

## Lesson 3: Political Perspectives and Budget Priorities

### BIG IDEA:

The Quebec political scene is often confronted with political issues. In most cases, people have different opinions on some issues and their opinion is influenced by their values, their principles and the way they see the world around them. Some individuals are more sensitive regarding some issues and this is based on the potential impacts and repercussions on an issue. Politics is rife with controversial issue and opposing arguments and it is important to question each other's viewpoints while also respecting the opinions of others.

### LEARNING GOALS:

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Compare and analyze different political opinions and economic priorities;
- Compare and analyze the positions and priorities of Québec political parties;
- Improve critical thinking skills and decision-making skills about public policies; and
- Form its own opinion on public policies.

### SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS:

- Activity Sheet 3.1: Graphic Organizer
- Slide Deck F: The Political Spectrum
- *Party Perspectives* videos (<http://budgetconsultation.quebec/party-perspectives/>).
- Québec Student Budget Consultation survey (paper and online versions available)

### ACTIVITIES:

#### Hook: 5-10 min

Ask students if they would prefer to pay more taxes and have more government services and support, or if they would prefer to have lower taxes and less government services and support. Encourage students to share their reasoning or initiate a friendly debate. Additional questions:

- What services in which they currently receive would they be willing to forgo for lower taxes (e.g., doctor visits, maternity benefits, children benefits, subsidized public transit, Télé-Québec, public roads, snow removal)?
- Which services would they pay higher taxes for in order to receive (e.g., free university/college, dental visits, free medications)?

#### Background: 10-15 min

Share the following concepts with students : **political issues**, **opinion**, and **worldview** using the Slide Deck F.

**A civic or political issue** is a topic or subject that affects society as a whole and, often there are multiple opinions on various sides of any given issue.

An **opinion** is a belief or idea on a given issue. Your opinions are personal, they are subjective and influenced by your values, beliefs and perspectives. For example, not everyone shares the same opinion on which is the most important issue facing the province, but there is no right or wrong answer; all opinions are valid. Give some examples of political issues facing the quebec society like people living in poverty, homeless people, school fees, access to a family doctor.

Guiding questions:

- What is your opinion about the issue?
- What are other opinions on the issue?
- What has shaped your opinion on this political issue? (e.g., family, friends, the media, personal experiences, social groups, religious institutions)

Conclude by mentioning that each individual has its own **worldview**, which relates to how they see the world and interpret events around them. In other words, a worldview is the big ideas or the principles underlying an opinion, it can often be interpreted as a project for society.

### Working On It: 10-15 min

1. After sharing the concepts of **political issue**, **opinion**, and **worldview**. You could ask your students to fill out the activity sheet 3,1 : political issues and opinions. Ask your students to find an example for each party and each concept watching each video of the section : *Party perspectives*.
2. As a class, watch the [Party Perspectives](#) videos on the Québec Student Budget Consultation website to introduce students to the different perspectives offered by Québec's political parties in relation to the upcoming budget, and in advance of the upcoming provincial election.
3. Have a closing discussion with students on the following questions:
  - Which political party's opinion/position did you agree with the most? Why?
  - Which political issues impact you the most and why?
  - How each answer presented by the parties reflect its position on the political spectrum (Left/right)

### Action: 25-30 min

1. Provide an introduction to the Québec Student Budget Consultation survey. Students will be asked to answer questions related to their own priorities for the 2019 provincial budget. Their opinions, along with students across the province, will be shared with the the political parties, the media and the general population in advance of the 2019 budget.

*Teacher Note: A PDF copy of the survey questions are available on the Québec Student Budget Consultation website, and we would recommend reviewing it in advance with your class to make sure that all questions are understood.*

2. You could also review the results from last year Student Budget Consultation using the slideck F.

*Teacher note : The graphics presented in Slide Deck F refers to two different consultations. Last year a budget consultation was held at a federal level (Federal SBC) and aother one at a provincial level (Quebec SBC). The results allow us to think that Canadians students are more in favour of tax reductions for big corporations and for the wealthiest.*

3. Provide students 20-25 minutes to fill out the survey. The online survey is compatible with smartphones and tablets. Paper copies of the survey are available and provided to you (with return postage) at no cost upon request.

### CONSOLIDATION: 5-10 min

Have a closing discussion about political perspectives regarding Québec's Budget. Alternatively, ask students to prepare a written reflection.

- Would you rather have lower taxes and fewer services, or more services and higher taxes? Defend your position.
- Which political party's economic policy do you agree with most and why?
- What have you learned about politics through the Québec Student Budget Consultation? What else do you want to know?
- What have you learned about yourself and your views? What or who do you think has shaped your views the most?
- Has anything you have learned as a result of the Québec Student Budget Consultation changed your party preferences?

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- A. Divide the class into 4 groups and assign each a party represented in the National Assembly. Each group should conduct research into the party's economic policies and prepare a plan for the 2019 provincial budget. You could invite your students to visit [Pollinise](#), an online platform created in the lead up to the 2018 Quebec provincial elections to analyze and compare political parties' platform. Students could focus on one specific issue of concern to all political parties (such as education or healthcare), or select a few issues to highlight.

Afterwards, have each group present their findings or have an in-class debate. Students could create visual materials (such as posters or slide decks) to highlight the specifics of their financial plan. A mock budget debate could be organized, like one held in the National Assembly following the presentation of the actual budget, with students taking on the role of the Finance Minister and political party leaders and representatives.

*Teacher Note: Preliminary research for this activity could be completed as homework in the days leading up to the activity, or completed over several class periods. Please be aware that not all Québec political parties communicate in both official languages. Some parties publish and share materials only in French, and you may be required to translate some materials or access media summaries.*

- B. CIVIX-Québec encourages students to become active citizens. Invite your students to make themselves heard by the government and opposition parties by publishing a video or an opinion letter. Try with your students to find a consensus on some issues and try brainstorming ways of making yourself heard.

Based on the issues you have learned about as part of the Québec Student Budget Consultation, and the opinions you have heard from journalists and political party representatives, have your preferences for the next government changed at all? If so, why?

Guiding questions : Is there items that you strongly agree or disagree with? How could you influence the provincial government, or your own MNA, to take actions on those issues?

You could also invite your students to contact the Minister of Finance with their own priorities and conduct research on how you would contact the Minister at the Ministry of Finance, and the proper format and protocol for a letter or email to a government official. Alternatively, you could share your

views through social media. Do you think that one method would be more effective than the other? Why do you think that is?

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- Québec National Assembly - <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/index.html>
- Quebec Student Budget Consultation website - <http://budgetconsultation.quebec>