

Canada: Rights, Responsibilities, and Our Democratic System

Instructions

Choose **ONE** of the five questions below to answer in a well-organized essay of 400-600 words. Your response should demonstrate your understanding of Canada's government system and connect to the responsibilities that come with being a Canadian citizen; it makes sense to structure your response as three separate paragraphs dedicated to an introduction, illustration and conclusion. So, yes, it is possible to format your response as three standalone paragraphs or a single lengthier paragraph (I prefer three smaller paragraphs).

Requirements:

- Use specific examples from class materials
- This is not a formal writing assignment; however, students are encouraged to limit their use of personal pronouns
- Students must work within the word count range (400 to 600 words)
- Include relevant terms and concepts (define them if needed)
- Connect your ideas to real-world situations
- Write clearly and organize your thoughts logically
- Cite specific sections of the *Charter* or *Constitution* when relevant
- Do not use AI, i.e. if even 1% of text is detected as written by AI the affected student will receive an automatic 0. However, there are three things students can do to establish authorship, e.g. pass a jargon test,¹ rewrite the offending text, and by effectively answering (orally) questions related to the offending text²
- There should be no grammar, spelling or information-related mistakes
- Do not use paraphrase tools as they utilize AI and would set off AI detectors
- You can use grammar and spell checking tools
- This is an exam and students will receive a grade that reflects whatever work that's been completed by the deadline

Questions

Option 1: Protecting Our Democracy

Canada's parliamentary system includes several ways to prevent any one person or group from having too much power. Explain how Canada's three branches of government work together to protect democracy. Then discuss: What responsibilities do Canadian citizens have in keeping this system strong? Use specific examples to support your answer.

Consider discussing: checks and balances, elections, the role of MPs, non-confidence votes, your role as a future voter

¹ **Jargon Test:** the instructor selects ten words from the composition and the student must be capable of writing an effective definition for *all* ten words thereby demonstrating their authorship.

² **Oral Questions:** the instructor will develop questions to test the student's knowledge on the text in question.

Option 2: When Rights Collide

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects many different rights, but sometimes these rights can conflict with each other. Choose one of the situations from the "Judging Your Rights" assignment (the RCMP/Sikh turban case, the controversial book case, or the blood transfusion case). Explain the Charter rights involved and discuss: How should Canadian citizens balance protecting individual rights while also considering the needs of society? What responsibilities do we have toward others who may have different beliefs?

Consider discussing: freedom of religion, freedom of expression, equality rights, reasonable limits, respecting diversity

Option 3: Your Voice in Government

Canada operates on multiple levels of government (federal, provincial, municipal) that all affect your daily life. Describe how these different levels work and give examples of how they impact a typical Canadian teenager. Then discuss: What are the different ways Canadian citizens can participate in democracy beyond just voting? Why is citizen participation important for keeping government accountable?

Consider discussing: division of powers, services you use, elections, protests, contacting representatives, staying informed

Option 4: The Senate Debate

The Senate has been controversial throughout Canadian history. Some people think it should be reformed or abolished, while others believe it serves an important purpose. Explain the role of the Senate in Canada's government and the main criticisms people have raised. Then discuss: Do you think the Senate should be changed? What responsibilities do Canadian citizens have when it comes to understanding and debating changes to our government system?

Consider discussing: appointed vs. elected, "sober second thought," regional representation, constitutional reform, informed citizenship

Option 5: Living the Charter

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms affects Canadian life every day, even in ways we might not notice. Choose three different Charter rights (from different sections) and explain how they protect Canadians in real-life situations. Then discuss: What responsibilities come with having these rights protected? How can Canadian citizens help ensure these rights are respected for everyone?

Consider discussing: fundamental freedoms, democratic rights, equality rights, real examples, respecting others' rights, speaking up against discrimination