

# Activity 7

## POLITICAL POWER PLAY

### **Objectives**

To become familiar with:

- the hierarchy and interrelationships of power in Canada's system of government;
- the branches of government, the names and faces of important roles in governing Canada, its provinces and territories; and
- the multiple functions and sub-groups of some elements of government, such as the Prime Minister and the House of Commons.

### **Suggested Sources:**

*The Guide to the Canadian House of Commons* included in this binder or online at:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/guide/guide-e.htm>;

*The Senate Today* included in this binder;

Info Boxes, reproduced pages from this guide;

*The Canadian Encyclopedia*;

Web sites at the back of this guide;

provincial and territorial government Web sites;

Commissioners of the Territories at [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/nap/comm\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/nap/comm_e.html);

and

Lieutenant Governor Web sites.

### **Directions**

This activity enhances the users' familiarity with the functions of various elements of government. Use the Power Grid activity sheet which follows as a model for a deck of cards or as a preliminary list for a larger research project. A further grid, similar in style to the Power Grid, could also be created to examine the responsibilities of various individuals and elements of government.

#### **1. Card Game**

Using the Power Grid activity sheet, create a deck of cards. Use these cards in a variety of ways (using one approach or a combination of several, depending on time and suitability) to reinforce the functions and/or responsibilities of various elements of government.

*Suggestions:*

- Individuals can quiz each other, e.g. ask "Who is the Head of State?" "What is the difference between the executive and the legislative branches of government?"
- Remove the answers from either the Elements or the Functions columns from the Power Grid. Without access to the cards, how much of the empty column can users complete?
- Scan or download photos of the current Governor General, Prime Minister, and other notable figures and ask users to match them to the correct cards.
- If any of the group are talented artists or caricaturists, encourage them to produce original illustrations for their deck.

#### **2. Mini-Research Assignment**

Ask individuals or groups of users (depending on time or level of users) to become "experts" on any of these given areas and make a presentation to the class (posters, presentations, role playing). While listening, the rest of the group can elaborate on the Power Grid.

# Activity Sheet

## THE POWER GRID

ELEMENT	FUNCTION
Executive Branch	
Legislative Branch	
Judicial Branch	
Monarch (Queen or King)	
Governor General	
Prime Minister	
Cabinet	
Senate	
House of Commons	
Government/Party in Power	
Leader of the Official Opposition	
Opposition Members	
Supreme Court of Canada	
Federal Court of Canada	
Provincial Courts	

## *Answer Sheet:* THE POWER GRID

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>
Executive Branch	carries out the nation's laws
Legislative Branch	makes the nation's laws
Judicial Branch	interprets the nation's laws
Monarch (Queen or King)	Head of State
Governor General	fulfills the role of Head of State; carries out the Monarch's responsibilities
Prime Minister	Head of Party (or coalition of parties) with the most members in the House of Commons
Cabinet	suggests federal laws; advises the Head of State as the Privy Council for Canada
Senate	Upper Chamber of law-making branch; appointed
House of Commons	Lower Chamber of law-making branch; elected
Government/Party in Power	largest group of elected members from the same political party
Leader of the Official Opposition	usually the leader of the party with the second-highest number of seats in the House of Commons
Opposition Members	all elected Members of Parliament not part of the governing party
Supreme Court of Canada	general court of appeal for Canada
Federal Court of Canada	court dealing with certain matters under federal jurisdiction, and court of appeals for territorial tribunals and for decisions of federal commissions, boards and tribunals
Provincial Courts	general administration of civil and criminal law