



## Global Voices Information Sheet

### Social media and government 2.0



#### Background

- In Egypt, social media helped bring down the oppressive leader Hosni Mubarak.
- Protestors tweeted news of military raids and violent protests to gain international support.
- One protestor said, "We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world."
- Social media makes it possible to spread information farther and faster than ever.
- In Canada, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government was recently found in contempt. This means that the Conservatives lost the trust of the House of Commons because they refused to share information about the costs of certain government programs.
- Harper was forced to resign, and a federal election was called, which will take place on May 2, 2011.
- The Canadian government fell, in part because they refused to be transparent and share information with the public.
- Social media has changed how people interact with governments. It can support a revolution and it can change ideas about transparency.

#### Key terms

- **Social media**—the use of internet-based and mobile technology to have conversations and create user-generated content (examples are Facebook and Twitter)
- **Transparency**—Honesty and clarity surrounding a decision-making process, when the rules and reasons behind actions are understood by those involved; free sharing of information to invite collaboration
- **Policy**—basic principles by which a government is guided; declared goals that a government seeks to achieve
- **Generation**—All of the people born and living at about the same time, at around the same age. Mothers and daughters are from different generations
- **NDP=New Democratic Party**—A federal political party in Canada
- **MP=Member of Parliament**—An elected representative of voters to a parliament

## Global Voices Secondary Educator Resources

### Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

### Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: Canada, elections, the Canadian federal election, social media, communication, political parties, and voting.
- Course Connections: The Arts, Canadian and World Studies, English, Social Sciences and Humanities, Technological Education.

### Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Computers and internet
- Global Voices column

### Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

### Knowledge and Understanding

1. What is Social Media? (estimated time: 15 minutes)
  - a. Write the heading "Social Media" on the board.
  - b. Ask students to define social media and write this definition on the board.
  - c. Following this, ask students to list all the forms of social media that are available. Write these sites in a list on the board (e.g.: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogging sites etc.).
  - d. Go down the list and ask students to explain the who, what, where, when and why of each site.
  - e. When this is complete, ask students to select one social media site they use in their life and write a reflection around how they use it and why they use it.

## Thinking

1. Reading Comprehension: Global Voices Column (estimated time: 15 minutes)
  - a. Pre reading steps:
    - i. Introduce the topic and encourage students to discuss what they already know about the topic, making prediction around what the column is about.
  - b. Reading steps:
    - i. Read: students must read the text independently, highlighting important points throughout the column.
    - ii. Ask: students must ask themselves what the story is about, recording five questions they are unsure of after reading the column.
    - iii. Paraphrase: encourage students to write point form notes in their own words around what the column is about.
  - c. Post reading discussion:
    - i. What are the main points of the column?
    - ii. What emotions did this column evoke in you?
    - iii. What problem is identified in the column?
    - iv. What questions do you have about the column?
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 10 minutes)
  - a. Ask students to answer the following five key questions of media literacy:
    - i. Who created this message?
    - ii. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
    - iii. How might people understand this message differently?
    - iv. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
    - v. Why is this message being sent?

## Communication

1. Canadian Parliament (estimated time: 30 minutes)
  - a. Ask students to identify the parties in the Canadian parliament and the leaders of each party.
  - b. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to choose one of the parties of Canada (ensure each party is represented).
  - c. Ask groups to look at the party's websites and learn about their campaign.
    - i. New Democratic Party of Canada <http://www.ndp.ca/>
    - ii. Liberal Party of Canada <http://www.liberal.ca/>
    - iii. Conservative party of Canada <http://www.conservative.ca/>
    - iv. Green Party of Canada <http://greenparty.ca/>
    - v. Bloc Québécois <http://www.blocquebecois.org/accueil.aspx>
  - d. When groups have finished viewing the websites, ask them to present their findings briefly to the class.
  - e. Hold a discussion around the upcoming election.

## Application

1. Keeping up with the Canadian Federal Election through Social Media (estimated time: continuous project)
  - a. In the Global Voices column, this upcoming Canadian federal election is referred to as the "social media election." Ask students to explain what this means, using evidence from the column.
  - b. Divide students into small groups (groups of 2 – 4)
  - c. Ask each group to select one of the following forms of social media: Facebook, Twitter, and blogging (Tumblr, Wordpress, Blogger).
  - d. As a group, ask students to do the following:

- i. Create an account as a group (Teacher Note: accounts should be named after the class and passwords should be the same for all groups so as to monitor the students' progress).
  - ii. Through their chosen medium, find the different ways they can keep up with the Canadian election (e.g.: following election candidates, "liking" different pages, learning from others etc.)
  - iii. Follow the election and gather all information learned on their group account (e.g.: on Twitter, students can retweet information, on Blog sites students can re-blog and post information and on Facebook students can like things and post interesting findings).
  - iv. Focus in on issues they care most about and look at the different parties' takes on the issue.
- e. Before the election takes place, ask students to present their social media project to the class, identifying the things they learned about the social media site as a source of information as well as what they learned about the election. At this time, ask students to explain (if they are willing) how they would vote after participating in this project.
- f. Ask students to write a reflection about the project, answering the following:
- i. Were they familiar with the social media site before?
  - ii. What were some new things they learned?
  - iii. How easy/difficult was it to share information through the site?
  - iv. How did they make sure the information they shared was from a valid source?

## Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

Free The Children [www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com)

Lead Now [www.leadnow.ca](http://www.leadnow.ca)

Move On [www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)

Canadian Parliament <http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/index.asp?Language=E>

New Democratic Party of Canada <http://www.ndp.ca/>

Liberal Party of Canada <http://www.liberal.ca/>

Conservative party of Canada <http://www.conservative.ca/>

Green Party of Canada <http://greenparty.ca/>

Bloc Québécois <http://www.blocquebecois.org/accueil.aspx>



**FREE THE CHILDREN**  
*children helping children through education*

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