

BLM #2A

Simulation: A Journey to the Democratic Vote in Canada

"Everyone stand. You represent the women and men in Indigenous communities who have equal voices as consensus is achieved in important decisions. You are Canada before colonization.

It is early colonized Canada. You represent a different population. Men with property and some women with property can vote in British Colonies (in what is now Canada.) That's not a large percentage of the population. You will now take on your "Citizen Identities".

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. Please sit if you are female and of African descent.

You should also know that until 1920, most colonies or provinces only allowed people who had property or made a taxable income to vote. If you were poor, working class or from other racialized groups like Asians or Indigenous peoples, you were not eligible to vote, please sit down.

It is 1851. Women are officially excluded from all legislative elections in British North America. All females sit down.

It is 1857. First Nations men could give up their status in exchange for the right to vote. Few do, however. The Metis faced no legislative restrictions on voting. Inuit, however, could not vote because their lands were not under the political control of Great Britain.

It is 1885 and 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 those living in what is today British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories. If you are male and Indigenous and from those locations, please sit down.

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, women, men and organizations still agitate, through many ways, for the right to vote. (Citizens sitting have 15 seconds to shout slogans about wanting to vote.)

Finally, on January 28, 1916. Manitoba women get the Provincial vote. ('Manitoba' females stand up.)

Following in the next year, other provinces follow suite. (Other provinces females stand up each time.)

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 comes to the NATIONAL or FEDERAL vote, Women still don't have enfranchisement. All females sit down. Males of European and African- descent groups, still have the vote at all levels of politics.

Finally on September 20, 1917 (during WWI) the Wartime Elections Act gives the federal vote to women in the armed forces and to female relatives of males in the military. Could about 50% of females please stand. BUT if you are a citizen from a country we are at war with (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, Montenegro, Poland) please sit down. Also, you lose your vote if you disagree with war and are a conscientious objector. Please sit down.

Now, on May 24 1918, Canadian women get the federal vote. Please stand if you are female, but not if you are excluded under racial or Indigenous exceptions. So, if you are of Asian, African or Indigenous descent, you do not get to vote: male or female. Please sit down or remain sitting.

Sitting citizens who want to vote feel hopeful and get 15 seconds to shout slogans.

As you can see there are still certain racialized groups and certain locations where women are not allowed to vote provincially. That changes slowly.

On April 17, 1919 New Brunswick women get the vote. Please stand.

On May 20, 1919 Yukon women get the vote. Please stand.

It's July 1, 1920. The Dominions Elections Act is passed. This means that if you were NOT allowed to vote federally during the war, you are now allowed to, except if you were prohibited because of race. Please stand.

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. Sit down if you are an Indigenous citizen who happens to be standing. Stay sitting for longer, if you are already down.

On May 3 1922 PEI women get the vote. Please stand.

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

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. Please sit down if this means you.

In 1940 women in Quebec get to vote provincially. Please stand.

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. Please stand or remain seated.

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. Please stand.

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.

And finally, in _____ (the year your students will be 18 and allowed to vote) YOU will be allowed to vote!