

Nelson

**Sample Material from
Unit 1: The Good Citizen**

CIVICS NOW

**Available
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Civics Now Program Components



Student Text

- 100% match to the new Ontario Grade 10 Civics curriculum (CHV20)
- Accessible text designed to engage all students
- Accessible reading level
- Literacy strategies and skills embedded throughout
- High visual-to-text ratio

Teacher Resource (Print/CD/Web)

- Teacher's Resource provided in a three-way media format, including print binder
- Content accessible via CD-ROM and secure website for greater flexibility in planning
- Assessment strategies and tools
- Answers to all questions
- Strategies for accommodating individual needs
- Reproducible Blackline Masters (in modifiable format)

Computerized Assessment Bank

- Easy-to-use ExamView® software enables the creation of tests and quizzes with full answers to all questions
- Provides hundreds of questions ranging from multiple choice, short answer, and extended completion

Catholic Values Supplement

- Provides connections between the Civics Now resources and Catholic curriculum framework

DVD Package

A set of visual DVDs will make the course interesting and bring content to life

CIVICS NOW

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CIVICS NOW

Table of Contents

Unit 1

1.1. What is Civics?

1.2 Your Classroom: A Society in Miniature

1.3 Power

1.4 Democratic Decision Making

Skills for Social Action—Locating and Evaluating Sources: Determining the Reliability of Sources

Unit 2

2.1. Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities

2.2 Elections

2.3 Parliament and Government

2.4 Public Policy

2.5 Political Parties

2.6 The Judicial System

Skills for Social Action—Role-plays: Simulations

Unit 3

3.1. Political Participation

3.2 Interest Groups

3.3 Government Accountability

3.4 Quebec and Citizenship

3.5 Aboriginal Citizens

Skills for Social Action—Values Exploration: Personal and Social Values

Unit 4

4.1. You as a Global Citizen

4.2 How the Media Inform Us

4.3 Contemporary Global Concerns

4.4 Human Rights

4.5 War and Armed Conflict

4.6 Environmental Citizenship

4.7 The Indigenous Citizen

4.8 Protecting Democratic Rights

4.9 The United Nations

4.10 Canada’s Role in the Global Community

Skills for Social Action—Using Inquiry Skills to Study Civics Topics: How to Write a Research Report

Using Civics Now

Features of the Student Text

Unit Opener

Each unit opens with a large photograph that represents the unit. This is followed by a list of Focus Questions that contain the “big ideas” of the unit. The Focus Questions are repeated throughout the unit when a major topic is introduced.

Use the Focus Questions to access your prior knowledge or to guide you as you read. You can also use them to focus your note-taking and discussions, and review your understanding of the unit.

What Is This Unit About?

This summary of the unit prepares you for reading, and outlines the main ideas in the unit. Use this section to skim and preview the content. As you skim this summary, think about what you already know about the topic. You might create a web or a list to help you organize your thoughts before you begin reading. You can also return to this summary after reading, to review what you’ve covered in the unit.

Literacy Strategy

These margin notes provide tools to help you better understand what you’ve read, manage and discuss the content, and apply the information to other situations. Use these strategies to help you plan your reading, organize your thoughts and ideas as you read, and reflect on what you’ve read once you have finished.

Key Terms

These are the new words that you need to know. They are defined in the margins the first time they are mentioned. They also are defined in the Glossary at the back of your textbook. Preview the Key Terms before you begin reading, and look for their meaning in context as you read. If the meaning of the word is unclear, think of a word that looks similar, such as a word that has the same root. You can also return to these definitions as a quick content review.

Let’s Discuss

These questions help you to preview the content before you read a passage, they guide you as you read, and they help you plan your tasks after you have finished reading.

Before you begin, read these questions to help you focus on the main ideas. As you read the passage, look for the answers, and jot them down. These questions may also contain tasks you are expected to perform when you’re finished. Once you’ve read the passage, pause and reflect on what you’ve read. Make notes on the content and jot down your opinions and conclusions.

Web Links

This margin note sends you to the Nelson Civics Now Web site to learn more about the people, places, and events discussed in your textbook.

Civics Now DVD

This margin note sends you to the Nelson Civics Now DVD, which contains video clips that bring the ideas in your textbook to life. While viewing the DVD, take note of how some of the concepts you have studied are applied in Canada.

Making a Difference

This feature introduces you to Canadians who have made a difference in their community, in Canada, or in the world. After you have finished reading a section or a unit, take time to reflect on a topic and determine how you could make a difference.

Civics Showcase

This feature helps you make connections between a civics topic and your own life.

Speaking Out!

This feature presents two or more viewpoints on an issue. Read the opinions, and decide what you believe and why. As you read, summarize the content, including your opinions. Use your notes to explain and justify your beliefs.

Ecohabits

This feature highlights actions we can take to improve our environment and our planet. Think about the task as you read, and jot down any ideas you may have prior to discussing them in your group.

Check Your Understanding

These questions provide a guide for you to summarize the content at the end of each section. Read the questions and answer them carefully, referring to the notes that you have made. If you're not sure of the answers, reread the section and jot down the main ideas in your own words. Then return to these questions to complete the answers.

Skills for Social Action

This feature shows you how to develop an important skill. The skills include getting reliable information, coming up with the right questions on a civics topic, thinking about different viewpoints, interviewing people, and writing and presenting information. Plan the tasks ahead of time and use the strategies that best suit you to help you perfect each skill.

Unit Conclusion

Each unit ends with questions and activities that give you a chance to show what you've learned in the entire unit. Use your notes and your summarizing and reflecting strategies to help you consolidate your learning.

Appendix (Reading to Learn and Learning How to Learn)

The Appendix is designed to help you better understand content and apply skills. Reading to Learn provides step-by-step literacy strategies to help you learn how to read the content. Learning How to Learn provides simple explanations to help you learn content and apply skills.



The Good Citizen

Focus Questions

This unit explores these questions:

- *Why am I taking a civics course?*
- *How are decisions made in your society?*
- *Power—is it good or bad?*
- *How will your wants and needs be met?*
- *How do you settle arguments?*
- *What do you gain from democratic decision making?*
- *How do you define a responsible citizen?*

What Is This Unit About?

In a democracy, people are free to make choices.

- We choose our political leaders who make laws and policies to protect our freedoms.
- We try to respect all citizens, whatever their country of origin, their spoken language, and their religious beliefs.
- We try to balance the rights of the minority—whether French-speaking Québécois people, or Aboriginal people, or immigrant Canadians—with the rights of the majority.
- We attempt to maintain equality before the law.
- We try to provide equal access to health care and support for the elderly and those living in poverty.

Citizens need to be informed, be active, and have a sense of purpose. Democracy is complex. There are many issues and opinions to consider before and after decisions are made. A good citizen becomes actively involved in society. Will you?

Key Terms

arbitration

autocracy

autocratic decision
making

basic needs

common good

conciliation

consensual/collaborative
decision making

consensus building

democracy

democratic
decision making

discrimination

human dignity

inequalities

mediation

negotiation

power

psychological needs

society

wants

1.1

What Is Civics?

Focus Question

- *Why am I taking a civics course?*

A course on civics involves the study of government, democratic decision making, and what it means to be an informed, active, and responsible citizen in local, national, and global contexts. In this course, you will learn how decisions get made, such as how much money is spent on the environment or how much money goes toward sports programs in your community. You will also learn how you can be involved in decisions that affect the society you live in.

Let's Discuss

What are your opinions about a civics course? On what information do you base your opinions (personal interest/experience, views of friends)? What questions do you have about the civics course in general?

I'm not sure what to expect in this course. I like the idea that, during civics class, I will be learning more about politics and how I can make a difference in Canadian society.

I'm already really involved in my community. I watch the news almost every day, and I like debating political issues, especially about human rights. I hope to pursue a career having to do with politics or human rights.

I don't care about corrupt politicians or what's going on in the community. I just want to get a good job and make money for me and my family.



Why Does the Provincial Government Make Civics a Compulsory Course?

Let's Discuss

How involved are you in your community? Give examples. Discuss what you would like to do or change in your community.



▲ A young person enjoys skateboarding at a new sports centre.

1. Be a Better Citizen

An understanding of civics is intended to make you a better citizen, one who tries to make informed decisions and who wants to participate effectively in the community, nation, and world. A civics course will help you to develop the skills and attitudes that citizens living in a democracy need. These skills include looking at questions from several points of view; getting involved in issues of community, national, and global concern; and understanding and caring about the rights and freedoms of all people, not just your own.

2. Learn About Your Rights and Responsibilities

Many young people want to know more about their rights and responsibilities. They want to understand how government works in a democratic society, and how they can try to change things for the better. For example, a group of teenagers may think that their community should have a new sports centre. If they understand civics, they would know who to ask about the sports centre as well as how to get other people in the community to support their idea. They would recognize and appreciate that there are many other competing interests besides their own (having the roads paved, or getting a larger park, or building a daycare facility).

3. Learn About Canadian Government and Politics

A civics course will help you discover more about government and will give you a basic understanding of how democracy functions and how you can change things. Canada needs citizens who understand how government works at all levels, who participate actively in their communities, and who contribute their knowledge and skills to make Canadian society better for all its citizens.

By the end of this course, you will be able to define what makes a good citizen—in your classroom, school, community, country, and the world. You will be able to say what being a citizen means to you. You will discover that citizenship gives you many rights. Along with these rights, though, come responsibilities. You will discover what these rights and responsibilities are.

1.2

Your Classroom: A Society in Miniature

Focus Question

- *How are decisions made in your society?*

As you sit in a group in your class, take a minute to consider the following questions with a cooperative group:

- What are your goals in this course?
- Who will ensure that these goals are met?
- How do we ensure that most goals are met?

Write your answers on chart paper. Compare your answers with those of other groups, and discuss the following questions:

- What goals were shared by all the groups?
- What goals were different?
- Were the goals realistic?
- What rules would have to be agreed on if these goals were to be achieved?

Making Decisions

If you chose to vote, with the majority vote making the decision, your class is modelling one type of **democracy**. Define **democratic decision making** in your own words.

Literacy Strategy

Before reading, skim and preview the content of this section. Note how the questions help you organize your thoughts and guide your reading.

Let's Discuss

As a whole class, select five main goals from all the ideas that have been presented. How will you decide which goals are most important? Why did you choose a certain method to come to a decision? What factors influenced your decision?

democratic decision making:

A process by which a group decision is made by a majority vote.

autocratic decision making:

A process by which one person makes a decision for a group.

consensual/collaborative

decision making: A process by which everyone in the group must agree before a decision is made.

If one person (e.g., the teacher) or a small group of people has been given the power to decide, your class is modelling an **autocracy**. Define **autocratic decision making** in your own words.

If you try to reach a **consensus** (everyone must be in agreement) for the decision, your class is working collaboratively. In other words, everyone must work together to reach a decision and agree with that decision. Define, in your own words, **consensual/collaborative decision making**. In your own experience, what are some of the things that get in the way in consensual/collaborative decision making?

↔ Check Your Understanding

1. Consider the following scenarios:

- A family is trying to decide how household duties will be shared.
- A basketball team must decide who will be the starting players for the game.
- A class is trying to choose one activity for fundraising.
- A group of friends is deciding what movie or club to go to.
- The principal is asking for input on what to do to prevent locker break-ins.

a) Which form of decision making would you suggest for each scenario? Give reasons for your answer.

b) Complete the chart on the right in your notes. Choose two of the above scenarios. Consider the pros and cons of these three ways of making decisions for each scenario you have chosen. Include points that interest you about sharing power.

| Democratic decision making | Autocratic decision making | Consensual/Collaborative decision making |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| | | |
| | | |

2. For this entire exercise, you have been working as a “citizen” of your classroom. Which of the following qualities do you think are the most important for a classroom citizen? Rank the three qualities that, in your view, are most important and the three qualities that are the least important. Are there other important qualities that are missing from this list?

- comes on time
- is friendly with all students
- participates actively
- helps group members to achieve their best
- gets high marks
- respects the teacher
- respects other students
- reports someone cheating on a major test
- shares relevant personal experiences during discussions
- runs for student council
- helps keep the classroom clean
- comes to the aid of a teacher or student who is being verbally threatened

1.3

Power

Focus Questions

- *Power—is it good or bad?*

In any group of people—whether it is your classroom, your sports team, or your circle of friends—some people have more **power** than others. One definition of power is the ability to achieve what you want. Within a group, power can be defined as the ability to get others to do what you want. There are many reasons why one person is more powerful than others. These include greater intelligence, persuasiveness, charisma, money, physical strength, attractiveness, and social status.

Power is a natural part of being human. We use it every day. We can use power to achieve personal and shared goals. We can also use power to deny certain people or groups equal opportunities to meet their needs and wants. This misuse of power can lead to **discrimination** and **inequalities**. Power can be very destructive in the wrong hands, but it can also be constructive if it is used to promote equality and improve lives.



▲ A student assists a senior at a local seniors' centre.

power: The ability of an individual or group to get what it wants.

discrimination: The unfavourable or prejudiced treatment of an individual or group based on race, sex, appearance, income, and so on.

inequalities: A term often used to refer to the differences in our society where some people have more money, education, and other resources than other people; these differences may be the result of discrimination.

Literacy Strategy

During reading, pause and think about what you're reading. Using what you already know about power, try to make connections between the text passage and the world you live in.



▲ A soldier hands out food to children. Is this an example of good or evil power?

Types of Power

There are many types of power that operate within our society and in the larger global community. Military power can be used for both good and evil ends. Political power and influence can be used positively or negatively. Corporate power can be used to benefit consumers and employees or to promote greed and overcharging. In a democracy, the voters and consumers ultimately judge how well elected leaders and large corporations use their power to satisfy the voter and the buyer.

Influence

People are constantly trying to influence politicians to do certain things. Interest groups will exert influence on decision makers—sometimes for the public interest, sometimes for private gain. If power is used responsibly, most people in a democratic society will benefit.

↔ Check Your Understanding

Consider the following scenarios. Write briefly how power is used in five of these scenarios. In which scenarios is power being used in a forceful way? In which scenarios is power being used in a persuasive way? In which scenarios is power based on rewards?

1. A mother insists that her children go to bed by 8:00 P.M. or they will lose their television privileges.
2. A student persuades the class to stop buying hamburgers at a certain restaurant because the extra packaging used by the restaurant is harming the environment.
3. You know that if you speak out against the government leader, you will “disappear.”
4. You purchase a brand of running shoes that is endorsed by a major sports figure.
5. After watching preelection TV ads for several weeks, you vote for a political party.
6. Your parents give you extra money for the “A’s” on your report card.
7. After an earthquake, looters are imprisoned without trial.

Literacy Strategy

After reading, think about what you’ve read. Use your notes containing your opinions and conclusions to answer the questions. Note how these scenarios make a connection between the content and the world around you.

• Civics Showcase •

Are Humans Good or Evil?

Thomas Hobbes, a famous British philosopher in the 1600s, felt that all people are born selfish and will seek only their own interests. This selfishness often leads to violence and war. Hobbes thought people should be taught obedience, enforced by a supreme ruler, in order to avoid chaos.

A hundred years later, French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau disagreed with Hobbes's ideas and argued instead that the natural state of humans was one of peace and harmony. He saw democracy as a reflection of our basic sense of fairness and equality.

Questions

1. Do you agree with Hobbes or Rousseau?
2. List three things you see in your life and in society that support either Hobbes or Rousseau. Discuss the photographs below as part of your evidence.



- ▲ Clockwise from top left: Volunteers help in a food drive. Students get involved in recycling. Young people help out in a soup kitchen. Soldiers fight in a military conflict.

Society: The Bigger Picture

Let's Discuss

One need of modern society is schools to educate young people. List at least ten other examples of needs in a modern society.

basic needs: Things people need for physical survival, such as food, shelter, and clothing.

wants: Goods or services that people desire but that are not necessary for survival.

psychological needs: Things people need for emotional reasons, such as safety and security.

human dignity: The feeling that one is respected and valued in a society.

common good: What will make the most people safe, secure, and happy.



Information on Democracy

For current new articles and information on Canadian democracy, social justice, and environmental and health issues, go to www.nelson.com/civicsnow.

Focus Question

- *How will your wants and needs be met?*

A **society** is a community of people who share **basic needs** and **wants**. Some of the most basic needs of a community are food and water and clothing and shelter. “Wants” are those things that are not essential for survival, but people desire and value them anyway. Cell phones, vacations, and multiple pairs of jeans are examples of individual wants. Life today is complex, and we have many wants and needs. Besides basic needs, there are also **psychological needs**. People need to feel safe, secure, and happy in their community.

It is not easy for societies to work out how to meet the basic needs and wants of their citizens. How will a society balance the shared needs of its citizens with what certain individual people or groups want? How do we decide what is fair?

True Democracy

Every society has a variety of groups with different wants and needs. In a democracy, all citizens have a voice in the decision making. Decisions reflect the will of the majority. Members of a democratic society live in freedom. The government is limited in its power and must respect people’s rights.

Citizens in a democracy not only enjoy their rights and freedoms, but they must also take very seriously the responsibilities of living democratically. They should uphold **human dignity**, respect the rights of others, work for the **common good**, and have a sense of responsibility for other people. Taking part in public discussion and debate on civic issues is another important responsibility of the democratic citizen.

The Enemies of Democracy

In all communities, there will be some people who don’t care about their responsibilities as citizens. They don’t understand how democracy works or why it is important to their lives. Other people may decide not to get involved in many aspects of democratic citizenship.

Speaking Out!



Enemies of Democracy

"In the election for student council president, I'll just vote for the first name I recognize. I don't have time to get into the issues."

"My family already pays taxes for garbage collection. Why should I bother with recycling?"

"My family and I come first. We have our own set of beliefs, and we don't need the government to make laws telling us what is right and wrong."

"Those people are always protesting something. The police should just arrest them."

Questions

1. Above are some examples of actions and beliefs that could be harmful in a democracy. Explain why these actions and beliefs could have a negative impact on the way democracy works in your community.
2. What arguments might you use to convince the person to change his or her views?

◀ This girl is an active participant in her community recycling program.

Clothing With Conscience

Being a good local, national, and global citizen involves taking care of the environment. Besides recycling, there are countless ways that you can become a citizen who cares for the environment, such as ecologically friendly habits involving clothing.

- Buy your clothes at a secondhand clothing store. Swap or alternate clothes with your friends instead of buying new.
- Buy clothes that are made from organic cotton or hemp. Organic cotton is grown without the use of pesticides. Hemp is a naturally pest-resistant crop that requires less water to grow than cotton does. Look for manufacturers that use environmentally friendly products and methods.
- Dry cleaning fluid is toxic to people and the environment. Buy clothes that can be washed, or look for dry cleaners that do not use perchloroethylene (Perc).
- Wash your clothes in cold water.

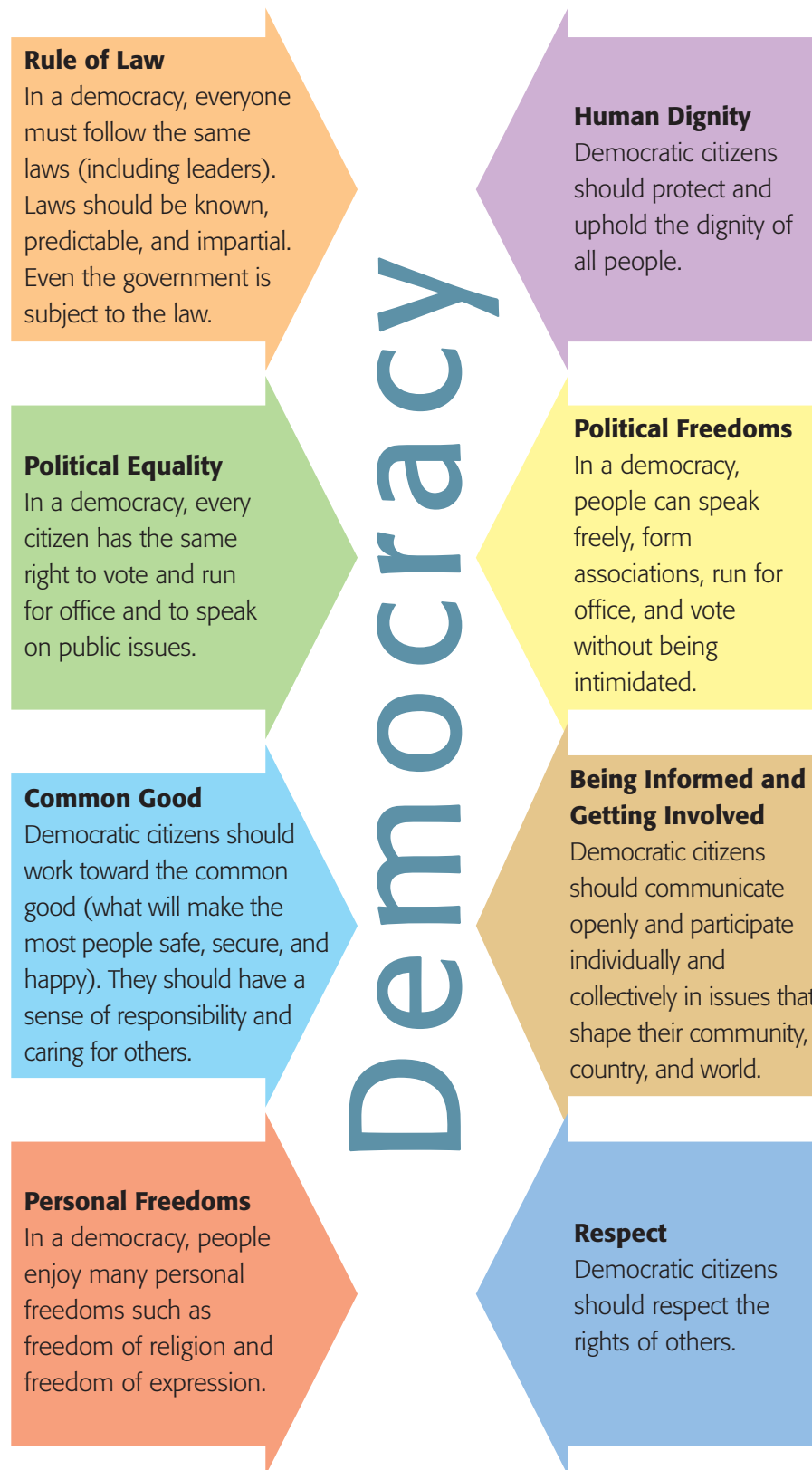
Questions

1. Visit your local dry cleaner, and find out if they use Perc. If so, ask about other ways of cleaning your clothes, or find a dry cleaner that does not use Perc. Report your findings to your class.
2. Research three or four manufacturers that use environmentally friendly products and methods. Share this with your class.
3. List environmentally friendly options for other products.



▲ A teen shops at a local secondhand clothing store.

Elements of Democracy



Let's Discuss

Using newspapers or the "news," look for current events that reflect different elements of democracy in action in your community or province. Look for examples that demonstrate undemocratic actions or behaviour in your community. How can we protect the elements of democracy listed in the chart on the left?

Literacy Strategy

The diagram helps organize the main ideas and supporting details. Reread the diagram, and make notes in your own words to ensure you understand the content. Highlight the main ideas.



Ideas on Democracy

Go to www.nelson.com/civicsnow for some different views and ideas on democracy.

Conflict Resolution

Focus Question

- *How do you settle arguments?*

consensus building:

A process by which a group makes a decision only when everyone is in agreement.

Literacy Strategy

Before reading, skim and preview the heading, the Focus Question, and the photo. Predict the content of this page. Think about how you would settle an argument before reading, and jot down your ideas. After reading, make a connection between your solution and the terms found on this page.

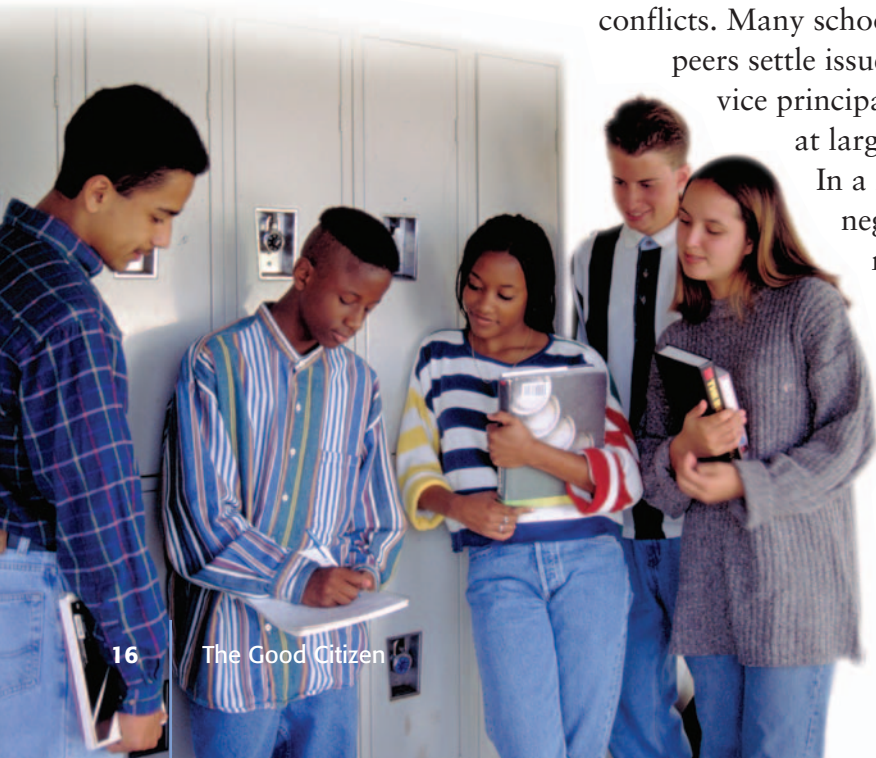
People often disagree about what they want or need. These disagreements can lead to arguments and conflicts, which can be resolved either physically or verbally. Physical solutions generally involve violence such as fighting or war. Often, the problem can be solved through discussion, verbal persuasion, or **consensus building**.

These are some ways to resolve conflicts verbally:

- **Negotiation**—Both parties discuss the issues and try to resolve differences, being careful to avoid negative, blaming language. Usually both parties have to give up some of their demands in order to reach a compromise.
- **Mediation**—A third party helps both parties arrive at a solution to the conflict.
- **Arbitration**—A third party is given the power to decide the outcome of the conflict.
- **Conciliation**—A third party clearly defines both the points of agreement and the points of difference that must be resolved to end the conflict.

At school, students are sometimes involved in negotiating conflicts. Many schools have trained student mediators to help peers settle issues. Only as a last resort does the teacher or vice principal step in as an authority figure. In society at large, some situations require similar methods. In a labour dispute, both parties may try to negotiate a solution. If unsuccessful, they may request a mediator or an arbitrator to settle their differences. Citizens also depend on government, police, and the court system to resolve conflicts.

- ◀ Students resolve a conflict by talking about it with each other.



1.4 Democratic Decision Making

Focus Question

- *What do you gain from democratic decision making?*

In every society, individuals and groups have different views about how their needs should be met. It is a natural result of people living together in groups. The types of social conflict can range from lively discussion and debate to violent action.

One way of solving civic conflict is through democratic decision making. It is important because it values all people equally. Everyone is entitled to a say, either directly or through an elected representative. No one voice is more important than another. The rights of all citizens are respected equally.

Democratic decision making can succeed only if people have the skills and attitudes to work together to resolve conflict. Two of the main skills needed for a successful democracy are the effective expressing of ideas, as well as listening to and carefully considering the ideas of others. Democratic decision making skills should be learned and the art of compromise practised to be effective. Otherwise, individuals will demand that only their own needs be met without considering the needs of others.

Here are the basic principles of democratic decision making:

1. Each person has something positive to offer, and each person has something positive to gain.
2. Each person must be accountable for his or her actions.
3. Each person in a group must participate in some equal way.
4. There must be a method for reaching the decision.
5. A decision must be made.

Literacy Strategy

Before reading, skim and preview, and ask yourself questions about what you are about to read. Find the answers in this text passage.



- ▲ A woman voices her opinion on the use of old-growth trees for the timber industry with a colourful sign.

Making A Difference

Rosemary Brown

Democratic decision making was one of the central factors in Rosemary Brown's life. Politician, teacher, and social worker, she was a leading African-Canadian pioneer who fought for equality for all Canadians. Her work helped to pass a new *Human Rights Code* so that everyone would be treated fairly.

Rosemary Brown was the first Black woman ever elected to a provincial legislature in Canada. She was also the first woman to run for the leadership of a federal political party—the New Democratic Party. That was in 1975, and although she did not win the leadership, it was still a milestone for racial and female advancement. In 1996, she was named Officer of the Order of Canada for her work on human rights.

Questions

1. Why is Rosemary Brown a good example of an informed, active, and purposeful citizen?
2. Name three other Canadians you think deserve to be appointed to the Order of Canada. Be prepared to defend your choices.

Literacy Strategy

After you read, reflect on how you might make a connection between the content and the world you live in. Be prepared to state your opinions, draw conclusions, and make judgments. Can you justify your thinking?



▲ Governor General Roméo LeBlanc congratulates Rosemary Brown after she receives the Order of Canada.

1.5

The Responsible Citizen

Focus Question

- *How do you define a responsible citizen?*

So far, we have examined a few ways in which decisions can be made in a society and discussed civic conflict. What is the role of the citizen in society? Who exactly is a citizen? A dictionary definition states that a citizen is an inhabitant of a city or country. There are, however, many sides to the meaning of citizenship. How we define “citizen” depends on our point of view.

↔ Check Your Understanding

Examine the viewpoints on the right that illustrate some of the many meanings of citizenship.

1. Why are there so many variations of the term “citizen”?
2. What are the qualities of a “responsible” citizen in terms of what that person knows, does, or thinks?
3. Assess the people on the right in terms of the qualities you have developed. What additional questions would you ask them?
4. What do you think has influenced their definition of citizen?
5. Write a quotation that summarizes your definition of a citizen.

“I was born here. I’m a Canadian citizen.”

“I devote my time and energies to helping homeless people. Politics seems not as important as these real-life problems that I can help solve directly.”

“My supreme leader is God. I follow religious leaders and laws, not secular ones.”

“My responsibility is to the world as a whole. I live in Canada, but I care about environmental issues worldwide. Every person must be responsible for caring for our world.”

“This is a great country. We have a democratic government, freedom, a high standard of living, good health care, and great natural beauty. I’m proud to be a Canadian.”

“I’m interested in what is happening back in my homeland. I became a citizen of Canada for better opportunities for my family and me.”

“I am Cree. We had a nation long before Canada existed as one.”

Skills for Social Action

Locating and Evaluating Sources



Television

Television has both great strengths and great weaknesses as a source of information. Visual images have a powerful emotional impact—some viewers believe the camera does not lie. Television newscasts are limited sources of information. The average half-hour television newscast contains the same amount of information as half a newspaper page. So, start your investigation with television, but don't stop there.

The Internet

The Internet is an enormous resource of information, but all Web sites are not created equal. Ask yourself: Who is behind the content of a particular site, and how reliable is the information? Does the Web site reflect the views of an individual person or a group? Does it contain unfair and biased perspectives on an issue?

Internet sites can be created and run by just about anyone. For example, television networks, newspapers, and government and educational Web sites often have valuable information on civics topics. Individual Web logs can provide different viewpoints on many issues that are often ignored by mainstream news. Always use other sources in addition to Internet sites to complement your research.



Newspapers

Newspapers are a rich source of information that can supplement what you learned from a television news story or a Web site. In newspaper stories, the headline and first few sentences convey the most important facts about the story in order to capture our interest immediately. The secondary details, which are revealed as the story unfolds, are important for a student researching a topic. Many published newspapers are available online, as are independent news agencies that publish only electronically.

Community Resources

Community resources are available on certain topics. Local, provincial, and national governments often have information on particular topics on their Web sites or in printed reports. Speaking with local officials, government departments, or people active in their community can be arranged.

Determining the Reliability of Sources

Suppose you are interested in the possible closing of a school in your community and attend a school board meeting where the issue is discussed. How would your account of the meeting compare with the coverage by television, the Internet, or the newspaper?

All four sources—television, the Internet, newspaper, and your own account—reflect a certain bias. **Bias** is the emphasizing of certain facts over others. You should attempt to assess the amount of bias that is present in all sources. Television is naturally biased in favour of a good visual story. Newspapers may be biased in the choice of headlines and lead paragraphs to grab readers' interest. Newspaper editorials have an obvious bias, called a point of view, and they are selective in the use of facts to support it.

By using as wide a variety of sources as possible, you can filter out the biases and obtain the information necessary to evaluate an issue in civics.



Unit Conclusion



1. Create a list of examples of power being used in a negative way and power being used in a positive way in your school and community.
2. Discuss ways in which people could influence the power of school and community leaders.
3. Draw your own visual based on the elements of a democracy. Use visuals that you think best illustrate each one of the elements (e.g., rule of law, political rights). Add specific examples from your life for each of the main headings. For example, the common good can be found in Canada when we pay taxes to support health care for all people in Canada.
4. Create a chart to describe what the ideal democracy would look like and sound like in your home, your school, and your community.
5. Locate your school's policy on student conduct. What are your rights in the school? What are your responsibilities? Create a chart to show rights and responsibilities.
 - Which are the most controversial?
 - Do you think these are fair?
 - Do you think they should be changed?
6. Think of a topic that is causing civic conflict in your community.
 - What is the main cause of this conflict?
 - What are some different viewpoints on the issue?
 - What is your viewpoint?
 - How do you think that this conflict might best be resolved?
 - Will the conflict lead to positive or negative change in your opinion?

Use the skills outlined in Skills for Social Action in this unit.

7. Ongoing Collaborative Project

“The Good Citizen”: An Interactive Bulletin Board

Create an interactive bulletin board in your classroom entitled “The Good Citizen.” Include newspaper articles, drawings, photos, and quotations from songs, speeches, and movies. Make it a mix of pictures, words, phrases, poetry, comments, and art. Add contributions to the board display to show what you have learned about the issues of citizenship. Consider the board a work in progress; you and your teacher should feel free to add as many contributions as you want at any time. Don’t forget to explain contributions to the class. You can create a Web page instead of a bulletin board.



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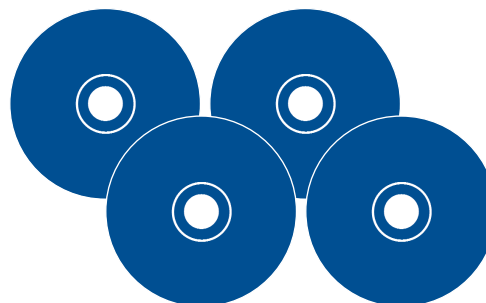
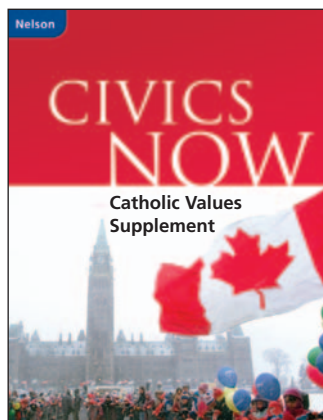
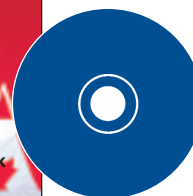
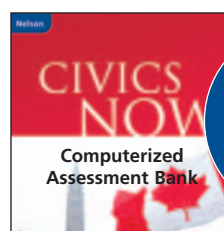
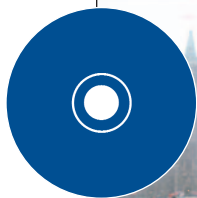
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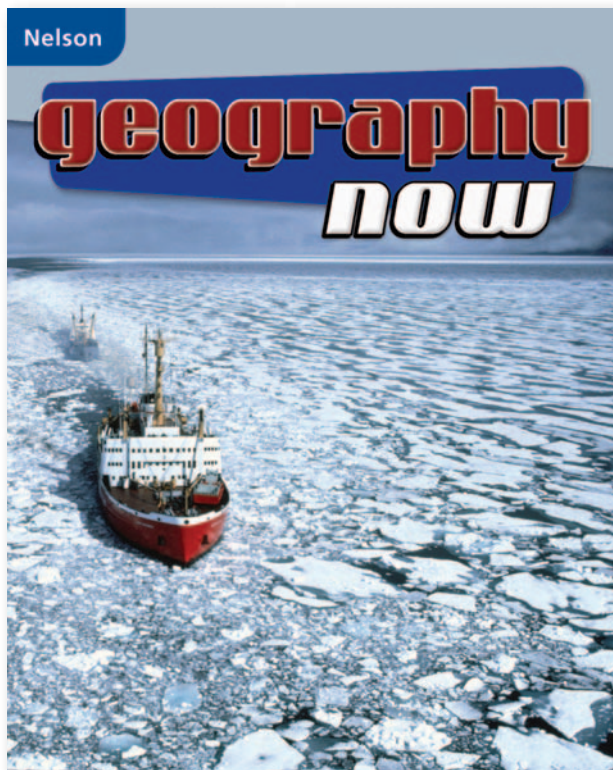
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