

# Activity 2

## ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE?

### **Objectives**

To become familiar with:

- the development of Canada's unique form of democracy during the pre-Confederation years;
- terms such as representative government, responsible government, democracy and other important concepts; and
- the reasons for the evolution of responsible governments, in Canada and elsewhere.

### **Directions**

1. Discuss the definitions of, and differences between, responsible and representative governments (see the Glossary at the back of this binder, among other resources). You may wish to have the group decide whether their local school's form of government is responsible or representative, or both.
2. As a whole or in smaller groups, discuss the following questions:
  - a) What kind of government does Canada have today?
  - b) Why do responsible governments often, as in North America, evolve *after* representative governments?
  - c) Is it possible to have a "true democracy" — one in which the citizens rule themselves, directly and equally? Why or why not?
  - d) What are the advantages of representative democracy?
  - e) What are the disadvantages of representative democracy?
  - f) How might interconnectivity — the Internet, etc. — lead to true democracy (e.g. every citizen could vote on every issue and/or bill which affects them)? Would they like a system like that? Is it feasible?
3. With this discussion in mind, have users read background material on the development of our system of government. In addition to available library resources, there are excellent on-line resources, such as the Canadian Encyclopedia and other Web sites listed at the back of this guide.
4. Using this information, complete the activity sheet, showing for each of the places and dates how they represent progress toward our current federal and provincial/territorial systems of government. In particular, focus on appointed versus elected representatives and the role and rights of the average citizen.
5. Optional activity (enrichment) on cause-and-effect: create a list of events and pressures that tend to lead to a more democratic form of government. Relate this list to current events on the international stage; where do they see similar developments? They may use newspapers, news magazines, and the Internet to research developments in democracy and representative governments.

# Activity Sheet

## ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE?

Using the format below, recreate the chart and fill in the missing information.

	Change in Crown/ Government Power	Change in Citizens' Role in Government	Cause/Event/Central Figure(s)
Nova Scotia, 1758			
Prince Edward Island, 1773			
New Brunswick, 1784			
Upper and Lower Canada, 1791			
Newfoundland, 1832			
British North America, 1839			
Upper and Lower Canada, 1841			
Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Province of Canada, 1848			
Prince Edward Island, 1851			
New Brunswick, 1854			
Newfoundland, 1855			

# Answer Sheet: ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE?

	Change in Crown/ Govt Power	Change in Citizens' Role in Government	Cause/Event/Central Figure(s)
Nova Scotia, 1758	Representative government granted	Elected assembly formed	Britain wanted to reform the former French colony and give it British institutions and a more British character (In 1758, the 2 <sup>nd</sup> of 3 waves of Acadian deportations took place.)
Prince Edward Island, 1773	Representative government granted	Elected assembly formed	Separated from Nova Scotia in 1769, P.E.I. was pressured by Britain to adopt British government institutions; the Secretary of State in London blocked needed land reform bills until P.E.I. agreed to form an elected assembly.
New Brunswick, 1784	Created as a separate colony from Nova Scotia	Elected assembly formed	Thousands of Loyalists settled in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, bringing with them political traditions that were at odds with those of the colony. These refugees wanted to form a new society based on their own values, and the colonial elite in Halifax did not satisfy their desires; the Loyalists lobbied for a colony of their own, and were successful.
Upper and Lower Canada, 1791	Province of Quebec divided into Upper and Lower Canada; representative government granted	Each colony got an elected assembly. The principle of "no taxation without representation" meant that the assembly had to approve all government spending.	Constitutional Act of 1791: attempt to stem the perceived democratic excesses that had led to the American Revolution and the loss of 13 colonies.
Newfoundland, 1832	Representative government granted	Elected assembly formed	Old administration was weak and had been set up only to coordinate the fishery, and was not designed to run a maturing colony. It was incapable of addressing ethnic, religious and class tensions. This was also a time of reform liberalism in Britain.
British North America, 1839	Lord Durham recommended creating a united Province of Canada with responsible government	Parliament in London agreed to unite the two Canadas but rejected the proposal for responsible government, there was no impact on citizens' role in government.	Durham Report into the 1837-1838 Rebellions.
Upper and Lower Canada, 1841	Union of the Canadas into a single province, with a form of representative government.	Province of Canada granted a single elected legislature with an equal number of representatives from Canada East and Canada West.	Act of Union (1840)
Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Province of Canada, 1848	Responsible government granted	The Executive is responsible to the Assembly, and the Assembly controls revenues.	Britain began to devolve political power to its settlement colonies. In each colony, leaders sought more control to deal with local issues and challenges themselves.
Prince Edward Island, 1851	Responsible government granted	The Executive is responsible to the Assembly, and the Assembly controls revenues.	The tenant farmers of the Island attempted to gain power to force land reform upon the landlords, many of whom lived in Britain and paid little attention to the farmers' interests.
New Brunswick, 1854	Responsible government tested	Principles of responsible government were ultimately upheld.	The Lieutenant-Governor had appointed a judge without the advice of the council, which had the confidence of the assembly. One council member resigned in protest.
Newfoundland, 1855	Responsible government granted	The Executive is responsible to the Assembly.	Ministerial responsibility and self-determination were major issues of the day, particularly in light of the controversy over French fishing rights around the northern peninsula and ongoing class, religious and ethnic tensions.