is a document that protects the essential rights and freedoms of people living in Canada.
- Is entrenched in the Constitution. This means that no one, including the government can take away the rights and freedoms of the people of Canada.
- The freedoms are “subject to reasonable limits.” The government can limit a person’s right or freedom, but it must show why the limit is necessary.
- The courts in Canada uphold our rights under the Charter.

- A person or group who feels that their right has been taken away can undergo an Appeal Process in our Court System.

The rights and freedoms contained in the document are as follows:

Fundamental Freedoms:

- To have and express your opinion.
- To belong to any group.
- To organize peaceful meetings and demonstrations.
- To practice your religion.

Democratic Rights:

- To vote for candidates in elections.
- To participate in an Election.
- To have legislatures and Parliament meet at least once a year.
- To have elections at least every five years.

Individual Rights:

- Rights that you are entitled to as a person.

Equality Rights:

- All Canadian laws must treat each individual with dignity and respect regardless of the person's race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, gender, age or physical or mental disabilities.

Collective Rights:

- Protect a group. Individuals who are part of a group that has collective rights are entitled to these rights.
- **Collective identity** – Sense of belonging to a community of group, established and strengthened through common characteristics and interests. Culture, and language are determining factors in the formation of collective identity.

Aboriginal Rights :

- Aboriginal people have rights to their traditional territories.

Language Rights :

- French and English are Canada's official languages. The Charter recognizes the rights of the English and French Speaking communities.

Protecting our Rights

Court System

- protects our rights and freedoms.
- A person or group who thinks a right or freedom has been taken away takes the case to a provincial court. The court makes a decision, but either side can appeal if they believe the decision was unfair. Appeal means to ask a higher court to review a decision made by a lower court.
- The highest court in Canada, The Supreme Court, considers the most important cases and their decision is final.

Constitution

- the highest law of the land.
- It is a set of principles that lays out the rules for how our country will be governed.
- It is very difficult to change
- The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was entrenched (firmly established) in the Constitution so that rights would be more effectively protected. The following reasons outline why it was essential for the CCRF to be part of the Constitution:
 1. No one, including the government, can take away the rights and freedoms of people in Canada.
 2. Laws that do not align with the Charter will be quickly struck down
 3. Provincial and federal leaders must negotiate and agree before any changes can be made to the Constitution
 4. All minority groups are protected

Historic Models of Democracy

Ancient Athens

Primary sources – are writings and objects that were created by people living at a certain time

Inscription – important sources of information that are carved on stone, wood, and metal surfaces, therefore lasting hundreds or thousands of years

Direct democracy – people vote directly to make decisions rather than having representatives

Decree – a decision made by people who are in authority

Orator – someone who speaks in public

Structure of Government in Athens

Assembly

- All men who were citizens could take part in debating issues and voting on laws.
- A minimum of 6000 people present to have a vote count.
- Each member had an equal right to speech.
- Example of direct democracy because they voted directly on government decisions.
- A decision was made based on a majority vote called a decree.
- Met about 40 times per year (every 8 – 10 days)
- They discussed large issues such as war and religion but also private concerns.
- Met in a large open area at the top of a hill call the Pnyx.
- Members made speeches, debate, listen, discuss, and finally vote.

Council of 500

- Also known as the Bouleuterion (Boule)
- Was the full time government in Athens.
- Council members' terms lasted only one year.
- Positions were chosen using a lottery method.
- You could only serve on the council twice in your lifetime.
- Council leaders only had the position for 24 hours. Their job was to supervise how the government was run.
- Divided into ten tribes
- 50 members from each tribe over the age of 30 served on the council

Athenian Court

- If citizens felt that they had been wronged, they would bring their concerns to the magistrate.
- Magistrates were citizens and officers of the court who were chosen by lottery for a one year term.
- Sometimes fines would be set, other times they would send the case to trial.

Class Structure and Citizenship in Ancient Athens

A person's class (slave, Athenian-born or Metic) determined their rights and responsibilities. The democratic principles of representation, equity and fairness only applied fully to male citizens.

Men

- 2 classes: Citizens or Metics
 - *Citizens:*
 - Free, born in Athens
 - Sent sons to school and owned property
 - Paid taxes
 - Expected to serve in government positions, vote, and perform military service
 - Only citizens could participate in government.
 - *Metics:* - not citizens
 - Foreigners living in Athens
 - They could send sons to school. (if they could afford it.)
 - They couldn't own property without permission.
 - They needed a citizen to sponsor them, otherwise they could become enslaved
 - They could not vote or hold government positions
 - Expected to perform military service

Women

- 2 Classes: Athenian or Metics – neither were citizens
 - *Athenian*
 - Caregivers and home managers
 - Could own property
 - Could influence citizens (influencing husbands)
 - Could not vote
 - Could not participate in government

- *Metics:*
 - Caregivers and home managers
 - Could not own property
 - Could not vote
 - Could not participate in government
 - Could not influence citizens

Children

- Boys: attend school (if they could afford it), If school was too expensive, they would help in the family business, expected to have military training. Athenian boys would become citizens, but Metic boys would not.
- Girls: stay home and learn household skills

Slaves

- Men, women and children who were bought and sold by others
- Could not own land,
- Could not make day to day decisions about their life
- Did not participate in government or vote
- Could not even become a citizen

What ideas of fairness, equity, and rights were part of Athenian democracy?

- The most important idea was that it is fair that citizens be allowed to rule themselves. This is the basis of democracy.
- Athenians believed that majority rule was fair. This meant that decisions were made by voting and that law supported by more than half the voters was passed.
- Athenians believed that people who belonged to the same class in society should have equal rights. All male citizens had the right to belong to the assembly and vote. (The only exceptions were people who committed acts that would cause them to lose their citizenship and these were clearly laid out in law)
- Women, slaves and metics were denied voting rights.
- Slavery was an accepted part of Athenian society. A person's right to own another person was not questioned, even by great Athenian thinkers like Socrates)
- Individual and minority rights were not part of the thinking of Athenian democracy. The common good was the highest value.

Iroquois Confederacy

Consensus – all the people affected by the decision have an equal voice. The final agreement represents a process that everyone agrees to.

Confederacy – a partnership agreed on by nations or groups of people

Clan System – a system that balances loyalty to the clan with loyalty to the nation

Structure of the Iroquois Confederacy

Clan Mothers: Clan mothers were the leaders of the Clan. The Great Law of Peace gave the clan mother ownership of the chieftainship title. This means that they had the responsibility for selecting chiefs for their own clan.

The Clan mother could remove a chief who was not doing his job properly. A chief might lose his position for

- Committing a serious crime such as murder
- Refusing to attend meetings of the Grand Council
- Not listening to and representing the views of the people
- Disobeying the Great Law
- Not acting with the welfare of the people in mind

New chiefs were chosen by the clan mothers. The clan mothers also ensured that all decision made by the Grand Council agreed with the Great Law of Peace. They carefully watched over discussions and made sure that all voices were heard and treated respectfully.

Iroquois Men: Men served as the chiefs on the Grand Council, which is the government of the Iroquois.

The Chiefs: The Chiefs were the leaders in Iroquois society. It was chief's duty to be teachers and spiritual guides and to remind the people that the Creator wants them to live together in peace. They were treated with great respect because of their wisdom. However, they were considered the same as everyone else in society – not better or above others. They were the caretakers of the Great Law of Peace. They looked after the welfare of the people and ran the affairs of the clan, the nation, and the Confederacy. They also upheld the rule of law in their society.

There were also:

- 1) war chiefs – selected by each of the nations to sit on the Grand Council. In wartime, these chiefs had to gather warriors for fighting.
- 2) Pine Tree Chiefs – showed special abilities or had an interest in public affairs. They were selected to join the Grand Council by its chiefs.

The Grand Council: The Great Law of Peace established a Grand Council made up of 50 chiefs who represented the nations of the Confederacy. Nations with large populations had more chiefs than smaller nations, but they were all equal to one another.

- Mohawk Nations – 9 chiefs
- Oneida Nation – 9 chiefs
- Onondaga Nation – 14 chiefs
- Cayuga Nation – 10 chiefs
- Seneca Nation – 8 chiefs

One important responsibility of the Grand Council was to consider the **seventh generation**. The chief has to always keep in mind how the decisions they made would affect the lives of their people for seven generations – more than 200 years in the future. This encouraged the chiefs to act cautiously so that the welfare of their descendants would be protected.

Status of Women within the Iroquois Confederacy

- Women had a position of respect
- After marriage, the husband would come and live in her family's longhouse
- Children belonged to the mother's clan
- Women raised the main food supply (also known as the "Three Sisters") of corn, beans, and squash
- Clan mothers were the leaders of the clan
- Title of clan mother was passed onto female relatives (sisters or daughters)
 - Clan – is a large group of families who are related to one another and each clan is associated with an animal
 - Clan mothers had the responsibility of selecting the chiefs for their own clan

Consensus Decision Making

Consensus – a process made by people having an equal voice

Characteristics of Consensus

- cooperative in nature
- tries to reach a decision good for all members
- inclusive
- individuals can recommend changes and ideas
- lengthy process
- Requires people to be open-minded
- People need to think deeply about the issue and listen to the ideas of others.
- The decision may not be their first choice, but they must be willing to support it in the best interest of the group.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement (inclusive) of many people in making decisions - requires people to be open-minded - think deeply about issues and listen to the ideas of others - process is cooperative in nature because the decision may not be their first choice but be willing to support the decision for the benefit all groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - many people would be involved so the process could be lengthy (not practical) - some members may not be willing to give up something that is important to them - all groups lose a part of their identity through the process - no group gets everything they want

Great Law

- was written to ensure that the Iroquois could live together in peace and harmony.

Democratic principles built into the Great Law

1. Although different nations had different numbers of chiefs in the Grand Council, there was equality among them. They had the same level of authority.
2. Authority was shared between men and women. Men were only members of the Grand Council, it was the women who nominated the chiefs and could take away their title. The fact that people belonged to their mother's clan gave authority to women.
3. Clan System (introduced by peacemaker) helped to make sure that no one nation would ever be able to take over the Confederacy. The balancing of being loyal to your clan and being loyal to your nation worked to maintain democracy and unity within the Confederacy.

Wampum Belt

Wampum: strings or belts made of white and purple beads which contained a message related to their Great Law of Peace (similar to our Constitution)

Wampum

- was a way of recording history and laws
- is a primary source because it provides information that is direct from the source and the time period
- was made by the women in the tribe
- often represented treaties among two groups of people (ie. Iroquois and Europeans)
- Wampum keeper was responsible for caring for the wampum and reading it; and use the texture to remind him of events/treaties
- Hiawatha Wampum symbols: images refer to specific tribes, connection between the tribes, other nations welcomed to join the Confederacy; white color refers to no evil or jealous thoughts, emblem of peace, love, charity and equality surrounds and guards the Five Nations
- The Wampum shows that the nations of the confederacy shared a collective identity.

Collective Identity: shared belief system that often includes the same language, culture, values, and attitudes

Treaty of La Grande Paix de Montreal

- agreement in 1701 between French Governor General of New France and the 39 Aboriginal groups to end violent conflict; 1300 Aboriginals attended the ceremony
- previously the French had made attempts to stop the warfare with individual groups but it always broke down so he decided the only way to make this work would be to have all groups come to consensus
- Representatives or ambassadors were present from all the different tribes

Process

- over a two week period they held discussion about the terms of the Treaty which was held in accordance with these First Nations traditions of discussion, compromise, cooperation and consensus
- ambassadors that were sent at representatives because of their recognized skill and speaking on behalf of their people
- many historians agree that the **diplomacy** of the First Nations that made this Treaty possible

Collective Identity- a shared belief system including language, culture, values and attitudes	Collective Rights – rights that individuals have because they are part of a particular group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all agreed to be allies• each representative spoke and presented his proposal; everyone listened carefully without interruption• independent nations have the right to make their own decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use the same hunting grounds north and each of Lake Ontario• all First Nations had to agree to the Treaty to ensure that peace was successful• right to their traditional territory was recognized by all parties

Treaty of La Grande Paix de Montreal and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

	Individual Identity	Collective Identity	Collective Rights
Treaty		- rights to traditional territories was recognized	- re-established the collective rights for each group to govern themselves - recognized that the French and First Nations could make their own decisions - respected and recognized that they would not attack each other; hunting grounds were for all groups
Charter	- outline all fundamental freedoms that all individuals have	- individual rights and freedoms -	- official and minority language rights

Local Government

Electoral Process

Election: a democratic way to select a representative

Representative: a person elected by the people to represent the people. Any Canadian citizen over the age of 18 can run for office (become a Candidate)

Steps of a Local Election:

- **Nomination** - Must be nominated to get name on voting ballot (papers with personal info and names of people who have nominated you are delivered to municipal offices) Name goes on voting ballot (a piece of paper used for voting that lists the names of the candidates)
- **Campaigning** - Gain support through campaign committees, debate, door to door knocking, leaflets and signs
- **Voting:** People go to polling station to vote. Person with the most amount of votes wins. Voting is a democratic way to voice your opinion

Why do we have Local Government?

Local government is created to provide services to meet some of the needs of its citizens.

Local Government Services: Public Transportation, Fire Protection, Waste Disposal, Parks and Recreation, Animal Control, libraries, Streets and Roads, Senior’s Facilities, School Boards

Taxes

- Local government collects the money for the above services through **tax** collection. Taxes collected from the people who own property in the community (houses, businesses, land):
- Money collected by taxes is called **revenue** or income for the local government to spend on the above services.
- When the local government spends its money it is called **expenditures**, or expenses.

Bylaws –

- are rules, at the local level, that specify people’s behaviour in order to help keep people safe and help community run smoothly.
- can only be enforced in areas they have been passed.
- People are responsible for knowing and obeying bylaws of that community and could be fined if rules are not followed.

New Bylaws or Changes to Bylaws

- **Motion** (idea or proposal discussed and voted on at a meeting) is introduced by a councillor.
- A person or group can make a presentation at a council meeting
- People have 3 chances to speak out against it. Supporters can answer criticisms each time.
- **Motion** is put to a vote. If the Majority of councillors vote in favour, it will be passed and become a bylaw.

Urban vs. Rural Governments

Municipalities are broken up according to population. An area with a high population in a small area is urban whereas an area with a low population in a large area is rural.

Local Government	Top Elected Official	Council
Urban – cities, towns and villages.	Mayor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually elected by voter 	Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 7 and 15 depending on size of community; 7 for towns • Elected by voters
Rural – include municipal districts and counties	Reeve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor elected as chief electoral officer by council 	Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually 3 for villages • Elected by voters
First Nations	Chief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected by voters in First Nation communities 	Council is selected by community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of councillors depends on size of First Nation
Métis	Chairperson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected by council members 	Council of 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected by community

Municipal District – is a rural area that has its own local government

Role of School Boards

School Board - is a type of local government that makes decisions about education services and programs in schools. They know the needs and values of the community and makes decisions that are appropriate to these needs.

Superintendent - is responsible for running the schools in a jurisdiction (name of area that covers all schools ex. Christ the Redeemer, Calgary Catholic), hired by school board.

Trustee – voted member of the community who serves on a school board. See page 121 in text.

Types of Public Schools

Public Schools – are open to all students, they may have French Immersion or bilingual programs in languages such as Chinese, Arabic or Ukrainian.

Separate Schools – have instruction in the Roman Catholic faith as well as a wide variety of language programs.

Francophone Schools – all Francophone schools are run by Francophone school boards unless they are private. Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives Francophone parents in Alberta the right to have their children educated in French.

Charter Schools – are not governed by the local school board. They have the same curriculum as public schools, but with a special focus, such as science, music or athletics.

First Nation Schools – are run by First Nations bands and often focus on aspects of the First Nations culture such as language.

Association Canadienne-Française de l’Alberta (ACFA)

What is the purpose of ACFA?

- To advance and broaden the vision of Alberta’s entire francophone community.
- To bring together, plan, mobilize, support and inspire the vital forces of Alberta’s francophone community
- To defend the official language rights of the francophone citizens of AB
- To provide a voice on issues that concern the francophone community as a whole

How does the ACFA make decisions?

- Members discuss issues and activities at an annual general meeting
- Members who are 16 yrs of age and older can attend the AGM and vote
- The vote of every member is equally important
- Members elect representatives to the board of directors. These include representatives for each region, members at large, and a Provincial President

Métis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA)

What is the purpose of the Métis Nation of Alberta?

- To improve the education, health, social and economic conditions of Alberta's Métis people
- To speak on behalf of the Métis to governments, industry, and communities
- To provide Métis people opportunities to participate in government policies and decisions
- To promote Métis rights
- To apply for gov't grants, and carry out gov't programs and services

How does MNA make decisions?

- All members have equal decision making powers
- A general assembly each year discusses policies and activities
- All members elect a provincial president and vice president
- Each of the 6 regions has a regional council with an elected regional president and vice president and Métis representatives
- The provincial council of the MNA includes the provincial president and vice president, and the presidents and vice presidents from each region. It has 14 members.

Métis settlement councils reflect historical and other rights.

- Métis settlements are Métis lands established by Alberta's laws in 1990
- Métis settlements reflect the rights of the Métis as one of Canada's aboriginal peoples

First Nations Authorities (FNA)

How First Nations Authorities provide a voice for their members.

- FNA's are elected by the people they represent.
- The chief and councillors are responsible for making decisions on behalf of those who elect them. They make decisions based on what is in the best interest of the electorate. The procedures for electing FNA's differ from nation to nation.

How First Nations Authorities Make Decisions

- FNA's arrive at decisions based on a quorum. A quorum is a minimum number of representatives who must be present to make a decision valid.
- Many FNA's consult Elders as part of the process of making decisions
- They set their own rule about how often to hold elections: every 3, 4, or 5 years.
- Major decisions, such as whether to allow resource development on their land, are made by a vote of the entire membership.

First Nations Authorities reflect historical and other rights through treaties.

- Treaty first nations hold an election for grand chief every 3 years.
- First nations authorities come from the treaty rights of first nations.
- Treaties are historic agreements negotiated between first nations and Canada's government.
- FNA's govern reserves for first nations established by the treaties.

Provincial Government

Electoral Process

Election: process of selecting an MLA and governing party

Constituency: an area or district represented by one member of the legislature. They are determined by population statistics and natural divides (i.e. mountains/river). They change as the population changes.

Constituents – are the people who live in the constituency that a member of government represents

Electorate: Voters must:

- live in a constituency where they want to vote
- be a Canadian citizen
- at least 18 yrs of age
- live in Alberta at least 6 months before election day

1. Nomination- All candidates must be and eligible voter and complete a nomination form with the signatures of 25 eligible voters in their constituency. 1 candidate per party runs in a constituency. A person can also run as an independent candidate

2. Campaigning – Voters get information about the candidates through phone calls, campaign literature, signs and talking to candidates. Candidates often go door to door to meet voters, attend forums, and give interviews to the media.

3. Preparing the Polling Station - Each constituency is divided into polls and every poll has a list of registered voters. election officials check names and cross them off as the voters cast their votes.

4. Showing Eligibility to Vote - A person must be 18 years old or older to vote and have lived in Alberta for 6 months. Voters can only cast their vote in their constituency (where they live).

5. Casting and Counting Votes

- **Advanced Polls-** Provided for voters who will be away or busy on Election Day such as Armed forces personnel.
- **Regular Polls-** Votes cast on the day of the election at each polling station.

6. Declaring the Outcome -

- Officials count the ballots by hand. When all the votes are counted, the office declares a winner. The announcement is televised and the party with the MAJORITY of votes forms the government.

Chief Electoral Officer: Works for the legislative assembly. Duties include:

- Making sure election laws are followed
- Training election officials
- Making sure they have the right ballots for the polls

Roles and Structure of the Provincial Government

The following lists the roles in the Provincial Government in order of authority.

Constitutional monarchy – a system of government in which a monarch, that is a king or queen, is the head of state. In Canada, the Prime Minister is the Head of government.

Lieutenant Governor

The role of the Lieutenant Governor is to serve as the Queen's representative within Alberta's provincial government. The Prime Minister recommends a person for the job of Lieutenant Governor and then the Governor General appoints that person.

The **duties** of the Lieutenant Governor include:

- Inviting the leader of the party that wins the election to become premier
- Issuing the Royal Proclamation that calls the Legislature into session
- Reading the Speech from the Throne (describes what the government plans to do during the upcoming session of the legislature) to open new sessions of the Legislature
- Dissolving or closing the Legislative Assembly so elections can be held

Premier: leader of the party with the most seats in the House of Commons

Cabinet Minister: Elected MLAs chosen by the premier to be in charge of a provincial government department. They meet with the Premier to plan for government needs. They also work with MLAs to plan for govt' actions and they research, write and vote on bills.

MLA: Elected representatives in the provincial government. They make the laws in the province, introduce, debate and vote on bills, serve needs of people, attend events and celebrations and hear views/concerns in their constituency, ask constituents about programs, keep informed about issues that affect their constituency, work on government committees, try to help constituents solve problems with government services, meet with and assist special interest groups.

Opposition Member – is an elected member of the Legislative Assembly who is not a member of the party in power

Why do we have Provincial Government?

The **Provincial Government** deals with matters that affect the whole province. Responsibilities of the provincial government include services, taxes, laws.

Services:

Services are programs and structures provided by the government to meet needs of citizens. Services provided by the provincial government include: Healthcare, Education, Sustainable Resources, Agriculture and food, Children's Services, Aboriginal Relations, Tourism and Parks, Seniors and Community Support

Taxes: a way for the government to generate money to operate/run the province. Taxes are collected to fund provincial services. Ex. Income tax.

Budget is a list of items showing how much money will be spent on each item.

Laws

Bill: a proposed or suggested law

Act: a bill that has been passed by the Legislative Assembly and signed by the Lieutenant Governor. An act is also known as a law.

Making a law

1. **Introducing a Bill** - Called the first reading; like an announcement to prepare the Legislative Assembly to debate the bill.
2. **Debating the Bill in principle** - Called the second reading; MLAs debate the main idea of the bill and decide whether to reject it or examine in more detail (potentially send to 3rd reading)
3. **Debating the Bill in detail** - MLAs study it and make suggestions on how to improve it. Debate and votes occur on each suggestion. This process can change parts of the bill.
4. **Last Chance to Debate** - Called the third reading; last chance for MLAs to make comments about the Bill; they can ask final questions about it.
5. **The Vote is taken** - MLAs vote; if majority, bill will pass and become a law.
6. **Royal Assent**- The LG of the province gives the bill royal assent which makes it a law or an act.

Current Events and Issues

Current Issue: usually a problem worth debating and talking about, affairs of public interest (ex: global warming, pollution)

Current Event: facts and details about events that are happening or people involved (ex: tsunamis in Indonesia, election,)

Participation in Government

Lobbying: participating in an organized attempt to influence people in government about a particular interest, or attempting to persuade a politician to support or oppose changes in the law.

Petitioning: submitting a formal written request, signed by many people, appealing to authorities on behalf of a cause.

Meetings: organizing or attending a meeting of people, especially members of a group, society or committee for the purposes of discussion.

- **Organizing or Attending Rallies:** organizing or attending a mass meeting of supporters or persons having a common interest, to show support for a cause, or to take concentrated action.

Contacting Elected Representatives: Phoning, emailing, or meeting elected representatives to impact decision making.

Accountability

Accountability: taking responsibility for your actions

Representatives show that they are accountable in many different ways:

- Listen to constituents to find out what their needs are and how they feel about issues. Voters may talk to their representatives in person or by writing letters or sending emails
- They present the concerns of their constituents at government meetings and then report what happened to their constituents.
- They keep their constituents informed by sending out newsletters, reporting what they have been doing.