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**Learning Activity:**  
**Don't Hate Debate: How Decisions Are Made**

**Grade level / Big Idea: 4 to 10 / Society Requires a system of laws and government (from SS 7 curriculum)**

**Provide a short description of the activity you want learners to engage in:**

Students explore how decisions are made in government through a variety of grade specific activities.

**Curricular Competencies** *what students will be able to do:*

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas and data; and communicate findings and decisions
- Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (significance)
- Assess the justification for competing accounts after investigating points of contention, reliability of sources, and adequacy of evidence, including data (evidence)
- Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups at particular times and places (continuity and change)
- Assess how underlying conditions and the actions of individuals or groups influence events, decisions, or developments, and analyze multiple consequences (cause and consequence)
- Explain and infer different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events by considering how prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs (perspective)
- Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and assess appropriate ways to remember and respond (ethical judgment)

*Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.*

**Core Competencies** *how does this activity align with Communication, Personal & Social Responsibility, Creative & Critical Thinking:*

- Communication
  - students are required to articulate their ideas verbally
  - I can articulate and defend my own or my team's viewpoints verbally
- Personal and Social

- I can identify problem solving strategies
- I can work cooperatively to develop a consensus with my team
- Creative and Critical Thinking
  - I can analyze my own assumptions and beliefs and consider and critique views that do not fit with them

### Overview of the learning opportunity:

#### Grades 4-7

Students will critically consider and examine a question or issue, engage in a structured debate, and finally decide a position via majority rule in a vote

#### Grades 8-10

1. In groups, students will create a proposal for a law (something meaningful to them). After each group presents, the class will vote on which law they would like to take to Parliament.
2. Students participate in a Jigsaw to learn how a bill is passed.
3. Through a Mock Parliament, students take their proposed law through the legislative process.

#### Suggestions for challenge-based or inquiry and cross-curricular integration

See attached Appendices for lesson ideas for grades 4-7 and 8-10.

#### Learner self-reflection questions

Ask students to reflect on the process and how they felt acting in their roles.

#### Resources

**\*Disclaimer – some of the information in these resources is out of date due to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II**

- BC Legislative Assembly site - [www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca)
- Mock Legislature - Alberta Teacher's Guide [ml\\_englishteachermanual.pdf](http://ml_englishteachermanual.pdf) ([assembly.ab.ca](http://assembly.ab.ca))
- Parliament of Canada - Bill Template  
<https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/Education/MPU/content/2-enhanced-simulation/1-planning-the-simulation/1-choose-a-bill/8-student-bill-template.en.pdf>
- Library of Parliament - A Parliamentary Committee simulation -  
[https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/Education/CommitteeSimulation/sm-social\\_bill-e.html](https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/Education/CommitteeSimulation/sm-social_bill-e.html)
- Parliament of Canada - Model Parliament Unit - [MPU Home — Model Parliament Unit](http://mpu.parl.ca/)
- Parliament of Canada - current bills before parliament -  
<http://www.parl.ca/Legisinfo/Agenda.aspx?Language=E>
- <http://blog.whooosreading.org/everything-you-need-for-your-first-class-debate/>

#### Assessment

- Observation of participation
- Reflective logs during or at the end of process

- Walk and talk shares
- Completed Coat of Arms
- Jigsaw
- Group presentations

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## **Appendix A**

### **Grades 4-7**

#### **Lesson 1:**

##### *British Columbia's Coat of Arms*

Discussion will be had on the Coat of Arms of British Columbia. Students will be provided information on what each part of the Coat of Arms means. Each student will be asked to think of values that are important to them and create their own Coat of Arms. Creation of individual Coat of Arms - once completed, each student will present to class and explain the meaning of the components of each item and the significance to them personally,

A tour of the Parliament Buildings could be an add on if permitted geographically. Otherwise videos and resources from the Legislative Assembly could be accessed from class. Print and pass out for discussion information sheet on coat of arms from Legislative Assembly. Note: Virtual tours of the Parliament Buildings will be forthcoming in 2019.

#### **Lesson 2:**

##### *Participation and representation in Canada's system of government*

Levels of government and their main functions.

Students will be broken into groups to come up with classroom "laws" or rules. The use of a talking stick will be implemented when in their working groups. Teaching respectful listening while each student has a chance to speak, etc. Indigenous aspects can be integrated here such as a sharing circle, etc.

Then once ideas are obtained, students will be broken into two groups and voting can take place by secret ballot to determine which class rules should be in place, etc.

Questions, thought provoking justifications for ideas can be done at end of each lesson.

#### **Lesson 3:**

##### *Class Debate*

1. Create a topic for debate. (cats vs. dogs, microwaves vs. toaster ovens, lower voting age to... etc.)
2. Split class into two groups to discuss the pros and cons of the topic. Allow time for both groups to discuss all options.
3. Assign a Speaker to moderate and a Clerk to time both sides.
4. Speaker chooses which side will argue the for and against.
5. Groups are given some time to form their arguments and choose who will argue the points.
6. Speaker calls to order.
7. "For" group opens with their argument. Then "against" rebutted. Continue for as long as time permits.
8. Allow "for" to end argument.
9. Vote.

## **Grades 8-10**

### **Lesson 1:**

*In groups, students will create a Bill - proposal for a law (something meaningful to them). After each group presents, the class will vote on which law they would like to take to parliament.*

1. Divide students into groups of 3-4. Highlight the difference between a Bill and an Act. Ask students to think, what bugs them? Have them focus on something meaningful to them that has to do with society as a whole.
2. After they have a list in their group, ask them to decide what they are going to do about it? Have them do “policy analysis” (research) and “drafting instructions” (writing up the proposed law using WWWWWHIIIB). (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How, If (conditions), If Not (consequences), But (exceptions)).
3. Once they have completed their research, each group presents to the class and the class votes on which Bill they would like to take to Mock Parliament.

\*See Bill template on the Parliament of Canada website:

<https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/Education/MPU/content/2-enhanced-simulation/1-planning-the-simulation/1-choose-a-bill/8-student-bill-template.en.pdf>

### **Lesson 2:**

*Students participate in a Jigsaw to learn how a Bill is passed.*

1. Break students into 5 groups
2. Have each student research a specific stage of the legislative process.
3. Form temporary “expert groups” by having one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same stage.
4. Give students in these expert groups time to discuss the main points of their stage and to rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group.
5. Bring the students back into their jigsaw groups. Ask each student to present their segment to the group.

### **Lesson 3:**

*Through a Mock Parliament, students take their proposed law through the legislative process.*

Either assign, or have students choose, a role in Parliament based on the current makeup of the Legislature. Students research their role and how the person in the role would respond to the proposed Bill. If possible, have MLAs from each of the three parties come and speak to the students. Have the students role play each stage of the legislative process with the Bill they chose in lesson One. Encourage students to stay in character the whole time and dress up. At the end of the process, have students reflect on the process and their role within it. \*The Alberta Teachers’ Manual has an excellent resource to use for the role play (see suggested resources).

## 2018 Example Roles:

- 1 Speaker
- 2 Clerks
- 11 NDP
  - 1 Premier
  - 1 Education Minister
  - 1 Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
  - 1 Minister of State for Child Care
- 13 Liberal Opposition
  - 1 Party Head
  - 12 Selected Ridings / Opposition Critic roles
- 3 Green Coalition
  - 1 Party Head
  - 2 Selected Ridings
- Teacher = Lieutenant Governor
  - Gives Royal Assent if Bill is passed in the House. Could possibly submit Bill proposal to local MLA.
- 1 Attorney General
- 1 Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
- 5 Selected Ministers