VOTING: VOCABULARY

WORDS TO THINK ABOUT

suffrage - the right to vote in political elections

suffragette - a campaigner willing to take action for women’s suffrage

disenfranchisement - to have the right to vote in elections taken away

enfranchisement - to be granted the right to vote in elections

Indain Status - a Canadian imperial notion that indigenous peoples are under the control and direction (wards) of the government to bring them into more “civilized” colonial ways of life

matrilineal - a system used in indigenous cultures that meant that women were involved in the decision-making and ancestry was determined from the mother’s clan
First Nations had many different ways of governing themselves before European colonization. Most Indigenous societies had some form of gender balance, where men and women held different, yet complementary roles.

Through these roles, Indigenous women held positions of power and leadership. First Nations women and men often had equal voices when important decisions were made. The Haudenosaunee, for example, follow a matrilineal structure with women holding leadership roles within the clan.
In the early years of British colonization, men with property and some women who owned property could vote. That’s not a large percentage of the population that had a say in how government decisions were made.
On August 1, 1834, an act prohibiting slavery throughout the British Colonies takes effect.

Black men had the right to vote; however, Black women were restricted because they were female.
In 1844, written records show that at least seven women voted in the Canada West (now Ontario) election.
In 1851, women are disenfranchised, or officially excluded from all government elections in British North America.

The 1867 British North America Act (Canada’s first constitution) stated:

“Every Male British Subject, aged Twenty-one Years or upwards, being a Householder, shall have a Vote.”

Other criteria for voting were under provincial jurisdiction, and all four provinces had excluded women.
In 1857, First Nations men could give up their status in exchange for the right to vote. Few do, however. The Métis faced no legislative restrictions on voting.

In 1885, the government passes the Electoral Franchise Act. All First Nations can vote in federal elections, whether they give up their status or not.
After the North-West Resistance, the law was changed to exclude First Nations living in what is today British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories.
In 1898, the government returns to the rules from before the Electoral Franchise Act (meaning you had to give up your status to be able to vote).
Through all of this, there were many efforts by women, men and other organizations across the country to expand the franchise in different levels of government.

The organizations represented different interests like the Knights of Labour (1886) and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (1892-1897), as well as the International Council of Women who, at a 1909 meeting in Toronto, resolved in favour of women’s suffrage in every country with a representative democracy. Regardless, it still took years to achieve their aims.
"Mock parliaments" were used particularly by Canadians as a humorous form of protest, a way to encourage public acceptance towards the idea of female suffrage, and to raise money.

The first one was held on February 9, 1893 in Winnipeg, led by Dr. Amelia Yeomans and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union after their petition for suffrage was ignored by the provincial government.

It was followed by at least seven in Ontario, two in British Columbia and four in Manitoba.
TIMELINE OF EVENTS

POSTERS THAT PROMOTED WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

IS A WOMAN A PERSON?
The Law says YES when she has to PAY taxes
The Law says NO when she asks to VOTE how her money shall be spent.
IS THIS FAIR?

WOMEN bring all VOTERS into the world
Let Women Vote

Votes for Women,
For the work of a day, For the taxes we pay, For the laws we obey, We want something to say.

Give Mother the Vote WE NEED IT
OUR FOOD OUR HEALTH OUR PLAY OUR HOMES OUR SCHOOLS OUR WORK ARE RULED BY MEN’S VOTES
Isn’t it a funny thing! That Father cannot see Why Mother ought to have a vote On how these things should be?
THINK IT OVER!
VOTING: WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

POSTERS AGAINST WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

Mummy’s a Suffragette.

When she gets it, what will she do with it?

We Want the Vote

I WANT TO VOTE, BUT MY WIFE WON'T LET ME
The most famous "Mock Parliament"—both for its hilarity and eventual impact—was held on 28 January 1914 at the Walker Theatre in Winnipeg. This included members of the Canadian Women’s Press Club and many of Canada’s most well-known suffragists, including Nellie McClung.

The performances imagined a world where women made all the decisions, and they debated giving men the right to vote. They used humour to educate the public on women’s suffrage.

The group filled a 1,800-seat theatre and sold out two performances and others elsewhere in the province.
VOTING: WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

NO VOTES FOR MEN!

CLICK ON THE COMIC TO SEE THE FULL KAYAK MAGAZINE ARTICLE ON HOW THE MOCK PARLIAMENT HAPPENED IN WINNIPEG IN 1914
The following year, Manitoba men voted a Liberal leader, Tobias Norris, whose government enacted female suffrage on January 28, 1916.
While occasionally suffering setbacks, the push for voting equality could no longer be stopped.

The determination and strong leadership from women like the “Famous 5” inspired many to take up the cause of women’s suffrage and voting rights for minorities.

The “Women Are Persons!” statue, honouring the contributions of the Famous Five (Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Emily Murphy). The sculpture by Barbara Paterson was unveiled on Parliament Hill in 2000.
These five Albertan women were drawn together by the tides of history and a shared idealism. Each was a true leader in her own right: one a police magistrate, another a legal expert who founded the National Council for Women, and three served as Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. And they did all this before they were even fully defined as "persons" under Canadian and British law.

Separately, these five women were champions of the rights and welfare of women and children. They worked hard and courageously in the face of the prejudices and resistance of the day. Together, they formed an unstoppable force that changed the world for women in Canada and in all Commonwealth countries.
The next year, other provinces follow suite and women get the Provincial vote:

- Saskatchewan on March 14, 1916
- Alberta on April 19, 1916
- British Columbia on April 5, 1917
- Ontario on April 12 1917.
- Nova Scotia on April 26, 1918

However, when it came to the NATIONAL or FEDERAL vote, women still didn’t have enfranchisement.
Finally on September 20, 1917 (during WWI) the Wartime Elections Act gave the federal vote to women in the armed forces and to female relatives of males in the military. Immigrants from a country Canada was at war with (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, Montenegro, and Poland) were not allowed to vote.

Also, conscientious objectors (anyone who disagreed with and spoke out against World War I) were not permitted to vote.
TIMELINE OF EVENTS

On May 24 1918, Canadian women get the federal vote. However people of Asian, African or Indigenous descent do not get to vote: male or female.

Provincially and Federally, things begin to slowly change:

- On April 17, 1919 New Brunswick women get the vote.
- On May 20, 1919 Yukon women get the vote.
- It’s July 1, 1920. The Dominions Elections Act is passed. This means that anyone NOT allowed to vote federally during the war, were then permitted, except for those prohibited because of race.
Throughout the 1920s, laws were passed and then changed that gave Indigenous men the right to vote both with and without giving up their status.

Needless to say, it is confusing. But the main result is that First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities had no voice in democracy.

On May 3 1922 PEI women get the vote.

On April 3 1925 Newfoundland and Labrador women get the vote in their colony. Remember, they only join Confederation in 1949.

Agnes McPhail was the first woman elected to the Canadian House of Commons. She is shown on the $10 bill alongside two Fathers of Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George-Étienne Cartier, as well as James Gladstone, who was Canada’s first senator of First Nations origin.
In 1934, the Dominion Franchise Act explicitly removes the voting rights from men and women who are Inuit and Status Indians, except for Status Indian veterans.

In 1940 women in Quebec get to vote provincially.

In 1947 the Citizenship Act gives the right to vote at all levels of government to Chinese-Canadians and South Asian-Canadians men and women, but not to Indigenous Peoples and Japanese Canadians.
In 1948, the United Declaration of Human Rights is issued and in it, Article 21 states that elections “shall be by universal and equal suffrage.” In response, the Elections Act is revised and says ALL Canadians of every race and gender can vote, except for Indigenous peoples.

On June 12, 1951, women in the Northwest Territories get the vote.
Finally, on July 1, 1960 Indigenous people are granted the right to vote federally, although some provinces still exclude them until 1969.

On April 17, 1982 the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights of all Canadian Citizens. The right to vote is one of them.
2025

And finally, in 2025 (when you turn 18) YOU will be allowed to vote!

The suffrage movement in Canada was a long and hard fought battle. Though white women got the federal vote in 1919, minorities had to wait another 29 years to get their voting rights and First Nations, longer still. SO...
VOTING: YOUR VOTE MATTERS

GET OUT AND VOTE!

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!
VOTING: ASSIGNMENT TIME

COMPLETE THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE USING THIS WORD BANK

TAKE A SCREENSHOT OF THE NEXT PAGE AND SUBMIT YOUR EDITED RESPONSE IN GOOGLE CLASSROOM LESSON 12 CROSSWORD ASSIGNMENT.
Voting In Canada
Assignment for Lesson 12

ACROSS
2. Indian ________ to be a"ward" of the Canadian government.
4. in 1948, the Elections Act is revised and says ALL Canadians of every race and gender can vote, except for _________ peoples.
7. Conscientious _________ - anyone who disagreed with and spoke out against war.
8. The right to vote in political elections.
10. To have the right to vote in elections taken away.
11. The city where the first mock parliament took place on February 9, 1893.
13. On April 17, 1982 the Canadian Charter of Rights and _________ gives all Canadian Citizens the right to vote.
15. The gender of voters as stated in the BNA Act of 1867.
16. You will be allowed to do this when you turn 18.
18. The first province to allow female suffrage in 1916.
19 Mock ________ - A humorous protest performance used to educate the public on women's suffrage.

DOWN
1. A campaigner willing to take action for women's suffrage.
3. To be granted the right to vote in elections.
5. The Second World War resulted in ________-Canadians losing their citizenship rights, including the right to vote.
6. ______ McPhail - the first woman elected to the Canadian House of Commons. She is shown on the $10 bill
9. The women in this province get the vote on May 3, 1922.
12. The number of women voters recorded for the 1844 Canada West election.
14. This was abolished in 1834 and allowed Canadian Black men (but not women) to vote.
17. The "________ 5" were five Canadian leaders of women's suffrage.

WORD BANK
INDIGENOUS WINNIPEG SUFFRAGETTE STATUS
MALE VOTE OBJECTORS SEVEN
MANITOBA SLAVERY ENFRANCHISEMENT FAMOUS
AGNES FREEDOMS SUFRAGE PEI
PARLIAMENT JAPANESE DISENFRANCHISEMENT