

Course  
**Democracy and the Right to Vote**  
**SST-1101-1**  
Secondary Cycle One





“Voting is a means of showing solidarity with other citizens, as well as respect for the community.”

*30 mots clés pour comprendre la citoyenneté*

## Presentation of the Course *Democracy and the Right to Vote*

The course *Democracy and the Right to Vote* is designed to help adult learners deal competently with real-life situations in which they exercise their right to vote. It encourages adults to participate in the democratic process of collective decision making.

By the end of the course, adult learners recognize the democratic rules of conduct associated with the right to vote and apply them to communicate effectively and develop critical thinking skills.

## Dealing With the Real-Life Situations

Dealing effectively with real-life situations is based on actions. These actions are grouped into categories and make use of a set of resources that include operational competencies and essential knowledge. During the learning process, adults are expected to construct knowledge related to these resources in order to be able to deal appropriately with their real-life situations.

The class of situations, categories of actions, operational competencies and essential knowledge constitute the compulsory elements of the course. These elements are explained in detail under their respective headings.



## Class of Situations Addressed by the Course

This course addresses a single class of situations: *Popular consultation*.

This class of situations includes various situations in which adults are likely to exercise their right to vote. Such situations arise during elections and in cases of collective decision making.

Adults are asked to choose members of the federal, provincial and municipal governments. They also vote for union and student representatives. Votes also arise with the need to make a collective

choice, arrive at a consensus, hold a local referendum, or participate in a committee. These situations require an understanding and application of standards related to democracy and the right to vote.

Class of Situations	Examples of Real-Life Situations
Popular consultation	<p>Elections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ federal</li> <li>▪ provincial</li> <li>▪ municipal</li> <li>▪ school</li> <li>▪ referendums</li> <li>▪ union</li> <li>▪ student</li> </ul> <p>Votes on matters related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ collective agreements</li> <li>▪ association committees</li> <li>▪ user's committees</li> <li>▪ student councils</li> <li>▪ community groups</li> </ul>

## Categories of Actions

The *categories of actions* are groups of actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations addressed in the course. *Examples of actions* are provided to illustrate the scope of the category in a variety of contexts.

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifying the function and conditions of the right to vote</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognizes the democratic significance of the right to vote</li> <li>▪ Defines voter status by type of consultation</li> <li>▪ Finds out about the conditions for voting: type of ballot, location of poll, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding the issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhances his/her understanding of the issue</li> <li>▪ Appeals to available sources of information: newspapers, community or union newsletters</li> <li>▪ Examines the facts</li> <li>▪ Attends information meetings in the neighbourhood, education centre or workplace</li> <li>▪ Recognizes the different actors or groups present</li> <li>▪ Identifies differences of opinion and opposition</li> <li>▪ Considers foreseeable consequences</li> <li>▪ Considers the whole situation</li> <li>▪ Takes a stand on the issues</li> <li>▪ Debates his/her points of view with others</li> <li>▪ Expresses his/her point of view in meetings or committees</li> <li>▪ Follows debates on television or the radio</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Taking a stand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Makes a choice</li> <li>▪ Votes</li> <li>▪ Considers the results</li> </ul>

## Compulsory Elements and End-of-Course Outcomes

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The compulsory elements are those that the teacher must absolutely take into account when designing learning situations.

### Class of Situations

Popular consultation

### Categories of Actions

- Identifying the function and conditions of the right to vote
- Understanding the issues
- Taking a stand

### Operational Competencies

Exercises critical and ethical judgment

- Identifies the advantages and disadvantages of the project submitted for popular consultation
- Examines different opinions
- Assesses the values underlying the proposals
- Justifies his/her choice

Communicates

- Learns about the conditions for exercising the right to vote and about the issues involved
- Discusses the issues with people with different opinions
- Clearly expresses his/her opinion in a debate

### Essential Knowledge

- Right to vote
- Democratic values
- Geopolitical maps of Canada
- Levels of government

- Electoral system
- Debate
- Electoral issues
- Sources of information

The end-of-course outcomes describe how adults make use of the compulsory elements to deal with the real-life situations addressed in the course.

### End-of-Course Outcomes

In dealing with the situations related to *Popular consultation*, adult learners identify the function and conditions of the right to vote and the underlying democratic values. They understand the issues and take a stand.

When they identify the function and conditions of the right to vote in the popular consultation in question, adult learners refer to the current electoral system or the appropriate voting procedure, specifying the targeted level of government or institution and using geopolitical maps as needed to construct an adequate visual representation. They locate the poll and find out the conditions for exercising their right to vote on this occasion. They define the conditions of their participation based on the information gathered about all of these elements, depending on the type of popular consultation in question.

When they represent the issues of the popular consultation in question, whether national, provincial or local, they identify the main advantages and disadvantages of the proposal for individuals and the community. They find out about the issues involved from a variety of sources representing different sides. They develop their own representation of the issues by discussing with others, examining different opinions and clearly expressing their own in a debate.

When they take a stand in the popular consultation, adult learners rely on their assessment of the democratic values underlying the proposal in question and justify their choices based on meaningful elements of their representation of the issues. They express their choice in accordance with the conditions of their right to vote in the type of popular consultation in question.



## Evaluation Criteria

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- Adequately recognizes the function and conditions of the right to vote
- Develops an informed representation of the issues
- Justifies his/her position

## Operational Competencies

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The contribution of each operational competency is described in terms of the actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations in this course. These operational competencies are addressed in other courses and therefore all of the courses taken together contribute to their development.

In this course, only the following operational competencies are addressed: *Exercises critical and ethical judgment* and *Communicates*.

### Contribution of the Operational Competency *Exercises critical and ethical judgment*

The operational competency *Exercises critical and ethical judgment* helps adult learners to appreciate the significance of exercising the right to vote in a democracy and of taking a stand based on an assessment that disregards stereotypes, prejudice and subjective and intuitive convictions.

In their reflection, adult learners identify the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. Participation in debates enables them to examine different opinions. They assess the democratic values underlying the project. They take a stand and justify it.

### Contribution of the Operational Competency *Communicates*

The operational competency *Communicates* enables adult learners to express their opinions, ask questions and debate an electoral issue. They must be attentive to the rules, codes and requirements associated with the context in which they express themselves.

Adult learners must find out about the conditions related to the right to vote and the issues in question. They discuss the issues with people who disagree with them in order to develop a representation of the situation and to clearly express their opinion in a debate, while respecting the rules of democracy.

## Essential Knowledge

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### Right to vote

- Principle of democracy enshrined in the charters
- History, origin and evolution of the right to vote
- Conditions for exercising the right to vote: citizenship, legal age, domicile, membership in the group
- Location of poll
- Consensus: concept and connection with the concept of majority

### Democratic values

- Equality of citizens in exercising the right to vote
- Freedom of expression, association and opinion

### Geopolitical maps of Canada

- Provinces
- Territories
- Provincial and federal capitals
- Municipalities
- Ridings

### Levels of government

- Federal
- Provincial
- Municipal

### Electoral system

- Voting procedures: secret ballot, vote by show of hands, single constituency and proportional vote
- Representation

### Debate

- Right to speak

### Electoral issues

- Type of issue
- Players: lobby groups, stakeholders

### Sources of information

- Difference between fact, opinion and argument
- Sources of information
- Reliability of documents

## Attitudes

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The following attitudes are provided as suggestions only. The development of these attitudes can help adults become more competent in dealing with the real-life situations in this course.

Respect	Open-mindedness
Popular consultation involves debating different opinions. Participating in such discussions requires an attitude of respect for others and their opinions, that is, respect for each person's right to express himself or herself.	In a popular consultation, adults discuss the proposals. These discussions require an attitude of open-mindedness, a desire to examine different opinions. This attitude is indispensable for true dialogue between the participants.

## Complementary Resources

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The following resources are provided as suggestions only and consist of references that may be consulted in learning situations.

Social Resources	Material Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Office of the Chief Electoral Officer</li><li>▪ Political parties</li><li>▪ Unions</li><li>▪ Popular and community groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Electoral laws</li><li>▪ Code Morin</li><li>▪ Constitution (charter, bylaws) of organizations</li><li>▪ Government information on popular consultation</li><li>▪ Media</li><li>▪ Political platforms</li><li>▪ Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms</li><li>▪ Newspapers and electronic media</li></ul>

## Contribution of the Subject Areas

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The contribution of other subject areas, in particular knowledge related to Languages and to Mathematics, Science and Technology, is also useful for dealing with the real-life situations in this course. The elements identified for each subject area are not compulsory and do not constitute prerequisites.

### Subject Area: Languages

#### Program of Study: *English, Language of Instruction*

Course (Presecondary): *Informed Choices*

- Categories of actions related to the class of situations *Using language to explore current issues in the media*

Course (Secondary): *Rights and Responsibilities*

- Categories of actions related to the class of situations *Using language to exercise rights and responsibilities*

### Subject Area: Mathematics, Science and Technology

#### Program of Study: *Mathematics*

- Interpreting graphs related to the issues involved in the consultation

#### Program of Study: *Computer Science*

- Searching the Internet (or consulting the appropriate electronic media) for information about a political or social issue

## Andragogical Context

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The right to vote is at the heart of democracy and is exercised in different situations. Whether as members of a cooperative or a union, or simply as taxpayers, sooner or later, adults are called upon to exercise their duty as voters.

The teacher can choose to use either a real-life situation or a simulation of a school, federal, provincial or municipal election to ensure that the learning is meaningful for the adults.

The learning situations help adult learners gradually construct concepts and rules related to democracy and the electoral system and to mobilize those they are familiar with. Emphasis is placed on the development of the learners' ability to express their opinion, taking the facts into account. In this context, teamwork, cooperative work, discussion groups, role-plays and simulations are well suited to the task of understanding the right to vote and analyzing electoral

issues in respectful and effective discussions. Adult learners are encouraged to use different sources of information to structure their arguments in debates and discussions. They can borrow ideas, arguments and facts to enhance their position. Audio-visual documents can help them understand the rules and procedure of a debate. It is important to foster exchanges of ideas and opinions on real-life or simulated projects submitted for a vote. Adult learners can also give a formal or informal presentation of concepts related to the right to vote or of different political institutions. Individual work sessions are also useful for helping adult learners acquire concepts and for stimulating reflection on the different options presented and on their own values, which fosters the development of critical thinking. Since some debates can be heated, the teacher should create an atmosphere of respect and neutrality.

## Learning Situation

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The learning situation that follows is provided as an example to show teachers how the principles of the education reform can be applied in the classroom.

It is authentic in the sense that it addresses a real-life situation (taken from the class of situations in the course) that adults may find themselves in. It is sufficiently open and comprehensive to allow adult learners to explore several important aspects related to dealing with this real-life situation.

The examples of actions presented in the course help the teacher to identify those actions that an adult would take to deal with the real-life situation. The teacher can then refer to these examples in order to develop pertinent learning activities.

The learning situation is organized in terms of the three steps of the teaching-learning process, which are as follows:

- planning learning
- actual learning
- integrating and reinvesting learning

These steps highlight the principles of the education reform insofar as they encourage adults to be active, to reflect on their learning and to interact with their peers when the learning context is suitable. They include learning activities and may also include evaluation activities intended to support adults in the learning process.

These activities help learners to construct knowledge related to the compulsory elements of the course that are targeted by the learning situation concerned: one or more categories of actions, essential knowledge and the actions of the operational competencies associated with the categories of actions.

The example provided also refers to certain teaching strategies—pedagogical methods and techniques—that can be selected according to the learners, the context and the learning environment. Certain learning strategies may also be suggested, as well as a variety of material and social resources.



## Example of a Learning Situation

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### School Elections

There are many situations in which adults are called upon to exercise their right to vote. This learning situation addresses school elections from among the situations belonging to the class *Popular consultation*. The presence or creation of a student council or other body in the school involves the election of representatives.

The adults are told that they will be electing members of the student council. A simulation or a real-life activity is organized to elect student representatives.

In the first learning activity, adult learners participate in a discussion of the role of the student council and the mandate of its members. The major issues are presented: the need to elect adult learners enrolled in the centre, whose decisions will have an impact on school life.

Working individually, and based on their course notes and information documents about the student council, adult learners identify the conditions for calling the election and the procedures associated with their right to vote. They record their results in a logbook. They discuss the information gathered with their peers and the teacher verifies whether they have all the information they need to exercise their right to vote.

In the next activity, the adult learners consider the issues at stake in the consultation. The teacher helps them clarify and state their expectations with respect to the representation of candidates and the impact of their election on school life. Each learner records in his or her logbook the important elements he or she would like to debate. The candidates distribute information documents to the

class. These documents contain a description of each candidate, his or her program and his or her plans for student life at the centre. Next, individually or in teams, the adults examine the programs and projects submitted. With the teacher's help, each adult identifies points to examine; a group brainstorming session could also be held. The different options and arguments are recorded in a comparative table. Throughout the process, the teacher questions the adult learners and supports their research. This step can be done as a class, each learner being responsible for one of the aspects addressed. A presentation of the research will foster discussions about the options presented. Adult learners record the results of their research in their logbook and compare the different programs with their own priorities. They identify the democratic values defended by the candidates.

Based on their analysis, adult learners record in their logbook a few arguments in favour of their chosen candidate, using the information sources consulted. In pairs or teams of four, they hold a debate to share their opinions. The teacher reviews the democratic rules of order for this type of discussion. After the debate, each team fills out an evaluation sheet on the quality of each member's contribution. The learners confirm or refute their initial opinions and record the result in their logbook. Then they exercise their right to vote, if applicable.

At the end of the learning situation, the adult learners review the evolution of their decision-making process and justify it with respect to their expectations and the issues raised. The logbook is a record of the process. With the teacher's help, the class produces a

summary of the procedure, identifying difficulties encountered and ways of improving the process in a future situation.

## Elements of the Course Addressed by the Learning Situation

Class of Situations	
Popular consultation	
Learning Situation	
School Elections	
Categories of Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying the function and conditions of the right to vote</li> <li>Understanding the issues</li> <li>Taking a stand</li> </ul>	
Operational Competencies	Essential Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercises critical and ethical judgment</li> <li>Communicates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location of poll</li> <li>Electoral system: voting procedure, concept of representation</li> <li>Electoral issues</li> <li>Sources of information</li> </ul>
Complementary Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution (charter, bylaws) of the organization involved in the consultation</li> </ul>	



