

This activity will introduce students to the workings of the Cabinet and its Ministers, as well as the historical debate over nuclear weapons in Canada. A follow-up activity encourages the students to analyze the changing stance of Canada on nuclear armament and develop personal responses to the issue. Consult the online primary documents and website text as resources.

Additional Materials

- Argument and Response Sheets:
 - ["Arguments Against Canada Acquiring Nuclear Weapons"](#) (pdf)
 - ["Arguments in Favour of Canada Acquiring Nuclear Weapons"](#) (pdf)
- ["Tips for Administering a Classroom Debate"](#) (pdf)
- ["Post-Debate Discussion Questions"](#) (pdf)

Introduction

- Begin by explaining the function of the Cabinet and the Executive branch of the government.
- Give students the opportunity to study the primary documents and familiarize themselves with the nuclear issue in Canada.
- Encourage students to conduct background research to enhance this activity.

Refer to the following links:

- Eugene Forsey, *How Canadians Govern Themselves*, 6th Ed.
- Senate of Canada, *Canada: A Constitutional Monarchy*
- Canadian Heritage, *Canadians and Their Government*
- The Canadian Encyclopedia: *Bomarc Missile Crisis*

Activity

- The debate is set in 1963, as Diefenbaker's government confronts the issue of nuclear weapons.
- Explain the rules and process of a debate
- The debate should conclude with a vote on the issue and a decision by the Prime Minister.
- Work through the discussion questions which will help students to analyze the issue, their own views, and the role the Cabinet plays in decision-making.

Optional Activities

- Additional resources available upon request from the Diefenbaker Canada Centre for extended learning opportunities.