



Being a Canadian Citizen

QLWG
Essential Life Skills
Unit 4

QLWG Skills for Life

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THEMATIC UNITS

Competency-based learning meets the needs of all learners. It is important to keep in mind, however, that all learners are different. In order to address the needs and interests of all learners, units have been divided by *Essential Life Skills* and *Individual Life Skills*.

Essential Life Skills are important for everyone, while *Individual Life Skills* address the needs and interests of different learners. Once learners have completed the “Essential” units, they may choose a unit that is applicable to their interests and lifestyle.

Essential Life Skills Units	Individual Life Skills Units
1. Orientation Unit	18. My Hobbies and Leisure Time
2. Around the Home	19. Employment Skills
3. My Community	20. On the Job
4. Being a Canadian Citizen	21. My Family
5. What’s for Dinner?	22. Entertainment (music and film)
6. Managing My Money	23. Fitness and the Great Outdoors
7. Smart Shopping	24. Getting Around (travel and transportation)
8. My Health	25. Career Exploration
9. All About Me	26. Getting My Driver’s Licence
10. Communication Skills	27. Learning in Quebec
11. Living in Quebec	28. Living Green
12. Strategies for Reading	29. Handling Legal Concerns
13. Strategies for Writing	30. The Retirement Years
14. Strategies for Grammar	
15. Strategies for Numbers 1: Understanding Numbers	
16. Strategies for Numbers 2: Adding & Subtracting	
17. Strategies for Numbers 3: Multiplying, Dividing & Fractions	

QLWG *Skills for Life Series*

Being a Canadian Citizen

Unit # 4

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WELCOME LEARNER!

This workbook is meant to help you develop important life skills. As you work on different activities, try to see the purpose in what you are doing, stay motivated and enjoy!

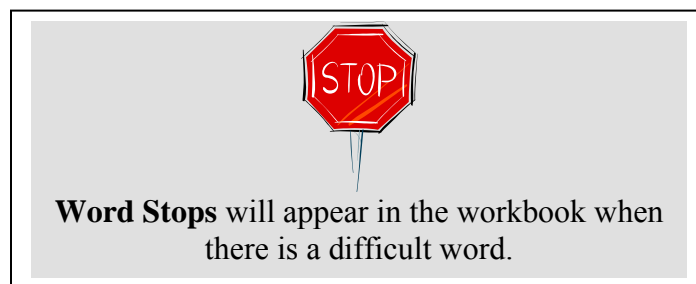
Things to Look for:

Checkpoints

You will finish every unit of study with a Checkpoint (in blue). Once you have completed the Checkpoint questionnaire, you will send this document to your distance education tutor. Make sure you fill in the **date, your name, your phone number** and the **distance education tutor's name** on the cover of this document.

Word Stops

Word Stops will explain more difficult words. Look for words in bold print (example: **bold**). A **Word Stop** will follow to tell you what that word means.



If you do not understand, follow these steps:

1. Look at titles and pictures. Do they tell you anything?
2. Try to find the general meaning.
3. Look for Word Stops.
4. Use a dictionary.
5. If you still do not understand, contact your distance education tutor.

Before you contact your distance education tutor:

1. Prepare your questions. What do you want to ask?
2. Give the page number and section title to your tutor so they know where you are.



“Act the part; walk and talk exactly as if you were already the person you want to be.”

~Brian Tracy

Being a Canadian Citizen

"A man who neglects his duty as a citizen is not entitled to his rights as a citizen."

~Tiorio



Introduction:

As a Canadian **citizen**, you live in a **democracy**. Every person who lives here has a role, rights and responsibilities. In order to exercise those rights, you must know what they are. In this unit, you will learn what it means to be a Canadian citizen.

In this unit, you will:

- Discover what it means to be a citizen.
- Learn about living in a democracy.
- Learn about the Canadian government.
- Learn about your rights and responsibilities as a citizen.
- Find out how to get information as a citizen.
- Learn about voting in Canada.
- Write a letter to a government official.



WORD STOP

1. **democracy** (dem-ok-roh-see): when/where people equally share power.
2. **citizen** (sit-uh-zun): a person who lives in a certain place.

What I Already Know



Explain what you know about being a Canadian citizen. This list will help to keep track of what you learn.

[illegible]

Some Writing Tips



"The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own arm."
~Author unknown

The following tips will help to decide when to put an "s" at the end of a word.

- We often add an "s" to show that there is more than one of a certain thing (plural).
- We often add an apostrophe and "s" ('s) to indicate that something belongs to someone (possessive).

Plural (to show that there is more than one):

Add "s" or "es" to most nouns:

Example: *The voterses went to polling station on buseses.*

A "y" (at the end of a noun) is often changed to "ies":

Example: *There are three main political partiesies in Canada.*

Possessive (to show that something belongs to someone):

Add an apostrophe and "s" to singular nouns:

Example: *The voter's ballot went in the ballot box.* (Just one voter.)

Just add an apostrophe to plural nouns (that already end with "s"):

Example: *The voters' ballots went into the box.* (More than one voter.)

Think about these rules when:

1. you want to indicate that there is more than one of something.
2. you want to indicate that something belongs to someone.

What is a Canadian Citizen?

In order to understand what it means to be a citizen in Canada, you need to understand what a “democracy” is.

Democracy:

A democracy is a society in which all citizens equally share power. Any group in which all members (or citizens) have an equal say in decision-making is considered to be “democratic”.




“Democracy is not something you believe in or a place to hang your hat, but it's something you do. You participate. If you stop doing it, democracy crumbles.”

~Abbie Hoffman

There are two main types of democracies:

1. A **DIRECT DEMOCRACY** is where citizens exercise their power by voting on an issue. If more than 50 percent of the members vote yes, then the group takes that position. A **referendum** is a good example of this. A referendum allows voters to vote “yes” or “no” to a question.


WORD STOP

1. **referendum** (ref-ur-ren-dum): a vote (by citizens) to approve or reject what is proposed by those in power.

2. A **REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY** is where citizens vote to elect members who will make decisions for the people. A representative democracy has two main features: **VOTING** and **POLITICAL PARTIES** (see next page).




VOTING:

Every adult citizen in Canada has an equal vote in electing someone.

Representatives are elected to three different levels of government:

Federal Government (for the whole country)	We elect representatives to the National Assembly (House of Commons).
Provincial Government (for each province)	We elect representatives to the provincial legislature.
Municipal Government (for different regions)	We elect representatives to councils, park boards, school boards, etc.



WORD STOP

1. **representative** (rep-ruh-zent-uh-tiv): a person who wants to be elected and speak for the people.

POLITICAL PARTIES:

Citizens create political parties based on their views. A political party provides candidates for an election. In Canada, citizens usually vote for the political party that most closely shares their vision.



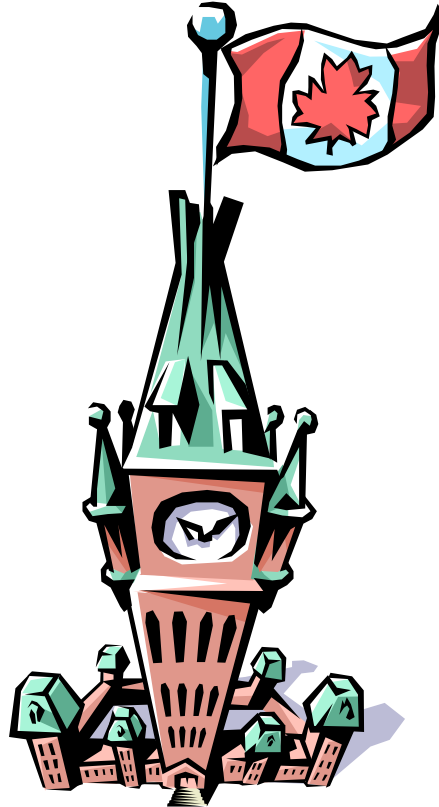
Who is a citizen in Canada?

A citizen of Canada is anyone who was born in Canada or has been granted citizenship by the government.

REFLECTION:

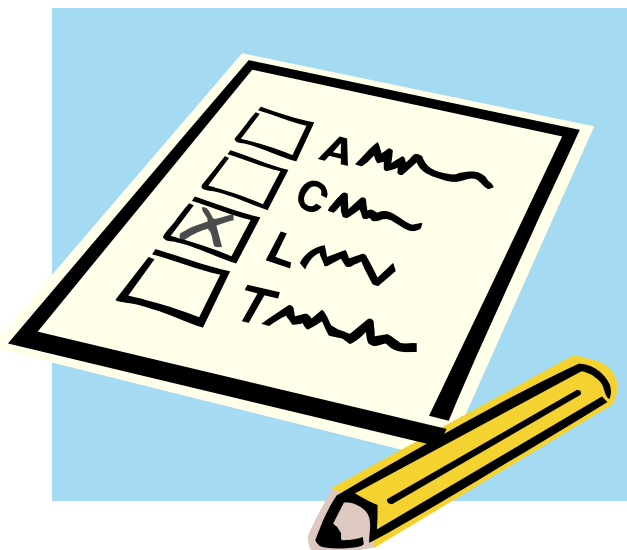
Do you know the names of Canada's major federal political parties? Who are their leaders right now?

Federal Political Party	Their leader right now



REFLECTION:

Do you think that referendums on serious issues, such as capital punishment or abortion, are a good idea? Why or why not?



Democratic Values

Equality

Canada is a country that promotes equal respect and tolerance. Every person should be treated as an equal. A person's race, age, religion, country of origin, disability, gender or sexual orientation does not affect their citizenship. Because equality is so important, equality rights have been placed in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

The Rule of Law

Citizens who create the law must live by the law. The rule of law is meant to make society both safe and fair. In Canada, all laws are published (made public) so that all citizens can know what the law is.

Privacy

We all have the right to keep personal information to ourselves. We also have the right to find out whether the government has information about us.

Participation

Canadian citizens should participate in their democracy. When a law is created, citizens can participate by sharing opinions. Citizens can also participate through challenging laws in court.



My Rights as a Canadian Citizen

1. To vote in federal, provincial and municipal elections.
2. To have my vote count equally with all other citizens' votes.
3. To run for election to Parliament, a provincial legislature or a local council.
4. To question government and be treated with respect.
5. To speak my mind on whatever subject I choose.
6. To organize with others who share my political views.
7. To have privacy.
8. To have access to information about government.

My Responsibilities as a Canadian Citizen

1. To vote.
2. To know about issues and candidates.
3. To get involved in other ways, such as running for office or supporting a political party.
4. To make my views known to my representatives.
5. To perform jury duty.

REFLECTION:

1. Why should you know your rights as a Canadian citizen?

2. How can you participate as a citizen?

Civil Liberties

Civil liberties support the freedom and rights of all citizens.

What is the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*?

The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is the supreme law of the land. It assures liberty, equality, and freedom of religion, expression, association, and peaceful assembly (see below). The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* sets out our fundamental rights and freedoms.



What the Charter does:

1. Stops governments from creating laws that do not respect our rights.
2. Gives citizens the power to protect themselves from government.
3. Protects *all of us* from injustice.

What does this mean for me?

Equality under the law:	<i>I am equal before the law.</i>
Freedom of religion:	<i>I can practice a religion of my choice.</i>
Freedom of expression:	<i>I can say what I think and believe.</i>
Freedom of association:	<i>I can join any group I wish.</i>
Freedom of peaceful assembly:	<i>I have a right to peaceful meetings.</i>

REFLECTION:

Do you think we need a *Charter of Rights*? Why or why not?



"If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in government to the utmost."

~Aristotle

How are you doing?



Complete the questionnaire to keep track of your learning.

1. Have you completed all reading and activities to this point? (*Circle your answer.*)

Yes

No

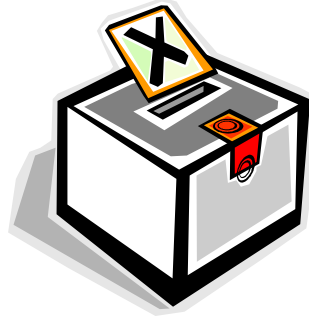
2. If you answered “No”, explain what you did not complete and why.

3. What was easy and why?

4. What was difficult and why?

5. General comments. (*Do you have any comments on the work that you have done?*)

Voting



Important Words:

Elector: A Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years old by election day.

Candidates: The persons who want to be elected.

Voters list: A list of names of people who are registered to vote.

Voter information card: A card that you receive by mail. It confirms that your name is on the voters list.

Polling station: The place you go to vote.

Deputy returning officer: The person who gives you a ballot. They can help you mark your ballot.

Poll clerk: The person who crosses your name off the voters list.

Ballot: The paper with the names of the candidates (and their political parties) in your district.

Secret ballot: Your ballot *is* a “secret ballot”.

Voting screen: This is a screen that provides you with a private area to vote.

Ballot box: This is where you put your ballot after you have marked your choice.

Source: Elections Canada

Political Rights

In Canada, governments must call an election at least once every five years to make sure citizens have a chance to vote and remove governments that have not earned support. In an election, all valid votes are counted. The candidate with the most votes wins.

Citizens in Canada have the right to vote in municipal, provincial and federal elections. They also have the right to run for office. Voters must be Canadian citizens who are 18 years of age or older.

The government must make sure that...

- citizens know about the election.
- all voters are registered.
- the time and location of voting is well known.
- there are enough polling stations (places to vote).
- polling stations are easy to get to.
- help is provided to people with disabilities.
- help is provided to people who do not speak or read English or French.



Your Rights as a Voter

- To keep your vote secret.
- To have candidates and their parties clearly identified on the ballot.
- To have your vote counted.
- To not be threatened to vote in a certain way.

Why Vote?

Voting is one of your fundamental rights as a Canadian citizen. Voting allows you to help decide who represents the people in making decisions.



How to Find Out About Your Candidates

You can find out about your candidates by listening to the radio, watching television, reading the newspaper and talking with other people.



How to Vote in Canada



When there's an election, you should receive a voter information card in the mail. This card shows that your name is on the voters list. It also tells you when and where to vote. If you do not receive a card, contact *Elections Canada*.

Elections Canada

Address:

257 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M6

Telephone:

1-800-463-6868 (toll free number)

There are Three Ways to Vote:

1. You can vote at an advance poll.

This is for those who cannot vote on Election Day. You can find out about times for advance voting by contacting **Elections Canada**.

2. You can vote by special ballot.

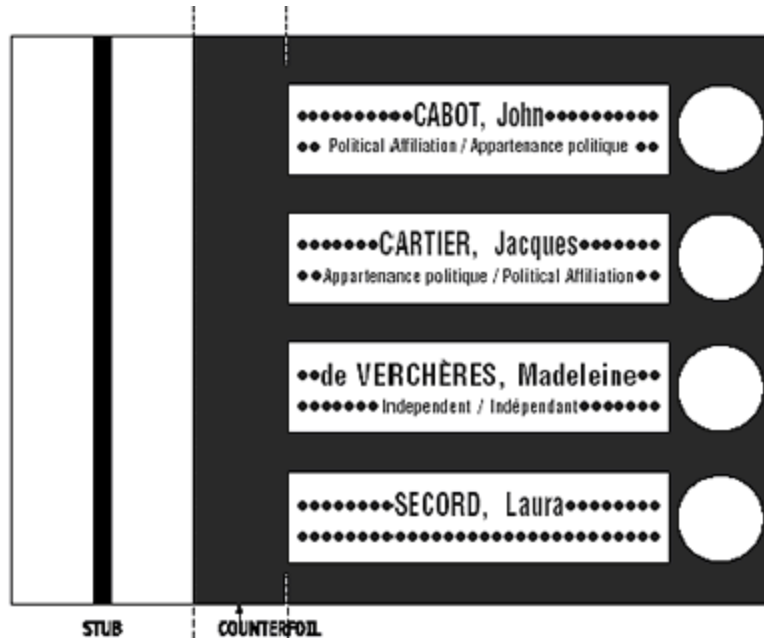
You vote by mail or at the office of the returning officer in your district.

3. You can vote at the polling station on Election Day

You vote at your polling station on Election Day.

The Voter's Ballot

Sample Voter's Ballot:



Source: Elections Canada

When You Vote

The voter's ballot has the name of all the candidates (and their political parties) from your district.

What You Do with the Ballot:

1. Go behind the voting screen and mark an **X** in the circle beside the name of the candidate you choose.
2. Re-fold your ballot in two so no one can see inside it.
3. Give your ballot to the deputy returning officer who will tear off the tab and give it back to you.
4. Put your ballot in the ballot box.

REFLECTION:

1. What should you do to prepare to vote responsibly?

2. What happens when a citizen does not vote?



ACTIVITY:

Explain the voting process.

STEP 1:

Review what you have learned about being a citizen in a democracy.

STEP 2:

Make sure you understand the voting process in Canada.

STEP 3:

Complete the questionnaire on the next page.

PURPOSE:

Voting is a way to exercise your rights as a citizen. Many people do not vote because they are not sure how. When a person does not vote, their voice is not heard.



"The vote is the most powerful instrument
ever devised by man for breaking down
injustice and destroying the terrible walls
which imprison men because they are
different from other men."

~Lyndon B. Johnson



Reviewing the Voting Process

1. How do you know if you are on the voters list?

2. What can you do if you are not on the voters list?

3. How can you find out about the candidates?

4. What happens when you go to the polling station? (*step by step*)

First...

Then...

Then...

Then...

Then...

Finally...

5. How can you be sure that your ballot is a “secret ballot”?

Participating as a Citizen



Sometimes, citizens have complaints. Complaints may be about government decisions, laws or policies. They may also be about something that needs to be done in one's community. It's the government's job to respond to complaints or concerns from the public.

How to Voice a Concern:

- By letter.
- In person.
- By telephone.

Who to Contact:

1. For a city (or local) concern, contact your mayor or city councillors.
2. For a provincial concern, contact a provincial Minister, Ministry or agency. For example, if you have a concern about your child's education, contact the Ministry of Education.
3. For a federal (whole country) concern, contact your local member of Parliament or a federal Minister, Ministry or agency.

When you have a concern, you can look in the *Government Pages* of your phone book (the part with the blue trim). The *Government Pages* are clearly divided by alphabetical order (from "Aboriginal Affairs" to "Workplace Health and Safety").

ACTIVITY:

Write a letter to a government official (at any level of government) that voices a concern or raises a question.

For example:

- Are you happy with education, health care, transportation, etc.?
- Do you have a concern about the environment?
- Are you concerned about crime?
- Are you happy with the roads in your area?

**TIP:**

1. Your letter does not have to be formal, but it should follow a basic letter format. (See Sample Letter on page 25.)
2. Fill in your contact information and ideas on the form on page 26.

STEP 1:

Decide on a question or concern.

STEP 2:

Decide which level of government you need to address.

STEP 3:

Decide which department/person/political office should be contacted.

STEP 4:

Read the Sample Letter.

Ask your tutor for help if you have trouble finding the government official who would deal with your concern.

STEP 5:

Complete the form on page 26.

STEP 6:

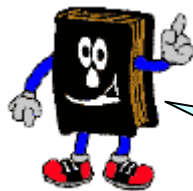
Review your ideas and write the first draft of your letter.

STEP 7:

Check your letter for mistakes, have someone read it, and then write a second draft.

PURPOSE:

You have a voice as a citizen and it should be heard. This activity will help you to share your concerns as a citizen.



If you have trouble finding the right government official, ask for help. Talk to:

- other people.
- your tutor.
- a librarian.

"The most important political office is that of private citizen."

~Louis Dembitz Brandeis

Sample Letter

January 26th

Dear Mayor Sanford,

I am writing to express my concerns about the lack of street lamps on Elm Street in the municipality of Smallville, Quebec. As soon as the sun goes down in this community, it gets very dark. This makes a number of us rather uncomfortable.

Many people do not feel comfortable going out after dark. The senior citizens in my community find it especially difficult. It is very unnerving to not be able to see what is happening on one's very own street.

In the last few months, we have noticed more and more vandalism at night. The lack of light at night in this area has allowed certain people to make mischief at the expense of residents. No serious damage has happened as of this point, but I do fear that it could get worse.

I strongly urge you to consider this matter. A few street lamps would make a big difference in our community. It would make our community safer and bring many of us great comfort.

I hope that you will be able to act soon on this matter. I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jonathon Lee

Getting Started

1. My question or concern:



2. The level of government that would deal with my concern:

3. The department/person/political office I need to contact:

4. My ideas (*why my concern needs to be addressed*):

Write **Dear**
and then put
Mr. Ms. or
Mrs.
followed by
the person's
last name.

Draft 1:

Now that you have your ideas, write the first draft of your letter.

Put the
date in the
top right-
hand
corner.

Dear _____,

In the first
paragraph,
say why you
are writing.
Set up the
problem.

In the
second
paragraph,
talk about
the
problem.
Provide
ideas to
solve it.

Sincerely,

End with
Sincerely,
followed by
your name.
Sign the
letter.

Draft 2:

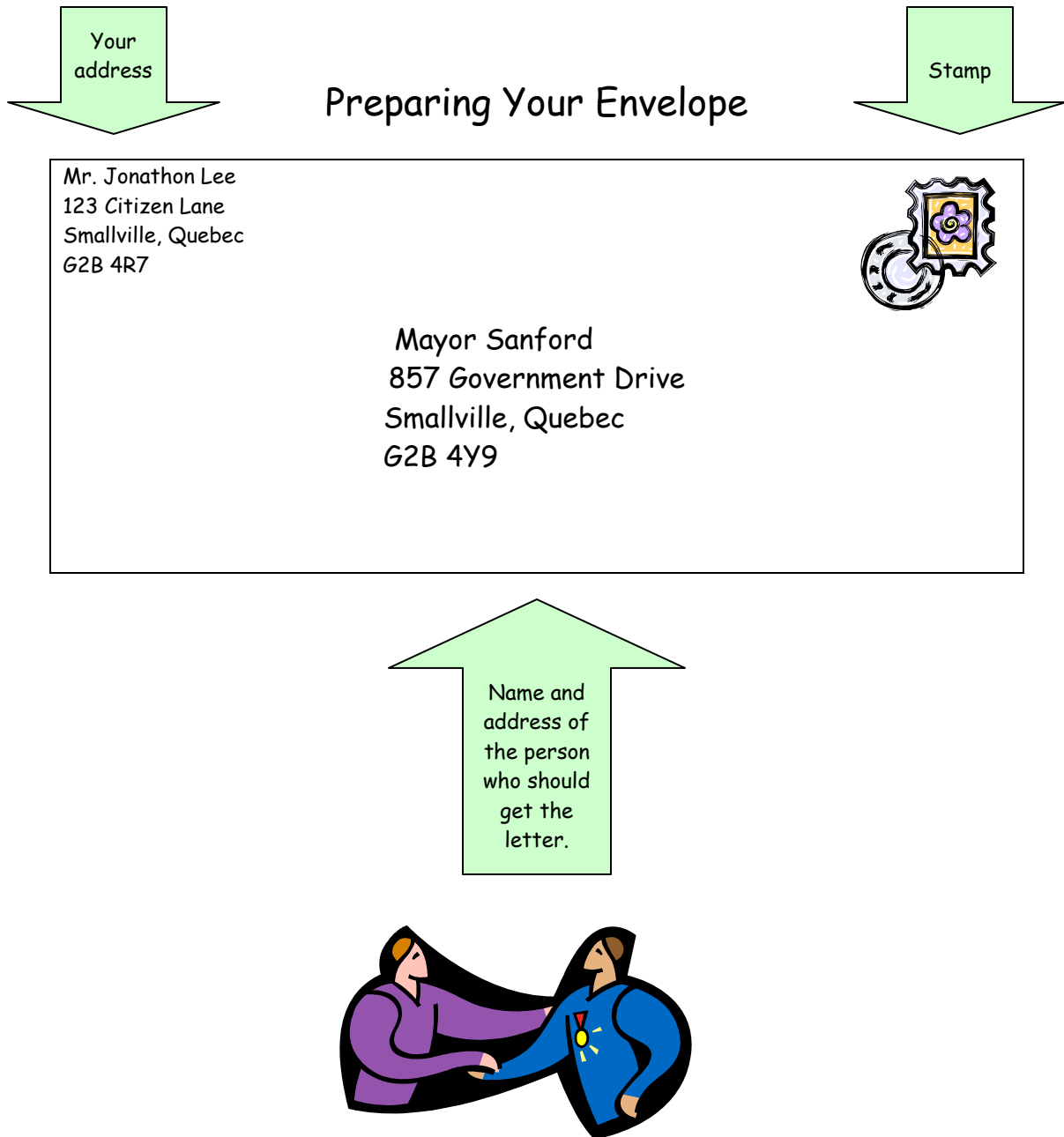
Check your first draft, make any necessary changes, and write a second draft.

Dear _____,

Sincerely,

FINAL STEP:

Prepare a final copy of your letter. Put it in an envelope and send it to the government official.



"There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship."
~Ralph Nader

For Your Information:

The Canadian Citizenship Test

People who want to become Canadian citizens must pass a test. The test assesses two things:

1. Knowledge of Canada
2. Language ability

The questions in the test are based on the information in the booklet *A Look at Canada*. For an online copy of this booklet, go to:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/look/index.asp>

To learn more about Canada and the **citizenship** test, go to:

<http://www.recitfga.gc.ca/english/activities/sitsat-2007/Darlene-Brown/index.htm>



WORD STOP

1. **citizenship** (sit-uh-zun-ship): being a citizen of a country.

Me and My Country

Now that you have learned about being a Canadian citizen, you are ready to observe how citizenship affects your everyday life.

ACTIVITY:

Pay close attention to the world around you to find examples of how citizenship affects your life.

STEP 1:

Reflect on what you know about your rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen.

STEP 2:

Observe the world around you for several days and take note of how your Canadian citizenship affects your life (or others' lives).

STEP 3:

Answer the questions on the following page. Provide solid examples of what you observe.

PURPOSE:

Learning is most valuable when you can apply it to your own life.

Where to find real-life examples:

1. Look at the people around you. How do their rights and freedoms affect them?
2. Look at your family and consider how they are affected by living in a democracy.
3. Watch the news or read the newspaper. How does Canada compare to other countries?
4. Take note of things that concern you as a citizen.

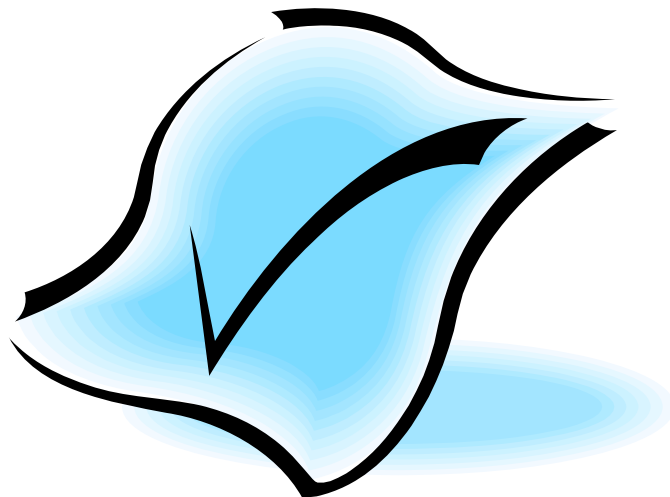
Me and My Country

REFLECTION

Provide solid examples of what you have observed in the past few days. How does living in a democracy affect your everyday life?

[illegible]

How do you feel about what you observed? Why do you feel this way?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

What I Know Now



Go back to the beginning of this unit and look at the list of things you knew before you started. Describe what you know now. What have you learned?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Checking My Writing

Look over your writing in this unit and put a check mark next to the items that you have successfully completed.

Plural	
I know when to put “s” or “es” at the end of a plural noun. <i>Example: The voters went to the polling station on <u>buses</u>.</i>	
With nouns that end with “y”, I know to change “y” to “ies” to make it plural. <i>Example: There are three main political <u>parties</u> in Canada.</i>	
Possessive	
I know to add an apostrophe and “s” to singular nouns to show that something belongs to someone. <i>Example: The voter's ballot went in the ballot box.</i>	
Capitalization	
I know to just add an apostrophe to plural nouns (that already end with “s”) to show that there are two or more people that own something. <i>Example: The voters' ballots went into the box.</i>	

Checking for Clarity

I have thought about what I wanted to say.	
I focused on what I wanted to say.	
I read over what I wrote.	
I checked each sentence to see that it is clear and concise.	
I had someone read over my writing to make sure that is clear.	

Being a Canadian Citizen

Learning Checklist

Check off each item on this list that you can do as “ACHIEVED”. If you feel that you have to improve on something, check “IN PROGRESS”.
Review your Learning Checklist with your tutor.

COMPETENCIES What I can do.	IN PROGRESS	ACHIEVED
1. I can explain what a citizen is.		
2. I can explain what a democracy is.		
3. I can explain what a political party is.		
4. I can share my opinion on referendums.		
5. I can explain what “equality” is in democracy.		
6. I can explain my rights as a citizen.		
7. I can explain what the <i>Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> is.		
8. I can identify important voting words (<i>ballot, voting screen, etc.</i>).		
9. I can find out about a political candidate.		
10. I can contact Elections Canada to find things out.		
11. I can identify a voter’s ballot.		
12. I can use a voter’s ballot.		
13. I can explain how to vote in Canada.		

COMPETENCIES What I can do.	IN PROGRESS	ACHIEVED
14. I can vote.		
15. I can share my concerns with the government.		
16. I can list ideas for my writing.		
17. I can find contact information in the phone book.		
18. I can write a first draft of a letter.		
19. I can check my writing for mistakes.		
20. I can make changes to my writing.		
21. I can write a second draft of a letter.		
22. I can prepare an envelope to send in the mail.		
23. I can send a letter in the mail.		
24. I can use “ <u>s</u> ”, “ <u>es</u> ”, or “ <u>ies</u> ” at the end of a noun to show that there is more than one.		
25. I can use “ <u>s</u> ” to show that something belongs to one person.		
26. I can use “ <u>s</u> ’ ” to show that something belongs to more than one person.		
27. I can reflect on how I write to make sure my writing is clear and concise.		
28. I can connect what I learned to my life.		
29. I can look around me for examples of what I have learned.		

COMPETENCIES What I can do.	IN PROGRESS	ACHIEVED
30. I can observe how being a Canadian citizen affects my life.		
31. I can write about what I observe.		
32. I can keep track of my learning in a journal.		

The

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