

EDUCATION KIT for TEACHERS

LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

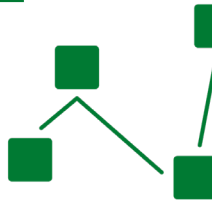


INTRODUCTION

Dear Educator,

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario is pleased to offer curriculum linked educational resources to help you introduce your students to parliament and government in Ontario. This kit includes facts on the structure of government and parliament, the legislative process, key parliamentary players, voting, and active citizenship.

For more information and additional teaching tools please visit www.ola.org/en/visit-learn.



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WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?

THE GOVERNMENT

Government sets public policy and is the administrative governing body. In Canada, there are three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. General elections are held every four years to elect the federal and provincial governments. Canada and the provinces are representative democracies divided into ridings. Government consists of the Prime Minister or the Premier, the Cabinet and the ministries. After an election in Ontario, the political party with the greatest number of elected members forms the government.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CABINET)

The Executive Council is formed by a small group of elected members of the governing party, who are selected by the Prime Minister at the federal level or the Premier at the provincial level. The Executive Council, also called the Cabinet, is the administrative body of Ministers who set government policy together with the Prime Minister or Premier.

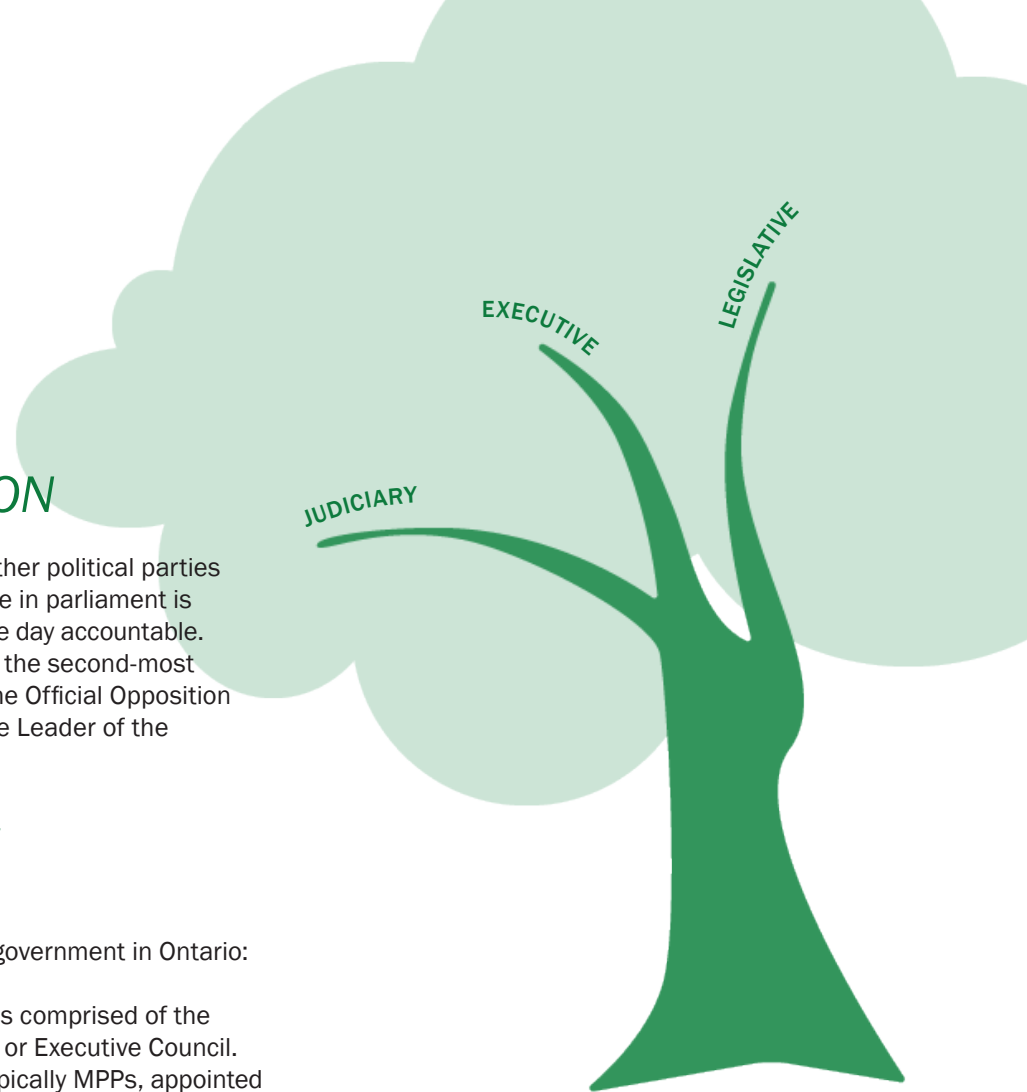
THE OPPOSITION

Members elected from the other political parties form the opposition. Their role in parliament is to keep the government of the day accountable. The political party that elects the second-most number of members forms the Official Opposition and their leader becomes the Leader of the Official Opposition.

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

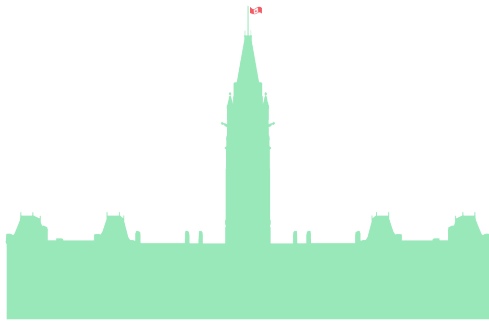
There are three branches of government in Ontario:

1. The **Executive** Branch is comprised of the Ministers of the Cabinet or Executive Council. Cabinet Ministers are typically MPPs, appointed to Cabinet by the Lieutenant Governor on the advice of the Premier.
2. The **Legislative** Branch refers to the Legislative Assembly comprised of elected Members of Provincial Parliament, who have the power to pass, amend, and repeal laws.
3. The **Judiciary** Branch is comprised of the Ontario courts: the Court of Appeal for Ontario, the Superior Court of Justice and the Ontario Court of Justice. The judiciary operates independently of the other branches of government and has a duty to administer justice, by following and applying the law.



LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

There are three levels of government in Canada: federal, provincial and municipal.



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Located in Ottawa, the nation's capital, the federal government is responsible for issues that affect Canada as a whole, such as: international relations, immigration, criminal law, national defence, and foreign policy. The federal parliament is comprised of 338 Members of Parliament (MPs) elected from every province and territory in Canada. The political party that elects the greatest number of MPs forms the federal government. Their leader becomes the Prime Minister and the head of the federal government.



PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The provincial government is responsible for issues that affect the province such as: education, health care, direct taxation (sales tax), and provincial highways. Ontario's Parliament, located in Toronto, the provincial capital, is comprised of 124 Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) elected from across the province. The political party with the most MPPs forms the provincial government. Their leader becomes the Premier and the head of the provincial government.



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

In Ontario, the municipal government receives its power from the provincial government. The city or town council decides on by-laws that deal with issues concerning their community such as public parks, libraries, social services, local police and fire services, garbage removal, recycling and public transportation. Municipal governments are made up of councillors elected locally and are led by mayors in cities and towns and reeves in villages and townships.

Classroom Activity

Try our levels of government game with your students! Available on our website at ola.org/en/visit-learn

PARLIAMENT VS. GOVERNMENT

LEGISLATIVE

PROVINCIAL
PARLIAMENT =

ALL MPPs
+
THE
LIEUTENANT
GOVERNOR

Parliament is the legislative or lawmaking body of government. At the federal level, parliament consists of the Monarch, represented by the Governor General, the Senate, and the House of Commons comprised of 338 elected Members of Parliament (MPs). At the provincial level, parliament refers to the elected Legislative Assembly of 124 Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), and the Monarch represented by the Lieutenant Governor.

Government is the administrative body who sets policy, and is comprised of the Executive Council (Cabinet) and the Prime Minister at the federal level, or the Premier at the provincial level of government. In parliament, Members at the federal and provincial levels, represent their constituents and participate in the legislative process. They introduce bills, propose amendments to current legislation, and vote on bills and motions. They also present petitions on behalf of constituents and bring forward issues related to their own riding. They also have a responsibility to hold the government accountable and can question Cabinet Ministers about government policy and practices.

In Canada, the provinces have a unicameral system, having one Legislative Chamber. The federal parliament is bicameral and has two Legislative Chambers – the House of Commons, known as the Lower House and the Senate, known as the Upper House, comprised of Senators appointed by the Prime Minister.



RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Canada's federal and provincial governments exercise the principle of responsible government. Under this system, the Executive must maintain the confidence, in other words majority support, of parliament (often referred to as the House). A government can lose power if it loses the confidence of the House. This is more likely to occur when there is a minority government - when the governing party does not have the majority number of seats in parliament.

LEFT: SAMPLE SEATING PLAN OF ONTARIO'S LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER WHERE THE GOVERNMENT (THE GOVERNING PARTY) HAS THE MAJORITY NUMBER OF SEATS IN PARLIAMENT.



The word parliament is derived from the French word "parler," which means to speak.

ABOUT THE CROWN

CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

The Crown was first established by the kings of France in the 16th century. Canada has evolved from a French colony to an independent nation, and is a constitutional monarchy.

CANADA'S HEAD OF STATE

In today's constitutional monarchy the Queen of Canada, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Canada's Head of State. In this system of government, the power to govern is vested in the Crown but is entrusted to the government to exercise on behalf and in the interest of the people. Although all laws in Canada are passed in Her name, the power of governing rests with the Prime Minister or the Premier and the Executive Council. The Head of State has no influence over decisions made by the country's elected bodies and does not interfere with the decisions of parliament.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, HER VISITS TO QUEEN'S PARK IN 2010, 1984, AND AS PRINCESS ELIZABETH IN 1951.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA AND THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

The Governor General is appointed, on the advice of the Prime Minister to represent the Monarch in Canada, and the Lieutenant Governors are appointed at the provincial level. The Governor General presides over the swearing-in of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of Canada, the federal cabinet ministers, and appoints the lieutenant governors of the provinces on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Governor General also welcomes new ambassadors to Canada and will host foreign dignitaries and members of the Royal family during their visits to Canada.

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO

The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario is the representative of The Queen in the province.

The Lieutenant Governor has the responsibility to: summon, prorogue, and dissolve the Legislature on the advice of the Premier; grant Royal Assent on the advice of the Legislative Assembly; appoint a Premier who has the confidence of the elected Legislative Assembly; and appoint the Executive Council (Ministers) on the advice of the Premier. The Lieutenant Governor also welcomes foreign dignitaries and attends and hosts a number of events including the presentation of medals and decorations honouring outstanding Ontarians.

BELOW:
THE HONOURABLE
ELIZABETH DOWDESWELL,
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
OF ONTARIO



MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

Ontario's 124 Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) are elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario by the eligible voters across the province, to represent the concerns of their constituents regarding provincial matters. Each MPP represents a geographical area of the province - called an electoral district, a riding or a constituency. Ontario is the only province in Canada to use the term "Member of Provincial Parliament" as the title of its elected provincial representatives.

ROLES OF AN MPP

MPPs may also be assigned different roles by their party leader such as House Leader or Party Whip. They may also be assigned additional responsibilities as Committee Chairs, critics, Cabinet Ministers or Parliamentary Assistants. Members that are not assigned special duties are referred to as backbenchers.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN MPP

At the Legislature, MPPs work in the Legislative Chamber, where they discuss, debate and vote on bills; speak about provincial issues and their

communities; introduce bills and present petitions. MPPs also participate in Legislative Committees.

When not in the Legislature, MPPs have a number of responsibilities in their home ridings such as meeting with constituents to listen to their concerns, helping them resolve matters related to provincial government services, and attending community events such as school openings or local fundraisers.

CAUCUS

A caucus refers to all the elected members from a particular political party. The political parties at Ontario's Parliament hold regular caucus meetings.



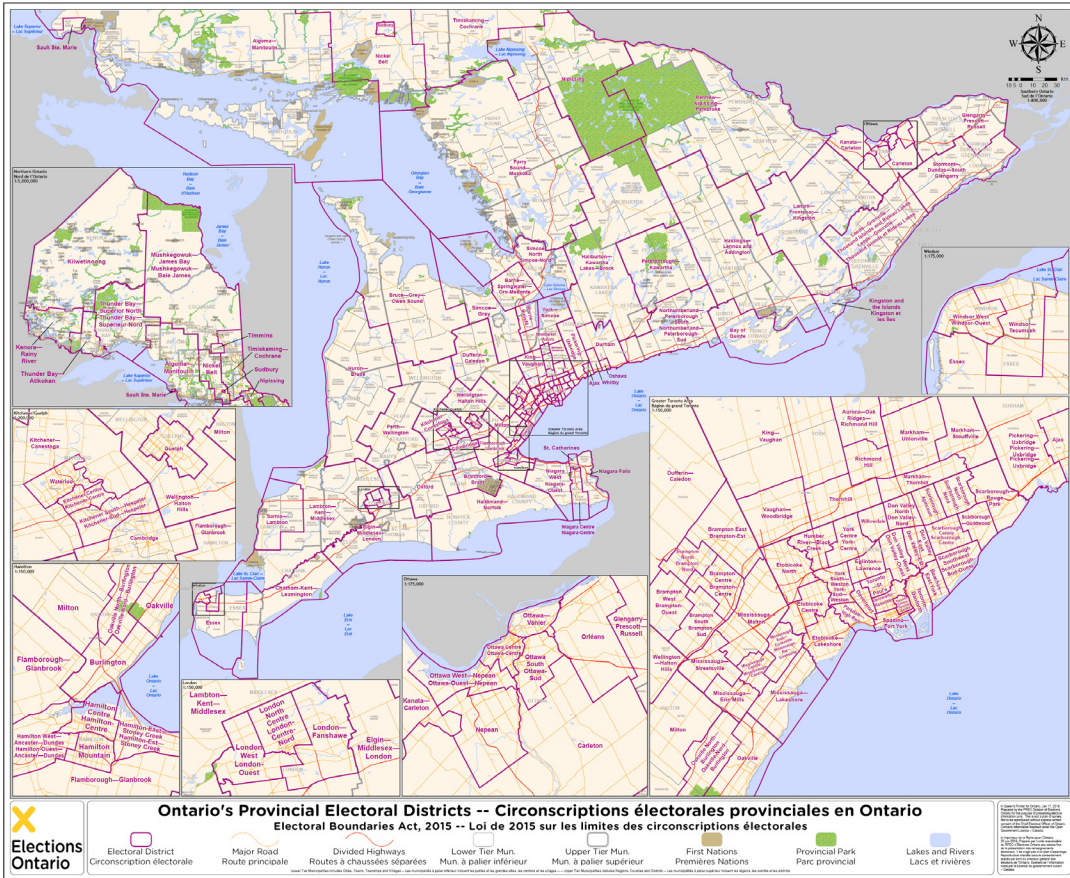
ABOVE: MPPs AND PARLIAMENTARY OFFICIALS FROM THE 42ND PARLIAMENT, 2019

BECOMING AN MPP

To be eligible to run for the position of an Ontario MPP, candidates must be 18 years of age or older, a Canadian citizen, and a resident of the province. To become a candidate for a particular political party individuals must be nominated by the party. Some candidates choose to seek election as independents with no party affiliation.



Any MPP, except Cabinet Ministers and the Speaker of the House, can present a petition.



LEFT:
 A MAP OF ONTARIO'S 124
 PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.
 FOR MORE INFO AND MAPS, VISIT
[THE ELECTIONS ONTARIO WEBSITE.](http://www.elections.on.ca)

RIDINGS IN ONTARIO

Ontario is divided into 124 electoral districts. One MPP is elected from each riding. Since ridings are based on population, their geographic size varies greatly. In densely populated areas of the province, such as the Greater Toronto area, the ridings are smaller. Ontario's smallest riding - Toronto Centre is only 6 square kilometers. Northern Ontario, on

the other hand, is much less densely populated than Southern Ontario. As a result ridings in the north tend to cover a much larger area geographically. Kiiwetinoong is the largest riding in Ontario covering 294,083 square kilometres.



Visit the Elections Ontario website at www.elections.on.ca and enter your school's postal code to find your provincial riding!

VOTING AND POLITICAL PARTIES

VOTING IN ONTARIO

In Canada, all provinces have the first-past-the-post or plurality system, meaning that the candidate that wins the most votes in each electoral district is the winner, regardless if this is less than 50 percent of the votes cast.

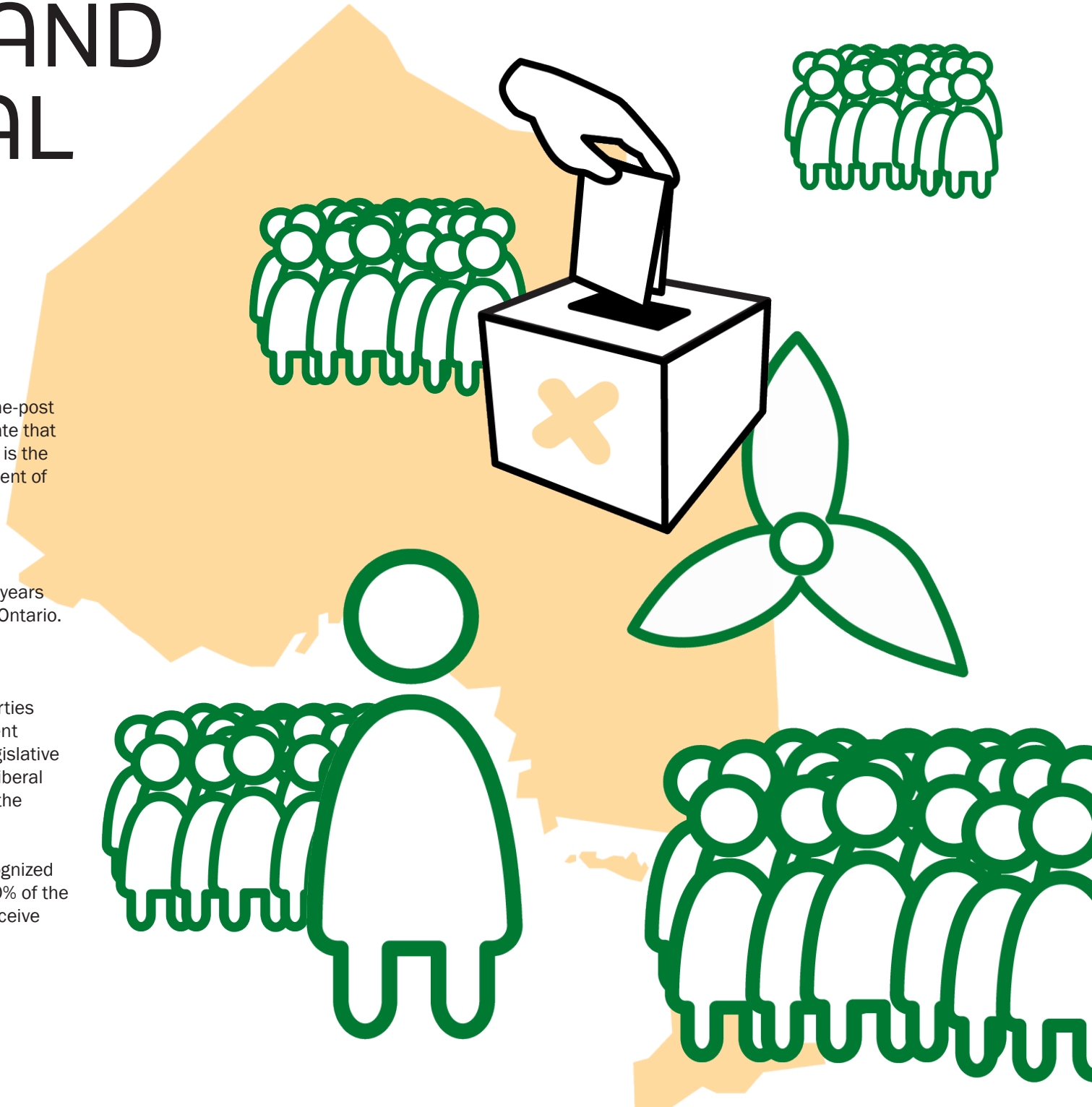
WHO CAN VOTE?

To be able to vote in Ontario you must be 18 years of age, a Canadian citizen, and a resident of Ontario.

POLITICAL PARTIES

There are a number of registered political parties in Ontario. Currently, MPPs from four different political parties have been elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario – the Green Party, the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party (NDP), and the Progressive Conservative Party (PC).

At the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a recognized party must have a membership of at least 10% of the total number of seats in the Legislature to receive the privileges of a recognized party.



POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS IN ONTARIO

AS OF JANUARY 2020



Doug Ford
Progressive Conservative Party



Andrea Horwath
New Democratic Party



Steven Del Duca
Liberal Party



Mike Schreiner
Green Party

THE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER

MPPs and various House Officers sit in the Legislative Chamber when the House is in session. The Speaker of the House sits at the front of the room on the Speaker's dais. MPPs are seated on either side of the Chamber, with the government MPPs always seated on the right side of the Speaker, and the opposition MPPs on the left. The official opposition will sit closest to the Speaker and their leader is seated directly across from the Premier. When there is a large majority, some government MPPs can be seated on the opposition side of the Chamber. In the middle aisle of the Chamber is the Clerk's Table, the smaller desk is for the Hansard Reporters, and near the entrance is a desk for the Sergeant-at-Arms.

**RIGHT:
THE LEGISLATIVE
CHAMBER**



PARLIAMENTARY PLAYERS

The Legislative Assembly has a number of neutral roles that ensure that each meeting of parliament is run efficiently and fairly. The individuals that fill these positions do not vote or participate in debates and most crucially - they are non-partisan.

THE SPEAKER

The first order of business for the Legislative Assembly after an election is to elect the Speaker by secret ballot. The Speaker serves the House by: overseeing its meetings; enforcing the rules and maintaining order and decorum; and the Speaker must act in a fair and impartial manner. The Speaker also has a ceremonial and diplomatic role, welcoming visiting dignitaries and representing the Legislature across Canada and abroad. The Speaker does not participate in the debates and does not vote unless there is a tie.

RIGHT:
THE HONOURABLE
TED ARNOTT, SPEAKER
OF THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO



THE CLERK

The Clerk is the chief permanent officer of the House, and is an expert in parliamentary rules and procedures. The Clerk provides neutral, non-partisan and confidential advice to the Speaker and the MPPs on the Standing Orders - the rules for conducting business in the House and in committees. The Clerk is the chief administrative officer of the Office of the Legislative Assembly, with responsibility for the entire non-partisan staff of the Legislature.

ABOVE LEFT:
TODD DECKER, CLERK
OF THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ABOVE:
THE CLERK AND
TABLE CLERKS IN THE
LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER

**BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT:
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS JACKIE
GORDON; INTERPRETATION BOOTH;
A HANSARD REPORTER; AND
LEGISLATIVE PAGES**

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for all security operations at the Legislative Assembly and ensures the Legislative Building is safe and secure. The Sergeant-at-Arms is also responsible for the safekeeping of the Mace. At the start of each sessional day, the Sergeant-at-Arms leads the Speaker's procession into the Chamber carrying the Mace over her right shoulder. The Legislative Mace symbolizes the authority of the Speaker in the House, and must be present during all legislative meetings.

THE HANSARD REPORTERS

In the Legislative Chamber, the Hansard Reporters capture parts of the debate and the interjections to ensure there are no gaps in the final transcript. An interpreter also interprets remarks made in the Chamber simultaneously into English or French. Hansard is the official verbatim transcript of the House proceedings.

THE LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Pages are students in grades 7 and 8, from across Ontario, selected to serve in the Legislature. The students deliver messages and water in the Legislative Chamber and learn first-hand about Ontario's Parliament and the legislative process.



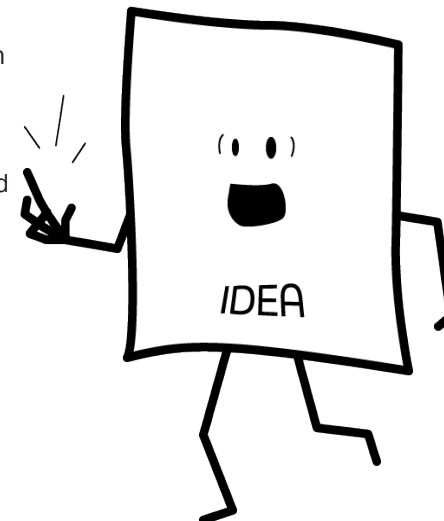


HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW?

The process of passing bills into law is one of the main tasks of a Legislative Assembly and it takes up a major portion of the Assembly's time. All bills must pass through several stages of the legislative process before a bill can become a law - the stages are based on the British (Westminster) model.

While the process is similar in all unicameral Canadian legislatures, over time, it has been modified in each jurisdiction as circumstances and political events have dictated. During this process, the MPPs have an opportunity to study the bill, listen to experts and citizens, and propose suggestions on how to improve the bill before it becomes law.

In Ontario, there are three kinds of public bills, which pertain to matters of public policy: Government Bills – introduced by Cabinet Ministers, Private Members' Public Bills – introduced by MPPs who are not Ministers, and Committee Bills – introduced by the Chair of certain standing committees.



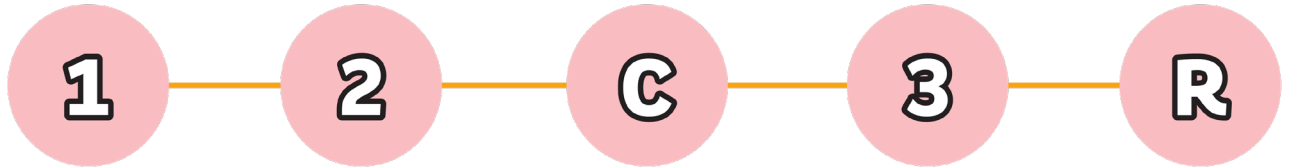
STAGES OF A BILL

FIRST READING

Bills are introduced during Routine Proceedings, when the House is in session. When a bill is introduced it is called First Reading. At this time, the objectives of the bill are explained and the MPPs decide whether to accept the bill for future debate. Each member receives a copy of the bill and the debate is usually scheduled for several days later, giving the MPPs time to study the bill.

SECOND READING

Second Reading, gives the MPPs an opportunity to debate and vote on the principles of the bill. After the debate, the MPPs vote on whether to move the bill through to the next step. In some cases, the bill may move directly to Third Reading, but often, it is first examined by a Standing or Select Committee. The Committee stage is an opportunity to call witnesses, examine the bill in detail, and make amendments. After the witnesses have been heard, the bill is examined clause-by-clause, during which time any amendments are voted on. Finally, the committee votes on the bill as a whole, and whether to report it back to the House.



COMMITTEES

A committee is made up of a small group of MPPs from all political parties. They meet to consider bills or other specific issues that the House has asked them to review. Standing Committees exist for the duration of a Parliament, and Select Committees are set up for a limited time to study a particular issue. Members of the public can share their thoughts and ideas about a bill by making a presentation to a committee, submitting material, or attending hearings. If you present to a committee, your presentation will become part of the official public record of the committee.

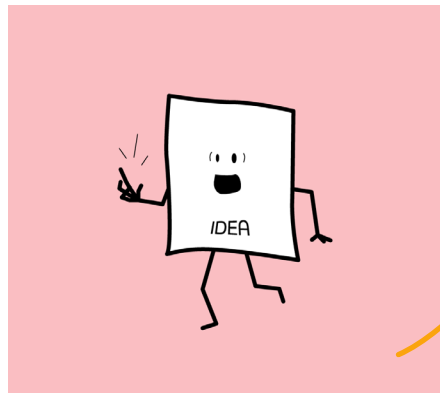
THIRD READING

Third Reading is the final stage of a bill, when the MPPs decide whether the bill will pass. MPPs have an opportunity to debate the bill for the last time. At the end of the debate, the Speaker calls for a final vote.

ROYAL ASSENT

By convention, the passage of a bill by the Legislative Assembly requires the assent of the Sovereign or her representative, the Lieutenant Governor. Royal Assent takes place in the House or the Lieutenant Governor's chambers. Once the bill receives Royal Assent it becomes an Act. An Act becomes law when it comes into force, which may happen immediately or at a later date if specified in the Act.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

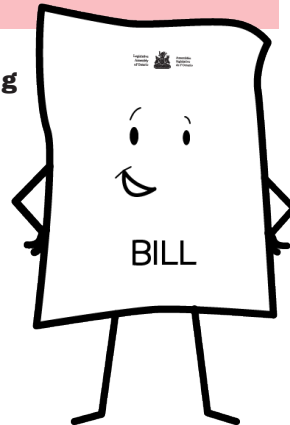


Idea

All bills start with an idea written in legal language and presented to the Legislative Assembly by an MPP.



First Reading

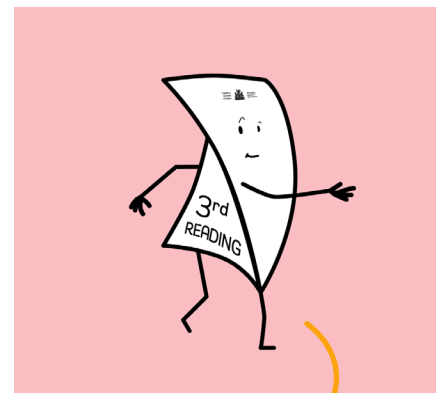


Second Reading



Committees

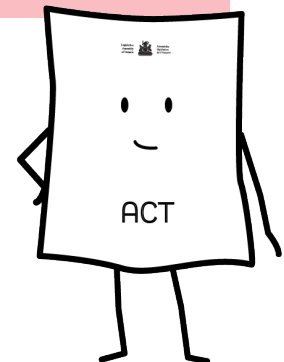
A bill can be sent to a committee after Second Reading or it can proceed directly to Third Reading. There are three types of committees: Standing Committee, Select Committee and Committee of the Whole House.



Third Reading



Royal Assent



FOR SCHOOL GROUPS + TEACHERS

The Parliamentary Protocol and Public Relations Branch provides a wide range of educational enrichment opportunities. The following programs and resources are offered in English or French, and are designed to support teachers and promote student engagement:

1. **Onsite curriculum-linked education programs** for grades 5 through 12. Program overviews and information on how to book a program are available on our website at www.ola.org/en/visit-learn.
 2. **Lesson plans** designed to help your students build their knowledge about Ontario's Parliament and government, and encourage and promote civic engagement and active citizenship.
 3. **Interactive educational games and quizzes** to test your students' knowledge. Try them on your smartboard to enhance your lessons on the Levels of Government, How a Bill Becomes Law, Rights and Responsibilities and more.
 4. **Youth programs** that will engage and challenge your students and those interested in civics, and learning about how parliament and government work.
- **Legislative Page Program** for outgoing, high achieving, community-involved students in grades 7 and 8, who have demonstrated responsibility and leadership.
 - **Model Parliament** for secondary and post-secondary civic-minded students, who are interested in current events and provincial issues.
 - **Youth Arts** for aspiring young visual artists (12-18 years), and young writers (grades 7-12) from across the province.
 - **School Choir Programs** for choirs of all ages - sing the National Anthem in the Legislative Chamber, or perform for 30 minutes on the grand staircase during the holiday season.





OUTREACH

Bringing parliament to you! The Legislative Assembly offers a free, 2-hour, unique educational program in your school for those who may be too far to visit the Legislative Assembly in person. Check our outreach schedule on our website to see when we will be in your community.

New Virtual Outreach Program

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario is launching a new virtual outreach pilot program to reach students across the province. This free, 45 minute educational virtual program, focuses on the function of provincial parliament and government, roles and responsibilities, and promotes youth engagement. For more information visit our website at www.ola.org/en/visit-learn.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS AT ONTARIO'S PARLIAMENT

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario Teacher's Forum is a 2-day professional development opportunity, designed for elementary and secondary teachers to deepen their understanding of Ontario's Parliament. Teachers will learn about the inner workings of the Legislature, meet with MPPs and parliamentary officials, and discuss strategies for teaching parliamentary democracy and active citizenship. More information is available on our website: www.ola.org/en/visit-learn.



PROMOTE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT, ACTIVE + INFORMED CITIZENSHIP

There are many ways your students can get involved, and learn about the role of provincial government, how parliament works, and the legislative process. Here are some ideas...

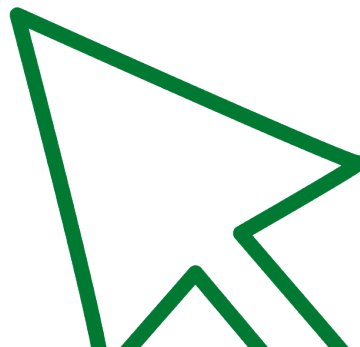
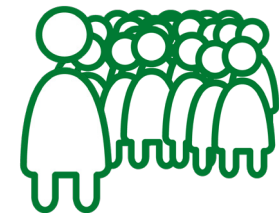
Students can experience the Legislature live:

Online - watch live video of the House proceedings as well as some committee meetings via the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's website. Each sessional day is streamed live, and members' statements and Question Period are archived daily.

On TV - watch the Legislature on TV, check your local cable listings for the Ontario Legislature's broadcast channel, ONTPARL.



In person - watch the House live, in person, from the public galleries. All sessions are open to the public. Visitors must check-in with security to obtain a pass to attend the public galleries. Visitors over the age of 16 may be required to show government issued photo ID.



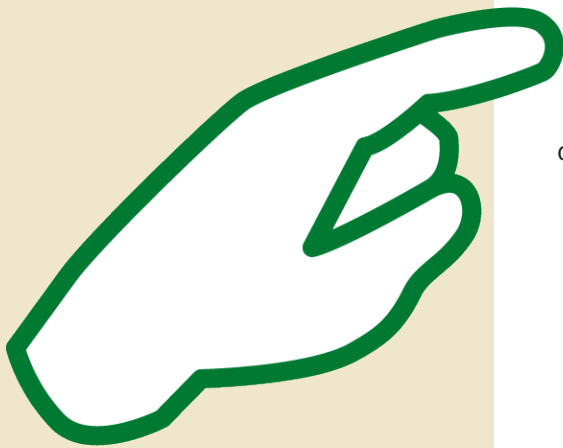
HOW TO GET INVOLVED

In Canada, we have the right to freedom of belief, opinion, and expression, and we have a responsibility to use these rights. Voting is only part of our rights as citizens.

CONNECT WITH YOUR MPP

Each MPP represents the interests of all the constituents in their riding, concerning provincial matters. Invite your local MPP to visit your classroom, or encourage your students to talk to their own MPP.

Students can find out who their MPP is by going online to the Elections Ontario website. It's easy – the student just has to enter their postal code to find out the name of their riding or electoral district, and the name of their MPP.



Are your students concerned about a provincial issue? Encourage them to start a petition:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows...”

Petitions ask the Legislature to act on or change its position on an issue. A petition must be signed by at least one person, and can be submitted by an individual or a group to an MPP who will present it on their behalf to the Legislature. The government must file a response within 24 sitting days of the presentation of a petition.

GLOSSARY

A

Act - A bill that has received Royal Assent and has become a law.

B

Backbencher - A Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) who is not a Cabinet Minister or a party leader, or a member who has not been assigned a special duty.

Ballot - A sheet of paper that lists the names of all candidates standing for election.

Bicameral - A bicameral parliament has two legislative chambers. Federally, Canada has a bicameral parliamentary system consisting of an appointed Senate (Upper House) and the House of Commons (Lower House).

Bill - A proposed law.

C

Cabinet - A group of Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) that is made up of the Premier and the Ministers. The Cabinet holds the executive power and sets the government's priorities and policies. The Cabinet is sometimes referred to as the Executive Council.

Cabinet Minister - An MPP that is appointed to the Executive Council (Cabinet) by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario on the advice of the Premier. In Ontario, Cabinet Ministers are given the title *Honourable*.

Candidate - A person who is running in an election.

Caucus - All elected members from the same political party.

Chamber - Also known as the House, the Chamber is the meeting place for the legislative body, where members meet to debate and make provincial laws.

Citizen - A resident of a province or country who has certain freedoms, rights and responsibilities.

Clerk - The Clerk is the principal authority on the practices and privileges of the parliament. The Clerk provides administrative and procedural advice to the Speaker and the MPPs, counts the votes, and swears-in newly elected members.

Constituency - A geographic area of Ontario that is represented by an elected MPP in the Legislative Assembly. A person who lives in a constituency is called a constituent.

D

Debate - An organized discussion where participants present different opinions.

Democracy - A form of government where citizens elect representatives to govern and make decisions on their behalf.

Deputy Speaker - An MPP who fulfills the Speaker's duties when the Speaker is unavailable to preside over the debates in the Chamber.

GLOSSARY

E

Election - A process where citizens vote for a candidate to represent their constituency in the parliament. In Ontario, an election is usually held every four years.

F

Federal government - The level of government that is responsible for issues that affect Canada as a whole country. Our federal government is located in Ottawa, Canada's capital.

Filibuster - an action taken to obstruct the progress of the Legislative Assembly while not technically contravening the rules.

G

Government - The political party with the greatest number of elected members. The government sets public policy and is the administrative governing body of a nation, state, or community.

H

Hansard - The word-for-word printed record of the daily proceedings in the Chamber and committees. Hansard is named after the family that began the tradition of recording the proceedings in the British House of Commons. It has been the official transcript of Ontario's parliamentary proceedings since 1944.

House - Another term for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It can also refer to the Chamber, where the Legislative Assembly meets.

House Leader - One member from each political party who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the party in the Legislature. The House Leader for the governing party is always a member of Cabinet and is responsible for announcing the daily order of House business.

L

Legislative Pages - Students in grades 7 and 8 from all over Ontario who act as messengers in the Chamber.

Legislative process - The process by which bills are approved by parliament and become laws.

M

Mace - A ceremonial staff that is a symbol of the Speaker's authority to oversee the Legislature. The Mace must be present during all legislative meetings.

Majority government - When the governing party holds more than half of the seats in the House, it is called a majority government.

Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) - A person who is elected to represent their riding at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Ontario is the only province to use the term MPP as the title of its elected provincial representatives.

Ministry - A government department that is in charge of one or several of the provincial government's responsibilities. For example, the Ministry of Education.

Ministry critic - Members from the opposition who are appointed to scrutinize the activities and policies of the ministries. They may question Cabinet Ministers during the daily question period in the House.

Minority government - If the government party holds fewer than half of the seats in the House, it is called a minority government.

Municipal government - The level of government that is responsible for issues that affect a city, town, village, or township. The municipal government receives its power from the provincial government.

GLOSSARY

N

Non-partisan - A person that is not affiliated with a political party.

O

Official Opposition - The political party with the second-highest number of elected members after the government party.

Opposition - All political parties and independent MPPs who do not belong to the governing party.

P

Partisan - A person who is affiliated with a political party and supports that party's policies.

Political party - A group of people who share the same political beliefs. They join together in organizations and nominate candidates to run in elections.

Premier - The leader of the political party with the highest number of elected MPPs. The Premier is the head of the provincial government.

Prime Minister - The leader of the political party with the highest number of elected Members of Parliament (MPs) in Canada. The Prime Minister is the head of the federal government.

Procession - Each day, the Legislature begins with the Speaker's Procession. The Sergeant-at-Arms carrying the mace on the right shoulder, leads the Speaker, followed by the Clerk, two Table Clerks and the Legislative Pages along the hallways to the Chamber. The procession is also known as the Speaker's Parade.

Provincial government - The level of government that is responsible for issues that affect the whole province. Our provincial government is located in Toronto, Ontario's capital.

Q

Question Period - The daily period when members of the opposition and government backbenchers have the opportunity to ask the Cabinet Ministers about the activities and policies of their ministries. Question Period is sometimes referred to as Oral Questions.

R

Readings - The steps a bill must pass through in order to become a law. Readings give MPPs the opportunity to study a bill and suggest how to improve it before it becomes a law.

Riding - A geographic area of Ontario that is represented by an MPP in the Legislative Assembly. Ontario is divided into 124 ridings, also called constituencies or electoral districts.

Royal Assent - The Lieutenant Governor grants Royal Assent, agreeing to the bill on behalf of The Queen. This last step of the legislative process makes the bill a law.

GLOSSARY

S

Senate - The Senate is the Upper House in Canada's bicameral parliamentary democracy. Federal bills must also pass the Senate before it can become law.

Sergeant-at-Arms - The guardian of the Mace, they are responsible for security in the House on behalf of the Speaker, and the safety and security at the Legislative Building.

Speaker - The MPP who presides over the debates in the Chamber. The Speaker is elected from among the MPPs, but does not participate in debates and only votes in the event of a tie.

Speech from the Throne - A speech delivered by the Lieutenant Governor at the beginning of each new session of parliament. This speech outlines the government's initiatives and plans for the new session of parliament.

Standing Orders - The rules and procedures for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. The Clerk advises the Speaker and MPPs on these rules so that order is maintained in the Chamber.

T

Third Party - The political party with the third-highest number of elected members after the government party and the official opposition.

U

Unicameral - A legislature that only has one law-making House or Chamber. For example, Ontario's provincial parliament is unicameral – it has only one Legislative Chamber.

V

Vote - A way for a person or group of people to make a decision. For example, a vote is a way for citizens to choose who represents them in parliament. It is also a way for MPPs to decide whether a bill should become a law.

W

Whip - One Member from each political party who is chosen to keep the other Members of their political party informed about House business. The Whip also ensures that Members are present in the Chamber, especially when a vote is being held.

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



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