

MAKING A NEW LAW



IN BRIEF

TEACHER RESOURCE

Learning Objectives

- To introduce students to the development of laws at both the federal and provincial levels.
- To explain the important roles played by the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary in Canada.
- To inform students on the ways they can become involved in the political process.

Materials

- Copies of the student handout, *Making a New Law* (one per student)
- Copies of *My Political Representative* activity sheet (one per student)
- Computers, internet and/or newspapers

Teaching and Learning Strategies

1. Assign the *Making a New Law* reading and have students complete the discussion questions either in pairs or small groups. Reconvene as a class to discuss their answers.

Teacher's Key - Discussion Questions

1. A new law enters into existence as a bill, and at this point is not officially a law until it passes through several crucial stages of evaluation. At the provincial level, an MLA or MPP may introduce a bill, while MPs at the federal level, whether a cabinet member or a private member, may introduce a bill.
2. Bills must pass through three different stages. The first stage is merely a reading of the bill. The second stage involves a debate on the bill and a vote, which, if passed, moves the bill on for a committee review. Following committee review, there will be a report to the House of Commons, at which time there will be

debate over the bill. Finally, the bill will then enter the third stage of final debate and a vote.

3. Answers will vary.
4. Students should provide a brief account of the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary, and their basic roles.
5. Laws can be subject to change as a result of a particular incident (e.g. the 9/11 attacks) or due to public pressure regarding a particular issue. This process is one in which the public can play an important role by speaking up to their elected officials and demanding changes.
6. Students' responses will vary, but they should mention contacting politicians, getting involved at the grassroots level, participating in public opinion polls and voting as some ways to become involved in the political process. Students should expand on which one they think is the most effective and impactful.
7. Answers will vary.

2. Have students complete the *My Political Representative* activity about either their local MPP or MP. Use either internet resources or local newspapers for research. Politicians may have websites or brochures about their platforms and political interests that could be referred to.

Teacher's Key - Sample *My Political Representative*

1. John Rafferty
2. Thunder Bay-Rainy River riding
3. Federal MP
4. NDP

5. Has experience as an educator, broadcaster, small business owner and volunteer. Has been educated at the University of Waterloo, University of Western Ontario, Lakehead University, and Confederation College.
6. Rafferty has twice been elected to represent Thunder Bay-Rainy River (2008, 2011). He is an advocate for the forestry industry and the CBC, and is opposed to the HST. He is also concerned with reducing the incidence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
7. Rafferty was strongly supportive of abolishing the long gun registry on the prompting of his constituents. He introduced a private member's bill, Bill C-531, to alter the *Criminal Code of Canada* in an effort to address violence against transit workers.

Extension

1. Contact one or more of the politicians that students researched and arrange a classroom visit. Have students prepare questions in advance of the visit.
2. Have students research a political issue and send a letter about it to a politician.