

## Lesson Plan

### Title

**Myth Busting: Separating Parliamentary Myths from Reality**

### Audience

Grade 5/6 introduction to the role of the parliament  
Senior grade review of parliament

### Overview

To identify common perceptions and misconceptions relating to the role of Parliament and to identify the myths versus the reality on how the Parliament operates.

### Objectives

- To understand what perception is and how environmental factors shape our perceptions
- To understand that our perception of parliament and government may not necessarily be true
- To make judgement between myths and facts
- To collaborate with a group and verbally express group findings
- To be able to summarize key points and develop concise notes
- To develop a more informed understanding of the reality behind how parliament operates

## Activities and Methods

### Starter Activity (5-10 minutes)

Teacher	Student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show perception image</li><li>• Introduce the definition of perception</li><li>• Q – Where do our perceptions come from?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students identify what they see</li><li>• Students discuss what perception is</li><li>• Students brainstorm where their perceptions originate from</li></ul>

### Introductory Activity (10-15 minutes)

Teacher	Student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show myth – busting images</li><li>• Ask students to vote whether they are true or false</li><li>• Reveal the answers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students vote true or false</li></ul>

### Main Activity (20-25 minutes)

Teacher	Student
<p><b>Part one:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers divide students into small groups- one group for each of the myths</li><li>• Teachers give groups an information sheet about their myth</li><li>• Teacher directs students how to take notes and give instructions</li></ul> <p><b>Part two:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher directs groups to explain the reality of their myth to their peers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Groups read about their myth aiming to find out what the reality of the situation is. They take notes to summarize the key points.</li><li>• Students listen and ask questions (if time permits)</li></ul>

### Plenary (5 minutes)

Teacher	Student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher chooses a number of students to explain what new information they have learned or what perceptions they had have changed after this lesson</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students volunteer how their perceptions have changed and what surprised/interested them about the lesson presentations</li></ul>

## **Preparation (by teacher and by students)**

- Organizing projection of materials
- Preparing voting cards for each student
- PowerPoint with perception image and myths ready to project
- Information sheets on myths for group work

## **Duration of Activity**

Approximately one hour. Research element could be extended further depending on access to technology or ability of students.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Grade 5/6 curriculum

- A1- Apply critical thinking skills
- A2- Interpreting tables
- A3- Evaluate credibility and reliability of selected sources
- C2- Describe levels, responsibility and the election of government in Canada
- C2- Distinguish different levels of government in Canada
- C2- Summarize responsibility of government
- C2- Identify key roles with provincial/territorial and federal government in Canada

## Materials & Resources

- Perception images:
  1. Voting is a long and difficult process: (<http://www.elections.bc.ca/docs/rpt/2009-Voter-Non-Voter-Satisfaction-Survey-20090826.pdf>) and
  2. My vote doesn't count: <http://www.straight.com/article-223273/delta-councillor-vicky-huntington-beats-wally-oppal-delta-south-recount-results-go-judicial-review>
- Myth Busters: Separating Parliamentary Myths from Reality ([Appendix A](#))
- Two Myths – Parliament Buildings are in Vancouver and MLAs only work in Victoria ([Appendix B](#))
- Voting cards (create on own or refer to [sample](#))

## Evaluation of Activity

- Teacher assessment of prior knowledge
- Teacher assessment of class voting
- Teacher assessment of note taking skills and group work
- Teacher assessment of group summary and explanation

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*NOTE: The ideas and opinions expressed in this classroom activity belong to their authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The Public Education and Outreach office only edits for clarity.*

## Appendix A

# APPENDIX A MYTH BUSTERS: SEPARATING PARLIAMENTARY MYTHS FROM REALITY



*Click image to download PowerPoint 2007 file (15.2 MB).*

## Appendix B

### MYTH 1: B.C.'S PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS ARE IN VANCOUVER

#### 1868 – VICTORIA NAMED CAPITAL CITY

Following the union of the colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island, New Westminster served as the home of the newly formed legislative council. Not wishing to anger the residents of Vancouver Island, the first Governor of the united colonies, Frederick Seymour, decided that the council would be given the task of deciding where to locate the provincial capital.

Victoria at the time was B.C.'s largest city, the centre of commerce and easily defended by the nearby Navy base at Esquimalt. Seymour, a mainland resident who favoured New Westminster, stalled after a vote that chose Victoria. Under pressure from London, he held a second vote, with the same result. Residents of Vancouver Island celebrated the vote but some New Westminster residents opposed the relocation of the capital to Victoria. On May 25, 1868, Governor Seymour reluctantly proclaimed Victoria the capital of B.C.

#### 1893 - CONSTRUCTION OF PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS STARTED - FRANCIS M. RATTENBURY

Francis M. Rattenbury was born in Leeds, England in 1867. He worked for his uncle's architectural firm in England for five years, and arrived in Vancouver in 1892. In less than a year, he had entered and won the competition for the design of the Parliament Buildings. Sixty-five sets of drawings were submitted by architects from all over Canada and the United States. Just 25 years old, it was his first major commission. The total cost was not to exceed \$600,000. When the commission was completed four years later, amid much controversy and argument, the total cost came to \$923,882.30.

With the success of the Parliament Buildings, Rattenbury went on to design many well-known public buildings in B.C. These include the Empress Hotel, the CPR Marine Terminal, the Crystal Garden (with P.L. James) and the courthouses in Nanaimo and Vancouver (now the Vancouver Art Gallery).

#### 1897 – NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS COMPLETED

Lieutenant Governor T.R. McInnes officially opened the Parliament Buildings on February 10, 1898. At the time they were built, the Parliament Buildings were criticized as an unnecessary extravagance, particularly since they came in over \$300,000 over the original \$600,000 budget.

## **MYTH 2:**

# **MLAS ONLY WORK AT THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

### **Becoming a MLA**

The B.C. Legislature is composed of the Lieutenant Governor and the 85 elected Members of the Legislative Assembly, or MLAs. Female and male members from a diversity of ethnic groups hold seats in the present House.

One MLA is elected in each of the 85 constituencies across the province. Any Canadian citizen who is 18 years of age or older on election day and has lived in British Columbia for at least six months may be nominated as a candidate for election as an MLA.

### **Representing and Acting for Their Constituents**

While the House is sitting, MLAs represent the people of their constituencies (their constituents) by asking questions and raising issues that concern them.

They also act for their constituents by presenting petitions on their behalf that ask government to take action on a particular issue and by introducing both public and private bills. MLAs maintain an office in their home constituency. A major part of an MLA's full-time year round job is to provide his or her constituents with advice, guidance and, when necessary, hands-on assistance in dealing with government programs and agencies.

When the House or committees are not sitting, MLAs can usually be found at their constituency offices or meeting with individuals, local businesses and community groups, to keep in touch with what their constituents think and feel and to assist them with their needs.

### **Making Laws**

When the House is sitting, MLAs are responsible for studying, debating and voting on all bills (proposed laws) put before them. It is their job to examine arguments for and against each bill and to consider the views and concerns of British Columbians before deciding to support or reject it.

### **Granting Supply and Approving Taxes**

The government of British Columbia acts in the name of the Crown. No tax may be imposed or money spent without the consent of the Legislative Assembly. MLAs are responsible for debating and voting on "estimates." This is the money requested each spring by the Minister of Finance on behalf of government ministries to fund programs and pay staff for the upcoming fiscal year.

### **Asking Questions**

When the House is sitting, MLAs participate in Question Period every Monday through Thursday afternoon; an intense 30-minute period of rapid-fire questions and answers.

### **Sitting on Committees**

Parliamentary committees, composed of MLAs, come together throughout the year to discuss social and economic issues of importance to British Columbians. In B.C. committees cannot initiate inquiries but must be given terms of reference by the House.

# BALLOT

General Voting Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Electoral District: \_\_\_\_\_

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