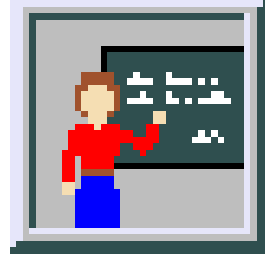


# Canada's SchoolNet Lesson Plan

## Speaker of the day: Canada's parliamentary system



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### Simplified rules of parliamentary debate

#### Parliamentary debate [\[1\]](#)

The role-play can be performed as a parliamentary debate with simplified rules.

Speaker	Objectives	Suggested time
Introduction by the Prime Minister	Present and define the objectives of the bill; Present the basic case for the bill.	2 minutes
First Member of the Opposition	Perhaps present a rebuttal; Refute the government's case; Perhaps ask the other side some questions.	2 minutes
Second Member of the Government	Perhaps ask the other side some questions; Respond to relevant questions.	2 minutes
Second Member of the Opposition [optional]	Perhaps ask the other side some questions; Respond to relevant questions.	2 minutes
Third Member of the Government [optional]	Perhaps ask the other side some questions; Respond to relevant questions.	2 minutes
Leader of the Opposition	Perhaps reject the proposed plan; Perhaps ask the other side some	2 minutes

	questions.	
Discussion period	No new evidence or points may be introduced.	9 minutes
Official rebuttal by the Leader of the Opposition	No new evidence or points may be introduced; Perhaps ask the other side some questions; Respond to relevant questions.	2 minutes
Official rebuttal by the Prime Minister	Respond to relevant questions.	2 minutes

### **Evidence**

Evidence must be fair and accurate. New points of evidence may be presented throughout the debate.

### **Ethics**

- Participants in the debate (called “members”) must use parliamentary language, following the rules of decorum.
- Members must be polite.
- Members must not insult their opponents.

### **Discussion methods**

- Members may ask questions and respond to questions addressed to them. They may refute statements made or provide evidence or points in support, all in the interests of construction discussion.
- New evidence or points may not be introduced during the discussion period.
- Speeches must not last longer than one minute each.
- The two opposing sides ask questions alternately.

### **Parliamentary debate**

- a. Teams: two teams of speakers are formed, one of which (the Government) supports the bill or resolution, and the other (the Opposition) opposes it.
- b. Each team is made up of two or three speakers (members). If the teams include three members, the Government team includes the Prime Minister, the Second Member and the Third Member, while the Opposition team includes the First Member, the Second Member and the Leader of the Opposition. If the teams

- include only two members, the Third Member of the Government and the Second Member of the Opposition are left out.
- c. Order of speeches (see above).
  - d. Parliamentary procedure
    - i. Members first address the person who presides over the parliamentary debate, using the title, “Mister Speaker” or “Madame Speaker.” All members must address the Speaker at the beginning of the speech. Participants in the debate and the public audience make up the “House” and the resolution is called the “bill.”
    - ii. Members always refer to the person whom they are addressing in the third person singular (for example, “the Prime Minister,” “the Leader of the Opposition,” “the Minister of Justice,” “the Honourable Member for Rutherford,” “the Second Member of Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition.”
    - iii. A member who wishes to speak stands up, stays in place, with hat off, and addresses the Speaker.
    - iv. Only one member may speak at a time in the House. As soon another member rises and addresses the Speaker, the member who was interrupted must stop talking and sit down. When the Speaker rises, all members must stop talking and sit down.
    - v. Members must not use unparliamentary language (in other words, offensive, derogatory or foul remarks, or insults to the House, the members, the Queen or any government official).
    - vi. As an option (the teacher can decide whether or not to inform the students of this aspect of parliamentary debate): in the House of Commons, heckling the speakers is permitted as long as the remarks are to the point, witty, brief and infrequent. Biting comments are allowed, but they should not be used simply to interrupt the opponent’s speech.
    - vii. Members must always be dressed in a dignified and proper manner.
    - viii. For purposes of this lesson plan, asking questions of the opponent during his or her speech is not allowed.
    - ix. Each member has the right to insist that the rules of debate be followed, and may cite the rule as soon as there is an infraction. A point of order may be raised when the rules of the House of Commons are violated, for example in the following cases:
      - Failing to begin a speech with the words, “Mister Speaker” or “Madame Speaker.”
      - Concealing the hands
      - Pointing at another member
      - Failing to refer to others in the third person
      - Using language that is inappropriate for a parliamentary debate
      - Accusing another person of lying
      - Failing to apologise when found guilty of violating a point of order or point of privilege.

*The teacher must make sure the students understand the rules before the debate begins. The violations of rules are written on role-play cards and*

*distributed during the discussion. The teacher can also make other cards based on these examples.*

- x. To raise a point of order, the member rises and says, “Mister (or Madame) Speaker, I rise on a point of order.” The member who has been interrupted must immediately stop talking and sit down (“surrender the floor”). The Speaker of the House then says to the member, “You have the floor to put your point of order.” Once the objection has been presented, the Speaker determines whether or not the point was “well taken,” or pertinent. The interrupted member must apologize before resuming the speech.
- xi. Normally, if an objection is “well taken,” the time for the objection is lost from the time allotted to the member’s speech. Otherwise, the speaker has the right to extra time to make up for the interruption. The teacher can use discretion in applying this rule, given the short time allotted for each speaker.
- xii. As an option (to simplify the situation, the teacher is recommended not to inform the students of this aspect of parliamentary debate): members may raise a point of personal privilege when they have been misquoted or misrepresented, slandered or insulted. The same procedure and time adjustments that govern points of order apply to points of personal privilege. If the point is judged to be “reasonable,” and if there was in fact a misconstruing of the complainant’s remarks, the Speaker allows the complainant to explain himself or herself (without introducing new evidence or points, however).
- xiii. When a member is called to order by the Speaker of the House, he or she must apologize to the House. If the member refuses or creates a disturbance, the Speaker may refer to the member by name (“designation”). A speaker who is asked to withdraw from the House cannot return before the end of the debate.

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[1] We are grateful to the Alberta Debate and Speech Association, whose rules of debate have been simplified for purposes of this lesson. Certain rules have been reproduced in their entirety, while others have been omitted, changed or reworded in the interests of simplification.

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MOT-CLÉ

REMARQUE

AIDE

ACCUEIL

ENGLISH

[Above: Keywords; Comments; Help; Home; français]

