

Chatterbox #80 – Elections

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Maura: And your pal Maura.

Harp: And we're here with another Culips English Learning Podcast.

Maura: And if you haven't been to our website, you should check it out. It's Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Harp: Yes, because there you can find all our older, but wonderful, episodes.

Maura: Right. You can also become a member. And when you become a member, you get the transcripts, more detailed explanations, and quizzes for all of our episodes.

Harp: Yeah, and I would strongly recommend that you listen once without the transcript and listen again with the transcript, just to make sure that you understood everything.

Maura: That's good advice, Harp.

Harp: I'm full of good advice.

Maura: And if you have any questions, you can always contact us on Facebook. Harp and I might answer, but our editor Jessie might also answer for you, too.

Harp: Yep, or you can just email us: Contact@culips.com.

Maura: So, today we're going to do a Chatterbox episode. And that is where Harp and I get to chat about all kinds of different topics. Sometimes we talk about things going on in the news, sometimes we interview people, and other times we talk about North American culture.

Harp: Yes. And today we're gonna talk about voting in elections.

Maura: Right. This is definitely a hot topic.

Harp: Definitely a hot topic in parts of Canada, specifically Quebec right now, and also in the US.

Maura: Right. So first we're gonna talk about types of elections and then...

- Harp: We're gonna talk about some upcoming elections...
- Maura: And then Harp and I are gonna talk about our experiences voting.
- Harp: Yes. So let's get started with the types of elections and voting.
- Maura: So what kinds of elections are there?
- Harp: In Canada, there are basically three governmental levels that you can vote at.
- Maura: OK, that makes sense.
- Harp: Well basically, in Canada, you can vote at the federal level. So that's where you're voting for the MPs—the Members of Parliament—and the Prime Minister.
- Maura: Right. So, depending on who you vote for in your **riding**, that will affect who becomes the Prime Minister of Canada.
- Harp: Yes, because in Canada, we don't vote directly for the Prime Minister. In Canada, you vote for the person running in your **riding**. And **the party** that wins the most seats, that **party's** leader becomes the Prime Minister.
- Maura: Right. It's funny you know, because some countries have Prime Ministers, some have Presidents, some have Presidents and Prime Ministers.
- Harp: Yes. In Canada, we have the Prime Minister, but the actual head of state is still the Queen.
- Maura: It's surprising. I think even to most Canadians it's surprising.
- Harp: Yep, the Queen of England is the head of state of Canada. And another level you can vote at in Canada is the provincial level.
- Maura: Right. So, in Canada we have how many provinces, Harp?
- Harp: We have 10 provinces and we have three territories.
- Maura: Right. So this is just larger separations of area in Canada.
- Harp: Exactly. So in Canada, you can vote federally or provincially.
- Maura: And then there's another level, right?
- Harp: There is. What level is this, Maura?
- Maura: This is the municipal level.

- Harp: Yes, so this is basically the city level. And at the city level, you would have the municipal vote.
- Maura: Ha ha. I'm laughing a little bit because Harp says that for some reason she has trouble pronouncing this word.
- Harp: It's such a difficult word for me to pronounce. I'm sure I say it wrong most of the time.
- Maura: So, what Harp is saying is the municipal level. So that's when we vote for our mayor, right?
- Harp: Exactly. We vote for our city councillors and our mayor.
- Maura: OK. I think it's the most exciting when we get to vote for federal.
- Harp: Exactly. It's big, it's across the country, it's super important.
- Maura: Right. And it's interesting, because different provinces have different reputations.
- Harp: Yes. And so in the federal elections in Canada, every citizen who is 18 years old is allowed to vote.
- Maura: But I wonder if most of them do.
- Harp: No. That's kind of a sad thing in Canada. Average voter turn out is around 60% or less.
- Maura: That is pretty sad.
- Harp: It's low. Forty percent of the population of Canada who is eligible to vote doesn't.
- Maura: Yeah, it is a problem. I think people are trying to do something about that by creating very **catchy** media campaigns to get younger people out to vote.
- Harp: Yeah. It's definitely the younger people that don't vote enough.
- Maura: Mmhmm. Another thing that's interesting is in Canada, we have a federal election every four years.
- Harp: Yeah. It can happen before that, but it has to happen every four years.
- Maura: And **the party** that is in power, which means the Prime Minister's **party**, gets to choose when the election will be. So they seem to have a little bit of a strategic advantage by choosing when the election happens.

- Harp: Yeah. If they're doing well in the polls, they can choose to call the election then, and they're more likely to win again.
- Maura: It's a little bit sneaky.
- Harp: Yeah. In the US, they have set election dates for the federal level, but not in Canada.
- Maura: I think it would be a good idea to do that, too.
- Harp: Yeah. You know something interesting that I learned while I was doing research for this episode?
- Maura: What's that?
- Harp: You know, I've noticed it but I didn't understand why, but in Canada, almost all of the time, elections happen in either the spring or the fall.
- Maura: Well, I would say that the winter isn't a good time because it's so cold and the weather can be really nasty. So, if by chance the election is on a day when there's a snow storm, people might not be able to come out to vote.
- Harp: Exactly. And because we have such a short summer, people are always on holidays in the summer, so that's why we have fall or spring elections.
- Maura: Mmhmm. That makes sense.
- Harp: It does indeed.
- Maura: So, let's talk about some upcoming elections now. Because, as we said, there are a couple that we're interested in.
- Harp: Yes. In Quebec, there is the provincial election happening very soon.
- Maura: Right. And it's really interesting because there have been a lot of student protests in the province of Quebec. So this election is going to be very interesting.
- Harp: It is going to be interesting, because the students have been protesting, so I'm interested to know if more younger people are going to come out and vote.
- Maura: Hey, that's interesting.
- Harp: It is. Have you been **following the election** in Quebec?
- Maura: To be honest, not that much. But as the day grows closer, I will become more and more interested to see what's going on.

- Harp: Yeah. You know, I've been **following** it quite closely and it's so interesting to see all the leaders and the **candidates** just **throwing out these election promises**. "I'm gonna put millions of dollars in this, and millions of dollars in this, and we're gonna do this." But they never give a plan.
- Maura: That's often what happens, right? **Empty promises**, that's what politicians are known for.
- Harp: Yeah. Unfortunately, that is what they're known for. But I've been **following** quite avidly and I'm interested to see. I haven't decided who I'm voting for yet.
- Maura: One really interesting thing about the province of Quebec that I think is different from other areas of Canada is that Quebec often has new and different political parties. So a group of people might start a new **political party** and within a few years they're getting a lot of votes, where the rest of Canada is very conservative with political parties.
- Harp: That's very true. In Quebec, yeah, you do have a lot of the new parties that come and they're sometimes around only for a couple of years and then they don't get voted in an election and then they disappear and a new **party** comes.
- Maura: Yeah, it's interesting.
- Harp: Yes. And another upcoming election that's happening is the American presidential election.
- Maura: Right. And there's an example where they don't have that many political parties to choose from. In the US, there's really only two big political parties that are taken seriously.
- Harp: Yep. There's the Republican **Party** and there's the Democratic **Party**.
- Maura: And it seems like every year the election is bigger and bigger news and more and more people are interested in it.
- Harp: You know, I think it's funny because I think a lot of Canadians **follow** the American election more closely than they **follow** the Canadian elections.
- Maura: I bet that's true. But I would say that's because the American election is so sensationalized and it's everywhere on the media, where the Canadian elections tend to be more about issues and debates and stuff that people might think is boring.
- Harp: Yeah. In the US, they have a lot of **attack ads**, so the commercials are interesting to watch and they spend a lot of money on elections.

- Maura: Right. And they spend a lot of time. This election that's coming up in the fall for the US has been talked about for almost a year already. And the campaign to see who was going to lead the Republican **Party** was such a big deal in the media.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. I think it might have something to do with the fact that they have set elections. They know when it's gonna happen. **The party** that's not in power has to choose a leader to go against **the party** that's in power. It's complicated and there's a lot going on.
- Maura: Definitely. But it's always interesting. Even if it's not our own country, it is interesting. And I bet it's not just Canadians. I bet people in countries all over the world are somewhat interested in what happens in the United States of America.
- Harp: Yeah. I think that's definitely true. People are **following the election** everywhere.
- Maura: So we'll see if Barack Obama will stay in power for another four years or if the Republicans will come back.
- Harp: Yeah, it's interesting. We'll see what happens.
- Maura: OK. Now let's talk about our own experiences voting.
- Harp: Let's do it. Maura, do you vote in every election?
- Maura: I do vote in every election. I can't say that I've always voted in every election, but over the past few years I've definitely realized how important it is and I make an effort to vote every year.
- Harp: Yeah, I'm the same. While I've voted in every provincial and federal election I have to be honest, when I first moved to Montreal, and even sometimes now, I don't really understand the city politics here. They have parties in the city level. It just... It's confusing to me.
- Maura: Hmm. I've probably voted more in Quebec than I did when I lived at home. But I do remember the first time I ever voted. And I felt quite young to be making such an important decision.
- Harp: Yep, me too.
- Maura: And I always feel a bit nervous when I'm filling out the ballot, like am I doing it right? Is it gonna work? Are they gonna take this seriously?

- Harp: I agree. It's the same thing for me. But you know, the first time I voted in a federal election, it was very interesting because I got to be a **scrutineer** at the end of the election.
- Maura: I've never even heard that word before. Now you're teaching me a new word, Harp.
- Harp: Basically, it's where you're representing a **political party**. First you go and vote, that happens separately, but at the very end of the election at about 7 o'clock I think the polls close, I don't remember exactly, maybe 9 o'clock. But after that, they have the people who are paid to count the votes. And they're part of **Elections Canada**, but each **party** sends a volunteer to watch when they count the votes. And it's very interesting. So when I was 18, I was able to watch them count the votes. And you really understand the process and you see how clear it is and how democratic. It was very interesting.
- Maura: That is very interesting. So, something else that you just made me think of is how it's not really acceptable to ask someone directly who they voted for.
- Harp: Yes. It's always a bit of a tricky topic of, you wanna know who they're voting for, and if they're your really close friends, you usually have an idea, but at work, for example, I wouldn't really ask someone who they're voting for.
- Maura: No, I would never ask someone directly unless they were a really, really good friend. Most of the time, if people wanna tell you who they're voting for, they just tell you. That's it. If you have to ask them, they probably don't wanna say.
- Harp: Exactly. It's a personal choice and you shouldn't ask people unless they're really close to you.
- Maura: Yeah. I remember when I was in Japan, there was a federal election and someone asked me. But I didn't wanna say.
- Harp: Oh, that's interesting. Yeah, it's kind of a tricky topic of when someone asks you, because we wanna be polite and answer the question, but really, it's private and personal and **none of their business**.
- Maura: Yeah. When I was in Japan, I had to go out of my way in order to vote because I wasn't in Canada. So when you're away from your country, it's a much bigger effort to be able to vote. I remember I had to contact the Canadian embassy and then you had to vote, I think, online. And again, you're not really sure. Did they really get it? Was it really counted? But I still thought it was really important to try to vote.

- Harp: Yeah. I've always been in Canada when there's an election, so I never had the opportunity to do that. But I've heard that you have to go to the consulate, you have to tell them before that you're coming to vote. It's a bit complicated.
- Maura: Mmhmm. One other thing I want to mention is **strategic voting**.
- Harp: Yes. **Strategic voting** has become more and more popular now that the Internet is more widespread and people are going online to see about different **candidates**.
- Maura: Right. So, in **strategic voting**, it's not just as simple as you deciding, oh, I like this **political party** so I'm gonna vote for them. It's more like, well this **political party** might win and I don't want them to win so I'm gonna vote for this other **party** because maybe it will mean that this guy loses.
- Harp: Exactly. Because in the Canadian federal elections, you have usually about four or five parties, four of which have a chance of winning a seat. So **strategic voting** is really important there.
- Maura: Right. And let's just go over the main parties in Canada in case anyone out there is curious.
- Harp: Perfect. So right now in power, we have Stephen Harper, and he is part of the Conservative **Party**.
- Maura: And then we have another **political party** that is, I believe, the oldest **political party** in Canada, which is the Liberal **Party**.
- Harp: Yes, and we also have the NDP.
- Maura: Which means New Democratic **Party**.
- Harp: Yep. And for the first time this election, they're the **Official Opposition**.
- Maura: And we also have the Green **Party**, which every year is getting a little bit more popular and a little bit more known.
- Harp: Exactly. I think they won their first seat in the last election.
- Maura: I think you're right. And then those are really the four big parties. And we started on the **right** with a more **right-wing** conservative **party**, and we listed them going towards the **left**.
- Harp: Exactly. I didn't even realize we did that.

- Maura: And there are some additional smaller parties, but they normally aren't involved in the federal politics.
- Harp: Exactly, because they don't get enough percentage of the vote to gain federal funding.
- Maura: So, it will be interesting to see how our election turns out in Quebec, and how the American election turns out. Sometimes there are all these projections and political pundits giving their expert opinion, but you really never know.
- Harp: No, for sure. And you know, I would love to hear from all of you out there. Do you vote? Is it a big deal for you? Which elections do you vote for?
- Maura: Right. Or are you bored, like many people are, and not really interested in voting?
- Harp: Yeah. I'm intrigued.
- Maura: So, let's go over what we talked about one more time in this Chatterbox episode.
- Harp: We started with talking about the difference types of elections that you could vote at.
- Maura: And then we talked about the upcoming elections for us in Quebec and for the United States.
- Harp: Exactly. And then we finished with talking about some of our personal experiences with voting.
- Maura: And if there's an election going on where you are, I hope **the political party** you're voting for wins.
- Harp: Exactly. So make sure you check out our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Maura: And become a member, because it only makes listening to these episodes even better and it helps us out at Culips as well.
- Harp: Definitely. And go to Facebook and like us and also leave a comment about voting and your experience.
- Maura: Yeah. That would be really interesting. And when some of the results come for these elections we talked about, we can comment on those as well.
- Harp: Exactly.

Maura: So, we will talk to you again soon. Bye everyone.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Detailed Explanation

A political party

A **political party** is an organization that believes in a certain political system or ideology, and attempts to influence the government to accept and implement their ideas. It is called a **party** because the word **party** refers to an organized group of people.

The term **political party** is used to refer to the political organization as a whole, not to specific people within that organization. In other words, the members of a **political party** may change, but the **party's** title, structure, and beliefs usually remain the same.

Political parties hold campaigns during election seasons, where they advertise their ideas and beliefs and try to get voters to accept their ideas and vote for them.

A riding

In Canada, a **riding** is a geographical area that is divided up according to which seat it will be voting for in the government's legislature.

First, let's look at what we mean by the word *seat*. In Canada, we have something called the House of Commons, where Members of Parliament, who are voted for in elections, sit, discuss, decide, and act on issues and ideas that affect Canada's governance. Most of these seats are filled by the people who Canadian citizens vote for. Each seat represents a certain **riding**, so each person sitting in those seats was voted to be there by the people living in different geographical locations around Canada.

A **riding** is an area that has a specific seat in Parliament assigned to it. The members of a **riding** can vote to fill this seat with someone who represents the political party they most agree with. The people who voters elect are different in each **riding**. The more seats that are filled by candidates who represent the same political party, the more influence the political party will have in the government as a whole.

Here's an example with the word **riding**:

Patty: Have you voted yet?

Samantha: No, have you?

Patty: Not yet. Do you want to go to the polls together after work?

Samantha: Well, we live in different parts of the city, so we're not in the same **riding**. We'll be voting for different candidates and we have to go to different polling stations. But we could get together afterwards if you want.

Catchy

Catchy is a casual adjective that describes something that is memorable or fascinating and that sticks in your head. Sometimes people say that a certain song is **catchy** if it is something that they remember after hearing it for the first time.

To catch something means to grab it or get it. The adjective **catchy** refers to something that grabs your attention.

In this episode, Maura uses the term **catchy** to refer to the media campaigns that political parties, the government, or other organizations create around election time to try to get young people to vote. These advertisements are usually **catchy** so that young people will immediately be interested in them and remember them.

Organizations can make advertisements **catchy** by using fun music or creating a phrase that is memorable. A **catchy** ad might also use bright colours or feature celebrities who appeal to young people, like musicians or actors. All these things can be used to catch people's attention, and to make the campaign **catchy**.

Here's an example with the adjective **catchy**:

Joe: Have you seen the commercial for that new video game?

Mike: The one about zombies fighting cats?

Joe: Yeah, that's the one!

Mike: Yep, I saw the commercial. The game looks really good. The music is so **catchy** and the graphics are great. What a weird idea for a game!

To follow an election

To follow an election means to watch an election closely, paying attention to all the political parties and their campaigns and ideas, as well as the statistics about how the public is feeling or how likely it is that they are going to vote on something.

People use the term **to follow** to talk about anything that they pay attention to and that is sort of long or involves a process. For example, a lot of people recently **followed** the Olympics. This means that they watched it from beginning to end. If you **follow** something, it usually means that you are interested in it or you care about its outcome.

Here's an example with the expression **to follow an election**:

Jen: Have you been **following** the US election?

Carol: A little bit. I watch the debates on TV sometimes, but I haven't had time **to follow it** very closely since I started my new job.

Jen: Oh, that's too bad. I've been **following it** quite closely. It's so interesting! I've watched every single debate.

To throw out promises

In this episode, Harp talks to Maura about the upcoming Quebec elections. She tells Maura that it is interesting to see all the candidates **throwing out election promises**. What Harp means by saying that the candidates are **throwing out promises** is that they are making many promises very quickly, just because they want to get their side more votes

Harp uses the term **to throw out** because it usually means that something is said without much care or thought, because someone is desperate to get what they want .

This is an interesting phrase, because **to throw out** usually means to throw something in the garbage. An easy way to remember what **to throw out** means when it is used the way Harp uses it in this episode is to imagine that when someone is **throwing out promises**, it's almost like they are filling up a garbage bin, because a lot of the promises will not actually be kept, so many of them will become garbage!

There are also examples of people **throwing out** things besides promises. Sometimes, people **throw out answers** when they are trying to guess something. This happens a lot when people play a trivia game in a group, where the first person to guess the right answer wins. People will start **throwing out answers** hoping that they eventually guess the right one.

An empty promise

When you promise to do something and then do it, you have kept your promise. If you promise to do something but don't actually do it, you have broken your promise.

Many promises that are made when political parties are campaigning to get more votes are not kept. Parties sometimes make promises just to get more people to vote for them, but they break these promises once they are elected.

Promises that aren't kept, and that were made even though the person who made them knew that they would not be kept, are called **empty promises**. They are called **empty promises** because they are just words that are not actually backed up by actions. If we know or suspect that a promise will not actually be kept, then it is an **empty promise**.

This phrase is used a lot around election time, because some politicians make a lot of promises that they are very unlikely to actually keep, and they make these promises just to get more people to vote for them.

Here's an example with the expression **an empty promise**:

Jake: Are you gonna come to the party this weekend?

Sarah: Yeah, definitely.

Jake: You always say that, but it's just **an empty promise**. You never actually show up!

Sarah: Sorry, Jake. This time I'll be there for sure.

An attack ad

Attack ads are commonly used during US election campaigns. **Attack ads** are advertisements that put down or attack a rival political party's agenda or ideas. Most of the time, these ads don't even promote the ideas of the party who pays for them. Instead, the entire ad is aimed at pointing out flaws in the competition.

Sometimes **attack ads** attack a political party's leader on an individual level, uncovering personal things about the candidate in an effort to make them look bad and reflect badly on their political party.

Although these types of ads are often quite mean and unfair, they work. People are affected by **attack ads** enough to influence their votes, and because of this, the use of **attack ads** continues and is starting to spread to other countries, like Canada.

In some countries, like Mexico, **attack ads** are illegal and cannot be shown on television at all.

A scrutineer

A **scrutineer** is a volunteer who goes out and observes the people who count the votes after an election, to ensure that the counting is accurate and that there are no mistakes or cheating. Each political party sends out a **scrutineer** to observe this process.

In this episode, Harp tells Maura about her own experience being a **scrutineer**, and how it gave her an idea of how democratic the voting process really is. It must have been so interesting for Harp to experience this!

The term **scrutineer** can be used in any situation that involves some sort of judging or ballot counting. It is a term for someone who judges the judges. This term is also used for people who go over technical requirements that are very specific and important, such as blueprints for a bridge in a busy city, to ensure that there are no mistakes.

The term **scrutineer** can be used to describe anyone who looks over any election, sport, or plan where accuracy is very, very important.

Elections Canada

Elections Canada is the official name of the national association that is responsible for organizing the voting process in Canada. It is an independent, non-partisan organization.

Non-partisan means that they are not hired by, paid by, or affiliated with any political party. An easy way to remember this is that non-partisan means non-party.

Elections Canada reports to the Canadian Parliament. They are responsible for every part of the voting process in Canada, from updating the voting register and ensuring that all citizens have access to the polls, to counting the ballots after the polls have closed.

To be none of someone's business

To be none of someone's business means to be something that someone has no right to know and to be something that doesn't concern them. If someone asks you about something that is **none of their business**, it means that the question they are asking you is not something they have a right to know the answer to.

This expression is usually only used when the person is asking you a very private and personal question. It is also usually used when you are angry about what the person has asked you because they are being nosy about your private life. So if someone asks you a question that you do not want to tell them the answer to but you are not upset that they asked you, do not tell them that it is **none of their business** because this sounds angry. Instead, you can say to them "I'd rather not answer that."

In this episode, Maura and Harp talk about their experiences with voting, and Maura tells Harp that when she was in Japan, someone asked her who she was voting for but she didn't want to tell them. Harp tells Maura that it can be tricky because even though you'd like to be polite, it's really **none of their business** who you are voting for. What Harp is saying is that although Maura probably didn't want to be mean to the person asking, it was rude of them to ask her because the topic was personal and private, so it was **none of their business**.

Here's an example with the expression **to be none of someone's business**:

Penny: Susan asked me about my doctor's appointment yesterday. She wanted to know what it was for.

Bob: Really? But you hardly even know her!

Penny: I know. I think she was just being nosy.

Bob: Well, **it's none of her business**. I hope you didn't tell her.

Penny: I didn't. I just said that I don't like talking about personal stuff like that at work.

Strategic voting

Strategic voting is when you do not necessarily vote for someone because it's who you want to win, but because you really don't want someone else to win.

For example, if there is only a 5% chance that the person you want to win an election will actually win and a 60% chance that the person you really do not want to win is going to win, **strategic voting** could mean that you vote for a third candidate who has a 40% chance of winning in order to try to get more votes against the person you do not want to win. Basically, **strategic voting** is voting for the candidate most likely to beat the one you really do not want to win, rather than voting for who you most want to win.

Strategic voting is a way to try and make a candidate you don't like lose, rather than a way to make a candidate you do like win.

In this episode, Maura and Harp discuss **strategic voting** and how it has grown in popularity because of the Internet. This is because people are now able to closely follow the polls during an election, not just after the polls are closed and the counting has officially begun.

Thanks to the Internet, people are able to see statistics about who is most likely to win and who is second most likely to win. So if people are really against the person most likely to win, they can go out and vote for the person second in line to win, even if that person is not actually their favourite candidate. The purpose here would be to make sure that the person who is most likely to win doesn't win, or to ensure that if they do win, the party in second place still has a lot of seats in Parliament.

A candidate

Candidates are the representatives from the political parties who people can vote on. In Canadian elections, there may be any number of **candidates**—it depends on whether the election is municipal, provincial, or federal. There is only one **candidate** for each political party that represents each riding.

A candidate can also be anyone or anything that is in a sort of contest or election against other people or things, where they will be voted on or judged.

There are two ways to pronounce the word **candidate**. The two are not that different, and you will probably hear both used in conversation. Both ways are correct, so it's up to you to decide which one you prefer. Some people say *can-did-it*, with the last syllable sounding just like the word *it*, and some people say *can-did-ate*, with the last syllable sounding like the number 8. Try saying each one and see which one you like better!

Here are a couple more examples with the word **candidate**, the first one talking about an election, and the second one talking about another type of decision:

Charlie: I'm still really undecided about who to vote for as this year's student council president.

Bill: I agree. It's a hard choice this year. They're all such experienced **candidates**.

Charlie: I know. Whichever **candidate** wins will do a good job, I'm sure.

Tanya: Have you bought a car yet?

Trish: No, I'm still deciding which model I wanna get. I've narrowed it down to three good **candidates**, but I want to do a little more research before I make my decision.

The Official Opposition

In Canada, when a political party wins the most seats in a federal election, they become the governing party in power, and their leader becomes the Prime Minister. The political party that has the next highest number of seats becomes **the Official Opposition**, and their leader becomes the Leader of the Opposition.

The Official Opposition is a very important position, which is why some people use strategic voting. Sometimes in strategic voting, people vote for the political party that is the most likely to get the second highest number of seats, so that when the leading party wins, at least the opposition will be strong because they will have gotten a lot of votes.

The more seats the **Official Opposition** wins, the more influence they will have in Parliamentary decisions.

Right wing and left wing

In politics, **right wing** means conservative and **left wing** means liberal. And this doesn't only apply to political parties—you can describe any belief system, including your own, as being more **right wing** or more **left wing**.

Usually, **right wing** describes an idea or belief system that is very traditional. A lot of the time, it is based on religious values. **Left wing** describes a belief system that promotes social change and more liberal ideas. **Left-wing** political parties tend to favour social equality and social programs rather than business.

For example, a **left-wing** party may choose to use their budget on art programs for teenagers who come from poor areas so that they may become more active members of society, whereas a **right-wing** party may choose to spend that money on making it easier for businesses to expand overseas to make more money.

The terms **left wing** and **right wing** originated in France, where a **left wing** political party is described as a party of movement, and a **right wing** political party is described as a party of order.

The terms themselves come from the French Revolution, when the two most radically liberal members of parliament happened to sit to the President's left. After that, people who were seen as radicals (meaning that they promoted revolution and change from the traditional order) were said to be left or leftists.

Quiz

1. What is a political party?

- a) a party held for the political candidates who win an election
- b) an organization that believes in a certain political structure and tries to influence governmental decisions
- c) an organization that monitors the election process
- d) a team of election officers who go out and try to convince eligible youth to vote in the next election

2. What is a riding?

- a) a geographic area that has a specific seat in Parliament assigned to it
- b) the amount of time that the polls are open and available for people to vote
- c) a campaign aimed at youth to try to get them to vote
- d) the group of people who volunteer to observe the vote counting

3. What is strategic voting?

- a) when you vote at a specific time of day
- b) when a political party calls an election at a certain time of year
- c) when you do not vote at all
- d) when you vote for the candidate who is most likely to beat the candidate you don't want to win

4. What is a scrutineer?

- a) someone who monitors or observes a judging process to make sure it's accurate and fair
- b) someone who goes to high schools and campaigns for young people to vote
- c) someone who stands outside a polling station and monitors the voters going in to vote
- d) someone who follows elections very closely

5. If right-wing parties are based on tradition and order, what are left-wing parties based on?

- a) businesses and education
- b) social equality and social change
- c) city restructuring and development
- d) religion

6. Which of the following is an example of an attack ad?

- a) a commercial that talks negatively about a rival candidate's personal life and past
- b) a commercial that tells people not to vote
- c) a commercial that tells youth that they should vote, and explains the negative things that could happen if they don't
- d) a commercial aimed at senior citizens who don't vote

7. In Canada, what is the Official Opposition?

- a) a political party that creates attack ads against another political party
- b) an organization that stages protests outside voting stations
- c) the political party that wins the second highest number of seats
- d) a name for the group of people who don't vote

Answers:

1.b 2.a 3.d 4.a 5.b 6.a 7.c