

# Municipalities Matter

## Social Studies 8



# CREDITS

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# ALSO FROM PLEA FOR GRADE 8:



## Local Government

Designed to accompany *Municipalities Matter: Social Studies 8*, PLEA's *Local Government* student newsletter features core material for teaching about local government and civic elections. Class sets available while supplies last.



## R. v. Wyler Mock Trial Kit

*R. v. Wyler* is a step-by-step guide that makes it easy to implement a mock trial in Social Science or Arts Education classrooms. Included are criminal fact situations, trial scripts, diagrams, courtroom personnel profiles, and instructions.



## Treaties and the Law (Newsletter)

Developed by PLEA for the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, *Treaties and the Law* introduces students to the unique place that Treaties hold in Canadian law.



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*Mock Trials* examines the history, the methods, and the curricular links for mock trials. An ideal companion guide for any teacher looking to implement a mock trial in any course.



## Our Government, Our Election: Second Edition

*Our Government, Our Election* is PLEA's comprehensive guide for teaching about government, politics, and the electoral process in a Saskatchewan-specific context. Fully updated, this new second edition is an invaluable resource for Social Studies teachers.



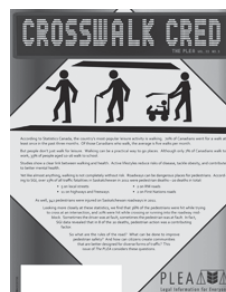
## Canada's Legal System: An Introduction

Canada is fortunate to be a country with a fair legal system. *Canada's Legal System: An Introduction* discusses how our respect for the Rule of Law has led to better government, better courts, and better law enforcement. Ideal for Social Studies 8.



## All 4 Each

Created in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association, *All 4 Each* is PLEA's guide to the legal and operational frameworks of co-operatives. *All 4 Each* is specifically designed to meet Resource and Wealth learning outcomes of Social Studies 8.



## Crosswalk Cred

Canada's most-popular leisure activity is walking. So what are the rules of the road? What can be done to improve pedestrian safety? And how can citizens create communities that are better designed for diverse forms of traffic? *Crosswalk Cred* considers these questions.

Preview or order these resources online at [teachers.plea.org](http://teachers.plea.org)

# INTRODUCTION

Our community is familiar. Our local actions are tangible. And our municipal politicians are often very accessible. Thus, municipal governance seems the natural starting point to engage students in the electoral and law-making process.

With this in mind, PLEA has updated our learning resource on local governance, *Municipalities Matter: Social Studies 8*, to help bolster young people's civic engagement.

Specifically written for Saskatchewan's Social Studies 8 Curriculum, *Municipalities Matter: Social Studies 8* begins with a community examination in Lesson One, then builds towards students constructing their own plan for personal involvement in the local political system.

Each lesson plan is constructed using objectives, procedures, and suggested curriculum links. Alongside this are handouts, activity sheets, and project outlines. When appropriate, background information summaries, answer keys, and evaluation rubrics are included.

Of course, just as the issues facing each teacher and their classroom are unique, so are the issues facing each Saskatchewan community. PLEA recognizes that teachers are the professionals best-placed to construct a Social Studies 8 program tailored to teacher strengths, student needs, and community issues. Thus, *Municipalities Matter: Social Studies 8* is written in an open-ended manner, so that teachers can use their professional discretion to intensively and meaningfully engage students in their own community. By using this resource alongside each teacher's existing and new-found resources *Municipalities Matter: Social Studies 8* can act as a frame to achieve many of the Outcomes prescribed in Social Studies 8.

Because teachers are the professionals closest to the actual learning taking place in Saskatchewan's classrooms, PLEA always welcomes your feedback and suggestions. Drop us a line at [plea@plea.org](mailto:plea@plea.org). Any insights will help us improve our future resources and programs.



## OUR MUNICIPALITY LESSON ONE

This introductory lesson is designed for teachers and students to identify what Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Education calls the “big ideas” that will frame this unit. The lesson’s intensive study of the municipality that students call home can be used to build understandings of a community’s history, current state, and relationship with broader environments. This localized context can provide a footing for the unit’s development of lifelong learners who are engaged citizens with a sense of self, community, and place.

### Suggested Curriculum Links

The broad nature of this lesson’s major project allows teachers and students to take several directions within the Social Studies 8 curriculum. The major project can be constructed around several Indicators within the following Outcomes:

- Interactions and Interdependence 8.2;
- Dynamic Relationships 8.1 through 8.3; and
- Resources and Wealth 8.1 through 8.3.

### Materials

- What is a Municipality?
- Saskatchewan Names and Places
- Our Municipality: Now and Then

### Procedure

1. As a class, discuss the differences between municipalities using **What is a Municipality**.
2. Use **Saskatchewan Names and Places** to familiarize students with various Saskatchewan municipalities.
3. To discover information about local governance, politics, and history, have students seek out relevant information portals. Just a few suggestions include the public library’s local history collection, local newspapers and blogs, and government data sources such as Statistics Canada.

Aggregate these sources in a central hub. This will provide your class with a starting point to research the assignments and activities in this resource. Encourage the class to continue to add sources to your hub as the unit proceeds.

In creating a central data hub, teachers are strongly encouraged to create an activity for students to evaluate the biases and perspectives of each of these information sources. Suggested resources for creating such an activity could include:

- *Media Literacy 101*, MediaSmart's video series on key concepts surrounding media awareness. Find it at [mediasmarts.ca/media-literacy-101](http://mediasmarts.ca/media-literacy-101).
- Lesson 2.4, The Media and Political Coverage, of *Our Government, Our Election Second Edition*. Find it at [teachers.plea.org](http://teachers.plea.org).

4. Using **Our Municipality: Now and Then** break students into four groups. Assign each group one of:

- The Basics
- Infrastructure and the Economy
- Community History
- Community History: Pre-colonization

Have groups create a presentation that includes a poster/web page/other representation. These presentations will function as anchor points for understanding the community and for building context for forthcoming lessons.

Teachers with students from several municipalities may wish to adapt this assignment so each student studies the specific municipality in which they live.

### Further Exploration

5. Because the entire community can be used as a classroom, it is important to recognize the benefit of place-based education. Of interest is this feature about Saskatoon's Outdoor School program on CBC Radio One's *The Afternoon Edition*. Find it at:  
[www.cbc.ca/afternoonedition/episode/2012/12/06/a-very-cold-walk-through-saskatoon/](http://www.cbc.ca/afternoonedition/episode/2012/12/06/a-very-cold-walk-through-saskatoon/)



## WHAT IS A MUNICIPALITY?

Whether we live on a farm, in a town, or in a city, most of us are residents of municipalities. Municipalities provide us with local governance.

The history of local municipalities in the land we now call Saskatchewan dates back to 1883. That is when the territorial government established a handful of local municipalities, as settlers began to occupy the land in greater concentration. However, it was not until 1909 that the Saskatchewan government enacted legislation to begin creating the municipalities we know today.

Saskatchewan has three categories of municipalities: urban, rural, and northern.

In the province's south, there are 454 urban municipalities:

- 16 cities
- 147 towns
- 250 villages
- 41 resort villages

Even though rural Saskatchewan is sparsely populated, it also requires municipal governance. In southern Saskatchewan, there are 296 rural municipalities (RMs). Within these RMs there are small communities called hamlets. Hamlets have five or more occupied homes and ten or more lots administered by the RM. A hamlet can become what is called an organised hamlet by an order of the Minister of Government Relations. Saskatchewan has 145 organised hamlets.

In northern Saskatchewan, there are 25 incorporated municipalities:

- 2 northern towns
- 11 northern villages
- 11 northern hamlets
- the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District (NSAD)

Northern Saskatchewan also has 11 unincorporated settlements, which are part of the NSAD and administered by the Northern Municipal Services Branch of the Government of Saskatchewan.

### Cities, Towns, and Villages: What's the Difference?

The type of municipality a community can become normally depends on its population:

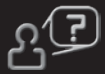
- City – minimum 5000
- Town – minimum 500
- Northern Village – minimum 250
- Village, Resort Village, Northern Hamlet – minimum 100

There is no minimum population requirement for rural municipalities.

Once a community reaches a minimum population, it can petition the Minister of Government Relations to become an urban municipality. If it grows even more, the local government can make a request to become another type of urban municipality. For example, in 1906 Warman was established. In 1966 it became incorporated as a town. Then in 2012, Warman successfully petitioned the Minister to become a city, after the population grew to 7,084.

But what happens if the population falls? It will not automatically be reclassified. Instead, the council must petition the Minister for reclassification. For example, Scott came into existence in 1908. By 1910 its population hit 600, and it achieved town status. However, as of 2016 the population of Scott was only 73. Because Scott has never petitioned for reclassification, it is now Saskatchewan's smallest "town." However, if the population of any community falls the Minister could reclassify the community if to do so is in the public interest.





## WHAT IS A MUNICIPALITY? ...continued

### Shrinking Saskatchewan: Ghost Towns

Though some municipalities in Saskatchewan date back to the late 1800s, most settlements sprung up in the early twentieth century when rail lines were built. So quick was the flood of settlers that Saskatchewan became the third-biggest province in Canada by 1911.

When Saskatchewan's population shifted from rural to urban, many of these small communities fell into decline. Population loss—often combined with unfortunate circumstances—left places like Girvan, Robsart, and Lemsford as mere shadows of their former selves. Other communities like Estuary, Govenlock, and Expanse became true ghost towns, with mere skeletal remains left.

When a town or village is shrinking out of existence, it is often no longer practical and sometimes impossible to have a local municipal government. When this is the case, the municipality's council can apply to be dissolved into the Rural Municipality in which it exists or the Minister of Government Relations can order the dissolution. For example, in the RM of Osborne there are two former villages, Lockwood and Guernsey. Lockwood was dissolved in 2002 and Guernsey was dissolved in 2005. Both are now hamlets administered by the RM.

Sometimes when a municipality is entirely abandoned the town site may revert to privately-held property. For example, the entire ghost town of Bents—complete with an abandoned grain elevator, houses, and stores—exists entirely on privately-owned land. Former public spaces, like the town's streets, are no longer public spaces. This means you need permission from the land owner to explore these places.

### Growing Saskatchewan: New Cities

There is no standard world-wide definition of "city." In Saskatchewan, a city requires a minimum population of 5000. In Alberta, 10,000 people are required. New Zealand requires at least 50,000.

Other places do not rely on population for a city designation. For example, the United Kingdom defines cities by using such factors as the community's historical status and the presence of an Anglican cathedral.

Meanwhile, some jurisdictions have abolished "city" designations entirely. Quebec has no legal distinction between town and city, and Sweden calls all settlements kommun (Swedish for municipality).

With the population of several Saskatchewan towns recently moving past 5000, a debate has been ignited about what constitutes a "city." Is 5000 residents enough to constitute a city? Or are other characteristics required?

Consider what makes a "city":

- Does a "city" require a central gathering place for work and shopping?
- Does a "city" require cultural institutions, such as theatres and art galleries?
- Does a "city" require transportation hubs, such as public transit and air service?
- Does a "city" require substantial public buildings and public spaces like parks and libraries?

Using your answers above, create your own definition of "city." How would your definition apply to communities in Saskatchewan?



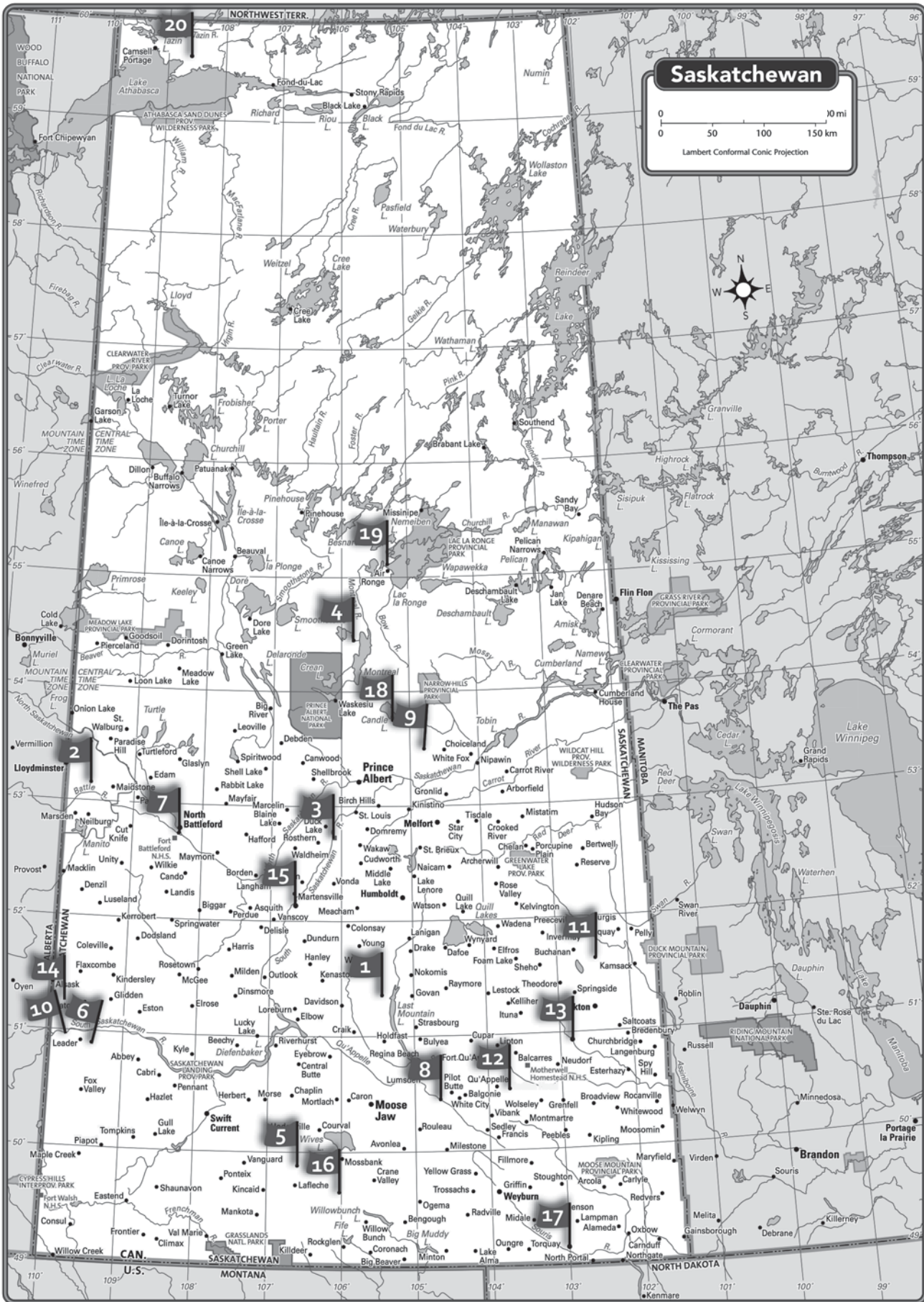
## SASKATCHEWAN NAMES AND PLACES

Saskatchewan has diverse communities with great stories to tell. Match the numbers on the map to their corresponding communities.

1. The original settlers of this south-central community were loyal to the British crown, giving the town and its streets royal names.
2. In Scottish, a “burn” is a small creek. This town was named by combining the name of a railway official and a small creek near the town.
3. This settlement was the place of the Métis’ final battle of the Northwest Resistance, brought about by the refusal of the Macdonald Government to grant Métis the right to the lands they had settled on.
4. This northern hamlet got its name from the Cree word for “swearing place”, inspired by the difficult time the original inhabitants had settling there.
5. This community was named by combining the last name of the town’s founder with a French word meaning town.
6. Reflecting the diversifying nature of Saskatchewan, this southwest town’s all-girls Catholic school is now an all-boys Islamic college.
7. This former capital of the Northwest Territories is home to Saskatchewan’s first newspaper, the Saskatchewan Herald.
8. When the capital city of the Northwest Territories was moved to a place called Pile of Bones Creek, the Governor General renamed the town something more suitable in honour of his mother-in-law, Queen Victoria.
9. Once called Dorrit, this village is “Mile 0” of the Hanson Lake Road.
10. This once-thriving town of 800 was ravaged by a series of mysterious fires and the bypassing of a branch rail line. It now is completely abandoned.
11. This town was named by abbreviating the name Canadian Northern Railway.
12. This town was the setting for the fictional town of Mercy on CBC’s *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.
13. The smallest city in Saskatchewan, it was named after the president of the Grand Trunk and Pacific Railroads. He lost his life in the sinking of the Titanic.
14. Following the example of neighbouring Alsask, the name of this small community was created by combining the names of two other Canadian provinces.
15. This city was formed in 1906 by its merger with two other settlements named Riversdale and Nutana.
16. An Ojibwa word that means “to cook with stones”, this town was named after the Northwest Territories district now covered by present-day Saskatchewan and Alberta.
17. The slave-like conditions in the coal mines around this city spawned a strike in 1931.
18. This resort village was named by Indigenous inhabitants who said a great haunted light shone between two islands on the eastern side of a lake.
19. This town’s name is said to be derived from the French verb “to gnaw” as early explorers found evidence of beavers gnawing at trees in the area.
20. This once-thriving community of nearly 3000 was virtually abandoned in 1982, following a series of mine closures.



# SASKATCHEWAN NAMES AND PLACES





## OUR MUNICIPALITY: NOW AND THEN

Knowing about a community's past and the present helps create a sense of place. In groups, create a profile that introduces a particular aspect of your community. Each group should use the following questions as a guide.

### Group A: The Basics

Group A's task is to create a general profile of the community's people and place as it exists today. Guiding points include:

1. Population, broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, and other factors
  - How does a diverse population benefit the community?
2. Climate
  - How does climate impact the community?
3. Location
  - Create a map that illustrates your community and its surrounding environment.
4. Relationships with other communities
  - How does the community's location and population shape its relation with other communities? For example, what services do people come to or stay in the community for? What services do people in the community go elsewhere to find? Where do they come from or go to?
5. What other highlights of the community today do you feel should be profiled. You may wish to think about flags, seals, or other community symbols.

### Group B: Infrastructure and the Economy

Group B's task is to explore elements of the local infrastructure and economy. Guiding points include:

1. Public infrastructure and public services
  - What would be the impact on the community if health care facilities, water treatment facilities, law enforcement, schools, or other government services disappeared?
2. Private enterprise
  - How do these businesses contribute to local well-being?
3. Locally-produced goods
  - What are the benefits of purchasing locally-produced goods?
4. Local media
  - Who owns the media outlets? What about local bloggers? Whose perspectives do they represent?
5. What other highlights of the local infrastructure and economy do you feel should be profiled?



## OUR MUNICIPALITY: NOW AND THEN ...continued

### Group C: Community History

Group C's task is to explore the community's history from its original settlement. Guiding points include:

1. Early immigration
  - What were the reasons that early immigrants chose the community as home?
2. Important local history
  - What events, buildings, and people shaped the community? How did the railroad, grain handling, and the post office play a role?
3. Important national and international historical events
  - How did events outside the community's control shape its history?
4. The land and environment
  - How did the land and environment impact the community's development?
5. What other highlights of local history do you feel should be profiled?

### Group D: Community History: Pre-colonization

Group D's task is to explore the community's history before European settlement. Guiding points include:

1. Original inhabitants
  - Who were the first people to live in the area? Describe their language, traditions, and culture.
2. The land and environment
  - How did the land and environment impact upon the lifestyle and identity of the original inhabitants.
3. Treaty
  - What Treaty land is your community located on? What agreements were made to allow for new settlement on this land? Have these agreements been honoured?
4. Impact of colonization
  - How did the arrival of new settlers impact upon the lives of those who already lived here?
5. What other highlights of the original inhabitants and Treaties do you feel should be profiled?



## GOVERNMENT POWERS IN CANADA

### LESSON TWO

Now that students have an understanding of the community's past and present, they can begin to consider the ways they can shape a community's future. This lesson will help students understand local government's scope of power. Knowing what local government can and cannot do will better equip students to influence the Canadian political system.

#### Suggested Curriculum Links

A primary intent of this unit is for students to construct their own plan for personal involvement in the local political system. This cannot be accomplished without knowing what government is, and the scope of power that each level of government holds. As such, this lesson is an essential step towards achieving several Indicators within the following Outcomes:

- Power and Authority 8.3 and 8.4; and
- Resources and Wealth 8.1.

#### Materials

- What Does Government Do?

#### Teacher's Background Information: Property Taxes

Although there is some flow of money through federal and provincial transfer payments and grants, municipalities are largely responsible for raising their own revenue. For municipalities, property taxes are the main source of money. This money is used to pay for services such as public libraries, local roads and parks, and transit.

Property taxes are based on the appraised market value of a particular piece of property. Owners of higher-valued property will pay higher taxes than owners of lower-valued property. This is consistent with a long-standing principle that citizens should contribute to society based on their ability to pay. This helps ensure greater income equality while providing all citizens with equitable access to quality public services.

The term used for municipal property taxes is mill rate. The mill rate is the dollars of tax placed on \$1000 of property value. For example, if a municipality's mill rate is 20, that means that the property owner will pay \$20 of tax for every \$1000 of value of their property. Municipalities establish the mill rate by taking into account how much revenue needs to be raised to provide quality public services.

Different classes of property—such as residential, commercial and industrial—are subject to different levels of taxation. Generally, businesses will pay higher taxes on property than home owners because unlike citizens who use their property primarily for shelter, businesses use their property primarily to make money. That being said, in many municipalities in Saskatchewan the property tax burden has been drifting from commercial and industrial property to residential property.

For an in-depth discussion of the foundational purpose of government, including concept and principles of taxation in Canadian society, check out Lessons 1.2 (Why Laws?), 1.3 (Public Goods and Services) and 1.4 (Paying for Government Services) in *Our Government, Our Election Second Edition*. Find it at [teachers.plea.org](http://teachers.plea.org).

## Procedure

1. Discuss the purpose of government in our lives. The Island Simulation prereading activity in *Lord of the Flies: The Novel Study* is an excellent activity for introducing this concept to students. Find it at [teachers.plea.org](http://teachers.plea.org).

2. Bridge discussion to reading of **What Does Government Do?**

### KEY QUESTIONS

- What are public goods and services?
- What are some examples of the public goods and services provided by government?
- What are some examples of laws governing our behaviour?

3. Using the chalkboard make three columns for use in a class discussion:

- In the first column list basic services or facilities that students think should be available to the community.
- In the second column list services and facilities that are actually available in the community.
- In the third column list services that would be nice to have, but may not be considered essential.

Have students discuss and debate what public services they consider important for a healthy, happy society.

4. Explain how municipal services are paid for largely through property taxes. Discuss how the amount of public services available is dependent upon the amount of money the municipality can raise.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- What does society gain from public goods and services? What does society lose when governments cut public goods and services?
- What does society gain by paying taxes? What does society lose by paying taxes?
- Is paying tax worth the benefit of having public goods and services?

## Further Exploration

5. PLEA's student publication *Crosswalk Cred* is useful for illustrating the role of municipal government. It explores how they create and maintain both the laws and the physical infrastructure that support walkable communities. Find it at [teachers.plea.org](http://teachers.plea.org).
6. To pursue discussions around the relationship between taxation and public expenditures, check out "Taxes and Public Expenditure: Springfield's Bear Patrol" in *Learning about Law with The Simpsons*. Find it at [teachers.plea.org](http://teachers.plea.org).



# WHAT DOES GOVERNMENT DO?

Think about the sidewalks and roads that link our neighbourhoods and communities together. Consider the complex planning needed to provide us with fire protection and public health care. Look at the laws that define what behaviour is acceptable in society. These and other features of our society are not just an accident or coincidence. Their presence is the direct result of government.

But what is “government”? Several years ago, Ricker, Saywell, and Skotch put forth a definition of government. It is still relevant today:

*Government is the machinery that individuals set up to enable them to do with others what they cannot do on their own<sup>1</sup>.*

From laws that protect society from theft to policies providing everyone with health care and K-12 education, governments ideally will act in ways that help society achieve its goals.

So we now know what government is. But *who* is government?

In Canada, our governments are an extension of all of us—the people. Citizens democratically choose governments to reflect our wishes for our society. This means that government must respond to the will of the people.

Because citizens choose governments, it is the responsibility of every citizen to be well-informed. After all, when we are better informed, we choose better governments.

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## Distribution of Government Responsibilities

To understand how we, as citizens, can become involved in creating the rules that govern our lives, it is important to understand that each level of government has different responsibilities. In addition to First Nation governments, there are three levels of government in Saskatchewan: Federal, Provincial, and Municipal.

The **Federal Government** has power over areas that are of interest to the country as a whole. This includes:

- banking
- criminal law
- broadcasting and telecommunications
- the RCMP
- air transportation
- national defence
- national parks
- international trade
- postal service
- oceans and fisheries

**Provincial Governments** have power over areas that directly affect the well-being of the province. This includes:

- education
- highways
- health care
- forestry and mining
- agriculture
- labour standards

1. Ricker, Saywell, Skotch. (1982). *How are we governed in the '80s?*





## WHAT DOES GOVERNMENT DO? ...continued

**Municipal Governments** are given their powers from the province. Through bylaws and other actions, municipal powers include:

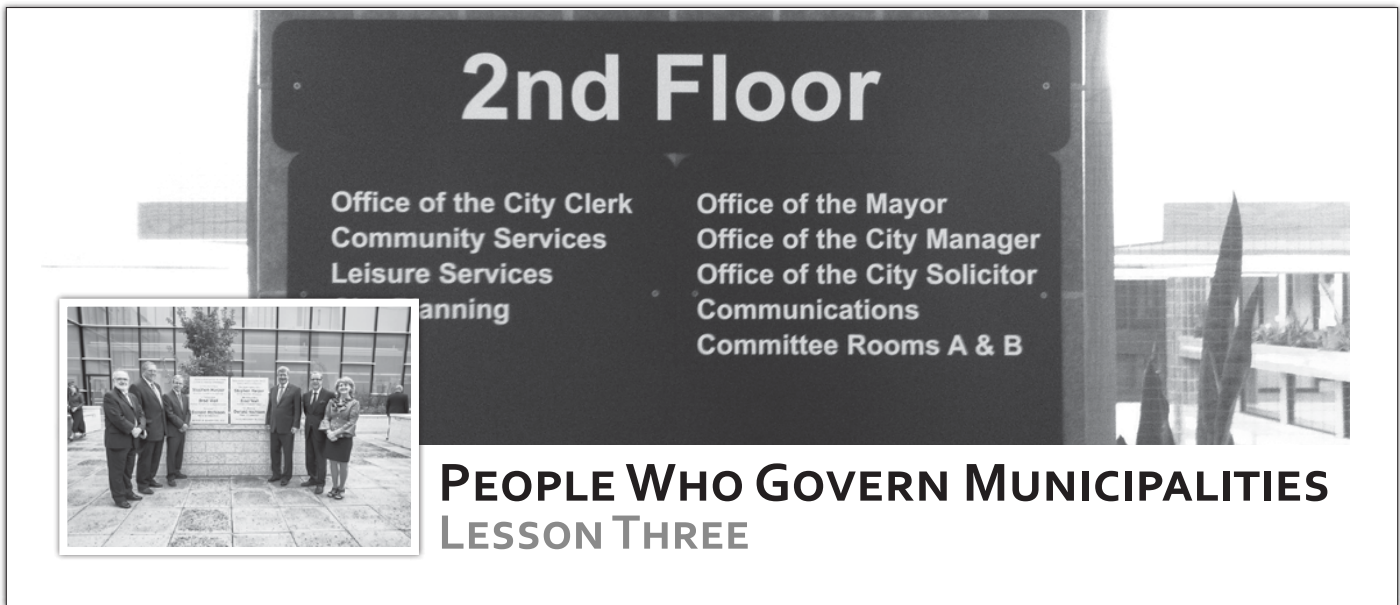
- health and safety of its citizens
- activities in or near public places
- vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic
- streets and roads
- property taxes
- utilities such as water
- sewage and garbage disposal
- local police and fire protection
- parks and playgrounds
- building codes
- public transit
- nuisances such as noise and litter
- store hours
- curfews
- animals and dangerous dogs

**First Nation Governments** have a structure and authority that differs from community-to-community. It ranges from minimal governance to self-government agreements with Canada.



### THINK Citizen Interests & Issues

1. For each of the following situations determine if it is a Federal, Provincial, or Municipal responsibility.
  - a) You want to build a garage in your backyard.
  - b) There is a dog in the neighbourhood that always bites people's heels.
  - c) Ms. Mabel thinks that the picture on the ten dollar bill is poorly drawn.
  - d) The highway to the next town is full of potholes.
  - e) The intersection of Main Street and First Avenue has poor visibility because of overgrown trees.
  - f) The fire department was slow to respond to a garbage bin fire.
  - g) The community's drinking water tastes like chlorine.
  - h) A local curfew requires all children 16 and under to be indoors by 9:00pm.
  - i) The minimum wage is too low.
  - j) There are not enough doctors in your community.
  - k) The community's bike paths are poorly designed.
2. Think about three issues you face in your life. For each, answer the following.
  - a) What is the issue?
  - b) Why is it an issue in your life?
  - c) How does this issue affect others in the community?
  - d) Does government play a role? If so, which level of government?



This lesson introduces the duties of municipal politicians. Through profiling local leaders, students will understand the reasons why people in the community choose public life. Consequently, they will be able to better evaluate if and how their elected leaders fulfill their role in a democracy.

### Suggested Curriculum Links

Part of this lesson’s examination of municipal politicians is an exploration of diversity. With this in mind, this lesson can achieve several Indicators within the following Outcomes:

- Power and Authority 8.3 and 8.4; and
- Interaction and Interdependence 8.1.

### Materials

- The Power and the Glory: Duties of Civic Politicians
- Local Council: The Break Down

### Teacher’s Background Information: Construct of Municipal Councils

Municipalities are governed by local councils. These councils are made up of people from the community elected by the community. Generally, the councils are constructed as follows:

- CITIES elect a mayor and six or more councillors (in multiples of two).
- TOWNS, ALL TYPES OF VILLAGES, AND NORTHERN HAMLETS elect a mayor and two or more councillors (in multiples of two).
- RURAL MUNICIPALITIES elect a reeve and a councillor from each local division of the RM.
- ORGANISED HAMLETS may elect a three-person hamlet board that reports to the RM council. Alternatively, some hamlets may be considered an electoral division of the RM.
- NORTHERN SETTLEMENTS elect an advisory board consisting of three or five members who consult with the provincial government on issues regarding their communities.

Most urban municipalities in Saskatchewan elect their councillors at large. This means all councillors

represent all areas of the community. Every city, town, village, and resort village has the option, however, to use the ward system. Communities using the ward system divide the municipality into smaller sections, with each area represented by an individual councillor. The processes followed to elect councillors is discussed in Lesson 5: Municipal Elections.

## Procedure

1. Discuss how politicians are under more public scrutiny than average citizens and often give up much of their private life to become a municipal leader. Use this discussion to lead a brainstorming session on the reasons community members choose to run for public office.
2. Read **The Power and the Glory: Duties of Civic Politicians**. For background information, teachers may wish to contact their municipal office to find out the remuneration for their municipal leaders.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- Do you think the pay that municipal politicians receive is fair, given their workload?
  - Would people from smaller communities have better access to their elected representatives than people from bigger municipalities? Or is accessibility dependent upon the effort of each councillor?
3. Assign **Local Council: The Break Down**. If this resource is being taught during municipal elections, this activity should be skipped as this concept will be covered in Lesson Five. The ambitious nature of this assignment makes it ideal for group work activity and class presentations.
  4. Once students have completed **Local Council: The Break Down** and shared their findings with the class, lead a class discussion of the following question:
    - Why is it important that elected municipal leaders take into account the concerns of all people in their community?



## THE POWER AND THE GLORY: DUTIES OF CIVIC POLITICIANS

Saskatchewan's municipalities are representative democracies. This means that we elect representatives to act on our behalf, to hear our concerns, and to ensure that the local government works for our community's best interests as a whole.

In Saskatchewan we elect councils to govern our municipalities. In urban municipalities, we elect councillors and a mayor. In rural municipalities, we elect councillors and a reeve. Together, they are responsible for bringing forth sustainable government and positive changes to communities. Therefore, they must:

- represent the public and consider the well-being and interests of the municipality
- help develop and evaluate the municipality's policies, services and programs
- participate in council meetings
- ensure that decisions of council are put into effect
- maintain the financial integrity of the municipality
- keep in confidence matters discussed in private at council meetings, until the matter is discussed publicly

In addition to the above duties for everyone on council, the mayor or reeve must also preside over meetings of the council, sign all bylaws that council passes, and sign many agreements into which the municipality enters.

Being a member of a local council is demanding work. Even so, the job in communities big or small is considered a part-time job. People on council often have day jobs in addition to their duties on council. However, in bigger cities the job of mayor is considered a full-time job. The mayor will often have an office and an assistant.

Because councillors attend council meetings, committee meetings, and community events, they often have to arrange their day-job schedules around these commitments. While councillors are not obliged to attend community events, a councillor can be removed from office for repeatedly failing to attend council meetings.

Perhaps the most important responsibility of our elected representatives is to hear the voices of everyone in the community. Remember: Governments are not put in place to impose their views upon us. As citizens, we democratically choose our governments to reflect our wishes for society.



### THINK

### True or False

1. \_\_\_\_ The job of mayor is full-time for every municipality in Saskatchewan.
2. \_\_\_\_ Elected officials must see that the financial integrity of their municipality is maintained.
3. \_\_\_\_ The pay for mayor, reeve, and councillors is determined by the provincial government.
4. \_\_\_\_ Every person on council must sign any bylaw that is passed for it to come into effect.
5. \_\_\_\_ A mayor of a city, town, or village, and a reeve of a rural municipality have the same duties as a councillor but with added responsibilities.



## LOCAL COUNCIL: THE BREAK DOWN

To understand our local government, it is important to know about the people who make up that government. This assignment will introduce these people.

### PART A: The People of our Municipal Government

Prepare a list of your municipality's elected officials. Questions to think about include:

- Who is the mayor or reeve?
- Who are the councillors?
  - » If you live in an urban municipality, are councillors elected at large or by ward? If they are elected by ward, find a map that outlines each ward and match the wards to the elected representatives. If you live in a rural municipality, match the councillors to their divisions.
- Where and when do these people meet as a council?

Once you have made a list of the local council, prepare a brief profile of each representative. The profile should include any information you believe is relevant to their role as an elected representative of the community. This could include:

- What contributions do they make to the community?
- What is the representative's occupation outside of politics?
- What volunteer work is the representative involved in?
- What policies do they support or believe in? How do these policies help the community as a whole?

### PART B: Our Community Representatives: Representing Our Community?

Look back to the community profiles created earlier in this unit. Compare the people of the community as a whole to the make-up of council. Characteristics could include:

- age
- gender
- cultural heritage
- occupation
- any other characteristic you deem important.

Once this is completed, consider the following:

- How does the local council compare to the community's diversity?
- If the council does not accurately reflect the community as a whole, why do you think that is?
- What barriers do under-represented members of your community face?
- Given the small size of a municipal council, is it possible for it to accurately reflect the entire community?
- If it is not possible for council to perfectly look like the entire community, why is it important that elected members understand the views of all people in the community?

### PART C: Issues Important to You

Consider council's role in bringing awareness to issues important to you.

- Has anybody on your local council discussed issues important to you? If so, what has been said or done?



Competing interests must be taken into account when creating local bylaws. Knowing the processes required to make bylaws is necessary to be able to advocate for change. This knowledge will help students better understand how to take action in their community.

### Suggested Curriculum Links

This lesson focuses on the evolution of a piece of legislation. As such, this lesson can achieve most of the Indicators in the following Outcome:

- Power and Authority 8.3.

### Materials

- The Nuts and Bolts: Local Council Meetings
- A Day in the Life of... A Creative Writing Activity

### Procedure

1. Engage the class in a discussion about current “hot button” topics. Preferably narrow the discussion to an issue that falls within the jurisdiction of municipal government. Use this discussion to demonstrate how a diverse society has competing needs, thus requiring real understanding of opposing viewpoints and consensus-building in order for society to be effectively governed.

2. Read **The Nuts and Bolts: Local Council Meetings**

#### KEY QUESTION

- Why is it essential that the public be allowed to observe and speak at council meetings?

To better understand the proceedings of a council meeting, teachers may wish to organize a class trip to watch a municipal council meeting, or view a recording of the most recent council meeting.

3. Either research and present a local issue which has been the subject of a bylaw passed by council, or assign students to do the same. For guiding the discussion, consider:
  - When was the bylaw passed?
  - What was the motivation for enacting the bylaw?

- What purpose does the bylaw intend to fulfill?
  - What are the penalties for violating the bylaw? Are they fair?
  - How do local people feel about the issue and how the bylaw addresses it?
  - Does this bylaw enhance the common good of the community? If so, how?
4. To evaluate student understanding of this (or any other) bylaw, assign **A Day in the Life of... A Creative Writing Activity**. This may make a good cross-curricular project with English Language Arts.

### **Further Exploration**

5. As a supplemental activity for exploring the purpose of a bylaw, check out the No Vehicles in the Park activity on page 16 and/or the Interpreting Laws activity on page 30 of *Just Law*. Find them at [teachers.plea.org](http://teachers.plea.org).



## THE NUTS AND BOLTS: LOCAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

More than any other level of government, municipalities directly impact our daily lives. Over the years, Saskatchewan municipalities have struggled with issues such as store hours, smoking bans, casinos, curfews, garbage collection, recycling and road repair. The decisions they come to on these issues are made at local council meetings.

Local council meetings take place at regular intervals and are open to the public. At these meetings, council will debate and discuss the operation of the community, citizens are given the opportunity to speak about issues important to them, and laws governing the municipality are considered.

The laws made at a municipal level are called bylaws. Municipalities make bylaws for the “peace, order and good government” of the municipality, and for promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Bylaws can cover issues big or small. For example, the city of Saskatoon recently attempted to enact a city-wide anti-bullying bylaw. Meanwhile, the town of Shellbrook introduced a bylaw that limited garage sales after one went on every day all summer. As you can see, communities have the power to enact bylaws dealing with quite a range of issues.

Passing a bylaw takes place in several steps. Once a council decides that a bylaw is needed, the community’s administration prepares a draft of the bylaw. The draft will be presented at a council meeting to be considered and voted on. Bylaws are considered in stages:

**FIRST READING** - the bylaw is discussed and a vote is taken. The bylaw is not necessarily read aloud at the meeting. Members of council must be provided the opportunity to read the full text of the proposed bylaw before first reading.

**SECOND READING** - The bylaw is again discussed and a second a vote is taken. Amendments to the bylaw can be proposed by councillors as part of first or second reading. If council votes in favour of a proposed amendment, it becomes part of the proposed bylaw.

**THIRD READING** - The third reading usually takes place at a subsequent meeting. By waiting for a later meeting, the public is given a chance to provide input regarding the proposed bylaw and any amendments. If the vote is carried, the bylaw is considered passed and adopted.

**SIGNING AND SEALING THE BYLAW** - The mayor or reeve must sign the law to put it into force. This usually happens shortly after the final vote that passes the bylaw.

This process is open to the public. Citizens can speak at council to share their thoughts and concerns about local bylaws, or simply sit in on the meetings to observe debate and discussion. As well, municipal offices make documents publicly available so citizens can review things such as drafts of bylaws and reports to council.

Not all of council’s work is done in public, though. Councils and their committees can meet in private to discuss long-range or strategic plans and to discuss matters that cannot be discussed in public because of privacy legislation. However, all laws must be passed at public council meetings.



### THINK

### Creating Fair Laws

1. Review the steps that must take place before a proposed bylaw can become a law. Why do you think bylaws are passed in stages?
2. Education scholars Michael W. Apple and Jeffery Beane have said that “Democracy is not simply a theory of self-interest that gives people license to pursue their own goals at the expense of others. The common good is a central feature of democracy.”
  - a) What is “the common good”?
  - b) How can local government ensure that they work towards the common good?
  - c) How can citizens ensure that local government works towards the common good?





# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... A CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY

Because bylaws deal with issues that are close to home, they impact our lives on a daily basis in many ways.

Imagine it's five in the morning and you are rudely awakened by your neighbour's frantically barking dog. You close your bedroom window and go back to sleep. Later that morning, you hop out of bed, have a shower, and get on your skateboard to meet your friends downtown.

Your day has just started, and already the decisions you have made are affected by the bylaws of the community you live in. The size of your bedroom window is likely determined by a municipal building code. Local bylaws can deal with neighbourhood problems. The water for your shower is likely provided by your local municipality. And traffic bylaws regulate the use of your skateboard.

## Your Task

How do bylaws impact your life? Create a short story that shows an understanding of how a particular bylaw could apply to you.

Key ideas to consider as you write this story should include:

- Does this bylaw fall under the jurisdiction of the municipality?
- What is the purpose of this bylaw?
- What are the penalties for violating this bylaw?
- How do you and others feel about this bylaw?
- How does this bylaw enhance the common good of the community?

Your story does not necessarily have to be about a character breaking this law. Other ideas could include having a citizen propose an improvement to an existing bylaw; a citizen who finds themselves unfairly disadvantaged by the bylaw; the story of two neighbours who disagree on the purpose of the bylaw; or an event that brings about the need for a new bylaw.



## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS LESSON FIVE

Now that students have an understanding of the basic structure and functions of municipal government, students will learn about municipal elections and the individuals running for office. This will provide the opportunity for students to critically consider the role of a local politician. Much like Lesson 1, this lesson is grounded in the local and is largely research-based. Teachers may wish to adapt this lesson to ensure it is best-suited to student learning styles.

### Suggested Curriculum Links

This lesson's examination of municipal politicians considers the diversity within such groups. With this in mind, this lesson can achieve several Indicators within the following Outcomes:

- Power and Authority 8.3 and 8.4; and
- Interaction and Interdependence 8.1.

### Materials

- Evaluating Council's Performance
- Learning About the Candidates
- Municipal Elections

### Procedure

1. Either lead class reading of **Municipal Elections** or share information relevant to the specific municipality or municipalities in which your students live.

#### KEY QUESTION

- 2012 marked the first time municipal councils were elected for four-year terms. Previously, the terms were for three years. What are the advantages and disadvantages of putting politicians in office for longer terms?
2. Assign **Evaluating Council's Performance**. In addition to the central information hub created in Lesson 1, the Internet Archives ([archive.org](http://archive.org)) is an excellent way to research now-defunct websites of candidates for their past stances and promises. As well, during election years, teachers may wish to save campaign literature for approaching this activity in future years.
  3. In election years, assign **Learning about the Candidates**. Given the sheer number of candidates in some municipalities and that some teachers will have students from several municipalities, teachers may wish to approach this as a jigsaw activity.

4. As a summary discussion of either procedure 2 or 3, bring together class for discussion of prevalent local issues. Are these issues important to the students and their future in the community? How can more awareness be brought about of issues important to youth?

### **Further Exploration**

5. Teachers wishing to pursue the concepts of municipal plebiscites and referendums should check out *Direct Democracy: Plebiscites and Referendums*. Find it at **teachers.plea.org**.



# MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Each municipality elects its own local council. The number of elected councillors generally depends on the size of the municipality. Voting eligibility and election dates can vary depending on the type of municipality.

## Urban Municipalities

Urban municipalities hold general elections every four years. If the community uses the ward system, each voter casts one ballot for a candidate running for council in their ward, and one ballot for mayor. If the community does not use the ward system, voters can cast ballots for as many council candidates as there are seats on council, and one ballot for the mayor.

To vote in most urban municipal elections, individuals must be Canadian citizens 18 or older who:

- a) have lived in Saskatchewan for at least six months, and
- b) lived in or owned property in the municipality for at least three months.

Urban municipalities hold their general elections every four years, in the beginning of November.

## Rural Municipalities

Although the reeve and councillors of rural municipalities hold office for four years, the full council and reeve are not elected at the same time. One-half of the council is elected every two years. The reeve is elected every second election. Each division in a rural municipality elects a councillor while all eligible voters in the entire rural municipality can vote for the reeve.

To vote in most rural municipal elections, individuals must be Canadian citizens 18 or older who have:

- a) resided in the RM for at least three consecutive months, or
- b) own land in the RM or are the spouse of such an individual.

Other people may also be eligible to vote in RMs. Complete requirements are listed on the Government of Saskatchewan's Municipal Affairs website.

Rural municipalities hold their elections in the beginning of November.

## Organised Hamlets

Some organised hamlets elect a three member management board that reports to the RM council. Other organised hamlets may be designated an electoral division of the RM in which they exist, so the hamlet will elect one councillor to RM council.

## Northern Municipalities

Northern municipalities hold general elections every four years to elect local council members and a mayor. Like other urban municipalities, northern municipalities can be divided into wards where one councillor is elected from each ward or the councillors can be elected from the community as a whole. Mayors are elected from the community as a whole.

To vote in most northern municipal elections, individuals must be Canadian citizens 18 and older who:

- a) have also lived in Saskatchewan for at least six months and
- b) lived in or owned property in the municipality for at least three months.

Northern municipalities hold their general elections every four years, some time in the fall.



# MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ...continued

## Resort Villages

Because some people from other provinces live in resort villages during the summer months the residency requirement for eligible voters is a little different. Even if an individual has not lived in Saskatchewan for six months they may vote in an election in a resort village provided that they:

- a) have lived in, owned or leased property in the village for at least three months, or
- b) are the spouse of such a person.

Resort villages hold their general elections every four years, on a Saturday in late summer.

## Plebiscites and Referendums

Sometimes, certain issues can be put to a direct vote. Either the local council decides to have a vote on a matter, or community members petition for a vote on a matter. This type of vote is called a plebiscite if the results are non-binding. It is a referendum if the results are binding and the local government must act on them. Although plebiscites and referendums can be held at any time, they are usually held during an election.



# EVALUATING COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

During elections, candidates for local councils put forth their ideas in order to gain the trust and support of the community. If elected, it is their role to make good on their promises.

Consider the direction your community has taken in the recent past. How does it compare to what was promised during the last election campaign? Your assignment is to evaluate the recent past of your community and council's role in shaping it.

## Part A: The Community

Using your earlier-created community profiles, re-consider the recent past of your community.

1. What major undertakings have happened in the past few years? For example, have new roads been built, new facilities been opened, or new public spaces developed?
2. How many of these local initiatives were strictly the result of the local government? Did other levels of government help out? Were any other groups involved?
3. What are community members saying about the direction of your community?

## Part B: Council's Role

Much of the direction of a community is shaped by its council. Review past campaign promises of those sitting on local council. Make a list of what promises were made, and by whom.

1. Do you see past campaign promises reflected in the current direction of the community?
2. Are there promises that were not kept? What were they?
3. If promises were not kept, have those on council explained why? Do these explanations justify their inaction?
4. What new initiatives have councillors undertaken since being elected?
5. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with council's performance and the direction of the community?



## LEARNING ABOUT THE CANDIDATES

In addition to the legal requirements such as being over 18 years old, all candidates for civic office require certain skills and knowledge to be an effective representative of the people. Your assignment is to better understand the individuals running for public office.

### PART A: The Candidates

Make a list of who is running for election in your municipality. If you live in a community using a ward system or a rural municipality with districts, be sure to group the candidates for each ward or district separately. For each candidate, consider:

- What contributions to the community outside of their elected work would make them a good representative?
- What is the candidate's occupation outside of politics?

### PART B: The Election Platforms

To get elected, politicians should put forth their vision for the community, and they should outline the ways they will achieve their vision. These plans are often called election platforms. Look at each candidate's platform. Guiding considerations include:

- What reasons have they put forth for running for local office?
- Is their platform realistic?
- How do they plan to implement their election promises?
- What are other people and candidates saying about this candidate's stances?
- Does their platform serve the common good of the community, or the special interests of a few?

### PART C: Do Our Candidates Represent Our Community?

Look back to the community profiles created earlier in this unit. Compare your community's diversity to the make-up of the candidates. Characteristics to consider could include:

- age
- gender
- cultural heritage
- occupation
- any other characteristic you deem important.

Once this is completed, consider the following questions:

- How do the candidates compare to the community's diversity?
- If the candidates do not accurately reflect the community as a whole, why do you think that is?
- What barriers do under-represented members of our community face?
- Given the number of candidates running, is it possible for candidates for council to reflect the entire community?
- If it is not possible for candidates for office to reflect the entire community, why is it important that they work to understand the views of all people in the community?

### PART D: Issues Important to You

With your knowledge of the community and your above examination of the various candidates, consider issues important to you.

- Have any of the candidates discussed issues important to you? If so, what has been said or done?
- If you could ask each candidate a question about their platform, what would it be?



## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: SPEAK OUT!

### LESSON SIX

Now that students are aware of the governance of their community, the issues facing their community, and the people that represent them or are running to do so, they have the background knowledge needed for bringing their concerns about the community to the forefront. This lesson provides methods for students to construct a plan for their personal involvement in the political system.

#### Suggested Curriculum Links

The primary intent of this lesson is to explore avenues for involvement in the political system, and then launch students into creating their own action plan to do so. Therefore, this lesson can achieve several Indicators within the following Outcome:

- Power and Authority 8.4.

#### Materials

- Speak Out! Personal Involvement in the Political System

#### Procedure

1. On the board, create five columns that students can line up in front of. Label columns:

Strongly Agree • Agree • Neutral • Disagree • Strongly Disagree

Read the statement: "Citizens cannot expect positive change unless they speak out and act upon issues they are passionate about."

Ask students to stand in the column with the stance they most agree with. Allow class discussion of various stances, then give students opportunity to change their position. Ask those who moved to share why they changed their opinion.

2. Ask students to share and discuss issues facing the community that they find of interest.
3. Work through **Speak Out! Personal Involvement in the Political System** as a class. Discuss each method's merits and drawbacks.
4. To illustrate how many of the Speak Out methods work in unison, as a class or in groups examine the in-depth case study **Bypassing the Saskatoon Public Library**.



5. To broaden understandings of citizen participation in society, have students build a plan to participate in any of the listed activities in **Speak Out! Personal Involvement in the Political System**. Students could observe a rally, write an email to an elected representative, speak at a council meeting, volunteer with a community advocacy group, or even report about posters with political messages in their community. Have students research effective examples of what they are setting out to do, then build an action plan of their own. It is highly likely that any action plan will involve more than just one of the listed methods, and may include ideas not included on the following pages.

### **Further Exploration**

6. Teachers interested in teaching for political consciousness may be interested in reading Paul Orlovski's "Teaching For and About Democracy, Including Its Flaws." Find it in *Democracy & Education*, Vol. 18 No. 2.



## **SPEAK OUT! PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM**

Change does not happen by accident. Nor does change happen by waiting for people with power to share their power. Change happens when people advocate for the causes they believe in. This often involves collectively organizing through mass movements. From workers' rights to student advocacy to honouring Treaties, our society has progressed because people became involved in the political system.

There are many ways to be personally involved in the political system to influence governments and change communities. For young citizens who are not yet old enough to vote, being involved in the political system is a good opportunity to demonstrate to older adults that citizenship is more than just voting once every four years. Citizenship requires being active and informed.

The following pages will briefly outline just some of the ways to participate in our democracy, both in the public square and in the online sphere. The reasons for getting involved do not have to necessarily be to propose or oppose something. If government or an elected representative is doing something you support, you should not hesitate to show your support for them.

Remember: the people elected to public office have a responsibility to listen to their community and represent the interests of all citizens.



## SPEAK OUT! LETTER WRITING

Writing letters and e-mails or visiting government representatives are effective ways to express opinions. Elected representatives are there to represent the concerns and interests of their constituents. Writing to them is a way to directly voice your concerns.

### Case Study: Reasonable Expectations and Letters to the President

The President of the United States is widely considered to be the most powerful person in the world. Even if the President spent the entire day reading and responding to the letters they receive, it would be impossible to reply to every one. After all, they receive tens of thousands of letters every day.

However, the President does read some of these letters. According to a *New York Times* report, letters to the President are first sorted by communications staff. Urgent matters and matters requiring further work are directed to the appropriate authorities. Of all these letters, a few that are believed to reflect a sample of what American people are experiencing are slipped into the President's daily briefing package. Mike Kelleher, the director of White House correspondence, told the *New York Times* "We pick messages that are compelling, things people say that, when you read it, you get a chill."

These letters appear to have an effect. It is not uncommon for people to receive personal responses. And often, these letters come up in meetings with top staff.

### THINK

1. Civic politicians in Saskatchewan clearly have less constituents and responsibilities than the President of the United States. Is it important that your local politicians read all letters sent to them? Is it reasonable to expect a response from your local government?
2. Do you think a single letter can be effective? Why or why not?
3. How can you contact your elected representative in your local government?



## SPEAK OUT! POLITICAL PARTIES

By joining a political party you can learn more about the political and legal processes at work in Canada. You can also influence party policies and participate in choosing the candidates who run for office, even if you are not yet voting age. All major parties have youth chapters that provide an opportunity for young people to get involved. It is important to note that political parties are not officially active at the municipal level in Saskatchewan.

### Case Study: Canada's Political Leaders and their Party Memberships

#### *Pierre Trudeau, former Liberal Prime Minister*

Pierre Trudeau wrote about and rallied for progressive causes during his youth. He campaigned against conscription, studied Marxism and progressive economics, and supported striking workers. This brought Trudeau prominence as a left-wing writer and intellectual. During much of this time, he was involved with the CCF (the precursor to the modern-day NDP) and other left-wing parties and movements. However, when Trudeau entered elected politics in 1965, he joined the Liberals. He felt the party was the most realistic way to achieve power.

#### *Stephen Harper, former Conservative Prime Minister*

Stephen Harper was said to be an admirer of Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. As a teenager he joined the Liberal student club at Richview Collegiate in Etobicoke, Ontario. His friend persuaded him to join so that he could meet with a cabinet minister at a Young Liberal meeting. Harper, however, became disillusioned with Liberal plans such as the National Energy Program, a policy meant to share energy resources across Canada. Harper later joined the Progressive Conservative Party in the early 1980s.

#### *Thomas Mulcair, former New Democratic Party leader*

Thomas Mulcair became interested in student politics while studying Law at McGill University in the 1970s. He joined the youth wing of the NDP. Following university, Mulcair worked outside of party politics. However, in 1994 he was elected to the Quebec National Assembly as a Liberal, later becoming Quebec's Minister of the Environment. Mulcair quit Cabinet when the government tried to force him to allow condominiums to be built near environmentally-sensitive land. In 2007, Mulcair rejoined the NDP.

### THINK

1. Do the experiences of these leaders indicate that once you join a political party, you must remain committed to that party for life?
2. Why is it important to question what each political party does, even if you are a member?
3. People's perspectives evolve. When is it fair to criticize politicians who change their mind?



## SPEAK OUT! VOLUNTEER FOR A CANDIDATE

Political campaigns rely on volunteers. This is especially true at the municipal level, because candidates do not receive formal support from political parties. Volunteers can be involved in many ways, from going door-to-door telling people about the candidate to putting up posters to helping coordinate social media accounts.

### Case Study: Young Voters and the Bernie Sanders Phenomenon

In the United States, the two major political parties—the Republicans and the Democrats—select their presidential candidates in the months leading up to the general election. People seeking the nominations for either party launch nation-wide campaigns and each state holds a vote so that citizens can select each party's nominee.

In the lead-up to the 2016 American election, a 74-year-old democratic socialist named Bernie Sanders caused an earthquake in American politics. He sought the Democratic Party nomination for president. He promised universal health care, free college tuition, and criminal justice reforms. He said these programs would be paid for by tax increases, mostly on corporations and the rich. His message resonated with Americans. Tens of thousands of people filled parks and sports arenas to hear Sanders speak. In the end, he did not win the Democratic nomination but he came very close. He ran again for the Democratic presidential candidate nomination in 2020. The 2020 campaign was very similar to the 2016 campaign: while he did not win, he came very close and helped shift the political conversation. In his wake, countless young progressive people picked up Sanders' torch, and ran for political offices in the United States.

One thing that made Bernie Sanders' campaigns different from the other candidates who were seeking the presidential nomination was his reliance on young volunteers and small donations. While competing candidates took in millions of dollars in donations from millionaires and corporations, Sanders refused their money. Instead, he relied on enthusiastic young volunteers and small donations, averaging \$27. These small donations added up: Sanders' campaign received more individual donations than any other campaign in American history.

It is universally-agreed that Sanders' campaign would never have been as influential had it not been for young people. His young volunteers' understanding of social media and their ability to motivate their peers was unequalled in American politics. And when it came time to vote, Sanders was the overwhelming choice of young people. In some states, Sanders received over 80% of the votes cast by people aged 18-29.

### THINK

1. If a candidate speaks about issues you believe in, would you volunteer for their campaign?
2. Is it more likely that candidates will better-understand issues important to young people if young people are involved in their campaigns?
3. Even if a candidate does not win, how can their candidacy contribute to change?



## SPEAK OUT! PETITIONS

Citizens can create petitions to make people aware of issues. Petitions are formal requests for change that can be signed by people who support the idea. Given the ease with which petitions can be made online, this task has become much more simple than when petitions had to be taken door-to-door. By promoting and then presenting a petition to city council, the council can become aware of the depth of citizen concern with an issue of interest.

### Case Study: Changing Local Bylaws on Longboarding and Skateboarding

Saskatoon longboarder Mike Nemeth was discouraged with how the City of Saskatoon fined people \$15 for skateboarding and longboarding in the city's downtown. Nemeth believed that skateboarding and longboarding was a legitimate form of transportation. So he began an online petition so that the city would recognize that longboarding was a legitimate form of transportation.

Nemeth's petition outlined four specific reasons why longboards should be allowed downtown. Through his work, city council changed the bylaw so skateboarders and longboarders were allowed to use downtown trails and cycling lanes. Tricks, however, would still be subject to fines to ensure the use of these boards downtown was transportation-related.

### THINK

1. Because online petitions are easy to create, is simply creating a petition an effective way of voicing concern? Or should they be created in conjunction with other efforts?
2. How can you be sure the signatures on an online petition are legitimate? How can you be sure the signatures on a paper petition are legitimate?
3. If a petition meets certain requirements and gains enough signatures, a municipal government may be forced to hold a plebiscite or referendum on the issue. What kinds of issues should be put to a direct vote so all citizens can decide?



## SPEAK OUT! INTEREST GROUPS

Interest groups are people who come together over common concerns. They work toward a common goal. Many interest groups exist at the local, provincial and national level, ranging from local heritage societies to advocacy groups for minority rights. These groups are often called members of “civil society.” By supporting civil society groups you can help focus public and government attention on important issues.

### Case Study: Local Heritage and Regina’s École Connaught School

École Connaught School, built in 1912, was a central feature of Regina’s historic Cathedral neighbourhood. It needed a costly renovation, but the Regina Public School Board believed that the enormous challenge of renovation was too much. Instead, it decided that it wanted to tear the school down and build a new one.

The school board’s decision disappointed many in the community. A movement began to save the school. A civil society group Save Our Connaught formed, and their work—along with the work of many concerned citizens—brought much awareness to the importance of the school as a heritage building and the architectural and cultural value the building brought to the Cathedral neighbourhood. Heritage Regina, the Connaught School Community Council, the Cathedral Area Community Association, and local heritage advocates presented the school board with petitions indicating widespread support for renovating the building, and gave the school board presentations that spoke to the heritage value of the school. However, the school board still believed tearing the school down was its best option.

The school board’s demolition plan hit a snag when Regina’s Municipal Heritage Committee recommended to Regina’s city council that the building receive a heritage designation. This designation would have prevented the school division from demolishing the school. When the matter came to a vote at Regina city council, 14 different people and groups spoke to council about designating the school as a heritage property. The only speaker who opposed the heritage designation was the Regina Public School Board.

Despite the immense public support for saving the school, council voted against the heritage designation. This allowed the school board to tear down the then 102-year-old school.

### THINK

1. Do you think that civil society helped build a better-educated public by bringing attention to Connaught School and its importance to local heritage?
2. Even if an interest group is unsuccessful in certain endeavours, does this mean their work was a waste of time?
3. Is changing people’s attitudes a lengthy process?



## SPEAK OUT! POSTERING

Many communities have public spaces where posters can be displayed. These spaces can be used by citizens to post any number of things, from concert announcements to information about public events. It is not uncommon to see information posted in these places that address issues, concerns, and causes relevant to the community.

### Case Study: Speaking Out or Vandalism? Protest Stickers in Saskatoon's Downtown

Protest stickers have frequently appeared in Saskatoon's central neighbourhoods, especially downtown. For example, in May 2010 Saskatonians woke up to protest stickers placed in areas relevant to their message. For example:

- "Have you driven drunk yet today?" was posted near a bar.
- "Clean up after your religion" posted near a cathedral.
- "No human rights allowed within 5 meters" was posted near a courthouse.

This trend continued in late 2015, when a new batch of stickers targeting Saskatoon's Mayor Don Atchison appeared throughout downtown. These stickers read "Don Atchison for a drug and gay free Saskatoon." Their message likely was connected to a police raid of a downtown marijuana dispensary, and the Mayor's continual reluctance to attend the city's annual Pride parade.

While the fairness of the criticisms on these stickers could be debated, they did succeed in bringing awareness to local and national issues. However, it was against the law to place these stickers on public and private property. The first round of stickers were characterized by the Saskatoon Police as public mischief, and the second round of stickers were treated under the city's graffiti bylaw.

### THINK

1. Do you think the messages on these stickers raised valid concerns? Why or why not?
2. Would these stickers have been more or less effective if they were placed on designated poster areas?
3. If you were posterizing, where would you put your posters?





## SPEAK OUT! SOCIAL MEDIA

For most of the past 150 years, traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers have been one-way forms of communication. Audiences were largely confined to receiving information from “reliable” sources. However, the rise of the internet has changed this. From Facebook groups to re-tweets, social media provides people with a platform to express their opinions to engage in conversations with people who agree or disagree.

### Case Study: The Fast Rise of #IdleNoMore

Founded by four Saskatchewan women, Idle No More is a movement that “calls on all people to join in a peaceful revolution to honour Indigenous sovereignty and to protect the land and water.” Within weeks of it first appearing on social media, Idle No More grew into one of the largest mass movements in Canadian history.

Idle No More started in October 2012 when planning began for a teach-in about the federal government’s omnibus budget bill. The omnibus bill made changes to the *Indian Act*, the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, and the *Environmental Assessment Act*. When the founders posted the group’s teach-in event to Facebook, they called it “Idle No More.”

The first Saskatoon teach-in on November 10th quickly expanded to events in Regina, North Battleford, and Prince Albert. From there, a National Day of Action ensued on December 10th with events across Canada that brought attention to issues of importance to Indigenous people and Canadians as a whole. Round dance flash mobs popped up across the country, solidarity protests sprung up around the globe, and dialogues took place in communities and on social media.

The lightning-fast spread of Idle No More was helped by the power of social media. According to CBC News, the movement’s famous #IdleNoMore hashtag first appeared on November 4th 2012. In a few weeks it was trending on Twitter. Social media and the instant networking it allowed meant that activists across Canada could network to engage in dialogues about Idle No More. As well, its phenomenal rise meant that mainstream media could not ignore Idle No More.

The initial flurry of Idle No More has passed. However, the hashtag is still commonly used when discussing issues of importance on social media. And more importantly, Idle No More has changed the nature of the national conversation about Indigenous perspectives.

### THINK

1. Do you think Idle No More would have been the success it was without social media?
2. Who is excluded from using social media? Think of issues such as access to technology and wealth disparity. How can we find ways to include everyone?
3. When engaging in dialogue online, are people always polite and thoughtful in their discussions? If they are not, what can you do to change that?



## SPEAK OUT! POLITICAL RALLIES AND PROTESTS

Political rallies and protests are surprisingly common occurrences. They are part of our right to peaceful assembly guaranteed in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Even if one does not believe in the cause, attending a rally or peaceful protest as an observer can be a useful way to understand the multiple viewpoints that make up our society.

### Case Study: The Occupy Movement

The Occupy movement rose up in 2011. It described itself as a leaderless resistance movement that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the super-rich and elite. Spurred on by the Canadian magazine *AdBusters*, Occupy protests began in New York City's financial district. Soon the protests spread to Canada and around the world. People congregated in public spaces to bring awareness to increasing social and economic disparity. Their rallying cry, "We are the 99%," is a reference to disparity between the richest 1% of society and everybody else. In Canada, for example, the wealth gap between the rich and everyone else is at its highest point since the 1930s.

The initial round of Occupy protests disbanded over the course of winter 2011/2012. However, demonstrating the ongoing impact of protest movements, the awareness it created carried on. Major documentary films have been created, addressing wealth disparity has become a plank of political party platforms, and income inequality is now frequently discussed on social media and some mainstream media.

### THINK

1. Have you heard people talk about "the 1%"? Do you think the Occupy movement was successful in getting their message out?
2. When is protest appropriate? Can you think of circumstances where violent protest is appropriate?
3. During a town hall meeting with young people in April 2016, United States President Barack Obama told the assembly that sometimes young activists focus too much on protest and not enough on finding solutions. He said:

You can't just keep on yelling at [political leaders] and you can't refuse to meet because that might compromise the purity of your position.... Too often what I see is wonderful activism that highlights a problem but then people feel so passionately and are so invested in the purity of their position that they never take that next step and say, 'How do I sit down and try to actually get something done?'

Do you agree or disagree with this comment? Discuss.



# SPEAK OUT! IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY

## BYPASSING THE SASKATOON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Political engagement can take on many forms and often involves engaging in several different ways. It also can involve finding common interests across different groups. Consider this as you read the following case study about how citizens of Saskatoon stopped city council from diverting \$750,000 in taxes designated for the public library into the construction of a freeway overpass.

### The Background

Since 1966, the Francis Morrison branch of the Saskatoon Public Library has served as the city's main branch. Intended to serve the public for 25 years, the current facility is now inadequate. At 78,000 square feet, it is only half the size of what a 2004 report revealed is needed to operate efficiently. As Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* reporter Darren Bernhardt outlined:

Rows of book stacks and irreplaceable archival material for the Local History Room line the basement where flooding is a risk. Public materials and shelving run the length of corridors restricted to staff. Book trolleys choke every corner and up to four staff members share work desks while others are relegated to makeshift offices in the windowless basement.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the space crunch, the library has been forced to turn away donations and even important archival material such as old city blueprints. However, the city has been slow to commit to a new main branch. After redirecting \$15 million in federal grants earmarked for library expansion into developing the River Landing area, city council approved a plan to redirect a further \$750,000 of taxes designated for the public library into the construction of a freeway overpass.

### The City's Proposal

The problems for the library began when First Pro Shopping Centres approached city council in 2006. First Pro wanted to build a "big-box power centre" anchored by Walmart on the south end of the city. However, the developer's proposal was contrary to the recommendations of the city's \$120,000 public study on the feasibility of commercial development.

Ignoring what their own study recommended, city council approved the developer's proposal in a 10-to-1 vote. Council rejected the study because they "didn't think the pace of development should be determined by bureaucrats so much as by those who were willing to risk their money."<sup>2</sup>

Soon, complications from approving the proposal surfaced. One major problem was that the development would create traffic congestion. If it was to go ahead, construction of a freeway overpass would have to be fast-tracked. Unfortunately, the city lacked the cash reserves to build the overpass. While the developer said they would pay for 20% of the cost of the overpass, the city was still stuck with 80% of the bill and no funds to pay for it.

To get around this problem, the city decided to borrow the money. They planned to pay the loan back by diverting all tax revenue from the big box development for seven years. This included all taxes dedicated to the library and the school system. However, the plan soon ran into problems. As *StarPhoenix* columnist Randy Burton revealed:

This happened in such a rush that it was all done over the telephone. The library board didn't even hold a meeting to approve the deal. At the time, the board was under the impression that the province and school boards would



## SPEAK OUT! IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY BYPASSING THE SASKATOON PUBLIC LIBRARY ...continued

also divert education taxes to the interchange. The province wanted no part of it, and in order to make up the shortfall, the city moved to a 15-year diversion deal on municipal and library taxes.<sup>3</sup>

With the plan rejected by the province, the city decided to more than double the amount of municipal and library taxes to be dedicated to the overpass. The city took the position that “if a development doesn’t occur, then we’ve got nothing, whereas if we can assist in a development then at least we’ve got the tax base coming in the future.”<sup>4</sup>

### The Opposition

As public understanding grew that the city was using library tax dollars to build a freeway overpass for a Walmart, public pressure for the city to drop the plan also grew. A civil society group called ShEEP (Should Exploitative Economics Persist) was on the forefront of bringing concerns about the plan to the public. This included voicing concerns through local media and through making contact with city council. In addition, dozens of letters in opposition to the plan were written to city council, the public library board, and the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* by the public-at-large.

Opponents were primarily concerned with the diversion of library taxes into a freeway overpass, especially given the need for a new central branch. However, the concern did not end there. Many questioned the need for yet another Walmart in the city. Others took issue with the city tossing aside the recommendations of its own urban planning report to accommodate a multi-billion-dollar developer. And some were concerned with the relationship between the developers and city council: one ShEEP member observed that the

relationship between council and a representative of the developer may have been too close, noting that at a public meeting they were “quite chummy.”<sup>5</sup>

### The Resolution

Opposition to the city’s plan reached its peak at a protest at Saskatoon City Hall on March 13, 2006. Approximately 100 protesters—including representatives from the union representing library and municipal workers, members of ShEEP, and the general public—came to city hall with the aim of stopping the tax diversion and hopefully stopping the Walmart from being constructed. While the concerned citizens were unsuccessful in halting the development, city council did rescind their motion to divert library taxes to the freeway overpass.

The work of these concerned citizens, however, did not expedite the construction of a new library. The under-sized main branch still stands as the library’s headquarters today.



# SPEAK OUT! IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY

## BYPASSING THE SASKATOON PUBLIC LIBRARY ...continued

### THINK

1. Opposition to the city's plans came from several fronts. This included:

- workers' unions
- voluntary civil society groups
- concerned individuals

While the core issue was the diversion of library taxes into a freeway overpass, people were also concerned with the relationship between city council and corporate interests, and the need for more big-box retail in general.

- a) What does this tell us about the importance of different groups co-operating to bring about change?
  - b) Not everybody got exactly what they wanted. How does this reflect the nature of democracy in a diverse society?
2. The opposition's battle took place on several fronts. Public awareness was built through such things as formal speeches to city council, letters to local media, letters to the library board, and a protest in the city's public square.
    - a) What "Speak Out" tools did the people opposed to the city's plan use?
    - b) Given the rise of social media, how would you approach this situation today?
  3. If common citizens do not politically engage, who will have the most influence in a democracy?

<sup>1</sup> Bernhardt, D. (2007, August 15). Library naming rights could be up for grabs; Frances Morrison looks for way to fund \$34-million expansion. *The StarPhoenix*.

<sup>2</sup> Klein, G. (2006, March 15). Sod turned for civic election. *The StarPhoenix*.

<sup>3</sup> Burton, R. (2006, March 11). Council set to take overpass exit. *The StarPhoenix*.

<sup>4</sup> Burton, R. (2006, March 11). Council set to take overpass exit. *The StarPhoenix*.

<sup>5</sup> Coolican, L. (2006, March 14). Stonegate big box centre on south side clears council. *The StarPhoenix*.



## POST-ELECTION ANALYSIS LESSON SEVEN

This lesson is an analysis of election results, so is only intended for election years. Through examining and considering the election results against the understandings built in this unit as a whole, students will be able to begin a longer-term reflection on the effectiveness of the election process.

### Suggested Curriculum Links

The broad nature of this lesson can be focused on the consequences of engagement or non-engagement in the political system. As such, this lesson can be best used to achieve some Indicators within the following Outcome:

- Power and Authority 8.4.

### Materials

- Media coverage of civic election results

### Procedure

1. As a class, discuss civic election results. If more than one media source is available, teachers may want to discuss and compare reporting of the results. Possible items of discussion could include:
  - If there was a parallel election held in class, compare and discuss the results.
  - What factors made the winner win and the losers lose?
  - What role did the local media play in the election?
  - What role did social media play in the election?
  - What promises were made? How can the winners be held accountable for these promises?
  - How does the newly-elected council compare to the community's diversity. Has your community made progress in this area?
  - What were the most significant events of the campaign?
  - Did the elected candidates receive 50% or more of the votes? If not, is the majority truly being represented by our electoral system?
  - What was the voter turnout? How does this compare to other municipalities?
  - What was the level of support for winning candidates when calculated as a percentage of the voting-age citizens as a whole?
  - What do the results of this election mean for the municipality's future?

# ANSWER KEY

## Lesson One:

### Saskatchewan Names and Places

1. Imperial
2. Lashburn
3. Batoche
4. Weyakwin
5. Gravelbourg
6. Prelate
7. Battleford
8. Regina
9. Smeaton
10. Estuary
11. Canora
12. Indian Head
13. Melville
14. Mantario
15. Saskatoon
16. Assiniboia
17. Estevan
18. Candle Lake
19. La Ronge
20. Uranium City

## Lesson Two:

### What Does Government Do?

- a. Municipal
- b. Municipal
- c. Federal
- d. Provincial
- e. Municipal
- f. Municipal
- g. Municipal
- h. Municipal
- i. Provincial
- j. Provincial
- k. Municipal

## Lesson Three:

### The Power and the Glory: True or False

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. T

# PROJECT RUBRIC

Expectations	Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Needs Work
Knowledge/ Understanding	Understands the civic issue and describes conditions in the selected area	Understands the civic issue with a high degree of effectiveness and describes conditions in the selected area with a high degree of effectiveness	Understands the civic issue with considerable effectiveness and describes conditions in the selected area with considerable effectiveness	Understands the civic issue with some effectiveness and describes conditions in the selected area with some limited effectiveness	Understands the civic issue with limited effectiveness and describes conditions in the selected area with limited effectiveness
Thinking / Inquiry	Interprets and analyzes civic needs and the mindset of citizens	Interprets and analyzes civic needs and the mindset of citizens with a high degree of effectiveness	Interprets and analyzes civic needs and the mindset of citizens with considerable effectiveness	Interprets and analyzes civic needs and the mindset of citizens with some effectiveness	Interprets and analyzes civic needs and the mindset of citizens with limited effectiveness
Communication	Puts forth a readable structure and tone; persuasive arguments; and relevant facts and figures	A high degree of clarity in putting forth a mature tone; persuasive arguments; and relevant facts and figures	Considerable clarity in putting forth a mature tone; persuasive arguments; and relevant facts and figures	Some clarity in putting forth a mature tone; persuasive arguments; and relevant facts and figures	Limited clarity in putting forth a mature tone; persuasive arguments; and relevant facts and figures
Democratic Thinking	Provides an effective rationale that respects the multifarious principles and perspectives within a democracy	Provides a highly effective rationale that respects the multifarious principles and perspectives within a democracy	Provides a considerably effective rationale that respects the multifarious principles and perspectives within a democracy	Provides a somewhat effective rationale that respects the multifarious principles and perspectives within a democracy	Provides an ineffective rationale that respects the multifarious principles and perspectives within a democracy

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Overall Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



# PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Expectations	Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Needs Work
Subject Knowledge	Demonstrates knowledge of the subject	Demonstrates mastery of the subject	Demonstrates a considerable knowledge of the subject	Demonstrates some knowledge of the subject	Demonstrates little knowledge of the subject
Organization/Coherence	Organizes and presents the material with effectiveness	Organizes and presents the material with a high degree of effectiveness	Organizes and presents the material with considerable effectiveness	Organizes and presents the material with some effectiveness	Organizes and presents the material with limited effectiveness
Voice	Speaks with a clear, confident voice	Always speaks with a clear, confident voice	Usually speaks with a clear, confident voice	Sometimes speaks with a clear, confident voice	Rarely speaks with a clear, confident voice
Visual Aids	Uses visual aids and other creative devices with effectiveness	Uses visual aids and other creative devices with a high degree of effectiveness	Uses visual aids and other creative devices with considerable effectiveness	Uses visual aids and other creative devices with some effectiveness	Uses visual aids and other creative devices with limited effectiveness
Language	Uses grammar and vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience	Always uses grammar and vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience	Usually uses grammar and vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience	Sometimes uses grammar and vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience	Rarely uses grammar and vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience
Physical Gestures	Maintains eye contact and uses appropriate posture/gestures	Always maintains eye contact and uses appropriate posture/gestures	Usually maintains eye contact and uses appropriate posture/gestures	Sometimes maintains eye contact and uses appropriate posture/gestures	Rarely maintains eye contact and uses appropriate posture/gestures

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Overall Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

# SHORT STORY RUBRIC

Expectations	Criteria				1 Needs Work	
	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Needs Work	1 Needs Work	
Purpose of Bylaw	The purpose of this bylaw is clear. The circumstances of the story demonstrate the purpose and scope of the bylaw.	The purpose of this bylaw is evident. There may be one or two parts of the story where the purpose of the bylaw does not fit into the story.	The purpose of this bylaw is somewhat understandable. The circumstances of the story do not lend themselves well to the scope of the bylaw.	It is unclear what the purpose of this bylaw is. The circumstances of the story do not demonstrate the purpose of the bylaw.		
Consequences of Bylaw	The consequences of this bylaw, including its contribution to the community's well-being and the penalties for violating this bylaw, are clear and well-developed.	The consequences of this bylaw, including its contribution to the community's well-being and the penalties for violating it, are somewhat clear.	The consequences of this bylaw, including its contribution to the community's well-being and the penalties for violating this bylaw, are somewhat clear.	The results of this bylaw are unclear. The explanation of its impact does not fit the scope of the bylaw.		
Plot	The story makes sense, and has a definitive and logical beginning, middle, and end.	The story is understandable and the beginning, middle, and end flow logically.	The story needs more details to make beginning, middle, and end coherent.	The story is hard to follow and the elements need to be linked together better.		
Fluency	The story uses complete sentences with proper length and structure, that flow together logically.	The variety of sentence length and structure is okay, but could flow together better.	The sentences need more work to show a greater variety and/or sentences do not flow together logically. There are incomplete sentences.	The sentence structure makes the story hard to understand.		
Conventions	The story contains correct grammar, punctuation, and capitalization, and spelling.	There are a few errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	There are several errors in grammar and punctuation which take away from the readability of the story.	There are too many errors which make the writing hard to understand.		
Creativity	The story shows unique and original ideas. It is interesting to read and shows creative thinking.	The story integrates some unique and interesting ideas which make it interesting to read.	The story's ideas do not mesh well with the plot and bylaws. Shows little creative thinking.	The story's ideas are hard to understand and not unique.		

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Level: \_\_\_\_\_

# CLASS RUBRIC

Expectations	Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Needs Work
Knowledge/ Understanding					
Thinking / Inquiry					
Communication					
Democratic Thinking					

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Overall Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Legal Information for Everyone