

*Elections
Alberta*

BUILD THE VOTE!

An Election Simulation



Elections Alberta also acknowledges the contributions of ideas and approaches from the following organizations:

Elections Manitoba
Elections British Columbia
Elections New Brunswick
Elections Canada

Please be aware that Internet websites may change or disappear in the time between when this resource was written and when it is read. All Internet websites in this resource were current at the time of publication.

Teachers should check each website for appropriateness before using it in the classroom or providing the website address to students.

The developers have made every effort to acknowledge sources used in this resource. If any questions arise as to use of source materials, we will be pleased to make the necessary corrections in future printings.

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■ Election Simulation

The information, forms and templates in this Election Simulation resource are designed to actively engage students with issues they are concerned about, give them opportunities to stand as candidates for an election, explore political party affiliations, run campaigns and vote in an election.

- Information is presented in source card formats, designed to be photocopied and cut into two or four cards per page.
- Templates guide students through steps in the process that are modeled on Alberta election processes. Students who wish to explore the electoral process in more detail can find additional information on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca.
- The activities, templates and source cards can be applied in different contexts:
 - o To conduct an election simulation in the classroom
 - o To conduct an election simulation for combined classrooms at the same grade level
 - o To organize and conduct an election simulation for your school.

The process involves the following steps:

1. Prepare
2. Nominate
3. Register Voters
4. Select Candidates and Election Officers
5. Run Campaigns
6. Prepare Polling Stations
7. Vote
8. Announce Results

Election Simulation Process Cards

Each of the steps outlined on this page is detailed in individual process cards. These process cards can be used to help you structure and organize the election simulation or be provided to students to have them take responsibility for planning the election simulation.

Elections Alberta will provide an **Election Simulation Toolkit**, which includes the following items:

- Electoral Division Map
- Provincial Electoral Division Map
- Voting Screen
- Pencils (3)
- Paper Ballot Box Seals (3)
- Election Officer Badges
- Scrutineer Badges
- “Vote Here” sign (with arrow tip)
- Registration Officer Sign
- Poll Book (modified to include 6 pages)
- Statement of Poll (photocopy)
- Voter Template for Visually Impaired
- Guide for Scrutineers
- Guide for Polling Place Officials
- Guide for Use of the Special Ballot Poll
- Guide for the Conduct of Mobile Polls
- Guide for Candidates on the *Election Act*
- Information for Students on Provincial Elections (brochure).

Contact Elections Alberta to order the toolkit.

Elections Alberta

Suite 100, 11510 Kingsway NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5G 2Y5

Office Hours:

Monday through Friday

8:15 a.m. to 12 noon;
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tel: 780-427-7191

Fax: 780-422-2900

Other locations in the province can call toll free by dialing 310-0000 then dial 780-427-7191

An online booking form to request the participation of a Returning Officer is available at www.elections.ab.ca, under the *Education* tab.

Election Simulation Process Cards

1 Prepare

- Decide on the context of the election. Will you hold it in your classroom, with other classrooms or for the whole school?
- Establish a planning calendar with dates for the nomination of candidates, the campaign period and Polling Day. Use the Election Process Cards to identify tasks and the process for the election.
- Talk to teachers of the classrooms involved. Present information to your principal, letting her or him know what you are doing.
- Contact Elections Alberta to request the participation of a Returning Officer in your election. Or have a teacher act as the Returning Officer.
- Publicize your election in your community or with local media.

Source Cards & Templates

Election Process Cards
Calendar Template

2 Nominate

- Identify the roles involved in the election – candidates, election teams and lobby groups.
- Identify the roles involved in the election – Returning Officer, Registration Officer, Deputy Returning Officer and Poll Clerks.
- Work with students to prepare criteria for candidate nomination.
- Distribute nomination forms and assign roles. Or ask students to register their interest in roles as candidates, campaign teams, lobby groups or as election officers.
- Accept nominations of candidates.

Source Cards & Templates

Role Cards
Candidate Nomination Paper

3 Register Voters

- Have Registration Officers register voters by creating a list. This will become the List of Electors. Set a registration deadline and ensure that it is publicized.
- Assign each voter a registration number. Record this on the List of Electors.
- Establish an advance poll for students who know they will be away on Polling Day.

Source Cards & Templates

List of Electors
Advance Poll Process Card

4 Select Candidates & Election Officers

- Assign and approve final roles. Fill in tasks on role cards. Ensure that all students have a role and tasks to complete.
- After nominations have been approved, have the Returning Officer prepare a list of candidates.
- Have candidates appoint their agents and scrutineers.
- Provide time for students with the same roles to meet and assign specific tasks.

Source Cards & Templates

Candidate List
List of Election Officers

5 Run Campaigns

- Have political party groups and candidates start their campaign to obtain support from voters.
- Design campaign materials, such as posters, leaflets and advertisements.
- Have reporters interview candidates and election officers.
- Have lobby groups design materials to bring issues to the attention of candidates and voters.

Source Cards & Templates

Campaign Task Cards

6 Prepare Polling Stations

- While the campaign is being conducted, have election officers prepare for Polling Day. They should publicize the polling place locations and the date of the election.
- The election officers should also arrange for those students who know they will be away on Polling Day to advance vote.
- Have the election officers design their own print, audio or video advertisements to encourage voters to vote.
- Prepare the ballots for Polling Day, with names of candidates in alphabetical order.

Source Cards & Templates

Ballot Template

7 Vote

- Set up polling stations, depending on the level of participation:
 - o Classroom election – Establish 1 or 2 polling stations.
 - o Multi-classroom election – Establish 1 or 2 polling stations per polling place.
 - o School-wide election – Each classroom can be a polling place with one or more polling stations.
- Ensure that polling stations have ballot boxes and voting booths that allow voting to take place in private.
- Have election officers ensure that political parties and candidates do not campaign inside the polling station.
- Have scrutineers watch the process of the election.

Source Cards & Templates

Poll Book

8 Announce Results

- Have the election officers count the ballots. Sort the ballots into piles for each candidate, with one pile for rejected ballots that cannot be counted. Each candidate, their agent and scrutineers can also observe the count of ballots.
- Check the results against the total number of votes cast. Record results on the Reporting Form.
- Report the results to the Returning Officer, who will do an official count.
- Announce the results.

Source Cards & Templates

Reporting Form

■ Election Process Cards

1 An election officially begins when the government in power passes an **Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council** and the **Chief Electoral Officer** issues a **Writ of Election** to each **Returning Officer**.

The election period is a total of 28 days after the date of the Writ of Election. This means that voting day is on the 28th day. **Nomination Day**, the date by which all candidates must be nominated, is the 14th day after the date of the Writ of Election and **Polling Day**, the day on which voting takes place, is the 14th day after Nomination Day.

2 Each Returning Officer completes an **Election Proclamation**, which contains the following information:

- The place, dates and times fixed for revisions to the Lists of Electors
- The place and times fixed for nomination of candidates, and the date fixed for the closing of nominations
- The locations, dates and times for voting at the advance polls
- The date and times for voting
- The place, date and time for the announcement of the official results
- The name, address and phone number of the Returning Officer for the electoral division.

Find Out More

The responsibilities of election officers are described on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/597.htm.

Information that candidates and political parties need to know are found at www.elections.ab.ca/Public%20Website/political_participants.htm.

As soon as possible following the issue of the Writ of Election, each Returning Officer publishes the information on the Election Proclamation, a map of the electoral division and a list of polling places. This information is published in one or more newspapers in each electoral division and on the Elections Alberta website at www.elections.ab.ca. It is also posted in the Returning Officer's office.

The Chief Electoral Officer provides copies of the Lists of Electors and polling subdivision maps to each registered political party. Each political party is entitled to receive this information. Candidates receive this information from their political party. The same material is provided by the Returning Officer to independent candidates.

3 The Returning Officer can accept changes to the Lists of Electors, starting on the 5th day after the date of the Writ of Election and continuing each day, except Sundays and holidays. Changes can continue to be made until 4:00 p.m. on Saturday of the week before the opening of the advance polls.

These changes often include names of electors who:

- Were not included on the List of Electors
- Moved since the List of Electors was prepared
- Recently became eligible electors.

Changes to the List of Electors can also be made by electors who have registered online using Voterlink (www.voterlink.ab.ca), which is an online voter registration service provided by Elections Alberta.

4 A **candidate** is a person who is running for election in an electoral division. A candidate must file an Application for Registration of Candidate with Elections Alberta to be able to raise and spend money on a campaign. After the Writ of Election is issued and the candidate has registered, he or she may begin their campaign.

To be nominated, a candidate must be at least 18, a Canadian citizen and a six-month resident of the province. A person does not have to be ordinarily resident in an electoral division in order to be a candidate in that electoral division. A member of the Senate or House of Commons of Canada is not eligible to be nominated as a candidate.

A candidate must submit a completed Nomination Paper to the Returning Officer responsible for the electoral division. The Nomination Paper must be signed by 25 eligible electors in the electoral division and must be submitted with a \$500 nomination deposit.

5 Each candidate is required to appoint an elector as an **official agent** to manage his or her campaign. The name, address and telephone number of the appointee must be on the Candidate Nomination Paper and is posted on the website and published by the Returning Officer in a newspaper of general circulation.

Persons appointed as official agents must be eligible to vote under the *Election Act*, but do not have to be a resident in the electoral division where their candidate is seeking office. The official agent must consent to the appointment by signing the Candidate Nomination Paper. A candidate cannot act as an official agent.

6 A **scrutineer** is a person who represents the candidates at each polling station. Scrutineers watch election procedures in each polling station during polling hours as well as when the votes are unofficially counted after the polling station is closed.

Each candidate may appoint, in writing, not more than four resident electors for each polling station and Registration Officer's station as scrutineers to observe the voting in order to help ensure fairness. No more than one scrutineer per candidate per ballot box or Registration Officer's station may be present at any one time. A scrutineer may attend more than one polling station or Registration Officer's station. Scrutineers must take the Oath of Secrecy at each polling station or Registration Officer's station before performing their duties.

7 There are four types of **polls** that are used to conduct voting in each electoral division:

- **Polling Day polls** are open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election. Several polling stations can be located at one polling place.
- **Special ballot polls** are used for electors who are unable to vote on Polling Day or at an advance poll. Special ballot polls can be used by people with physical challenges, eligible inmates, candidates, election officers, official agents or scrutineers. They may also be used by people who live in remote areas.
- **Advance polls** are established by the Returning Officer in each electoral division. These polls can be used by people with physical challenges, those who believe they will be absent from their polling station and those who will be unable to vote on Polling Day, to vote in advance. Election officers, candidates, official agents or scrutineers can also use advance polls if their official duties may prevent them from voting at their own polling station on Polling Day. Advance polls are open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday prior to Polling Day. The dates and locations are published by the Returning Officer in the Election Proclamation. All electors who wish to vote at an advance poll must complete an Advance Poll Declaration.
- **Mobile polls** can be established by the Returning Officer for places like seniors' lodges and treatment centres. The hours for mobile poll voting are established by the Returning Officer, who consults with the staff at these centres.

The votes cast at all types of polls are counted after the close of polls on Polling Day.

The *Election Act* allows a candidate to briefly visit polling places during polling hours, but campaigning is prohibited. Students and members of the media are also permitted to briefly visit polling places.

8 A **ballot** is a list of candidates' names that electors use to vote. Candidates' names are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by their last name. Candidates' names cannot include titles, degrees, prefixes or suffixes. The name of the political party which the candidate represents appears directly below the name of the candidate. If the candidate is not running for a political party, the word "Independent" is printed beneath the candidate's name.

9 **Voting** involves the following process.

- The Deputy Returning Officer is responsible for confirming each elector's name and address by using the List of Electors.
- The Poll Clerk finds the elector's name in the Poll Book beside a consecutive number. The Poll Clerk then draws a line through the elector's name on the List of Electors, which is preprinted inside the Poll Book.
- The Deputy Returning Officer provides the ballot to each elector once their name has been found in or added to the Poll Book. The ballot is numbered with a corresponding number found in the Poll Book and the Deputy Returning Officer initials the back of the ballot.
- The Deputy Returning Officer then provides instructions to the voter to proceed to a polling booth and mark the ballot by placing an "X" in the circle opposite the name of the selected candidate. The ballot should then be folded and handed back to the Deputy Returning Officer once the elector has voted.
- When the voter is in the polling booth, no one else may enter or look into the booth to see the ballot. Voting is private and secret. Exceptions are made if the voter is physically unable to vote or cannot read the ballot. An elector may receive assistance after appropriate oaths are taken.
- Ballots may not be removed from the polling place. If a person declines to vote, the Deputy Returning Officer writes the word "Declined" on the ballot and places it in a separate envelope.
- If a voter spoils their ballot, they are entitled to receive a second ballot. The Deputy Returning Officer writes "spoiled" on the back and places it in a separate envelope. The voter is not entitled to receive any additional ballots.
- The Deputy Returning Officer checks the ballot without unfolding it to ensure the number matches and it is the same ballot provided to the voter. The ballot is then placed in the ballot box after the stub with the identifying number is removed.
- The Poll Clerk marks the Poll Book to show the voter has voted.

■ Planning Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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■ Role Cards

Returning Officer

Election officers are eligible electors who perform a specific role in the conduct of an election. Some, like the Returning Officer, serve electors throughout the election period in an office established in the electoral division. Others, like Deputy Returning Officers, Poll Clerks and Registration Officers, serve electors at the advance polls and on Polling Day.

The Returning Officer is responsible for enumeration and the conduct of the election in one electoral division. This responsibility includes recruitment, training and supervision of the front-line election officers who staff the polling stations.

What will your responsibilities be in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The Returning Officer does not vote except to break a tie. He or she must remain impartial. If you could vote, what would you look for in the candidate you would vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

Deputy Returning Officer

Election officers are eligible electors who perform a specific role in the conduct of an election. Some, like the Returning Officer, serve electors throughout the election period in an office established in the electoral division. Others, like Deputy Returning Officers, Poll Clerks and Registration Officers, serve electors at the advance polls and on Polling Day.

The Deputy Returning Officer is responsible for assisting the Returning Officer in conducting the election at a single polling station. The Deputy Returning Officer works with the Poll Clerk and issues ballots to voters. What will your responsibilities be in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

As an election officer, you are still able to vote, but you must remain impartial. What are you looking for in the candidate you will vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

Poll Clerk

Election officers are eligible electors who perform a specific role in the conduct of an election. Some, like the Returning Officer, Election Clerk and Administrative Assistant, serve electors throughout the election period in an office established in the electoral division. Others, like Deputy Returning Officers, Poll Clerks and Registration Officers, serve electors at the advance polls and on Polling Day.

Poll Clerks are responsible for maintaining the Poll Book, by recording electors who have voted.

What will your responsibilities be in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

As an election officer, you are still able to vote, but you must remain impartial. What are you looking for in the candidate you will vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

Registration Officer

Election officers are eligible electors who perform a specific role in the conduct of an election. Some, like the Returning Officer, Election Clerk and Administrative Assistant, serve electors throughout the election period in an office established in the electoral division. Others, like Deputy Returning Officers, Poll Clerks and Registration Officers, serve electors at the advance polls and on Polling Day.

Registration Officers are responsible for swearing in electors on Polling Day. They administer the oath to electors who are not on the List of Electors, so the electors may be added to the list and vote.

What will your responsibilities be in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

As an election officer, you are still able to vote, but you must remain impartial. What are you looking for in the candidate you will vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

Candidate

Who can be a candidate in an election? Anyone who:

- Is at least 18, a Canadian citizen and a six-month resident of the province.
- Has registered with Elections Alberta and the local Returning Officer
- Is nominated by a minimum of 25 qualified electors from the electoral division
- Files a \$500 nomination deposit
- Is not prohibited from voting for failure to file a financial statement or other violation of election law.

A candidate can be affiliated with a political party and run for office under its policies. If a candidate does not wish to represent a political party, he or she can run as an independent candidate. A candidate does not have to be resident in the electoral division in order to be a candidate in that electoral division.

What criteria for candidate nomination have you established for your student election? Fill in criteria and check each that you meet.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What are your positions on the issues of this election? Prepare a position statement.

Scrutineer

A candidate may have scrutineers in attendance at polling stations and Registration Officers' stations to observe election procedures.

They may represent the candidate at each polling station during polling hours and during the unofficial count after the polling station is closed.

Each candidate may appoint, in writing, not more than four resident electors per polling station and Registration Officer's station as scrutineers. Not more than one scrutineer per candidate per ballot box or Registration Officer's station may be present at any one time. A scrutineer may attend more than one polling station or Registration Officer's station. Scrutineers must take the Oath of Secrecy at each polling station or Registration Officer's station before performing their duties.

What responsibilities will scrutineers have in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

As a scrutineer who works for a candidate, you are still able to vote any way you wish. What are you looking for in the candidate you will vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

Candidate's Official Agent

Each candidate in a provincial election in Alberta is required to appoint an elector as an official agent.

Persons appointed as official agents must be eligible to vote under the *Election Act*, but need not be ordinarily resident in the electoral division where their candidate is seeking office. The official agent must consent to the appointment by signing the appropriate section of the Candidate Nomination Paper. The responsibilities of the official agent may include:

- Authorizing the decisions made during the campaign
- Acting as the contact person for the candidate
- Contacting the media
- Organizing and running the campaign. This can include getting volunteers, developing an advertising campaign and raising money for the campaign.

What responsibilities will the candidates' official agents have in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

As an official agent who works for a candidate, you are still able to vote any way you wish. What are you looking for in the candidate you will vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

Lobby Group

Lobby groups represent a particular stance or position on an issue. They can also represent the interests of a group of people, such as environmentalists or developers. These groups are sometimes called "third parties."

What stance or position does your group represent?

What responsibilities does your lobby group have in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What are you looking for in the candidate you will vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

Media

The media is interested in making sure the public has information on the candidates and the process of the election. The media will also report on issues that are important to the election and cover events that are part of the election campaign, such as debates or meetings.

The media often provides information about the candidates and the positions they and their political parties represent. They also inform the public about election results during and after Polling Day.

What responsibilities will the media have in the student election?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What are you looking for in the candidate you will vote for? What is your opinion on the issues of this election?

■ Candidate Nomination Paper

We, the undersigned electors, from the Electoral Division of _____,
(Name of Electoral Division)
nominate _____, representing _____
(Candidate) *(Registered Political Party or Independent)*
as a candidate for the election now being held.

Printed Name of Elector	Address in Electoral Division	Signature of Elector

I, _____, swear (or affirm) that I witnessed the signature of the electors recorded on this Candidate Nomination Paper.

Signature _____

Signature of Candidate's Representative _____

■ Candidate List

Name	Political Party

During a provincial election, lists of candidates are provided to the public by Elections Alberta.

Elections Alberta also provides a list of the Returning Officers for each electoral division.

Display this list of candidates and election officers during your election.

■ List of Election Officers

Name	Title

List of Electors

Electoral Division: _____

Polling Station: _____

Number	Name	Address	Telephone Number

■ Advance Poll Process

Advance polls allow electors who are disabled, electors who believe they will be absent from their polling subdivision on Polling Day, and electors who believe they will be unable to vote on Polling Day to vote in advance. Election officers, candidates, official agents and scrutineers, whose official polling day duties mean that they may not be able to vote at their own polling station on Polling Day, are also eligible to vote in advance.

Advance polls are open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday prior to Polling Day. The dates and locations are published by the Returning Officer in the Election Proclamation, which appears in newspapers. All electors wishing to vote at an advance poll must complete the Advance Poll Declaration. An individual whose name is not on the List of Electors must take the Oath of Elector.

- Prepare Advance Poll Declarations for electors who will not be present to vote in your election.
- Set a time for your advance poll.
- Have electors complete the Advance Poll Declaration when they vote at the advance poll. Enter their name in the Poll Book.
- Provide electors with a ballot. They should be provided with a private place in which to mark their vote.
- Place the ballots in the ballot box, which will be counted when the Polling Day results are counted.

Advance Poll Declaration

I, _____, confirm that I will not be present to vote on Polling Day because of the following reason:

- _____ (List reason)
- _____ (List reason)

I have not voted previously and will not vote again.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

■ Campaign Task Cards

Set Policies

Your policies are the things you would do if you were elected as the government. They tell voters what your political party and candidates stand for. You need to have strong policies so that people know what they are voting for.

- Policies can address issues and topics like education, environment, health, safety or quality of life.
- Create a policy statement for your political party and candidate.

Campaign Activities

Make a list of priorities for your election campaign. Your campaign activities may include things like:

- Design a logo for your campaign.
- Make posters or flyers to tell voters about yourself and your policies.
- Prepare a speech.
- Talk to a reporter.
- Participate in a debate.
- Conduct an opinion poll or survey.

Posters

An attractive poster with a great message will let voters know more about you.

- Create your poster with colours and visuals that will catch their attention.
- Make sure your message is short, to the point and meaningful.
- Think about the issues that are important in this election. How can you communicate your position and policies?

Press Release

Prepare a press release for the media and lobby groups who are involved with the election. A press release gives information to reporters so that they are interested in writing more about you.

- What is the main message or story for your press release?
- Why is your message or story important? What will interest readers?
- Keep your message short and emphasize the main points.

Debates

Debates can be an important part of an election campaign. They allow candidates to share their positions, policies and opinions and let voters, the media and lobby groups ask questions.

Organize a debate or question session for candidates. Have candidates prepare a short speech. Then organize a question and answer session. Set time limits for speeches and questions.

Opinion Polls

An opinion poll is a strategy that is used to find out what people think about something. An opinion poll can be used during an election to find out how people are likely to vote or the issues that are important to them.

Carefully plan the questions you would like to find out more about. Here are some examples:

- Are you planning to vote? Why or why not?
- What is most important to you about the issue of _____ ?
- What is the most important quality in a candidate? Why?
- What is the most important issue to you in this campaign? Why?

■ Ballot Template

Ballot

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<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
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Ballot

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Ballot

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<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	

■ Poll Book

Electoral Division: _____

Polling Station: _____

Number	Name	Address	Voted

■ Reporting Form

Electoral Division: _____

Polling Station: _____

Candidate	Number of Votes

Spoiled Ballots	
Declined Ballots	
Rejected Ballots	
Ballots Not Used	

