

Chapter 2

Values in Canada's Democracy

GOALS

We will learn about

- values, and why they are important to us.
- democratic values - such as fairness, respect for the law, freedom of expression and religion - and how they affect our daily lives.
- freedom of speech and what it means in a democracy.

Handout 2.1

"If I were a Grandparent . . ."
Introductory Activity

Read the story in the shaded area below and answer the question at the end.
No one will know this is *your answer*.

You are a grandparent. You have lived a long life and have had both sad and happy times. Your granddaughter is five years old. You are going to tell her three things that you think are important about life. She will never forget what you tell her.

What three things do you think are most important for you to tell your granddaughter?

[Fold and tear on the dotted line. Give your answers to your teacher or workshop leader.]

(1)

(2)

(3)

Handout 2.2A

Living with Democratic Values
Vocabulary List

1. *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
(pp 32, 33)
2. respect for individual and minority rights
(pp 32, 33)
3. rule of law
(pp 25, 26, 27)
4. due process
(p 28)
5. privacy
(p 29)
6. consultation
(p 30)
7. non-violence
(p 31)
8. public services
(pp 23, 24)
9. 'bubble zone'
(p 36)
10. censorship
(pp 34, 35)

Understanding these terms will help us talk about values that are important for a democratic society. We will also look at an example of what can happen when two of these values come into conflict with one another.

We have already talked about some democratic values: accountability, equality, and freedom of expression. To review what they mean, see Handout 1.3B - Vocabulary Resource.

Handout 2.2B

Living with Democratic Values
Vocabulary Resource

1. *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* one of the most important parts of Canadian law. It protects our basic rights and freedoms. These include freedom of expression, freedom of religion, voting rights, equality rights and legal rights. (pp 32,33)
2. respect for individual and minority rights a moral and legal principle of democratic governments that prevents a majority of citizens from pushing aside the basic rights of individuals and minority groups. (p 32, 33)
3. rule of law a democratic legal concept that means all citizens, whatever their wealth or status in society, must obey the same laws as everyone else. It means that laws, rather than the individual wishes of politicians, set the rules for society. (pp 25 - 27)
4. due process standard rules and practices followed by courts, agencies, and other government officials to ensure that their decisions are fair and reasonable. (p 28)
5. privacy the rights to keep our personal business to ourselves, and to have control over the personal information that others gather about us. Privacy rights are intended to prevent the government and others from wrongfully monitoring our personal lives. (p 29)
6. consultation talks and meetings between government officials and citizens where the government gets information, advice and criticism about its plans (p 30)
7. non-violence using peaceful methods, such as meetings or court action, to solve problems and disagreements (p 31)
8. public services - agencies (such as Immigration Canada), institutions (such as schools and libraries), and all other places that provide a service to the public (such as McDonalds and The Bay) (p 23)
9. 'bubble zone' a protected space around certain abortion clinics where no one can protest against abortions or talk to people going to the clinic (p 36)
10. censorship a law or government action that limits what a citizen can read, hear, talk about or see (pp 34,35)

Handout 2.3A

Living with Democratic Values : Vocabulary Exercise

Match an example on the left with a vocabulary word on the right. The first one is done for you.

1. In Canada, we worship and read and vote as we want to, even if most of the people in our town don't agree with us.
2. Workers from City Hall meet with people from every part of the city to discuss the new rules about basement suites.
3. In the campaign, Tam works to elect a new government. He knows about the special Canadian law that protects free speech and lets you criticize the government without fear.
4. An immigrant counselor told our women's support group that no one can bother us or demonstrate against abortions within 50 metres of the abortion clinic in the next block.
5. Government offices, schools, movie theatres and stores are some of the places where people go every day. These places must serve everyone and cannot discriminate.
6. Canada Customs officers refuse to let certain magazines into Canada, claiming that they are obscene and against the law.
7. If Alec is arrested, the police will let him call a lawyer right away. This is one of the standard procedures in Canada to give fair treatment to people who face arrest and trial.
8. The recent strike made many people very angry, but they did not physically attack the strikers. Most Canadians want to solve problems without using violence.
9. In some countries, the police and government can ignore the law whenever they want. In Canada, everyone has to obey our laws, whether they are high government officials, the police or ordinary citizens like us.
10. In Canada, government officials cannot tap our phones, watch our houses, or otherwise keep track of our lives without a very special reason to do so.

censorship ()

due process ()

individual and minority rights (1)

privacy ()

consultation ()

rule of law ()

Charter of Rights and Freedoms ()

'bubble zone' ()

non-violence ()

public services ()

Handout 2.3B

Living with Democratic Values
Vocabulary Exercise

Use the vocabulary words on Handout 2.2A to finish the sentences below:

1. In Canada, we can worship, read, and vote as we want to, even if most of the people in our community don't agree with us. That's because our government and laws support _____.
2. City officials will meet with people from every part of the city to discuss new rules about basement suites. These talks are called _____.
3. In the campaign, Tam worked to elect a new mayor. Tam knows Canada has a special law to protect free speech. This allows you to criticize the government without fear. That special law is the _____.
4. An immigrant counselor told our women's group that no one can bother us or protest against abortions within 50 metres of the abortion clinic in the next block. That 50 metres of protected space is called a _____.
5. Government offices, libraries, schools, and stores are places where people go every day. They must serve everyone and cannot discriminate against us because of our race, or sex, etc. In human rights laws, these places are called _____.
6. Canada Customs officers refused to let certain books into Canada, claiming that they were obscene and against the law. When government officials decide what we can read or see, that is called _____.
7. When Alec was arrested, the police let him call a lawyer. This is a standard practice and acts as a safeguard to ensure that the police treat people reasonably and fairly. Rules that protect fair treatment are called _____.
8. A strike often makes many people on both sides very angry, but they do not usually attack each other with rocks, fists or baseball bats. Most Canadians prefer to use co-operation and discussion to solve problems. We like peaceful change, or _____.
9. In some countries, the police and government can ignore the law whenever they want. In Canada, the law applies to everyone, whether they are high government officials, the police or ordinary citizens like us. This is known as the _____.
10. In Canada, government officials cannot tap our phones, watch our houses, or otherwise keep track of our lives without a very special reason to do so. Government or other interference into our personal lives is an invasion of _____.

Handout 2.4 *Does this Democratic Value have Limits?* A Freedom of Speech Discussion

Read the numbered statements below. If you think the 'speech' described in the statement should be **OK** in Canada, put an **O** in front of the number.

If you think the 'speech' should **not be OK** in Canada, put an **X** in front of the number.
What reasons can you give to support your decisions?

Remember: this is about whether the 'speech' is OK in Canada, not whether you agree with it.

1. In a city park, three young men hand out notices inviting everyone to a meeting where speakers will say why they oppose the present government.
2. A young woman stands next to the front stairs of an abortion clinic and quietly offers anti-abortion information to women entering the clinic.
3. Four women come onto the school grounds during lunch hour and give elementary school children notices to take home to their parents. The notices invite families to a religious celebration at a nearby church.
4. Several protesters stand close together in front of a super store entrance, holding signs that ask shoppers not to buy certain products. It is very difficult for shoppers to get into the store.
5. Outside a pub, several angry people argue loudly and push each other. A police officer tries to keep the two sides apart to prevent violence. Just as several other police officers arrive, the leader of one group grabs a heavy stick, waves it over his head and yells: "Come on guys. Let's get them."
6. A theatre presents a play highlighting the work of people in the 1960s who struggled to uphold voting rights for Black citizens in the southern part of the United States. In the play, a racist uses the term "nigger" in a scene where he is shouting at a Black civil rights worker.
7. On a Canadian campus, pro-abortion students mess up and partly destroy a display of anti-abortion posters and other materials that compare abortion and its supporters to the Holocaust and Nazi thugs. The pro-abortion students say the display is 'hate literature' and that they are right to try to destroy it.
8. Every time a trade official from a particular country appears in public during his Vancouver tour, protesters of various ethnic backgrounds hold up posters showing their opposition to the human rights policies in the official's homeland.

Handout 2.5 *Values in Canada's Democracy* - Reading for Details

Fill in the information or answer the questions below.

The facts you need are in the *Citizenship Handbook* on the pages noted

- A. List four basic Canadian values: (p 22)

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

- B. 'Equality' means that we cannot be treated unfairly because of our - (p 23)

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

- C. In British Columbia, if someone will not rent an apartment to us because of our ethnic origin, we can complain to the _____ (p 24)

- D. If we are accused of doing something wrong, 'due process' gives us certain rights to make sure we are treated fairly. Name two of those rights: (p 28)

1. _____

2. _____

- E. Name four rights protected by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*: (pp 32/33)

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

- F. Give two reasons why some people think censorship is wrong: (p 35)

1. _____

2. _____

- G. Name at least one way citizens can help turn Canadian democratic values into real laws and government policy: (p 39)

Handout 2.6 *The Rule of Law and the Police:* A Letter to Friend: True/False Exercise

Read Jose's letter from his Vancouver friend Dan. They were born in a country torn apart by civil war, and left with their families when they were twelve years old. Now sixteen, they use English in the letters they write to each other from their new homes in Texas and British Columbia.

Dear Jose,

I liked your last letter. I hope you are still coming to visit me in Vancouver this summer. I moved some chairs out of my room and put in a second bed. Now you must come. I do not like doing hard work for nothing!

Today a police officer visited our class. No. - we did not do anything bad. She (yes - she) came to tell us about the police in Canada. It gave me a lot to think about. When I was just a kid, I was afraid of the police. Were you? They did not like my father. They talked to his boss, who fired him from his job. The police left people alone who gave them money, but we never had enough. It seems to be different here in Canada.

Last month in school we talked about some ideas that are important to Canadians. One of them is the idea of the 'rule of law'. ('Oh wow!' I can just hear you say.) But really, it's a very good idea. It means that the law is more important than politicians, or rich people, or even the police! In Canada, you go to jail because you broke the *law*, not because some rich guy doesn't like you, or because the police don't like your politics.

Up here, the police must obey the same laws as everyone else. And if they don't treat you right, you can make an official complaint. The police officer told us all about it today. It's interesting. I wonder what the police think about it.

Well, I guess this is your Canadian culture lesson for the month! Is there a way to complain about the police in Texas? You can tell me about it when you visit.

See you soon --

Your friend, Dan

Circle True (T) or False (F) for each sentence below

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Jose will have a place to sleep in Dan's house. T F | 5. In Canada, a woman cannot be a police officer. T F |
| 2. When Dan was a child, he was afraid of the police. T F | 6. The rule of law means that police do not have to obey the law. T F |
| 3. The police in their country helped Dan's father find a job. T F | 7. The police officer told Dan's class how to make a complaint against the police. T F |
| 4. Dan thinks Canadian police are different from police where he used to live. T F | 8. Dan knows how to make a police complaint in Texas. T F |

Handout 2.7

Living with Democratic Values - Review

Read each Canadian Activity and find the Democratic Value it matches. Put the number of the Activity in the () next to its matching Value. (The first one is done for you.)

Everyday Canadian Activities

1. In Mr. Ramon's clothing business, he pays both male and female clerks the same basic wage.
2. Jason Lewis doesn't smoke in the restaurant even though he thinks the anti-smoking by-law is wrong.
3. When Mrs. Singh's boss casually asks her how she voted, she knows she doesn't have to tell him.
4. While both sides in a labour dispute are angry and upset, their leaders and the police work together to help prevent violence.
5. Our environmental group makes an appointment to meet with the local MLA to find out why he voted against our proposal.
6. City Council holds public meetings so people can say if they want a by-law to limit tree cutting on their own land.
7. Vincent Chan wins his case against a landlord who refused to rent suites to people of Chinese origin.
8. When her application for income assistance is unfairly refused, Mira Radovic shows an Appeal Board that she should get the money.
9. Sandra O'Brian asks neighbours to sign a petition to save a park the city wants to use for building new apartments
10. The Police Chief gets a ticket for speeding on the way to a movie and must pay a \$75 fine.

Democratic Values

- A. rule of law ()
A citizen obeys the law even if s/he doesn't like it.
- B. freedom of expression ()
Citizens can express their opinions, even against the government.
- C. privacy ()
Citizens should have control over their own personal information.
- D. due process ()
Gov't. decisions should be fair and reasonable, with a right to appeal.
- E. accountability ()
The people we elect are answerable to us for their actions in government.
- F. human rights ()
Treating people unfairly because of their race or ethnic origin is wrong.
- G. rule of law ()
The same laws apply to everyone, even the police.
- H. equality (1)
Male and female citizens should be treated equally under the law.
- I. non-violence ()
Peaceful ways like co-operation and debate are best for solving conflicts.
- J. consultation ()
The government discusses its plans and policies with citizens who will be affected by them.

