The Elections of 1957 and 1958: Educational Activity

The activities in this program encourage students to think critically about messages they see in the media. Students will evaluate and critique images, ask questions, and confer with their classmates about what they mean. A follow-up activity encourages students to create a visual identity for themselves and participate in a mock election campaign. Consult the online primary documents and website text as resources.

Additional Materials

- "Key Questions When Analyzing Advertisements" (pdf)

Introduction

- Begin by examining a number of logos: historic and current, corporate and governmental, successful and unsuccessful.
- In small groups, have students discuss how these images form an identity for the group they represent. What kind of conclusions can students draw from the images? Is it important where these images are likely to be found? (television, the internet, signs in their school and community, other social media, etc.)
- Encourage students to make connections between the logos and the groups they represent, and ask students to make value judgments about which logos they like or dislike, and why.
- Study and discuss the differences between campaigning styles past and present. How does Diefenbaker's style compare and contrast with the campaigns of other Canadian politicians?
- Give students the opportunity to study the primary documents and familiarize themselves with the concept of election campaigning.
- Encourage students to conduct background research to enhance this activity.

Refer to the following links:

- History of the Vote in Canada
- Young Voters
- Persuasion: Print Advertising and Advocacy on the Prairies
- History Matters: Making Sense of Ads
- Why are a donkey and elephant symbols of the Democratic and Republican parties?
- Elections Canada: "Canada at the Polls!" election simulation

Activity

- Introduce the concept of campaigning; explain that when individuals run in elections, they seek to create a public image which will appeal to the voters and represent their beliefs or ideas.
- Encourage students to think about how they would summarize who they are in a single picture or statement.
- Examine the logos of the political parties of Canada, Britain, and other Commonwealth nations. How are these images connected to the philosophy of the party they represent? Are there similarities between the logos of the Canadian parties and their British equivalents?
- Examine the logos of the major political parties in the United States. Why do their parties use the colours of the American flag? Why might political parties in Canada and Britain not use the colours of their respective flags in their logos?

- Examine political ads used during election campaigns past and present. Students should focus on identifying the purpose of the ad, who the intended audience is, how the group/candidate is "selling" themselves to voters, what the ad reveals or conceals about the group and what additional information is required to make a good decision?

Optional Activities: Mock Campaign and Election Simulation

- Divide students into parties, and help them choose an agenda to focus on, design a logo, and create a campaign line which summarizes what their party represents.
- Students can also create media for themselves, such as campaign ads, while highlighting the best qualities and larger ideas of their parties.
- Facilitate a simulated election where students vote for a class leader or a particular field trip.
- Additional resources available upon request from the Diefenbaker Canada Centre for extended learning opportunities.