

## Chapter 5

# Making the Democratic Process work for You

### *GOALS*

We will explore what it means to participate in the life of our communities.

We will learn

- how to work with our neighbours and friends to improve our communities.
- how to organize a community group so that it works effectively.
- how some B. C. residents worked together on community issues that were important to them.



Handout 5.2A      *Working Together*  
Vocabulary List

This vocabulary covers some of the words that come up when we talk about people working together to improve their communities.

1. to participate (throughout the chapter)
2. opinion (pp 79, 83)
3. political party (p 78)
4. to influence (pp 77, 78)
5. to organize (pp 79, 83, 85)
6. publicity (p 85)
7. to lobby (p 91)
8. petition (p 84)
9. demonstration (pp 79, 86)
10. *Charter* challenge (p 92)



Handout 5.2B      *Working Together*  
Vocabulary Resource

1. to participate      to take part in an activity - for example, to work in the community with a group of people who have interests like yours (on many pages throughout the chapter)
2. opinion      what you think about something. Your opinion is usually more respected if you support it with good reasons. (pp 79, 83)
3. political party      a group of people who have the same political ideas and goals. The current most active political parties in Canada (as of June, 2002) are the Bloc Quebecois, the Canadian Alliance, the Liberals, the New Democrats, and the Progressive Conservatives. (p 78)
4. to influence      to use your political, financial, or moral power to help control what is happening, or to make things happen the way you want them to (pp 77, 78)
5. to organize      to set up a way to do things (pp 79, 83, 85)
6. publicity      actions taken to let the public know about an idea or a plan (p 85)
7. to lobby      to visit politicians and try to persuade them to do something you think should be done. Some people do this as their job. (p 91)
8. petition      a written request for action, given to the government or others, and signed by people who support the request (p 84)
9. demonstration      a group of people acting together in public to show their support for or to protest against government or other activities (pp 79, 86)
10. *Charter* challenge      a court action started by people who think the government has done something that the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* does not allow (p 92)

### Handout 5.3 *A Democratic Vocabulary in Everyday Use* Vocabulary Review

Choose the best words to fill in the blanks. The first one is done for you.

1. On the open-line radio show, Rob Sangha said: "I support a photo radar system. It helps police officers catch drivers who speed. I think that is very important."

*This is Mr. Sangha's \_\_\_ opinion \_\_\_.*

2. Our MP has power in Ottawa. He is on the most important committees. At meetings, other MPs agree with him. If anyone can help us get federal money for this project, he can.

*Our MP has \_\_\_\_\_.*

3. John Lee goes to parent meetings at his sons' school. He is on two committees that help run the community centre, and he volunteers to help at every civic election.

*Mr. Lee likes to \_\_\_\_\_.*

4. Laura Jones called a meeting for parents upset because the school board wants to close their local school. The group made plans for a demonstration, set up a publicity committee, and chose someone to ask the police about a permit. Then they set a date to meet again.

*They know how to \_\_\_\_\_ well.*

5. On Monday, the club president and the mayor announced a dinner to raise funds for a new park. The next day, CBC radio interviewed the president about park plans, and club members put posters all over town. On Friday, radio stations advertised the dinner.

*This is well-planned \_\_\_\_\_.*

6. The group talked to every MLA about a new law to limit jet-skis on BC lakes. They gave the MLAs petitions supporting the law and new material about water safety and noise levels. They tried to persuade the MLAs to support a firm limit on the use of jet-skis.

*This was a good way to \_\_\_\_\_.*

7. Three children in one year were hit by cars in the intersection at 8<sup>th</sup> and Pine. Parents from a nearby school got 800 signatures on a letter asking the city to put in a traffic light.

*We wish them luck with their \_\_\_\_\_.*

8. When city workers came to cut down trees in the park, some local residents joined hands around the trees. Others carried signs saying 'Save our Trees' and gave out notices about a court action to stop the tree cutting.

*This was a peaceful \_\_\_\_\_.*

9. Many citizens were unhappy with the people planning to run in the next election. They got together and raised funds to support a new group of candidates who agreed with their ideas about government goals and policies.

*They are starting a new \_\_\_\_\_.*

10. The city agreed to set up large barriers around a building where a trade meeting was planned. Some groups went to court, saying that the barriers interfered with their freedom of speech.

*This court action is a \_\_\_\_\_.*

- (A) petition
- (B) publicity
- (C) influence
- (D) political party

- (E) organize
- (F) Charter challenge
- (G) demonstration

- (H) opinion
- (I) lobby
- (J) participate

## Handout 5.4A Neighbourhood Action

John and Katy Wong are worried. Last night, someone stole things from their car and their back porch. This was their third nighttime robbery. John and Katy also know that houses on their street were broken into during the day. They decide to talk to people who live nearby about safety in their neighbourhood.

Below are sentences describing what happened when John and Katy met with their neighbours. The sentence about what happened first has a #1 in front. Number all the rest of the sentences in the correct order. Look for word clues to lead you from one step to the next.

- ( ) Surjeet said she would ask her friend about how to start a neighbourhood watch program.
- ( 1 ) Jon and Katy invited the people on their street to meet at their house one night after supper to talk about safety in their neighbourhood.
- ( ) Surjeet Gill told about a friend nearby who was part of a block watch program to keep the street safer in the daytime.
- ( ) Everyone decided they should have another meeting so they could hear what Bill and Surjeet had learned.
- ( ) Bill MacDonald said if they had street lights in the back lane they would not have as many garage robberies at night.
- ( ) At the start of the meeting, Katy asked people to tell anything they knew about making neighbourhoods safer.
- ( ) The Wongs and their neighbours set a date for their next meeting. Bill said they could come to his house.
- ( ) After hearing Bill and Surjeet, the people at the meeting wanted to find out how to get lane lights and how to set up a block watch program of their own.
- ( ) Bill agreed to contact City Hall and find out how to get lane lights and how much they would cost.
- ( ) At the second meeting, Bill gave out written information about lane lights. Surjeet brought a policeman to the meeting. He was from the local police detachment and was in charge of setting up neighbourhood watch programs.

## Handout 5.4B      Neighbourhood Action

John and Katy Wong are worried. Last night, someone stole things from their car and their back porch. This was their third night-time robbery. John and Katy also know that houses on their street were broken into during the day. They decide to talk to people who live nearby about safety in their neighbourhood.

Here are some sentences describing what happened when John and Katy met with their neighbours. In your group, put these sentences in order from #1 to #10. We put a #1 in front of the first thing that happened. You do the rest.

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Surjeet said she would ask her friend about how to start a neighbourhood watch program.

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#1

John and Katy invited the people on their street to meet at their house one night after supper to talk about safety on their street.

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Surjeet Gill told about a friend nearby who was part of a block watch program to keep the street safer in the daytime.

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Everyone decided they should have another meeting so they could hear what Bill and Surjeet had learned.

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Bill MacDonald said if they had street lights in the back lane they would not have as many garage robberies at night.

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At the start of the meeting, Katy asked people to tell if they knew how to help make their neighbourhood safer.

Handout 5.4B      Neighbourhood Action (continued)

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The Wongs and their neighbours set a date for their next meeting. Bill said they could come to his house.

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After hearing Bill and Surjeet, the people at the meeting wanted to find out how to get lane lights and how to set up a block watch program of their own.

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Bill agreed to contact City Hall and find out how to get lane lights and how much they would cost.

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At the second meeting, Bill gave out written information about lane lights. Surjeet brought a policeman to the meeting. He was from the local police detachment and was in charge of setting up neighbourhood watch programs.

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## Handout 5.5A      *Planning for Community Action* Vocabulary List

To get something done in the community, you need good plans and hard-working people. This vocabulary is useful for talking about meetings where people decide what needs to be done and who will do it.

1.      citizens' group, public interest group, or  
        community group (p 78, 79)
2.      volunteer (p 101)
3.      chairperson (p 85)
4.      agenda (p 85)
5.      strategy (p 79)
6.      controversial (pp 80, 83)
7.      consensus
8.      compromise (p 96)
9.      fund raising (p 85)
10.     spokesperson (p 87)



## Handout 5.5B

*Planning for Community Action*

## Vocabulary Resource

1. citizens' group,  
public interest group,  
or community group  
(pp 78, 79)      three names for groups of people who join together to work on issues that are important to the public - the community as a whole
2. volunteer (p 101)      a person who does something to help members of the community or to make the community a better place, but does not get paid to do it
3. chairperson (p 85)      the person who runs (is in charge of) a meeting
4. agenda (p 85)      a list, or plan, of what will be discussed at a meeting
5. strategy (p 79)      a plan of action; the steps you will take to solve a problem
6. controversial  
issue ( pp 80, 83)      an issue that gives rise to many strong and different, even opposing, opinions
7. consensus      general agreement
8. compromise (p 96)      a situation where all parties in a controversy give up some of their demands so that they can work together to support the issues on which they agree
9. fund raising (p 85)      finding ways to get money to pay for the activities and programs of a community group
10. spokesperson (p 87)      someone who is chosen by a group to speak for it at public meetings and to the media. The spokesperson makes sure the media know about the group's activities.

## Handout 5.6A

## A Community Meeting

Use the vocabulary words to fill in the blanks in the story.

Try to finish the story without using Vocabulary Resource 5.5B.

Boris and Tanja are clearing rubbish from the stream behind their farm. A neighbour, Lewis, comes over to help. He tells them about a local \_\_\_\_\_ that is cleaning up the countryside around their small town. He is a member of the group, and like everyone else, is a \_\_\_\_\_. They clear away garbage and junk, then plant flowers and shrubs, and clean the trails in a woodland park. Lewis asks Boris and Tanja to go with him to the next meeting.

When they arrive at the meeting, they are happy to see some people they know. Lewis gets them a copy of the \_\_\_\_\_, so they can see what issues will be discussed that night. A local teacher is the \_\_\_\_\_, and runs the meeting well.

The only \_\_\_\_\_ issue is whether to improve the trails in the park. Some members want better trails and clear signs. Others think this will bring too many people to the park and will ruin it.

After much discussion, they work out a \_\_\_\_\_: they will improve the trails, but only with *natural* materials - wood chips on the paths, but no paving, and new wooden signs, but no lights.

Even these changes will cost money. Lewis agrees to set up a \_\_\_\_\_ committee to hunt for the money they need and for some free supplies.

There is a \_\_\_\_\_ among the people at the meeting that they need a more effective \_\_\_\_\_ for finding new members. The group's \_\_\_\_\_ asks if she should arrange to appear on a popular call-in radio show. She can talk about the group and answer questions phoned in from listeners. Everyone votes in favour of this idea.

The meeting ends. Most people stay for a while to chat, and to have some coffee and homemade doughnuts.

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### Vocabulary Words

- agenda
- chairperson
- community group
- compromise
- consensus
- controversial
- fund raising
- spokesperson
- strategy
- volunteer

## Handout 5.6B

## Citizens at Work

Use the vocabulary words to fill in the blanks in the story.

Try to finish the story without using Vocabulary Resource 5.5A.

Tim and his friends think city council ignores their part of the city. He and a few others set up a meeting for people in the area to discuss this matter. The people attending the meeting soon reach a \_\_\_\_\_: they must try to get a ward system in their city. (See *Citizenship Handbook* page 55 to see what a ward system is.)

Some cities do have wards. But the idea is still \_\_\_\_\_. People have very strong opinions in favour of them or against them. These residents think a ward system will result in better street lighting, reduced crime and fewer traffic problems in their area. But now they need a \_\_\_\_\_. What can they do to bring a ward system to their city?

They decide to form a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ to promote a ward system. Some people think this isn't enough. They want to find candidates for the upcoming election who will support a ward system. Others say more time is needed. They don't have enough public support yet. What if all their candidates lose? So they reach a \_\_\_\_\_.

They will not have candidates in the upcoming election. Instead they will run candidates in the election in two years. Meanwhile, they will educate city residents about the benefits of a ward system. After all, city voters will really decide the issue, and not city politicians.

They decide to start their new group at an open meeting at the community centre. Ivan will be \_\_\_\_\_. He is a \_\_\_\_\_ for two community groups, and knows how to run meetings. Next the group focuses on the \_\_\_\_\_ for that first meeting. There will be many things to discuss.

Roger says they will need a \_\_\_\_\_ committee to find money for the group's activities. Alice suggests a program committee to develop monthly programs and events. They all think that Tim should be the group's \_\_\_\_\_. He speaks well, knows a lot about the subject and is enthusiastic.

They then set a time to meet again to continue making plans for their first real meeting.

### Vocabulary Words

- agenda
- chairperson
- citizens' group
- compromise
- consensus
- controversial
- fund raising
- spokesperson
- strategy
- volunteer

## Handout 5.7 Participating in Canada's Democracy : Reading for Details

Fill in the blanks below using information from the *Citizenship Handbook* :  
(You can find the answers in the *Citizenship Handbook* on the pages listed.)

1. As a new Canadian citizen, you can vote in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ government elections. (p 77)

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ are two of the most active political parties in Canada. (p 78 is outdated. More parties are now active.)

3. To learn about political and social issues that are important in Canada, you can read \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, listen to the \_\_\_\_\_ on radio or watch it on TV, and attend \_\_\_\_\_. (p 80)

4. List three ways to get public support for a plan to improve your community. (p 83)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

5. List some of the activities that a well-organized citizens' group might use to work toward its goal. (pp 85-87)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

(d) \_\_\_\_\_

6. If you want the government to change a law or a policy, who are some of the people you should contact? (pp 88 and 89)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

(d) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Give three reasons why a citizens' group might decide *NOT* to take the government to court. (pp 92 and 93)

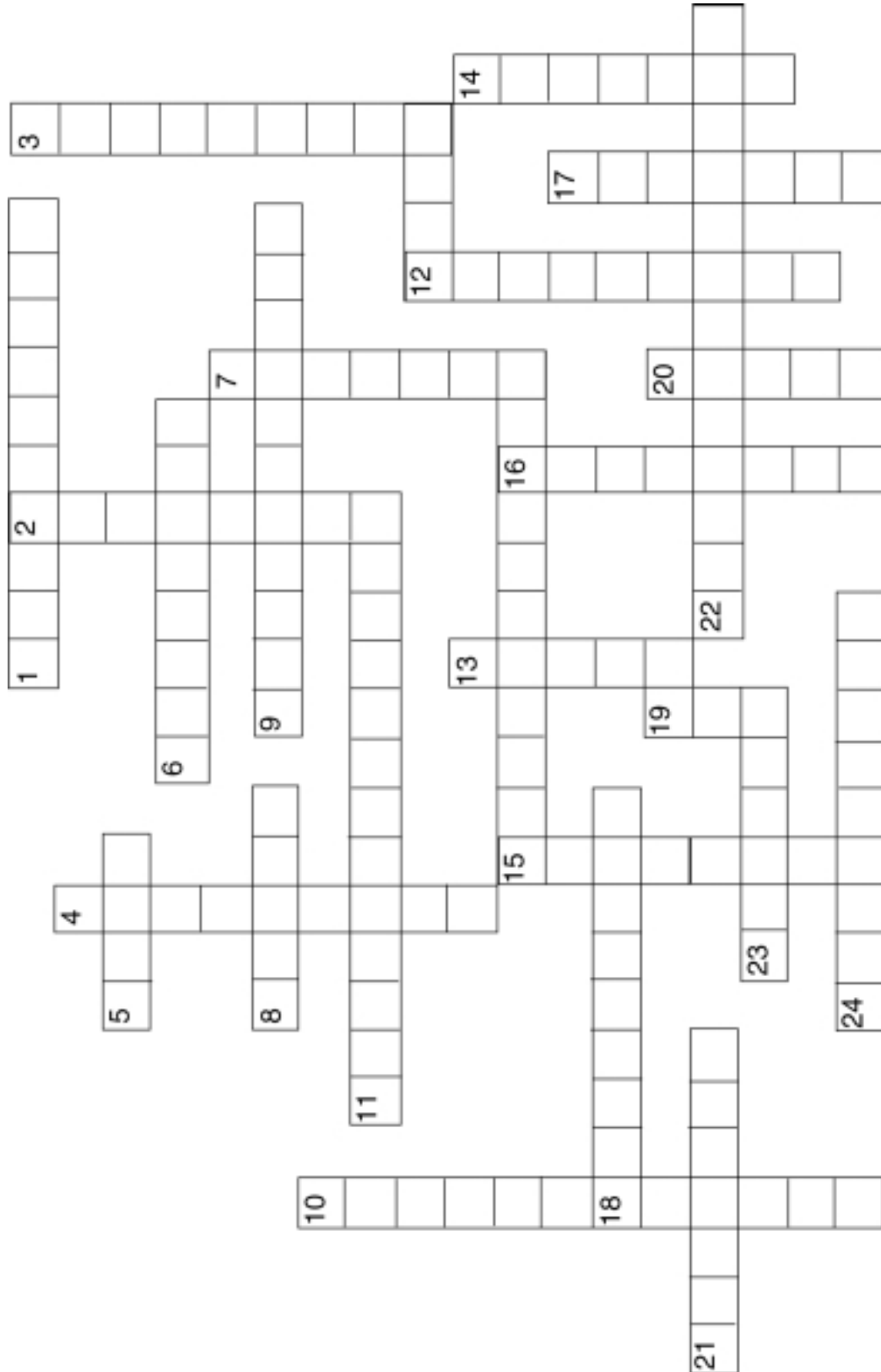
(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

### Handout 5.8 Participating in the Democratic Process - Review Puzzle

Turn this page sideways to work on the puzzle. Most of the words come from your vocabulary lists for this chapter. Try to do the puzzle without looking at Handouts 5.2B or 5.5B.



## Handout 5.8 Participating in the Democratic Process - Review (continued)

Across

1. to give up something so that everyone can work together
5. with 17 down, finding money to pay for a group's activities
6. to set up a way to do things
8. the place where you see a judge and a jury
9. to take part in an activity
11. a group of people in a public place, using signs and actions to show what they think
12. what a citizen does to help choose a government
15. the one who runs a meeting
18. how you let the public know your plans
19. letters that stand for a member of Parliament
21. see 3 down
22. debatable; causes many different opinions
23. a list of items to talk about at a meeting
24. general agreement

Down

2. a written request to the government, signed by many people
3. with 21 across, a court action to argue that the government is not following the the *Charter of Rights*
4. to have some power over what happens
7. what you think about something
10. someone who speaks for a group or club
12. a person who does something for no pay
13. with 15 down, people who join together to work on community issues
14. the Government of Canada
16. plan of action
17. see 5 across
19. letters that stand for a member of the BC Legislative Assembly
20. to try to persuade the government to do something

## Handout 5.9 Encouraging New Canadians to Vote

Pages 99 and 100 of *The Citizenship Handbook* list six reasons why new citizens might not vote in Canadian elections. After reading these pages, discuss the following questions with your group members:

1. Do you know new citizens who can vote, but probably will not vote in the next election?
2. Do you know the reasons why they won't vote?  
If not, what do you *think* are the reasons?
3. Given the reasons for not voting, (see 2. above), what do you think should be done to encourage new Canadians to vote?

(See pages 100 and 101 of the *Handbook* to learn what was done in Vancouver in 1996.)

Make a list of activities or events that you think will encourage new Canadians to vote.

Chose someone from your group to present these suggestions when everyone gathers for discussion.



## Handout 5.12                      Citizens Who Made a Difference

- (1) Read the assigned section from pp 94 to 101 of the *Citizenship Handbook*.
- (2) Work with your group to
  - make a role-play about it, **OR**
  - answer the 'Reading for Details' questions

## Role-Play

- Read the article.
- Identify the problem that upset the citizens.
- Make up a short role-play to illustrate the problem and what people did to try to solve it.
- Choose someone from your group to introduce the role-play by describing the problem.
- Act out your role-play.
- Ask those watching if they can think of different ways to solve the problem.

## Reading for Details

- Read the article or story.
- Think about and discuss answers to questions (a) through (f) below.
- Choose members of the group to present the questions and answers to the class or group.
  - (a) What is the problem that people are trying to solve?
  - (b) Is there a citizen's group mentioned in the story? If so, what group?
  - (c) What does the story tell you about the group?
  - (d) What part do government officials or agencies play in this story?
  - (e) What do you think about the way the people tried to solve their problem?
  - (f) Can you suggest other things they could have done?