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CIVICS

IN ACTION



IN YOUR COMMUNITIE
ACROSS CANAD
AND GLOBAL

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AND GLOBALLY

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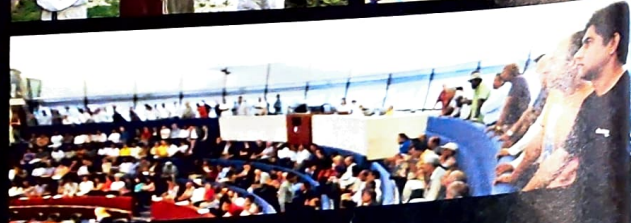
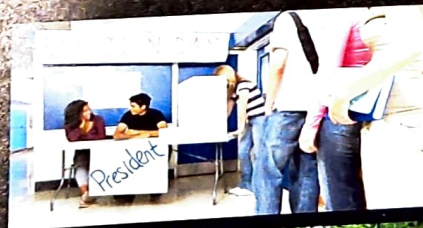
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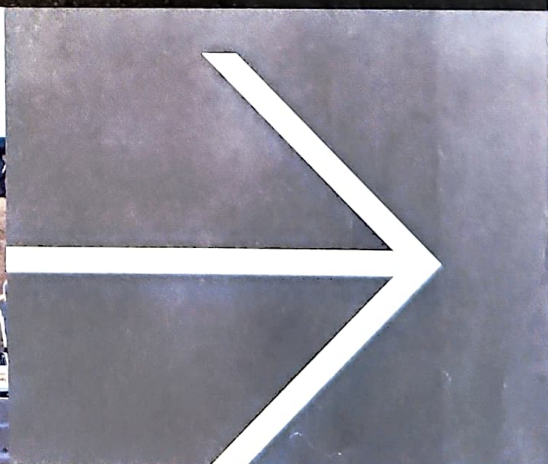
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A Tour of Your Text

Welcome to *Civics in Action*. The following pages provide a brief guided tour of this resource to help you complete the Civics and Citizenship course successfully. The Introduction gives an overview of the questions, concepts, skills, and goals that will guide you through the course and help you become an informed, engaged, and active citizen. In Unit 1, you learn about your rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen and how your first steps as an engaged citizen can begin in your own community. Unit 2 focusses on the structure and roles of government and discusses the various participants involved in the political process—including you. Unit 3 provides an understanding of politics around the world and the importance of taking action, in groups or as individuals, to fight for global human rights.

Unit Opener

- A **Unit Introduction** guides you to start thinking about the topics in the unit.
- The **Big Ideas** show the main ideas of the unit that you will be able to apply to contexts beyond this Civics and Citizenship course.
- **Thinking Civically** suggests how you can approach the unit topics by using the Concepts of Political Thinking (Political Significance, Political Perspective, Objectives and Results, Stability and Change).
- The **Citizenship Framework** makes connections between the content of the unit and being a responsible, active citizen.
- A **photograph** captures the essence of the unit.

UNIT 1

Civics and Citizenship Begin Close to Home

In Canada, we have a constitution, laws, and a legal system that protect our rights. We also have a system of government that ensures every Canadian—including you—has a say in how our rights are respected. Your voice matters. You have the power to effect change that will make Canada a better place to live for all of us.

Civic engagement may be new to you. Start by looking around you. What are some ways to improve your school and your city, town, or rural area? You can voice your concerns to your municipal government, volunteer for a community group, and gather donations for a social charity. All you need to do is take that first step!

BIG IDEAS

- In Canada, there are laws meant to protect our rights and freedoms.
- Canadians are responsible for making sure the rights and freedoms of others are respected.
- There are many ways to express our opinions and take action.
- Addressing the big global responsibilities that we have as Canadians is an important part of being engaged and involved.

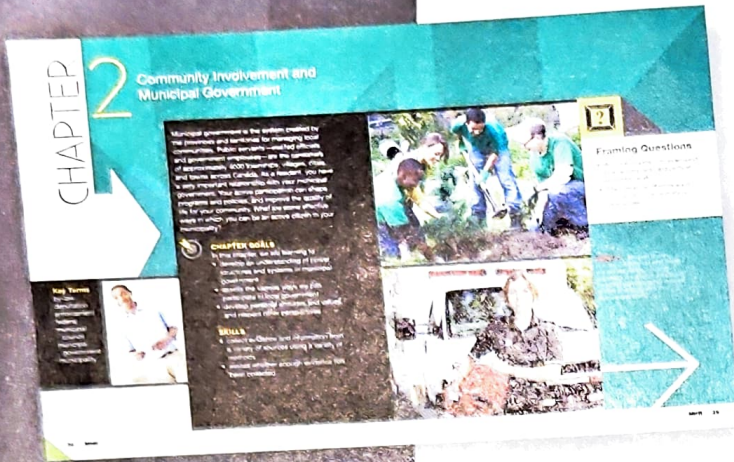
Thinking Civically

Who makes the decisions that affect the lives of the people in your community? When your government makes a decision, it can impact community members in various ways. Taking one action also affects you and those around you—sometimes in a big way. Being aware of the effect an action can have on your community is an important part of being civically engaged.

Citizenship Framework

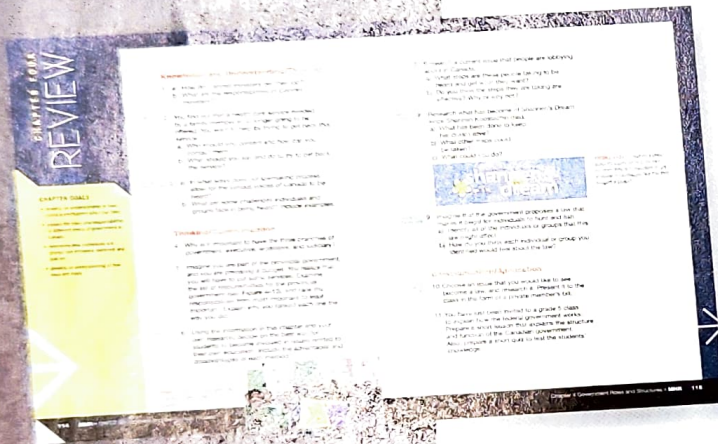
Chapter Opener

- The **Chapter Introduction** starts you thinking about the content explored in the chapter.
- **Key Terms** list the words used in the chapter that will become part of your civics vocabulary. These terms are defined in the margins and the Glossary.
- The **Chapter Goals** are the main objectives of the chapter that lead you along the path to becoming a more informed and engaged citizen.
- The **Skills** are the parts of the political inquiry process that are highlighted in the chapter.
- The **Framing Questions** activate your critical-thinking skills and get you thinking about how the material in the chapter is relevant beyond this course.
- **Photographs** capture the main themes of the chapter.



Chapter Review

- The end-of-chapter questions help you to review the chapter content.



Guide to Action

- These three features model the steps to complete a civic engagement project and provide activities to guide you along the way. These steps can be followed at any time during the course.



Civics in Action has a number of features that highlight the content, make civics and citizenship relevant to you, and provide interesting and sometimes challenging viewpoints on the topics you are studying.

Spotlight On

- This feature presents a high-interest topic related to the chapter content that is based on an event, idea, issue, or individual to engage your interest and prepare you for the chapter content.

spotlight on:
TOO YOUNG TO VOTE?

What do you think the voting age should be? This issue has come up for debate several times in Canadian society—sometimes resulting in changes and sometimes not. In 1970, the voting age in Canada was lowered from 21 to 18. Within the last 10 years, there have been calls to lower the age even further to 16 years old. In 2004, Mark Holland, now a former Liberal Member of Parliament from Ajax-Pickering, introduced a private member's bill to Parliament that sought to lower the voting age from 18 to 16.

Supporting the Voting Age
To support the proposal, he provided his own, and other Liberal members of Parliament, with a list of reasons why lowering the voting age would be a good idea. He argued that if 16-year-olds were allowed to vote, they would be more likely to understand the importance of the political process. He also argued that 16-year-olds are old enough to understand the importance of the political process.

Opposing the Voting Age
Holland suggested that lowering the voting age to 16 would give young people a voice in the political process. He argued that 16-year-olds are old enough to understand the importance of the political process. He also argued that 16-year-olds are old enough to understand the importance of the political process.



118 **UNIT 1** | Chapter 3: Democracy and the Political Process

Planning the Voting Age
On the morning of the election, you will be asked to vote. The voting age is 18. The government of Canada has set the voting age at 18. The government of Canada has set the voting age at 18. The government of Canada has set the voting age at 18.

Questions
1. Who should be considered a citizen?
2. What are the requirements for citizenship?
3. How can you become a citizen?
4. What are the benefits of citizenship?



MINIMUM VOTING AGE

Chapter 3: The Political Process • UNIT 1 • 119

Thinking Civically

- Each of these investigations relates one of the Concepts of Political Thinking to a real-world issue.

Thinking Civically
Stability and Change

Why do some countries have a long history of stability, while others have experienced significant change?

1. In what ways do political systems in different countries differ?
2. How do political systems in different countries change over time?
3. What are the factors that influence political stability and change?

120 **UNIT 1** | Chapter 3: Local Civics

Research & Inquiry

- This feature models a step in the political inquiry process and provides activities for you to practise the related skills.

Research & Inquiry
Citing Sources
Civics requires citizens to be informed about the issues that are being discussed and debated. To find good information for these discussions and debates, you need strong research skills.

Questions
1. What information do I need to find?
2. How do I find the information I need?
3. How do I cite the information I find?

120 **UNIT 1** | Chapter 4: Government Structure and Processes

In Focus

- This feature provides an in-depth examination of an issue, event, individual, or idea related to the content in the chapter.

Multiple Perspectives

- A current, and sometimes controversial, topic is presented from multiple perspectives.

IN FOCUS
Treaty Rights and Pipelines
In recent years, oil exploration and development has increased dramatically in Canada. The easiest method to transport the oil is by pipeline. Many cases have been brought by the Aboriginal peoples of the northern part of the country. Some Aboriginal peoples are concerned about the safety and environmental impact of pipelines. They are also concerned about the impact of pipelines on their traditional way of life.

Multiple Perspectives
Privacy and Safety
Concerned Canadians
Increasingly, Canadians live in a society where monitoring is common. This has led to concerns about privacy and safety. The Privacy Act was created to protect Canadians' personal information. The Access to Information Act was created to ensure that government information is accessible to the public.

Questions
1. How do you balance privacy and safety?
2. How do you balance privacy and safety?

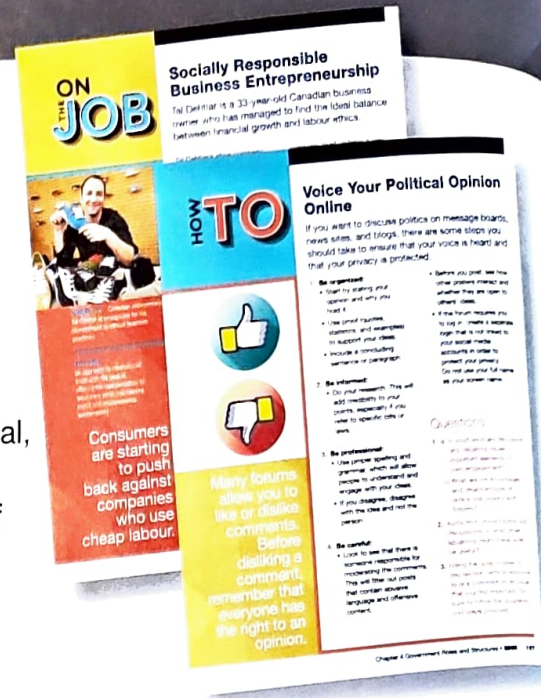
120 **UNIT 1** | Chapter 3: Local Civics

On the Job

- This feature highlights a career that involves knowledge and skills related to civics.

How To

- These guides provide practical, step-by-step instructions for carrying out specific forms of civic action.



An Interview With ...

- Provided in question-and-answer format, these interviews feature someone who has contributed to civic engagement.



Everyday Political Citizen

- These profiles highlight youth in Canada who have worked to change political policies and build a better country.

Before You Read

Examine the following list of notable Canadian political parties. Which ones do you believe are real?

- Pirate Party of Canada
- Green Party of Canada
- World-Least Party
- Liberal Party of Canada
- Marijuana Party
- Communist Party of Canada
- Rhinoceros Party
- Conservative Party
- Republican Party
- New Democratic Party

Political

Political parties belong to the national level, provincial level, or municipal level. They compete for election or control of government. Any political party can even include small members. People vote on their opinions and issues a government can be run, and together elected.

political party: an organization of people with similar values and beliefs who seek to influence or control the government by winning elections

party platform: a set of ideas and promises created during an election campaign to explain a political party's position on

Before You Read

- These boxes prompt you to start thinking about the next topic to help you gain a stronger understanding of the content.

Key Terms

- Each key term appears in boldface in the chapter and is defined in the margin nearby and in the Glossary at the back of the resource.

FIGURE 5 parties all 14 years of Why do you

Voices

- These brief quotations provide thought-provoking perspectives on the surrounding content in the chapter.

VOICES

"You must be the change you want to see in the world." —Mahatma Gandhi

Reflect and Respond

- These questions encourage you to think critically about the material you have read and provide an opportunity for self-assessment and teacher assessment.

Reflect & Respond

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. What are the serious long-term consequences of global activism? How is democracy threatened by global activism?

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

2. Holocaust Remembrance Day is one of the most significant global activism events. Research to find out so much more about it. How do these events influence history?

Pause and Think

- These margin questions prompt you to reflect on what you have just read and provide the opportunity for a quick self-assessment.

PAUSE + THINK

OBJECTIVES & RESULTS
How can you decide what type of civic action to take on an issue?

charge activity fees for extra-curricular activities as a barrier to students from lower-income families.
If you wanted to take action on this issue, choose a method of action. Write a letter or a petition to your school board or concerned citizens to organize a meeting. Review **Figure 1-14**.

Skills Focus

- These questions reinforce and provide opportunities to further develop the political inquiry skills learned previously in the course.

SKILLS FOCUS

Survey your classmates about their civic activities. Ask secondary questions to obtain more information.

20 Ways Canadians Can Get Involved

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ONLINE DISCUSSIONS | • send in a letter
• discuss on social media
• blog about the issue
• participate in online forums |
| OFFLINE DISCUSSIONS | • have a meeting
• write a letter to the editor
• make a presentation
• organize a meeting |
| ACTIVISM | • sign a petition
• boycott a company
• participate in a protest |
| COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | • work with a community organization
• donate to a charity
• volunteer for a cause |
| POLITICAL PARTICIPATION | • contact your MP
• attend a public meeting |

More to Know

- These boxes provide interesting facts related to the chapter content.

MORE TO KNOW...

While 55% of Canadians volunteer their time, only 10% volunteer in an election. Why might that be?

Global Connections

- These boxes make connections between issues around the world and issues closer to home.

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Over 30 countries around the world have mandatory voting. Some factors that influence whether or not a country has mandatory voting include:

Over 30 countries around the world make voting a mandatory part of citizenship.

Open for Debate

- These questions prompt thought-provoking discussions about issues that are often controversial.

OPEN FOR DEBATE

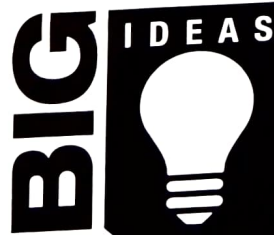
Do you think it would be a good idea to make voting mandatory in Canada? Why or why not?

Do you think it would be a good idea to make voting mandatory in Canada? Why or why not?

4 | Place Ballot in Box

Ballots are then folded and placed in a sealed box.

INTRODUCTION



What? ... So What? ... Now What?

Are there issues that you care about but you do not know how you can make a difference? Have you ever wondered what rights and responsibilities you have? What does *citizenship* mean? Who makes decisions on our behalf? How would our lives be different if different decisions were made?

These difficult questions are at the core of civics. In civics, we ask questions to better understand what is important to us— as family members, friends, students, residents, citizens, and members of global communities. We look at the issues in the world around us and ask, What? ...So what? ... Now what? By finding the answers, we can learn how to have our say and take part in the decisions that make a difference in all of our lives.

Introduction Goals

- develop an understanding of how to influence change in your communities
- describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada
- assess ways in which people express their perspectives on issues of civic importance

Key Terms

citizen
citizenship
common good
democracy
human rights
responsibilities
rights

- People living in Canada have rights and freedoms based in law. At the same time, they have responsibilities associated with citizenship.
- Individuals and groups of people can make a difference in the world.
- People, including students, have various ways to voice their points of view in the many communities to which they belong.

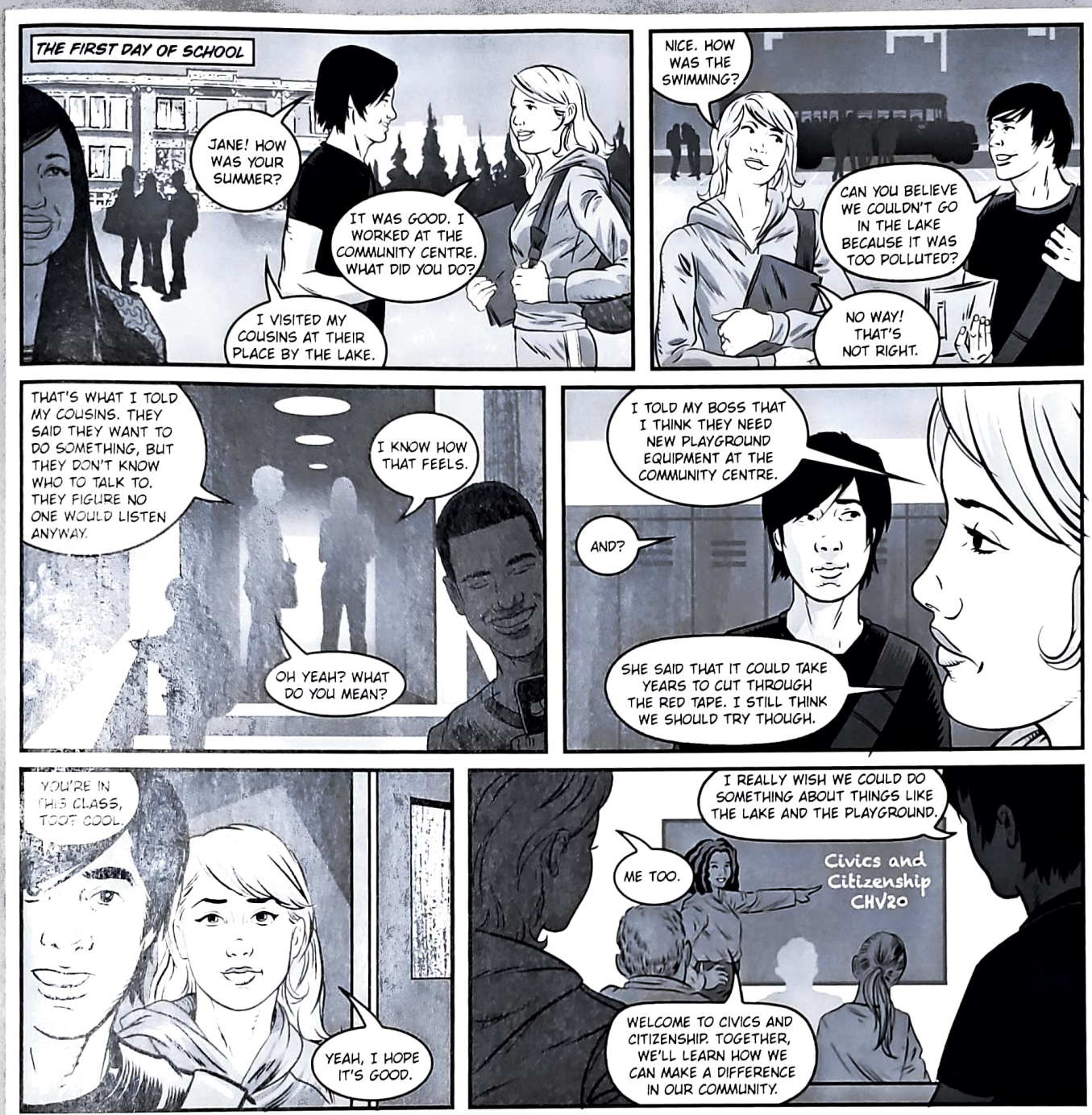


FIGURE 1.1 What issues are important to you, and how do you think you can make a difference?



Framing Questions

- How can I make my voice heard in the political process?
- Why should I care about issues in my community?
- What contributions can I make to my community?
- What can I do to make a difference in the world?

Before You Read

Discuss with a partner what you think civics is and record your thoughts.

What Is Civics?

If you ask 10 people what civics is, you might get 10 different answers. But is there a common thread?

In **Figure I-2**, students who have taken the course and teachers who teach it answer the question “What is civics?”

Students

Betsy: To me, civics is the study of citizenship and the responsibilities of citizens in a community. It is a course that helps students realize their roles in society as citizens. Civics is also a study of the system of government.

Mithuna: Civics revolves around the concept of citizenship including the rights and responsibilities of citizens. It involves the study of civil law and government functions as well as ethics and social justice. The main focus of civics is to educate the citizens.

Erica: I think civics is about learning how to be a productive and informed citizen to enable you to bring about positive change in your country.

Teachers

Aaron: Civics is a course to help junior students understand how to become active and engaged citizens. By learning about the different roles of government, the purpose of NGOs, and the impacts individual citizens have on a community, students can hopefully be more than passive observers: they can feel educated and empowered to make a difference.

Tracy: Civics is learning about citizenship, and responsibilities and privileges of being a citizen.

FIGURE I-2 Which of these definitions of civics most closely matches yours?

Civics can be described as the exploration of

- the rights and responsibilities of citizens
- how decisions are made and who makes them
- ways that we can act for the **common good** in our communities at the local, national, and global level

It is also much more than that, as you will explore.

As you read on page 2, in civics we ask questions about our communities and about the world. This is the first step along the path of “thinking civically.” When we think civically, we think in terms of What? ...So what? ... Now what?

- What do I need to know? (e.g., What is the recycling policy at my school?)
- So what does this all mean to me? (e.g., So what is my opinion on this policy?)
- Now what can I do about it? (e.g., Now what can I do to improve the policy?)

The goal of learning about civics is to become an informed, engaged, and active **citizen**. The steps you take are as important as the facts that you learn. It is not a process that you will do alone—the **citizenship** process is one that we are all a part of.

common good:

the well-being of people in a community or society in terms of justice, fairness, prosperity, and respect for human rights and the environment

citizen:

a person who lives in a city, town, or country, and who is legally allowed to have the rights and freedoms of the place in which he or she lives

citizenship:

understanding the rights of citizens in various communities and the roles, responsibilities, and actions that go along with these rights

Rights and Responsibilities

We all have rights and responsibilities associated with being a Canadian citizen or resident. Often, rights and responsibilities are thought of as one and the same, but there is a difference.

Rights are shared privileges spelled out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, such as

- freedom of conscience and religion
- freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of speech and of the press
- Aboriginal peoples' rights
- official language rights and minority language educational rights

By being granted these and many other rights, Canadian citizens are expected to accept certain **responsibilities**, including

- obeying all laws
- voting
- serving on a jury
- protecting the environment

Together, these rights and responsibilities form the core of citizenship. Understanding them is a part of what civics is.

Decision-making

In a **democracy** such as Canada's, decisions are made by people who are elected by its citizens. Whether at the local, provincial, territorial, or federal level, these representatives debate issues that affect all citizens and make decisions that are in the citizens' interests and for the common good of society. What role, then, do the citizens have in the decision-making process? What about the citizens who are not yet voting age—what role do they have?

As citizens, we are given the right to have our voices heard and to participate in the decision-making process. We can

- vote for the representatives we think will make the best decisions for us
- ask our elected officials to make decisions about issues we care about
- protest decisions that have been, or are yet to be, made
- run for elected office

It may seem that all of the decisions that are made about important issues are made by people who we do not know in town halls, city halls, or legislatures across the country. However, we have the tools available to give us a role in the decision-making process and to participate freely in our democratic society.

All individuals who live in Canada—both its elected officials and the people who elect them—have a role in acting for the common good. An important part of civics, and of being “civically minded,” is exploring ways in which we can act for the benefit of all Canadians.

rights:
privileges recognized and protected by law

responsibilities:
tasks or duties that an individual is required or expected to carry out

democracy:
a form of government in which laws are made either by a direct vote of the citizens or by a vote of the elected representatives of the citizens

OPEN FOR DEBATE

Are all rights and responsibilities shared equally among citizens? How important is it that they are?



FIGURE I-3 In what ways are these people being civically minded?

HOW TO

Hold a Democracy Talks Discussion



Samara, a Canadian organization that encourages greater participation in politics, created Democracy Talks.

These discussions give you the opportunity to talk about issues you care about and to make suggestions for improving politics and the democratic process. The goals of Democracy Talks are to

- create a space for you to discuss the political and civic process
- come up with ideas to improve democratic engagement
- discuss how your ideas can be applied to the real world

Democracy Talks are held in groups of 8 to 10 students. Each group needs a facilitator—either a teacher or a student—to keep the discussion on track, keep track of time, and take notes. Your teacher will provide more detailed instructions and the materials you will need, but here is a short overview of Democracy Talks.

Part 1: Introduction

(10 minutes)

Outline the goals of the discussion and establish ground rules (such as only one person talks at once, and everyone should be encouraged to participate).

Part 2: Identifying Important Issues (20–30 minutes)

Identify an issue that is important

to you. Discuss who you would get to help address the issue and who might not support the changes you would like.

Part 3: In an Ideal World ... (15–20 minutes)

Brainstorm your ideas on what an ideal democracy and political system looks like. Discuss what aspects of Canadian democracy could make it easier for you to take action on your issue.

Part 4: Making Your Move (30–40 minutes)

In small groups of three to five, work through a civic or political problem and figure out how to approach it.

Part 5: Wrap-Up

(10–15 minutes)

Share your discussion from Part 4 with the larger group.

Questions

After your Democracy Talks activity, complete the following questions.

1. What was the most interesting part of the discussion?
2. In what ways is a good group discussion like an effective democracy?
3. What else would you like to learn in order to address the issues you discussed?




FIGURE 7-4 What ideas about the democratic process would you share in a group discussion?

Civics in a Global Context

It is important to understand what citizenship means to us and what we can do to act for the common good in our communities and in our country. However, an important aspect of civics is looking beyond our borders and being aware of what is going on in the rest of the world.

Democracies and Other Types of Governments

A democracy is only one type of government. Around the world, there are many types of governments, each with its own characteristics.

Not every type of government grants the same rights to its citizens. To us, as Canadians, the citizens in some countries may seem to have fewer rights, or more rights. Additionally, the responsibilities expected of citizens may vary among countries.

For us to understand what democracy really means and what role we play in a democratic country, it is important to be aware of what other forms of governments there are and what roles the citizens of those countries play in decision-making.

Human Rights

While rights are privileges that are granted to citizens of a country by their government, **human rights** are considered to be universal and apply equally to everyone around the world. In some countries, the rights of citizens may be denied by their government due to their ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Many Canadians may often take for granted our rights to be who we are, practise the religion of our choice, live where we want to live, or vote for any candidate we want to, but these freedoms are not always possible for people in some other countries.

Organizations such as the United Nations, of which Canada is a member, try to ensure that the human rights of all of the world's population are upheld. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* are just two of the ways in which the international community works to fight for the human rights of all people.



FIGURE I-5 Why is it important that we, as Canadians, care about the human rights of people around the world?

OPEN FOR DEBATE

Are there human rights violations in Canada, or do they only happen in other countries? Discuss with a partner.

human rights:

rights that protect the dignity and value of every individual, and give equal status and opportunities, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, disability, and other similar factors

Reflect & Respond

OBJECTIVES & RESULTS

1. What can you do to participate in the democratic process?

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

2. Why are your responsibilities as a citizen of Canada just as important as your rights?

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

3. What is the difference between the rights of citizens of Canada and the human rights of everyone around the world?

So What Does Civics Mean to Me?

You might be asking yourself, “All of this sounds great, but *so what?* What does this all mean to me?” To find out, you need to explore

Concepts of Political Thinking

There are four political thinking concepts that form the “backbone” of civics investigations. They guide your learning and help develop your understanding of important issues and ideas. Each issue you investigate and each question that you are asked (and that you ask) can be looked at through the “lens” of one or more of these concepts.

Political Significance

What is it? It is the measure of the impact a policy, issue, or event has on communities and the impact those communities have on policies, issues, and events.

So what? What if you want to figure out how important a policy, such as an anti-bullying law, is, or the impact civic action has had on a policy?

How does it work? During an investigation, ask:

- What is the most important reason for engaging in civic action?
- Why are anti-cyberbullying laws important? To whom?

Stability and Change

What is it? It is a way of looking at how and why political institutions and government policies change (or do not change) over time and what effect this has on communities.

So what? You can figure out when change is or is not necessary, and how to contribute to change or to maintain stability. You can also see how political structures and decisions contribute to stability and change.

How does it work? During an investigation, ask:

- Who should I contact about an issue I care about, like pollution?
- What contributions can I make in my community?

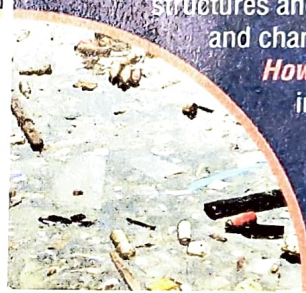
Objectives and Results

What is it? It is an exploration of the factors that lead to important civic/political events, policies, and decisions and the effect these decisions have on various groups of people.

So what? It is important to know if an event, policy, or decision has its intended effect, and if it doesn't, why not?

How does it work? Comparing the initial goals of a policy or decision and its effect lets you know the difference between intended and unintended results. During an investigation, ask:

- What was the objective of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*? Do all people enjoy the rights set out in that document?
- How do you know if your plan is achieving its objective?



Political Perspective

What is it? It is an analysis of how the beliefs and values of groups of people—politicians, members of the public, the media—can affect our response to important issues.

So what? Understanding that perspectives may influence someone's behaviour will help you gain a better understanding of their actions.

How does it work? During an investigation, ask:

- How can you figure out if your student council represents all students in the school? Who has the most influence and why?
- How important is the media in swaying public opinion?

why all of this is important, what you can do, and how you can do it.

Whether you want to complete an assignment, perform well in an activity, or become an informed, engaged, and active citizen, having clear goals is important. Knowing what your goals are and how to achieve them will help you complete any task successfully.

BIG IDEAS

Big Ideas are ones that will stick with you for a long time. They should help you answer “Why am I learning this?” or “So what?”



In a democratic society, people have different beliefs, which influence their position and actions with respect to issues of civic importance.



An understanding of how various levels of government function and make decisions enables people to effectively engage in the political process.



People living in Canada have rights and freedoms based in law. At the same time, they have responsibilities associated with citizenship.



Individuals and groups of people can make a difference in the world.



People have various ways to voice their points of view within the many communities to which they belong.



Through the critical analysis of issues and the creation of plans of action, students can contribute to the common good.

Framing Questions

Questions—both asking and responding to them—are an important part of civics. Framing questions are related to the Big Ideas and are intended to spark your curiosity and to help you develop critical-thinking skills.



What is the relationship between people’s beliefs and values and their positions on civic issues?



Why is it important to understand how political structures and processes work?



What are some ways in which I can make my voice heard within the political process?



In what ways does the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protect me? What responsibilities come with these rights?



Why should I care about issues in my community?



What contributions can I make to my community?



What is the most effective way to voice my position on a civic issue?



What can I do to make a difference in the world? How will I know whether my actions have been effective?

FIGURE I-6 Look through the Concepts of Political Thinking, Big Ideas, and Framing Questions. How can you use them to set goals for yourself for civics?

VOICES

"I think every single one of us has the power in our own hands to make the community better. ... Certainly politicians have power over policy, but the rest of us have the power to actually make our community better."—Naheed Nenshi, mayor of Calgary

Being an Informed, Engaged, and Active Citizen

In this introduction to civics, you have read about what civics is and what students and teachers say civics means to them. You have also read about why learning about civics is important, and about some of the goals of civics. But what is the ultimate goal? What is expected of you? What do you expect of yourself?

Ultimately, the goal is for you to understand, and use, the power you have to make change. It is to be engaged and participate in your communities, to care about something, and then to act on it.

The classroom is not the only place where civic engagement can begin. It can begin at home, in community centres, and even at a bus stop, as you will read on page 11. As you read about how Ali Chatur became civically engaged, put yourself in his shoes and think about the things you can become involved in and the changes you can make.

FIGURE 1-7 The Samara project studies why people are, or are not, involved in politics and civic action. Samara asked a number of Canadians to use a word to describe politics. This word cloud shows the words people used. The larger and darker words are the words that were used the most. Do any words surprise you? Make a word cloud for *democracy*. How is your word cloud different from the one for *politics*?



Reflect & Respond

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Describe one of the concepts of political thinking from page 8 to a partner and provide examples of how the concept might be used. Why is it important to use the concept?

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

2. Review the Big Ideas and Framing Questions on page 9. Make a list of additional Big Ideas and explain why you think they might be important to add. For each Big Idea that you think of, write one Framing Question to accompany it.

STABILITY & CHANGE

3. Conduct research on the Internet about ways you can become involved in your community. What different types of involvement can you find? Which types interest you the most? Why?



Everyday Political Citizen

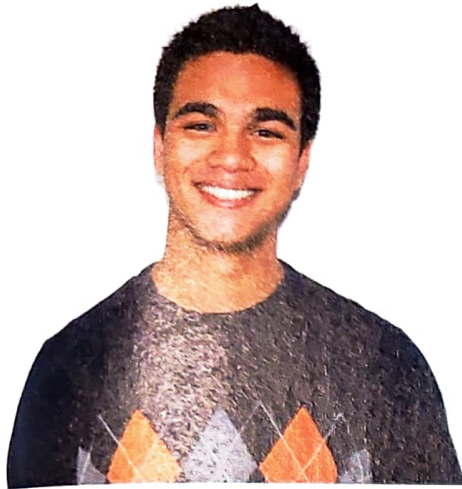


FIGURE 1-6 What factors have made you the person you are?

Ali Chatur was the winner in the youth category of the 2013 Everyday Political Citizen contest. This is a project of Samara that celebrates individuals in Canada who work to change policies and build a better country.

Questions

1. Ali was inspired by Jack Layton. Identify an individual who inspires you. It may be someone you know personally or someone you have learned about in the media. What inspires you about that person?
2. How do Ali's beliefs and values influence the ways in which he is civically engaged?

Ali Chatur

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Ali Chatur's inspiration to become involved in his community and school came when he was nine years old. While standing at a bus stop with his aunt, a man approached and started talking to her. After shaking her hand, the man knelt down and said to Ali, "Well, hello there. Tell me, what do you want to be when you grow up?" At the time, Ali wanted to go into culinary arts, so he said he wanted to be a chef. The man responded with a smile, "You can do anything you like. As long as you work hard, and never give up." The man then said goodbye to Ali's aunt and walked away. When boarding the bus, Ali asked his aunt who the man was. She said he was Jack Layton who, at the time, was the leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) of Canada. Since then, Ali has been inspired by Layton to be involved with his community, never forgetting the words of wisdom Layton told him.

Ali started volunteering in his community at a young age, and volunteering is integral to his ethics and values. Currently, he is the Co-president of the Gay-Straight Alliance at his high school, which promotes equality for all students and the creation of safe and positive spaces. Furthermore, he is involved politically with the NDP, having volunteered on numerous campaigns. He acts as an executive member of the Ontario New Democratic Youth (ONDY) and the Federal Youth Representative for his riding association.

Outside of partisan politics, Ali serves as the City Youth Councillor for Ward 29 (Toronto-Danforth) on the City Youth Council of Toronto (CYCTO). The CYCTO is an organization that involves impassioned youth in the workings of municipal government, providing a channel for youth to influence public policy and take ownership of community development. This role has allowed Ali to get more involved in his community, as well as be part of a group that tries to make Toronto a better city.

Ali says that his community involvement has profoundly influenced him. His community of East York, his school community, and his family have all shaped who he is today. Values that are cherished in his communities—ones of compassion, empathy, advocacy, and more—have affected how he sees himself: as a person helping create positive change in this world.



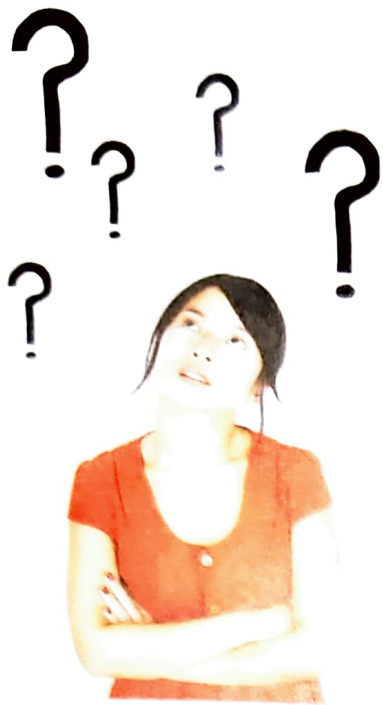


FIGURE I-9 What is an issue that really matters to you?

Now What Can I Do?

As discussed, it is important to contribute to the common good because it is our responsibility as citizens to participate in improving our local, national, and global communities. But where do you begin?

You Can Make a Difference

You can start with the basics. Think about your own beliefs and values. What is important to you? What are your ideas and perspectives on issues of civic importance? Identify one issue that is of particular importance to you.

Now look into the issue to find out more about it. You can look close to home or you can think more globally. Find out the who, what, when, where, and why of the issue, and about the perspectives of those involved in the matter. Doing research will help you make an informed and balanced decision about how you can best get involved.

Ways to Get Involved

- Express an informed opinion on a matter that is important to you by, for example, contacting your local elected representatives, starting a political blog, or writing a letter to a newspaper editor.
- Take on a leadership role in your community in order to support others in taking action on an important issue.
- Participate in your community such as by volunteering or working for a cause that matters to you and the other people in your community.
- Investigate a controversial issue to find out where problems may exist and what changes may need to be made.
- Listen to the perspectives of diverse individuals and groups to build positive relationships and ensure all voices—in your local community, in Canada, and around the globe—are heard.

Once you become involved in an issue, you may come to see an aspect of it that requires improvement, action, or change. Nothing is going to change if no one does anything about it. You can take steps to make a change happen. Find out all the possible ways that you can take action and decide which approach would be most effective. It is very important to think about what effect your action plan will have and who it will affect before you move forward with it.

Finally, the last step before making your move is to make a list of criteria that you can use to assess whether the action you take is effective. In that way, once you complete your action plan, you will know if you succeeded in meeting your goal.



FIGURE I-10 How can you lead the way toward improving local, national, and global communities?

Guide to Action



TakingITGlobal is a network of young people learning about, engaging with, and working toward tackling global challenges. The following is an overview of their Guide to Action, which they created to help youth like you make the changes you want to see in the world. These steps are provided in greater detail in this resource. The steps can be completed at any time during the course.

FIGURE I-11 Why do you think it is important to take civic action?

GET INSPIRED

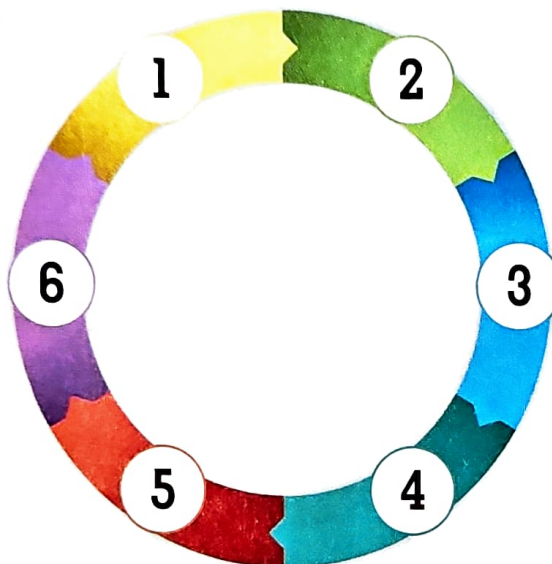
Think about the changes you would like to see happen, whether they are in yourself, your school, your community, your country, or even the world. Who or what inspires you to take action? Seeking out sources of inspiration can give you great ideas and help you to find the strength to turn your vision into a reality.

GET INFORMED

What issues are you most passionate about? Learn more by gathering information about the things that interest you. By informing yourself, you will be more prepared to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

HAVE A LASTING IMPACT

Monitoring and evaluation are important parts of project management. During and at the end of your project, you'll want to identify the obstacles you face and the lessons you are learning. Encouraging other youth to get involved in the issue you care about is a great way to sustain your efforts. Remember, even if you don't achieve all of your expectations, you likely influenced others and experienced personal growth!



GET INVOLVED

Being a good leader is about building on the skills you have and knowing how to use the strengths of others. Write down the skills that you and your team members have and see how each member of your team can use their strengths to lead in different ways. Remember that good leadership includes good teamwork!

GET MOVING

Now that you are equipped to take action, it's time to begin planning. Start with identifying the issue you are most interested in taking action on and one goal you can work toward. When you have your plan, stay positive and focused. Encountering obstacles is normal. You often learn more from things that are difficult than those that are easy!

GET CONNECTED

Connecting with a range of other people can give you ideas, access to knowledge and experience, and help in gaining support for your project. Create a map of your networks and track your contacts.

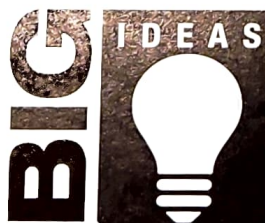
The students, teachers, and community organizations who contributed to this resource wish you good luck as you begin your path in civics and start down the road of becoming an informed, engaged, and active citizen. We hope the tools you are provided with help you better understand your communities and our society, and encourage you to make a lasting contribution to them.

UNIT 1

Civics and Citizenship Begin Close to Home

In Canada, we have a constitution, laws, and a legal system that protect our rights. We also have a system of government that ensures every Canadian—including you—has a say in how our rights are respected. **Your voice matters.** You have the power to effect change that will make Canada a better place to live for all of us.

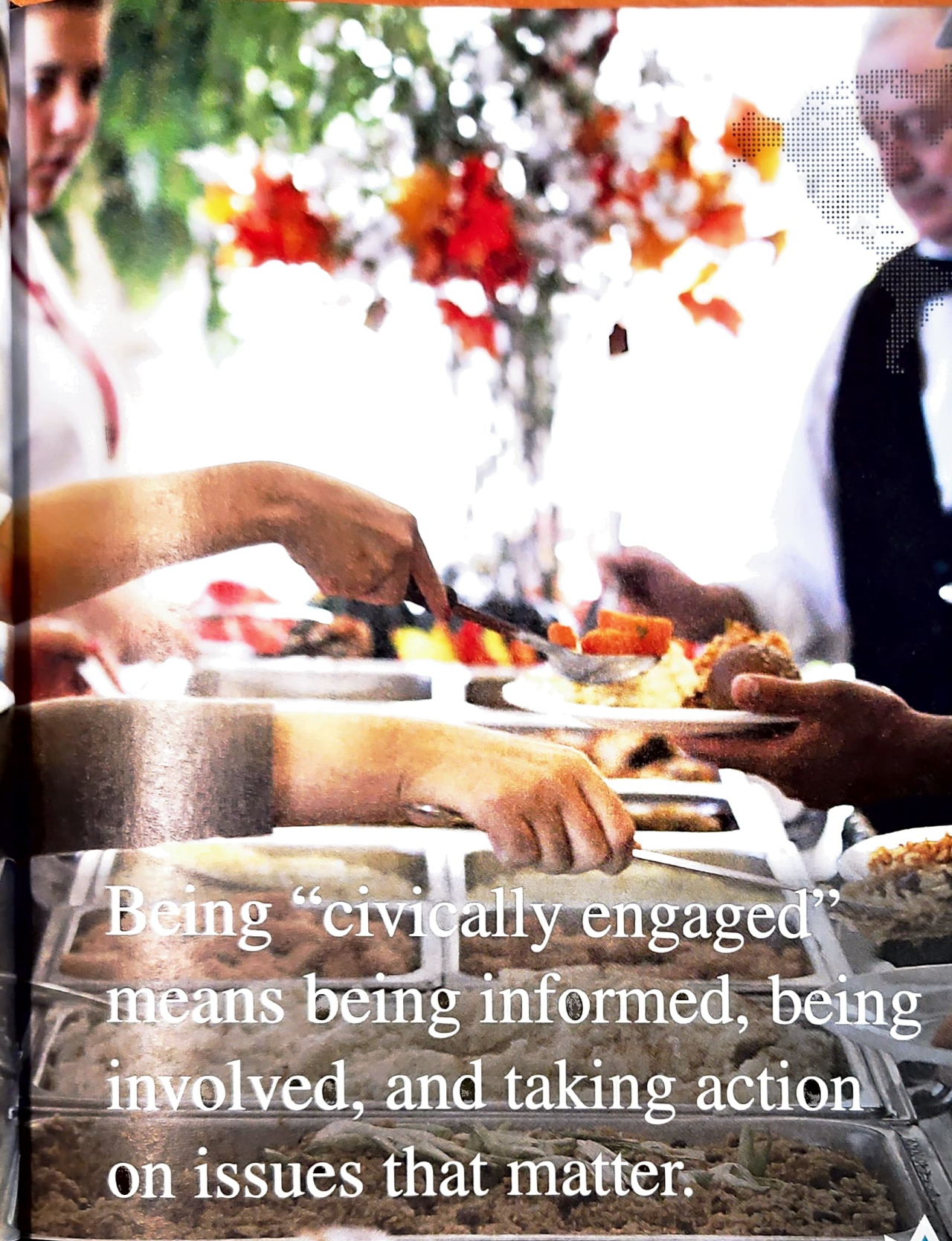
Civic engagement may be new to you. Start by looking around you. What are some ways to improve your school and your city, town, or rural area? You can voice your concerns to your municipal government, volunteer for a community group, and gather donations for a local charity. All you need to do is take that first step!



- In Canada, there are laws meant to protect our rights and freedoms.
- Canadians are responsible for making sure our rights, and the rights of others, are respected.
- There are many ways to express our opinions and take action.
- Knowing how our local governments work is an important part of being engaged and involved.



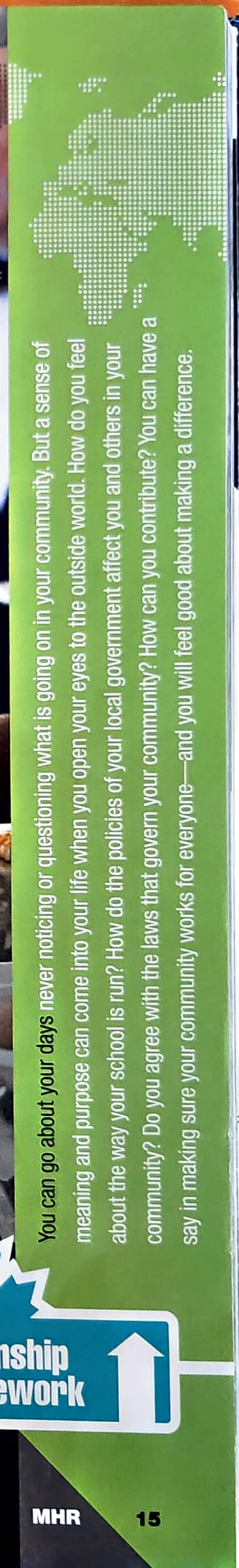
FIGURE U1-1 Volunteering for a charity or community event is only one of the many ways you can get involved.



Being “civically engaged” means being informed, being involved, and taking action on issues that matter.

Thinking Civically

Who makes the decisions that affect the lives of the people in your community? When your government makes a decision, it can impact community members in various ways. Taking civic action also affects you and those around you—sometimes in a big way. Being aware of the effect an action can have on your community is an important part of being civically engaged.



You can go about your days never noticing or questioning what is going on in your community. But a sense of meaning and purpose can come into your life when you open your eyes to the outside world. How do you feel about the way your school is run? How do the policies of your local government affect you and others in your community? Do you agree with the laws that govern your community? How can you contribute? You can have a say in making sure your community works for everyone—and you will feel good about making a difference.



**Citizenship
Framework**