**Date Reviewed**

February 2023

**Course**

[Social Studies 6](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/social-studies/6/core)

**Topic**

Comparing Governments

**Big Idea**

Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and freedoms.

**Essential Question**

How do the Canadian and American Systems of Government compare?

**Content**

*Students are expected to know the following:*

* different systems of government

**Curricular Competencies**

*Students are expected to be able to do the following:*

* Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to — ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions

**Core Competencies**

[Communication](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies/communication) - I can explain how Canada’s system of government differs from the United States’.

[Thinking](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies/thinking) – I can analyze the benefits and problems of different systems of government.

[Personal and Social](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies/personal-and-social) - I can interact in a group and achieve consensus on an issue.

**First People’s Principles of Learning**

* Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

**Introduction**

* Show the video [USA vs Canada](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1NqXCmTI60) (4:04)
* Explain that the United States has a great influence on Canada. We share a border. We have similar culture. Our economies are closely connected. Our systems of government have similarities too. However, there are some significant differences between the American and Canadian systems of government.

**Pre-Assessment**

* Encourage student discussion by using a [Think Pair Share](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/think-pair-share) strategy to ask:
* What do you already know about Canada’s government?
* What do you already know about the United States’ government?

**Interactive Learning Activities**

* Provide each student with a copy ofthe graphic organizer “Comparing Canadian and American Systems of Government”.
* Have students use the interactive[How do the Canadian and American systems of government compare?](https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/senatoreugeneforsey/inside_view/canada_usa-e.html) to complete the graphic organizer.
* Afterwards, go over the graphic organizer using “Answer Key: Comparing Canadian and American Systems of Government”.
* Divide students into seven groups and assign each group one area of difference between Canadian and American systems of government.
* Challenge each group to create one or two sentences explaining their assigned difference.
* Each group should come to consensus about whether their difference is more positive or negative for Canada. Encourage groups to have reasons to support their decision.
* Once groups have reached consensus, they should add their sentences to the board under either a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” symbol.

**Post-Assessment**

* Have students write a reflection to consider the following questions:
* What is the most interesting thing you learned about Canada’s system of government?
* When comparing systems of government in Canada and the United States, are the similarities or the differences more significant?

**Extension Activities**

* Students can watch this YouTube: [How does government impact your everyday?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9e3PuOzNaE)

**Additional References**

Canada. “How Government Works.” 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/how-government-works.html>

Canada. Parliament of Canada. “Learn About Canada.” [2020?]

<https://lop.parl.ca/sites/Learn/default/en_CA>

Canada. Parliament of Canada. “Our Country, Our Parliament: An Introduction to How Canada’s Parliament Works.” [2020?]

https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.894819/publication.html

Forsey, E. A. “How Canadians Govern Themselves. Chapter 4. Canadian and American Government.”. 10th edition. 2020. *Library of Parliament.*

<https://learn.parl.ca/staticfiles/Learn/assets/PDF/ParliamentaryPrimer/how_cdn_govern_themselves_10th_ed-e.pdf>

“Government and Democracy.” 2015. *YouTube*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgBBfM8SYPA&feature=emb_logo>

Gow, J.I. and P. Bishop. “Government.” 2016. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/government>

**Materials and Resources**

**Comparing Canadian and American Systems of Government**

**How are they the same?**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**How are they different?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Canada** | **With regard to…** | **United States** |
|  | Constitution |  |
|  | Languages |  |
|  | Head of State / Head of Government |  |
|  | Elections |  |
|  | Senators |  |
|  | Support of the House |  |
|  | Division of Powers |  |

**Answer Key: Comparing Canadian and American Systems of Government**

**How are they the same?**

|  |
| --- |
| * Democratic, federal states * Similar cultures |

**How are they different?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Canada** | **With regard to…** | **United States** |
| * Written (Canadian and British statutes) * Unwritten (traditions, customs, conventions | **Constitution** | * One written document |
| * Two official languages (French and English) | **Languages** | * One language (English) |
| * Queen (represented by Governor General) is head of state * Prime Minister is head of government | **Head of State / Head of Government** | * President is both head of state and head of government |
| * Elections every 5 years * No limit to how long person can be Prime Minister | **Elections** | * President can only be elected to a maximum of 2 terms |
| * Appointed by Governor General * Serve until age 75 | **Senators** | * Elected for fixed terms |
| * Prime Minister needs the support of the House of Commons in order to maintain power | **Support of the House** | * President and Congress may disagree but President remains in power until end of term |
| * Decentralization—broadened powers of provinces and narrowed power of federal government | **Division of Powers** | * Centralization—broadened federal power and narrowed powers of states |