

Glossary: Politics

Glossaries have been created to provide the definition of any words that are specific to each theme area. It is suggested that teachers review or point out the glossaries to students before they examine a specific theme area. Students may access them under Student Resources.

Acclamation: An election won without a vote, as only one person desired the position.

Attorney-General: Chief law officer of the Alberta Government. Acts as the guardian of the rule of law, which protects both individuals and society and is in charge of criminal prosecution, legislation, civil litigation, and administration of the courts.

British North America Act (BNA Act): Now called the Constitution Act of 1867, it was an act of the British Parliament that created the Dominion of Canada and set out its constitution. The BNA Act laid out the structure of the government of Canada and listed the division of powers between the federal government and the provincial governments

Boxcar: A fully enclosed railroad car, typically having sliding side doors, used to transport freight.

Bushel: A unit of volume or capacity in the British Imperial System, used in dry and liquid measure and equal to 36.37 liters.

Colonization: The act or process of politically controlling a distant region or country.

Convener: The member of a group or organization whose duty it is to assemble meetings.

Deficit: The result when the accumulated payments of a government exceed its earnings, usually over the period of one year.

Dominion: A self-governing nation within the British Commonwealth.

Dower: A widow's portion of her husband's assets that were acquired during the course of their marriage.

Economics: The science that deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Elevator (grain): A small building equipped with devices for lifting and releasing grain for transportation purposes.

Entrepreneur: A person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture.

Evangelical: Anything from or relating to a Christian church.

Expansionism: The practice or policy by a nation of territorial or economic expansion.

Famous 5: A group of five women, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, and Louise McKinney, who secured the right for women to be legally declared "persons" in 1929.

Foreclosure: The legal proceedings initiated by the person or group who is owed money to repossess the collateral, such as the land or house, for a loan that has not been paid.

Government: The agency or organization that exercises authority in a country, creating and enforcing laws that govern individual and group behavior.

Graft: To gain from the unscrupulous use of one's position or power, thereby deriving monetary gain or other advantages.

Great Depression: Term referring to the period in Canada from 1929 until 1939. Western Canada's economy had massive unemployment, breadlines, relief camps, protest marches, and dust storms. The beginning of the Second World War in 1939 brought Canada out of the Great Depression.

House of Commons: Along with the Senate, the House of Commons is one of the two parliamentary houses in the federal government. The House of Commons is the major law-making body in Parliament. In the Commons, elected Members of Parliament (MPs) devote most of their time to debating and voting on bills.

Immigrate: To enter and settle in a country that a person was not born in.

Jurisdiction: The right and power to interpret and apply the law in a certain area.

Kainaiwa: Kainaiwa is one member of the Blackfoot Confederacy, an alliance that also includes Siksika, Piikani, and Aamskapi Pikuni (Blackfeet).

Legislation: The act or process of making or creating laws by an official government body.

Libel: A false publication in writing that damages another person's reputation.

Macdonald, John A (1815-1891): The first Prime Minister of Canada and one of the "Fathers of Confederation". Served as Prime Minister from 1867-1873 and 1878-1891.

Maverick: There are two main definitions.

1. Originally, it referred to cattle that have not been branded yet, usually meaning a calf that has become separated from its mother. They were usually considered the property of the first person to brand them.
2. Today, it refers to a person who is independent in thought and deed, or who refuses to "go along with the group."

National policy: A wide-ranging course of action used to guide the federal government in pursuing its goals.

Natural Resources: Resources that are supplied in nature, such as trees, minerals, and oil.

Official Opposition: The role of the Official Opposition is to give voters an alternative viewpoint in elections and debates. It is the party with the second largest membership in the House of Commons. They suggest changes to government legislation or provide proposals for alternative legislation.

Politician: One who is skilled or involved in the administration of government.

Politics: The art or science of government of a political entity, such as a nation, and the administration and control of its internal and external affairs.

Populist reform: In order to make government more responsive to the people, "populists" propose the use of referendums, or a public vote, on certain issues rather than leaving all decisions to be made by their representatives (Members of Parliament).

Premier: The chief elected official of a Canadian province.

Prohibition: The forbidding by law of the manufacture, transportation, sale, and possession of alcoholic beverages.

Protectionism: When a nation protects its own companies and firms by limiting the importation of foreign goods and services. Usually done through tariffs or quotas.

Reform Party: The Reform party was created in 1987 and resembled the Social Credit party. It obtained its strongest support in Alberta and attracted socially conservative, English-speaking voters in Western Canada, who felt that Canadian society had disastrously retreated from desirable traditional Christian values.

Senate: Along with the Senate, the House of Commons is one of the two parliamentary houses in the federal government. The Senate studies, amends, and then either rejects or approves bills passed by the House of Commons. It can also introduce its own bills, except those to spend public money or impose taxes. No bill can become law until it has been passed by the Senate. The Governor General, upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister, appoints senators.

Social commentary: The act of sharing one's opinion with the idea of bringing a change in society or government. It is usually done informing the general public of a given problem and attempting to persuade others through the media.

Social Credit Party: A Canadian political party originally based on the Social Credit theory of Major C.H. Douglas. It reached its height of popularity in the 1930s, as a result of the Great Depression. This theory argued that all citizens have a claim to part of the wealth that we have jointly produced and financial institutions should be put under social control.

Social justice: The fair distribution of advantages, assets, and benefits among all members of a society.

Suffrage: The right or privilege of voting.

Tariff: A tax levied by a government on imported or exported goods to lessen competition with their own country's products.

Territory: A subdivision of Canada that is not a province and is administered by an elected legislature.

Think Tank: A group or an institution organized for intensive research and solving of problems.

Totalitarian: A type of government that has total control over all aspects of its citizen's lives.

The United Farmers of Alberta (UFA): The UFA was founded in 1909 as a lobby organization representing the interests of farmers. Under Herbert Greenfield, they formed the Alberta provincial government from 1921 to 1935. Its goal is to educate farmers in collective action and provide them with knowledge of their legal and political rights.

Western alienation: The perception that there is persistent social, political, and economic inequality based upon regions within Canada. It is the belief that the interests of the western provinces are ignored in favour of the interests of Ontario and Quebec.