

Chapter 1

Introduction: Citizenship in a Democracy

GOALS

We will find out

- what it means to be an 'active citizen' in a country like Canada.
- why most Canadians - even those who oppose the government - are not afraid of the police or public officials.
- how our everyday life and activities show whether we are good citizens.

Handout 1.1 Everyday Activities and Citizenship

Introductory Activity

Move around the room and ask different people the questions below.
When someone answers 'yes', put that person's name on the correct line.

Did you ever . . .

1. visit City Hall? _____
2. vote in an election?
(Where?) _____
3. call 911 to get help for somebody?
(Did it work?) _____
4. see the Canadian Prime Minister
or the B. C. Premier on TV? _____
5. go to a meeting at a school to
learn about your community?
(what was the meeting about?) _____
6. join a group that helps the
community in some way?
(which group?) _____
7. visit the public library? _____
8. go to Victoria and visit the
government buildings? _____
9. write a letter to a government
official? _____
10. join a political party? _____

Handout 1.2 Will I Get into Trouble . . . ?

Group Discussion

Answer the questions below by putting a circle around yes or no .

Will I get into trouble with the police or government officials if I . . .

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | walk around my neighbourhood at night? | Yes | No |
| 2. | take some fruit from a corner store without paying for it? | Yes | No |
| 3. | go to a public meeting where people say they do not like what the government is doing? | Yes | No |
| 4. | refuse to open my door for a police officer after the officer sees a robbery suspect run into my house? | Yes | No |
| 5. | vote for somebody who is against the present government? | Yes | No |
| 6. | refuse to tell a police officer who I am when he stops my car one night when I am driving friends home after work? | Yes | No |
| 7. | make a complaint about a police officer who I think was too rough when arresting someone on the street? | Yes | No |
| 8. | write a letter to the newspaper saying the government is doing something wrong, and sign my name to it? | Yes | No |
| 9. | am receiving financial aid from a government agency and do not tell my financial aid worker about the money I get for helping a friend build his house? | Yes | No |
| 10. | tell a police officer that I saw a serious car accident happen? | Yes | No |

Handout 1.3A

Citizenship in a Democracy
Vocabulary List

1. a democracy (pp 11, 18)
2. citizens (pp 11 - 14)
3. an elected representative
4. accountability (p 15)
5. to participate (pp 11,17)
6. rights (p 12)
7. civic responsibilities (pp 12 - 14)
8. values (pp 10, 12, 13)
9. equality (pp 13, 14)
10. freedom of expression (pp 13, 16)

Learning these words will help us understand the important role that citizens play in a democratic society like Canada.

Handout 1.3B

Citizenship in a Democracy
Vocabulary Resource

1. **a democracy**
(pp 11, 18) a country where free and equal citizens share political power. They elect people as their 'representatives' to make laws and to govern the country.
2. **citizens**
(pp 11 - 14) people who are members of a specific country and have certain rights and responsibilities because of their membership - or 'citizenship' - in that country
3. **an elected representative** someone who is elected to a government on behalf of the citizens in his or her community, and who 'represents' those citizens in the federal, provincial or municipal governments.
4. **accountability**
(p 15) having to answer to somebody else (like our parents, our boss, or the voters) for what we do and why we do it
5. **to participate**
(pp 11, 17) to take part in some activity or process
6. **rights**
(p 12) certain liberties and freedoms that belong to citizens of a democratic country (such as freedom of religion, the right to a fair trial and freedom of speech)
7. **civic responsibilities**
(pp 12- 14) important democratic duties (such as voting, protecting the environment, and being jury members) that we owe to other citizens, to our communities and to our country
8. **values**
(pp 10, 12, 13) the moral, legal and social ideals we think are important and use as guides for how we act (such as fairness, equality, freedom, and concern for the sick and the poor)
9. **equality**
(pp 13, 14 and 23) the right of all people in our country to have equally fair and respectful treatment by our government and laws, and to have equal chances to live the best lives we can
10. **freedom of expression**
(pp 13,16 and 34) the right to say, write or show what we think, and the right to hear and exchange information and opinions - all without interference by the government or the police

Handout 1.4

The Language of Democracy

Changing the Forms of Words

Complete the chart by putting correct words in the empty boxes.

NOUN	VERB	ADJECTIVE
democracy	democratize	
	elect	elected
participation		participating
accountability	account (for)	
	(be) responsible (for)	responsible
organization		organized
	express	expressive
equality	equalize	
	value	valuable
freedom	free	
	govern	governmental
influence		influential

Handout 1.5A *When does a good citizen get involved?*
Multiple Choice Problem Solving

Read the short story below, and choose the ending you think is best.
Decide what the story is saying about good citizens.

Mr. Daniel was on his way to pick up a customer in his taxi. It was early in the morning. The car in front of him was hit by a truck that drove through a stop sign. No one else was around, and the truck sped away. Mr. Daniel stopped to see if anyone in the car needed help. The car driver was alone, and was bleeding badly. Mr. Daniel had no first aid training, and was not sure what to do next.

(A-1) He decided that only someone with first aid training could safely help the injured man. Worried about getting his next customer to the airport on time, he left to pick that customer up. He told police at the airport about the accident and the injured man.

(A-2) He called the taxi dispatcher to say where he was and asked her to send the police and an ambulance, and to get another driver for the passenger he was supposed to pick up. He covered the injured man with a blanket and attempted to stop the bleeding. Waiting for help to arrive, he tried to remember details about the truck.

(A-3) The sight of the blood made him sick. He decided that nobody else would know he had seen the accident. He left to get his passenger. At the airport he used a public phone to tell the police where to find the injured man. He did not give his name, and he did not say that he saw the accident.

Handout 1.5B

When does a good citizen get involved?

Multiple Choice Problem Solving

Read the short story below, and choose the ending you think is best. What does the story have to do with being a good citizen?

Mr. Tran owns a small corner store in a poorer part of the city. The streets around his store are often dirty with trash from overflowing garbage cans. The city trucks pick up trash only twice a month. Mr. Tran wants the trucks to come every week. When it is time for civic elections, only two council candidates show any interest in improving trash collection. Mr. Tran tells friends it would be good to vote for these candidates.

(B-1) Some friends do not believe what politicians say before an election. They say Mr. Tran is silly to think that these two candidates will help even if they are elected. And what about all the other council members? They never mention garbage and do not come to Mr. Tran's neighbourhood. Why would they care about trash out there? Mr. Tran reluctantly agrees. He doesn't vote.

(B-2) A rich friend says that elections don't matter. He was in politics in their home country and says you have to give people money to get things done. He offers some of his money to Mr. Tran to give to the right person after the election. Mr. Tran knows little about politics, and thinks his friend knows best. So he doesn't vote.

(B-3) Older friends remember when local people stopped city politicians from building a freeway through their neighbourhood. Mr. Tran finds friends to help him now. A printer makes a handout urging people to vote for the two candidates. A local bank manager sponsors an essay contest on cleaning up the neighbourhood, and the two council candidates present the prizes. Other friends deliver campaign information that tells where you can vote. Lots of local people vote in the election.

Handout 1.5C

When does a good citizen get involved?

Multiple Choice Problem Solving

Read the short story below, and choose the ending you think is best. What does the story have to do with being a good citizen?

Mrs. Sanudo, who is 68, came to Canada from Chile, where her husband died in 1987 from a police beating. She now lives in an apartment near her daughter's house. A family with a baby moved into the next apartment. The husband was violent when he got drunk. One evening the noise was terrible. Mrs. Sanudo was very upset. She heard the man go out, but did not hear his door close. She went into the hall. She could see the wife lying on their floor, her eyes shut. The wife was not moving, and the baby was crying.

(C-1) Mrs. Sanudo comforted the baby and covered the mother with a blanket. She was afraid to call the police and afraid that the man would come back, but she wanted to help. She called her daughter, but no one was home. Then she called Rosa, a friend who is a volunteer at an immigrant services centre. Rosa said they had to call the police. She agreed to call them herself and to come over to stay with Mrs. Sanudo until the police arrived. Mrs. Sanudo, relieved, locked herself and the baby in her own apartment to wait for Rosa.

(C-2) Mrs. Sanudo comforted the baby and covered the woman. Frightened, she went upstairs to find someone to help. She got a man and a woman to come back with her. The man said they must call the police, who would not hurt her. Both he and the woman had heard the loud noises, and they agreed to wait with her to tell the police about it. Mrs. Sanudo was relieved that she wasn't the only one who would talk to the police. The man called 911 and they waited together for the police.

(C-3) Mrs. Sanudo was terrified. She didn't trust the police, and she didn't dare help the woman in case the husband returned. She hurried over to her daughter's house. No one was home, but she got in with her own key. She decided that if anyone asked, she would say she was with her daughter the whole evening. When her daughter came home, the women walked to a nearby phone booth. The daughter called 911, told the operator to send police to the apartment address, and hung up.

Handout 1.6 *Democracy in Canada*

Reading for Details

Each sentence below has a mistake. Find the mistake by reading the BCCLA *Citizenship Handbook* pages shown in (). Cross out the mistake in each sentence, and write your correction on the line below. The first one is done for you.

1. In a democracy, it is ~~only a few citizens~~ who determine the laws of our country. (p 11)
_ "it is all of us together as citizens" _____
2. Our government officials must treat each of us with respect, but do not need to honour the various rights and freedoms we possess as citizens. (p 12)

3. Where our rights are guaranteed by law, the law alone is enough to protect them. (p 12)

4. If you think a law is unfair to you and others, you have a responsibility as a citizen to convince other citizens that they should not obey the law. (p 14)

5. Canadian society considers women as equal partners in the business world, but not in the family or in our public life. (p 14)

6. The Canadian media comment on government actions, programs and policies but they never criticize public officials. (p 15)

7. Canadians respect other citizens' rights to speak out and raise concerns as long as they don't disagree with the government. (p 16)

8. Except for our aboriginal peoples, most Canadians arrived here over 200 years ago. (p 17)

9. No levels of government or private organizations offer assistance to help new Canadians adjust to their new home. (p 18)

10. Men in the RCMP must always wear the traditional "Mountie" hat, no matter what their religion is. (p 20)

Handout 1.7 *New Citizens in their new Country*
Questions for Discussion

A. An Election Dilemma:

Sasha Putnik has been in Canada only three months. He knows that a provincial election is coming soon. He can't vote yet, but he is interested in politics. He wants to learn about the people who will try to get elected. What do they stand for? What will they do if they get elected?

Sasha and some friends ask their ESL teacher to give lessons about the election. She does. They learn about the voters' list and where to go to vote. They see a sample ballot. But they don't learn much about the issues in the election. Sasha is frustrated. With his limited English, where can he go to learn more about the candidates and the issues they think are important? Who can help him?

In your group,

1. Make sure you all understand the story.
(Some words that might need thought are dilemma - election - politics - stand for - voters' list - ballot - political parties - frustrated - candidates - issues.)
2. Think of places to send Sasha to find the information he wants or someone to help him look for it.

Think about

- what can be done in Sasha's own neighbourhood, or cultural community, to help him get the information he wants. (Look ahead to pages 99 - 101 of the *BCCLA Citizenship Handbook* if you want an idea.)
- an interesting story about voting or elections that you can tell to the rest of your class or group.

Handout 1.7 (cont'd)

B. A Problem in the School Neighbourhood

Mohinder and Surjeet Gill came from India four years ago. Their son David learned English as he grew up in Vancouver. He is now in grade five. An older boy in David's school picks on him during recess and on the way home from school. He calls David ugly names, pushes him, and threatens to hit him.

Mohinder wants David to take martial arts lessons so that he can protect himself if the boy starts a fight. Surjeet hopes to solve the problem without a fight, and wants to talk to David's teacher. David is afraid of the older boy, but he is also afraid that he will be called a 'wimp' if his parents talk to the teacher.

The Gill family lives next door to Larry and Jean O'Malley who have a daughter in David's class. Jean hears about David's problem from Surjeet, and also from her own daughter.

In your group:

1. make sure you all understand the story.
(Some words that might need thought are picks on him - threaten - martial arts - protect - 'wimp' - attends.)
2. decide how you would solve this problem.
3. list some people or groups outside the school system who might be able to help the Gills.

Think about these questions:

- Is there a way to take care of a problem like this in your school (or your children's school)?
- Do you think Mohinder's suggestion is a good one? Why or why not?
- What can Jean do to help?

Handout 1.7 (cont'd)

C. Reporting an Accident to the Police

Quoc Tran has been a Canadian citizen for six months. He witnessed a serious car accident when he was walking home from work. Then he saw a woman come out of a nearby store and heard her call for help on her cell phone. As other people gathered from houses and stores to see if they could help, the police arrived.

Quoc saw an ambulance come and take away someone who was injured. When the police started talking to people who were watching, Quoc hurried home. He did not want to talk to the police.

The next day at work, Quoc learned that people who witnessed the accident should call the police to report what they saw.

In your group:

1. make sure you all understand the story.
(Some words that might need thought are witnessed - serious - gathered - ambulance - injured - report.)
2. decide what you think Quoc should do.
3. make a list of questions the police might ask Quoc if they interview him or create a role-play of an interview between Quoc and the police

Think about:

- why Quoc did not want to talk to the police.
- what you would do if you were Quoc.
- how Quoc's actions relate to being a good citizen.

Handout 1.8 How can WE be good citizens? Review Activity

Below is a list of six responsibilities that citizens have. After each one are two statements. Put an **X** beside the statement that shows good citizenship. Be ready to give the reasons for your choices.

(1) Participate in the democratic process.

- We vote because we care about our community and want to support the people who we think will make good laws and government policy.
- What does one person's vote mean in a big country like Canada? It can't change a thing. We don't bother to vote.

(2) Learn about important issues and events in BC and Canada.

- We watch police shows and sports on TV, but news is boring. And who has time to read newspapers? I guess we don't know much about our nation or the world.
- We watch at least one news show a day and read a local newspaper. This helps keep us up to date on what's happening outside our own cultural community.

(3) Protect the neighbourhood environment.

- We throw paper wrappers and drink boxes on the ground while we're waiting for the bus. Someone always picks them up eventually.
- We put litter in trashcans and try to remember to recycle newspapers and bottles. Last week everyone on our block helped clean up the street and back lanes, and planted some flowers in an empty lot.

(4) Treat other people with respect.

- We usually ignore people who are different from us, but sometimes we copy their weird accents and make fun of them. Who cares what they think?
- Why be bothered if people look or sound different from us? It's more interesting to find out what they are really like. Besides, it's boring if everyone's the same.

(5) Understand and obey the law.

- The law in Canada is clear: it is a crime to assault someone. Men can't hit their wives. The police can use only necessary force. We help our cultural community understand how the law works in Canada.
- How we treat our wives and children is our private affair. The police should not interfere. Besides, I think the police have their own 'laws'. So don't tell them anything, and don't complain about them!

(6) Participate in the community.

- We go to movies and sports events with our family, and relax watching TV in the evenings. We don't have time to go to neighbourhood or school meetings.
- Our son persuaded us to go to a meeting at his school, where we met the parents of some of his classmates. We also heard a policeman talk about home safety. We look forward to the next meeting.