

LESSON PLANS
AND ACTIVITIES

Voters List and
Effective
Representation
Grade 6

YOUR
power **TO**
CHOOSE

ElectionsManitoba





Supports

Curriculum Outcomes:

6-KP-051

Resources/Materials

- Manitoba Voter Register
- Manitoba Voter Register and answer key

GRADE 6

Voters List and Effective Representation

Lesson Objectives

Students learn the importance of the **Manitoba Voter Register**:

- Eligibility criteria for voters
- Why the Register is important and its links to democracy
- How the Register is kept up to date
- Electoral divisions
- Effective representation

Learning Strategies

- Think-Pair-Share
- Reading for Recall and Comprehension
- Progressive Brainstorm

Activating Strategy

Review: Think-Pair-Share

1. Ask students to take out a piece of paper and write down what they remember about who gets to vote in an election. Remind them this is called “eligibility criteria.” Have them compare their notes with a partner for additional ideas.
2. Show students the eligibility criteria overhead and discuss. Ask them to add to their lists any additional points they may have missed.
3. Pose this question to students: You know who is eligible to vote. How do you think Elections Manitoba keeps track of, and controls who actually gets to vote in an election? Spend a few minutes discussing ideas.
4. Briefly explain that Manitoba has a register of voters, which they will learn more about in the next activity.



Acquiring Strategy

Reading for Information – Manitoba Voter Register

1. Hand out copies of the Manitoba Voter Register (pages 4 and 5) and give students ample time to read. Ask them to underline information they think is important as they read.

Note: Mathematics integration: *6.N.5 Demonstrate an understanding of ratio, concretely, pictorially, and symbolically*

2. When students finish reading, ask them to form groups of two or three. Distribute the Manitoba Voter Register Question Sheet (see appendix) and have them collaboratively answer the questions.
3. When students are done, review answers as a large group.

Applying Strategy

Progressive Brainstorm

1. Write the following question on the board:

What is the Manitoba Voter Register, or voters list, and how does it help in elections?

- *List of names of all eligible voters in an electoral division*
- *Cornerstone of democracy*
- *Key to free, fair, accessible elections*
- *Voters list makes election day easier for voters. They get voter information card in mail before the election with election date and times; voting station address; advance voting information.*
- *Candidates have access to the voters list for their campaign.*
- *Makes election day easier for election officials. They can identify voters, monitor who has voted, and make sure voters vote only once.*
- *Elections Manitoba uses the voters list to calculate spending limits for candidates and political parties, i.e. the amount of money they may spend on their campaigns. This ensures a level playing field and fairness for all candidates and parties.*
- *The list is used to measure voter turnout in an election, a good way for government to assess voter/citizen engagement in the democratic process.*
- *57 electoral divisions in Manitoba, with about 22,000 people in each*
- *Each division elects one MLA, for a total of 57 in the Manitoba Legislature*
- *Effective Representation*

2. Tell the class they are going to take part in a “progressive brainstorm” activity. Explain briefly how it works. (See sidebar for explanation)

3. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 students. Ask each group to take their

- **Progressive Brainstorm** is a learning strategy where students consider and extend the ideas of their peers to learn complex or abstract concepts.
- Prior to activity, place chart paper around classroom. Number charts to match the number of student groups.
- Divide class into groups of 3-4 students. Ask groups to go to stations. Tell them they are at **home stations**.
- If needed, start with a practice of the **progression** between stations. On your signal, Group 1 moves to Station 2; Group 2 moves to Station 3, etc. (Group 8 moves to Station 1 in the first move.) After a few moves, have students return to **home stations**.
- To begin, give students two minutes to record **two ideas** on their home chart in answer to the question, “*What is the voters list and how does it help in elections?*”
- After two minutes, give a signal for groups to move to the next station. Give them two or three minutes to read ideas from the last group, and **add one new / different idea**.
- Give another signal, and repeat the process until students rotate through all stations, and are back at home stations. (Increase or decrease times as needed.)
- As the final step, ask students to review their “home” chart, and add any additional ideas that haven’t yet been recorded.
- As a class, debrief the process.

positions at one of the chart papers posted around the classroom and to brainstorm answers to the question on the board. Tell them to try to recall anything they have learned about the voters list and why it is important in elections.

4. Begin the Progressive Brainstorm activity.

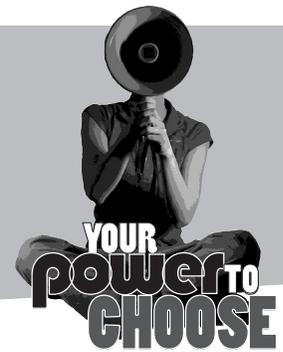
Debriefing

1. Before asking students to complete the debriefing activity, reinforce the fact that the voters list is the key to free, fair, and accessible elections. If necessary, review and discuss the meaning of the terms *free*, *fair* and *accessible*. Ask for examples outside of politics to make sure all students understand each term.
2. Ask students to take out a piece of paper and answer the following question:

Explain in your own words how the voters list helps make the electoral process free, fair, and accessible.

MANITOBA VOTER REGISTER

Election Experience Begins



What would happen if there was an election and no one knew about it?

How do people find out about elections? Or know where to vote? Or who to vote for?

What are the voting rules? Can you vote more than once?

Canada is a democracy. That means we have free and fair elections. Every citizen who is eligible to vote, also has the right to vote. Citizens are free to vote in secret, without pressure from anyone.

Voting is one of the most important things a citizen can do. Elections decide who will become the members of the government. Governments make laws that affect our daily lives.

Manitoba Voter Register

Citizens who want to vote in provincial elections need to have their names on the Manitoba Voter Register. This is also called the voters list. It is a record of who can vote in elections. People all around the world think of the voters list as the “cornerstone of democracy.” It is the key to free and fair elections.

When an election is called, Elections Manitoba mails voter information cards to everyone on the voters list. These cards tell voters:

- They are eligible to vote
- Date and time of the election
- Address of their voting station
- Dates, times, and addresses of advance voting stations
- Contact information, in case voters have questions

Manitoba is divided into 57 areas, called electoral divisions. Each area has about 22,000 people. During an election, each area elects one person. That person becomes the Member of the Legislative Assembly, or MLA.

Our provincial government has a total of 57 MLAs. That is, one from each division. Each division is small enough that MLAs get to know the voters in their area, and can be their voice in government. This ratio of one MLA for every 22,000 citizens is called effective representation.

Keeping the Voters List Up to Date

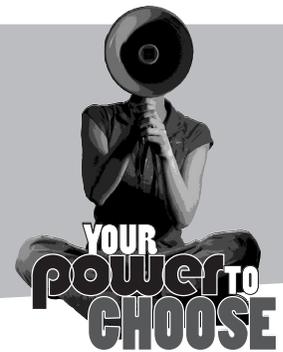
The voters list must be kept up to date. New people who move into an area need to be added to the list. So do new voters who turn 18. The names of people who move out of an area, and people who die, need to be taken off the list.

Democracy means “rule by the people.” It comes from the Greek word *demokratia*.

Demos = People
Kratos = Power

MANITOBA VOTER REGISTER

Election Experience Begins



Elections Manitoba has many ways to keep the Manitoba Voter Register up to date. They can get information about citizens from other government agencies. They can also send *registration agents* to areas where people move often. These agents go door-to-door and talk to voters in person. That way they make sure all eligible voters are registered to vote.

Citizens can update their own information; they just need to contact *Elections Manitoba*. They also have the freedom to have their names removed from the voters list.

Eligible voters can also register to vote by going to a voting station on election day. They just need to show a driver's license, or other ID, to prove who they are. Then they, too, may vote.

The voters list helps everyone participating in an election.

The voters list makes elections much easier for voters. When they get their *voter information card* in the mail, they have all the information they need to be able to vote. They also know they will have no problems when they go to vote on election day.

Candidates get a copy of the voters list for the area where they are running. They use information from the list for their campaign. They visit voters at their homes, or make telephone calls to encourage people to vote for them.

On election day, **election officials** at each voting station use the voters list to make sure people are eligible to vote. They first check voter identification. Then they cross names off the list as people cast their votes. That way they know who has voted, and make sure people only vote once.

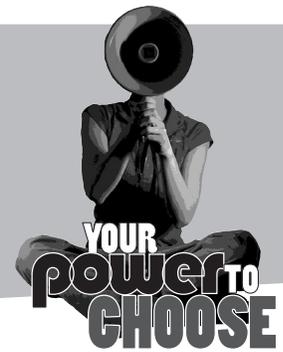
Elections Manitoba uses the voters list to set *spending limits*. This is the total amount of money candidates may spend on their campaign. The number of voters in an area helps decide the spending limits. This keeps elections fair for all candidates.

The voters list is also used to count the total number of people who vote in an election. This is called *voter turnout*. This is one of the best ways for the government to know if its citizens are taking part in elections.



MANITOBA VOTER REGISTER

Questions



9. What is effective representation and why is it important to voters?

10. Give four reasons why the voters list might not be up to date.

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

11. What is a registration agent?

12. List ways a voters list helps different groups participate in an election:

i. For voters:

ii. For candidates:

iii. For election officials:

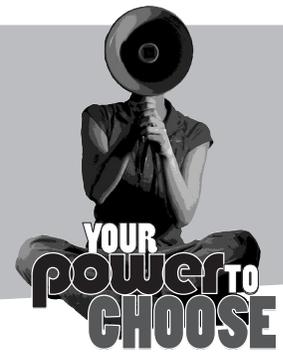
iv. For Elections Manitoba:

v. For governments:

MANITOBA VOTER REGISTER

ANSWER KEY

Election Experience Begins



1. Where does the word “democracy” come from and what does it mean?

From the Greek word *demokratia*; rule by the people

2. What is one of the most important things a citizen can do? Why?

Voting. Government members are chosen through elections and they make laws that affect our daily lives.

3. What is another name for the Register of Voters?

Voters list

4. What needs to happen before a citizen can vote?

They must be registered to vote.

5. Why is the voters list seen as the cornerstone of democracy?

It allows free and fair elections. All eligible citizens are included in the list.

6. Who sends voter information cards in the mail?

Elections Manitoba

7. What kind of information does the voter information card contain?

Date and time of election; address of voting station; dates, times, and addresses of advance voting stations; contact information for voters.

8. How many electoral divisions are there in Manitoba? How many people are in each division?

57 divisions; about 22,000 people

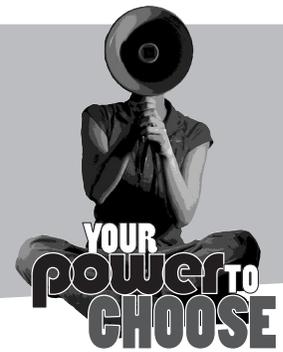
9. What is effective representation and why is it important to voters?

It is an equitable ratio of MLAs to voters, one MLA for about every 22,000 people. Electoral divisions are small enough that MLAs get to know their area and their voters’ needs. With (relatively) small areas, MLAs are able to be the voice of the people in their area, and effectively represent them in government

MANITOBA VOTER REGISTER

ANSWER KEY

Election Experience Begins



10. Give four reasons why the voters list might not be up to date.

- i. People who move into a new neighbourhood need to be added to the voters list for that area
- ii. New voters who turn 18 or became a Canadian citizen need to be added to the voters list
- iii. People move out of a neighbourhood, and their names need to be removed from the voters list
- iv. People die, and their names must be removed from the voters list

11. What is a registration agent?

A person who works for Elections Manitoba. Before an election, they update the voters list by visiting homes in areas where people move often.

12. List ways a voters list helps different groups participate in elections:

i. For voters: If their names are on the voters list, they get a voter information card in the mail with all the information they need about the election. They know they will not have any problems when they go to vote on election day.

ii. For candidates:

They use names and addresses on the voters list to go door-to-door during their campaign.

iii. For election officials:

They use the list to identify voters and make sure they vote only once.

iv. For Elections Manitoba:

They use it to set spending limits for candidates and political parties

v. For the government:

The list is used to count the total number of people who vote in an election. This is one of the best ways for governments to know if citizens are taking part in elections.