

Structure of the Canadian Government



The government of Canada is a constitutional monarchy. The monarch (king or queen) of the United Kingdom is the head of state and traditional symbolic leader of the country. The king or queen has little real power. The constitution of Canada explains how the government is organized. The constitution includes limits on the power of the king or queen of the United Kingdom.

Canada has a parliamentary democracy. In a parliamentary democracy, citizens elect members of parliament called MPs, who in turn choose the prime minister. The prime minister is the chief executive of the country and heads the military, enforces laws, and keeps the country running day to day. The prime minister also leads the parliament. MPs elected to serve for a certain amount of time, but the parliament can be dissolved and elections held again if the prime minister feels the government is not working well. If MPs believe that the prime minister is not making good decisions, they can vote to have new elections.

Canada also has a federal government. Power is divided between the central government and ten provinces. Canada's provinces can write their own laws and elect their own leaders. Parliaments in the provinces are organized in a way similar to the parliament of Canada. Instead of choosing a prime minister, provincial parliaments choose a premier.

Citizens of Canada have many freedoms, and they also have the right to vote. Men and women who are citizens aged 18 years or older may choose to vote. There are several political parties. The main political parties are Bloc Quebecois, Conservative Party of Canada, Green Party, Liberal Party, and New Democratic Party.

Canada has a level of personal freedom that is among the highest in the world. Citizens have the freedom to travel and trade. Personal property rights are protected by laws and enforced by an excellent court system.

Structure of the Federal Government Dominion of Canada



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Directions: Use your reading strategies (before, during, and after) to read and complete the questions. You may write or highlight on this. All questions must be answered in paragraph form to receive credit.

1. Explain the personal freedoms and rights of Canadians.
2. What type of democracy does Canada have? Explain how it works?
3. What other country have we studied with the same type of democracy?
4. How is power distributed in Canada? (Remember: Federal, Confederation, Unitary) Explain how the distribution of power works in Canada.
5. Like the United Kingdom, Canada is a constitutional monarchy. Explain what a constitutional monarchy is.