

# Canadian Civics



## Resource eBooklet



**Essential  
Course  
Resource**

**High School Civics  
(CHV20)  
Created by  
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# Introduction

Thank you for purchasing the course *Canadian Civics: Purposeful, Informed and Active Citizenship*. This ebooklet replaces the need for the online textbook, “Civics Canada Online.”

The following course activities utilize the ebooklet as a resource:

Activities that Utilize this eBooklet		
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If you have any questions on the materials please do not hesitate to contact me.  
I enjoy helping students learn!

Sincerely,

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## Activity 5

## Ideologies and Government

The democratic nations of the Western world have all had similar transitions on the road to democracy. The rights and freedoms that we enjoy today are the result of a variety of developments that include peaceful changes in law and thought, but also violent revolutions that claimed the lives of many. Highlighted below are a few significant development that have helped shape modern democracy.

### The Absolute Rule of European Monarchs

European governments of the medieval and early modern periods were quite different for our nation's own system of government. The various lands of Europe were ruled by "absolute" monarchs who made all decisions regarding their nation. It was believed that these absolute monarchs were divinely appointed by God and, therefore, their decisions could not be questioned. Some absolute monarchs used their powers wisely and are viewed more positively by historians. However, there are many absolute monarchs who abused their power and brought hardship to their people.

Henry II (1133—1189 A.D.) is often seen as a controversial monarch. Although he expanded English lands in continental Europe, he will forever be remembered for his conflict



with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. Originally, Henry II had appointed Becket as Archbishop

of Canterbury (highest position of clergy in England). However, their relationship began to deteriorate after Henry II attempted to exert more control over the church in England. Becket refused to comply with the demands of Henry II and in 1170 A.D., knights loyal to Henry II, secretly entered Canterbury and hacked Becket to death at the church altar.



Elizabeth I (1533—1603) is viewed as one of England's greatest monarchs. The illegitimate daughter of Henry VIII, she was originally imprisoned by her predecessor, her sister, Mary Tudor ("Bloody Mary"), before she ascended to the throne in 1558 A.D.. Under her leadership England became a world power militarily and economically. Her defeat of the Spanish Armada under Philip II of Spain in 1588 allowed England to develop the strongest navy in the world. Economically she developed an effective system of taxation and also engineered key trade relationships with other nations. As an absolute monarch she used her powers more wisely than many kings and queens of England who preceded her.

The monarch who best epitomized an absolute monarch was Louis XIV of France (1638—1715). Louis came to the throne at a young age and eventually centralized power around himself. Everyone and everything in France was answerable to Louis and, as a result, he became known as the "Sun King." His

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light shown over all of France penetrating every corner. The most defining feature of Louis' reign was the building of the extravagant

Versailles Palace just outside of Paris. The palace featured finely manicured gardens, man-made lakes, water fountains, sculptures and an opulent palace that contained beautiful paintings and the famous "Hall of Mirrors." Although Louis effectively organized French society, he also put France into significance debt through his desire for war. He will always be remembered as a controversial monarch who helped bring glory to France and himself, but also incurred debt and hardship for his nation.

## The Significance of the Magna Carta

The Magna Carta (1215) is often seen as one of the most significant documents that contributed to the development of democracy. The document originated during the reign of King John who increased taxes and conflicted with the church and barons of the land. He continually disregarded the concerns of these groups and this culminated in the outbreak of a civil war. As the war continued, John's forces experienced a number of defeats and, fearing complete loss of power, John agreed to the peace terms outlined in the Magna Carta. This document, often seen as the first written constitution in European history, limited the power of the King through the establishment of the "rule of law." This phrase meant, "No one is above the law, not even King." Although the treaty was violated very soon after the signing, it was reinstated several times throughout the following years and served as the basis for the British parliamentary system

and the formation of the court system. Most western democracies, including Canada and the United States, are based upon this British model of governing.

## The Enlightenment

During the 17th and 18th centuries people became tired of the abuses of monarchs and the inability of the common person to advance up the levels of society (the class system). Soon various philosophers began to challenge the traditional structures of society. These philosophers helped to ignite a movement called, 'The Enlightenment.' This was a scientific and social revolution that promoted scientific advancement through education and also the rights and freedoms of every individual in society. This development would lay the groundwork for many values of our present society.

John Locke (1632—1704) was an English political philosopher who believed in equality and freedom for everyone. He felt that monarchs held too much power over the lives of his/her subjects. His writings would challenge absolute rule and influence other philosophers and their thoughts. Furthermore, his ideas were influential in the writing of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. Other Enlightened philosophers would follow such as Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hobbes and Descartes. The ideas brought forth by these thinkers would be influential in the development of democracy and various ideologies such as liberalism and conservatism.

## The French Revolution

The powerful France established under the rule of Louis XIV was beginning to show





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cracks. Weak leadership under Louis XVI and the new ideas of the Enlightenment were leading the French to question the traditional role of government. The onset of famine in 1789 was enough for the people of France to start, arguably, the most famous revolution in human history—the French Revolution (1789—1799).

Louis XVI and his wife, Marie-Antoinette, had lived a life of privilege at Versailles Palace outside of Paris while the French people experienced severe hardship and very few individual rights. The ideas of French Enlightened philosophers such as Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau resonated with the people of France, especially the lowest class of society—the Third Estate. Soon the people began to rise up under the radical leadership of Maximilian Robespierre who sought to have the King and Queen executed as well as many others who opposed the new France. This time of incredible bloodshed became known as the “Reign of Terror.” Eventually, people became suspicious of Robespierre himself and he was also executed. From 1794 to 1799 a more stable style of government with five leaders was established known as the “Directory.” However, France’s experiment with democracy would not last and soon a new authoritarian leader came to power who would help France conquer much of Europe—Napoleon. The French Revolution did not initially reflect very positively on democracy, but it did emphasize that people could rise up if their monarch abused his/her power. The French Revolution opened the door to more developments in democracy that would eventually result the modern form which our socie-

ty is now based on.

## Christianity and Democracy

It is interesting to note that those who abused their power while in government were Christian monarchs. They believed that power had been given to them by God, but many governed in a manner that did not reflect the gospel. Their abuse of power indicates that when someone has too much power they can become corrupt—everyone needs accountability. The ideas of the Enlightenment attempted to hold these monarchs accountable and ensure freedom and equality for everyone. These themes of freedom and equality are derived from the Bible and are the foundation of modern democracy. In both cases, Christianity was used to support a particular style of government.



## Conclusion

The road to democracy has been an uneasy one filled with violence and hardship. Many people lived under extreme oppression and rose up in an attempt to establish a better life. The abuse of power by monarchs of the past reveals the need for accountability through clearly defined laws. The Magna Carta, Enlightenment and the French Revolution were all pivotal in the development of democracy. 🍁

## Activity 3

## Canadian Democracy

The road to democracy in Canada has, thankfully, been a relatively peaceful transition. A variety of people groups played an important role in helping Canada's modern form of democracy develop. Prior to the arrival of Europeans on the North American continent, Native peoples formed unions and confederacies between tribes with complex decision making processes. Additionally, the French and British also made important contributions to the development of democracy in Canada.

#### Native Contributions to Canadian Democracy

The Inuit inhabited many of the areas furthest north in Canada. Early Inuit societies were organized into "bands" which quite often revolved around hunting. Leadership was given to those who possessed wise decision-making skills and who excelled at hunting. Many of these band leaders consulted band members, men and women, when difficult decisions had to be made. Inuit bands also quite often worked together with neighbouring bands in determining hunting grounds. Although they were not officially democratic, their societies contained many elements of democracy.



The Iroquois people lived primarily in the Southern Ontario region

surrounding Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Originally, the Iroquois nation was divided into multiple tribes that often conflicted with each other. Eventually, the different tribes recognized the need for greater co-operation with one another and formed a "Confederacy" in 1450 to work out differences in a peaceful manner. This agreement became known as the "Great Law of Peace" (an early constitution) and brought together the following five nations under one confederacy: Mohawk, Cayuga, Seneca, Onondaga and Oneida—the last group to join was the Tuscarora. This new union of tribes would have a central congress where representatives from each tribe would meet to discuss concerns and make decisions. The representatives from each tribe were elected by "clan mothers" who could remove a representative if poor decisions were made. This complex system of democracy was the first of its kind in North America and can be argued was more advanced than many European democracies of that era.



#### The Growth of Democracy in New France

The nation of France also made contributions to the development of democracy in Canada. In 1603 Samuel de Champlain sailed up the St. Lawrence River and several years later went on to establish a new settlement called, "New France." Champlain would be the leader

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of this new settlement and he governed, not in a democratic manner, but in an authoritarian style. Although he often consulted advisors in making decisions, he could also be severe, believing that a firm hand was needed in order to provide stability and structure for the new colony. Champlain also developed key diplomatic and trade relations with the natives, most notably, the Huron's.

Following the death of Champlain in 1635 New France was ruled in an oligarchic manner. An oligarchy is defined as a style of leadership in which power is held by several different leaders. Sometimes oligarchy's consider the people while others rule in their own interest. The oligarchy of New France was made up of several different fur trading companies, most notably, the "Company of One Hundred Associates." Montreal served as the center of the fur trade industry and these companies wielded considerable power. They were granted, not only the responsibility of regulating production and trade of the furs, but also given the task of recruiting new colonist to the region. Their style of leadership was not democratic, but, just as Champlain, authoritarian.

Eventually, the King of France, Louis XIV, decided to make New France a royal colony under the leadership of a governor. The governor often consulted his "Sovereign Council" made up advisors and clergy when making decisions. The governor was the official representative of the King in New France, however, most of the administrative duties were performed by the "intendant" - the top advisor to

the governor. The first governor of New France was Jean Talon (1663). New France would be a royal colony until their defeat at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 which resulted in the British takeover of French lands in North America. It is important to note that none of the leadership styles of New France were democratic, however, they did contain democratic elements which would be foundational to modern democracy in Quebec (eg. Civil Law).

## Canada's Rebellion

By the mid-1800s Canada had developed into a prosperous British colony with legislatures in both Upper and Lower Canada. However, wealthy individuals formed the "Family Compact" which heavily influenced the decisions made by elected representatives, especially in the area of political appointments. As a result, the government was often seen more as an oligarchy led by the rich than a true democracy. One representative, William Lyon Mackenzie, felt that a rebellion was needed in order to stop the abuse of power. In 1837, along with supporters, he staged the "Upper Canada Rebellion." He and his forces had intended to take over the government in York (Toronto), but were dispersed by Loyalist Militia. A similar uprising took place in Lower Canada led by Louis-Joseph Papineau. This rebellion, although more violent, was also unsuccessful in its immediate objectives.

The rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada alerted the British government in Canada to the need for reform. These rebellions initiated the develop-



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ment of “Responsible Government” - the government can only rule by the consent of the people. If the elected government does not have the confidence of the majority of those elected then they are compelled to call an election. This is now an important feature of democracy in Canada. If the government loses a vote on an important piece of legislation (eg. Budget) then they are forced, by tradition, to call an election.

## Conclusions

The road to democracy in Canada has been influenced by many people groups and developments. This transition to democracy was not immediate, but rather the result of conflicts, like the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, and the contributions of various leaderships styles and structures from the French, British and Natives. 🍁



## Activity 8

# Canadian Federalism

## Canadian Legal System

Canada's legal system is designed after the British model of governing. There are three branches of government in Canada: executive, legislative and judicial (court system). Each of these branches are a check on the power of the other branch. The role of the judicial systems is to interpret laws and determine the appropriate punishment if the individual is found guilty. This system was designed to avoid abuses of power which had existed in centuries past under monarchical leadership (eg. Kings and Queens).

### The Role of the Judicial Branch

As discussed in the first unit, many monarchs of the past abused their power and made life very difficult for their people. If a person was accused of a particular crime, the trial, if one existed, was often brief and poorly structured. As a result, many innocent people were convicted and jailed, or even executed, simply because the trial process lacked a defined and balanced process. The nobles were often those who administered justice on behalf of the King and their decisions could rarely be questioned. Canada's system of justice has evolved from the injustices of the past to a well-defined and balanced system that allows for those accused to be given a fair trial that revolves around sound evidence.

### Foundations of the Canadian Court System

The Canadian Court System revolves around a number of important principles:

Principle	Description
<b>Presumption of Innocence</b>	When the trial of an accused starts, the court functions on the premise that the accused is innocent until proven guilty.
<b>Burden of Proof</b>	There must be overwhelming evidence against the accused in order for him/her to be convicted of the crime.
<b>Precedent</b>	Many different crimes have been committed before. The judge must look at previous court decisions that are similar in nature when giving a verdict. This principle is also known as, "Common Law,"
<b>Equality Before the Law</b>	The Magna Carta in 1215 dictated that no one is above the law, not even the king. Everyone is equal in the court system and must given the same access to justice regardless of their status within society.
<b>Fair and Speedy Trial</b>	The accused can not be imprisoned for an indefinite period of time without knowledge of what he or she has been charged with. Within 48 hours the accused must be informed of the charges and a trial must be given within a reasonable amount of time.
<b>Habeas Corpus</b>	Also derived from the Magna Carta, there must be sufficient evidence to arrest someone of a crime. If there is no evidence the person can not be imprisoned.

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## Court of Appeals

Canada's legal system has many different layers that help administer justice. The system can seem confusing

and overwhelming, but is intended to ensure that decisions made are well-informed and based on proven evidence and a defined process. In the event that a convicted individual feels they have been wrongly convicted they may appeal the decision. This means they can ask the court to review the evidence and start a new trial. The appeals division of the court system will review the case and determine if there is enough evidence to "re-do" the case. This ensures that there is a way to change court decisions if a wrongful conviction has been made. For example, David Milgaard was

convicted of murder and spent 23 years in jail before new evidence presented in an appeals case overturned the original decision. The appeals branch of the court system is a very important element of the judicial branch that helps ensure justice.

## Conclusions

The judicial branch of government serves a very important role in ensuring justice within Canada. The many layers and processes that must be completed and consulted with during a court case ensure that the rights of individuals are protected. 🇨🇦

