

Video 9: What is good policy?

Curriculum Links

This video series fits within the following high school courses across Canada. Teachers are encouraged to explore further connections to other courses in their province or territory.

Alberta

- Grade 9 Social Studies
- Social Studies 10-1 or 10-2
- Social Studies 20-1 or 20-2
- Social Studies 30-1 or 30-2

British Columbia

- Social Studies 11
- Political Science 12

Manitoba

- Grade 9: Social Studies
- Grade 12: Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability

New Brunswick

- Civics 10
- Political Science 120
- Canadian Law 120

Newfoundland

- Social Studies 1201/1202
- Social Studies 2201
- Social Studies 3201/3202
- Ethics and Social Justice 2106
- Career Development 2202

Northwest Territories

- Grade 9 Social Studies
- Social Studies 10-1 or 10-2
- Social Studies 20-1 or 20-2
- Social Studies 30-1 or 30-2

Nova Scotia

- Citizenship Education 9
- Global Politics 12
- Advanced Global Politics 12
- Law 12

Nunavut

- Grade 9 Social Studies
- Social Studies 10-1 or 10-2
- Social Studies 20-1 or 20-2
- Social Studies 30-1 or 30-2

Ontario

- Grade 10: Civics & Citizenship
- Grade 11: Politics in Action: Making Change
- Grade 12: Canadian and International Politics

Prince Edward Island

- Grade 9 Social Studies
- Canadian Studies CAS401A

Québec

- Monde Contemporain
- Sensibilisation à l'entrepreneuriat
- Histoire du Québec et du Canada

Saskatchewan

- Social Studies 10
- History and Social Studies 30
- Law 30

Yukon

- Social Studies 11
 - Political Science 12
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The Big Question

What is good policy?

In this video we look at key questions to ask when determining the strength of a policy. Through the voices of [Action Canada Fellows](#), young leaders in Canada all involved or interested in public policy, students will hear questions that Fellows ask when evaluating whether a policy is good or not. The activities in this Teacher Guide will help students apply these questions to a policy relevant in their daily lives. More questions may arise after watching this video, teachers and students are encouraged to watch the rest of the Policy 101 video series to learn more. (Specific focus, [Video 6: How does public policy get created?](#) or [Video 4: How can YOU influence public policy?](#)).

Learning Goals

Upon completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the strength of a policy by asking critical questions.

Materials

You will need the following materials to complete the activities described in this Teacher Guide.

- Access to technology for video viewing
 - [What is good policy?](#)
- Printed video transcript PDFs (if using)
 - These can be helpful for students who need support following the video, for English or French language learners or simply for annotation purposes
- Writing surface for class viewing (white board, Smart board, chalkboard or chart paper)
- Writing utensils for writing surface
- Access to technology for student research
- [Appendix 1: Is this a good policy?](#) for each student
- [Appendix 2: Evaluating Impact](#) for each student (if pursuing Extension Activities)

Pre-Video Activity

Tackle this activity before watching the video.

Minds On

Whole Group, 20 minutes

1. As a group, discuss the following:
 - a. What policies exist in your classroom? *NOTE TO TEACHER: have some examples ready to help the discussion move forward if needed.*
 - b. What policies exist in your school? *NOTE TO TEACHER: have some examples ready to help the discussion move forward if needed.*
 - c. How do you think the government influences how we create and use energy?
2. For each policy identified, discuss:
 - a. Is it a good policy? Why or why not?

3. Ensure you take note of the policies discussed as these will be revisited after watching the video.

Post-Video Activities

After watching the video, dive into these post-video activities to further discussions and deepen learning.

Consolidation & Assessment

Whole Group - Pairs or Small Groups - Whole Group, 25 minutes

1. Take a moment to review the policies discussed in the Minds On activity.
2. In pairs or small groups, ask students to choose one policy that they will analyze further.
3. Hand out [Appendix 1: Is this a good policy?](#) to each student. In pairs or small groups ask students to complete the appendix.
 - a. While completing the worksheet, students will be asked to consider each of the key questions posed in the video's introduction to assess whether a policy is good or not. They will also be asked to give the policy they are analyzing a final rating.
4. Regroup as a class. Have students share their final rating of the policy they reviewed. Discuss together:
 - a. Why did they rate it this way?
 - b. Do they have suggestions on how to improve the policy they reviewed? Does anyone else in the class have suggestions on how to improve the policy?
5. At the end of class, ask each pair or group to hand in their worksheet(s) to assess student learning. Follow up with pairs or groups who may need more clarity.

Deeper Dive: Policy Impact

Pairs or Small Groups, 25 minutes

1. In the same pairs or small groups, students will now ask further critical questions to assess their policy's impact.
2. Hand out [Appendix 2: Evaluating Impact](#) to each student. In pairs or small groups ask students to complete the appendix. While completing the worksheet, students will be asked to
 - a. Review the questions posed by Action Canada Fellows that help evaluate a policy's impact and choose at least 3 questions to discuss.
 - b. Consider biases through the following prompts:
 - i. What bias might people have when thinking about this policy? What bias do you have? Critically think about this policy while consciously removing your own bias. Has your opinion of the policy changed?

NOTE TO TEACHER: If you think it is needed for your class, define and discuss bias before asking students to complete the Appendix.

Extension Activities

Interested in continuing the learning? Try the activities below.

Public Policy Creation

Whole Group, 25+ minutes

NOTE: This can be done in pairs or groups if preferred.

1. As a class, discuss the following:
 - a. What are some issues present in your school or community?
 - b. For each issue identified, discuss: could a policy help tackle this?
2. Choose one issue identified above that you think a policy could help address. Imagine you will be creating a policy to address this issue.
3. As a class, discuss how you would consider each of the key questions discussed in Video 9 to ensure you create a good policy.
 - a. *Does the policy solve a real problem?* Good policy should address a specific issue that affects people's lives.
 - b. *Is it based on evidence?* Good policy relies on facts and data, not just opinions.
 - c. *Is it fair and inclusive?* It should consider everyone it impacts, aiming for fairness and equal opportunity.
 - d. *Is it sustainable?* Policies that last and adapt to future challenges help society over time.
4. Review [Video 6: How does public policy get created?](#) to review the policy making process.
5. Write out the four general stages of policy development identified in Video 6. As a class, decide at what stage in the process you would look at each of the key questions identified in Video 9.
 - a. General Stage 1: A problem is identified
 - b. General Stage 2: Research and analysis of the problem
 - c. General Stage 3: Gain support for policy
 - d. General Stage 4: Implement the policy

Policy Review

Whole Group - Pairs/Small Group - Whole Group, 45+ minutes

Special thanks to Tyler Sack for providing the example policy below.

1. As a class, review the following background about access to post-secondary education in Membertou First Nation.
 - a. Here is what Tyler shared about the barriers to post-secondary education that the policy is looking to address:
 - i. Historically, accessing education in the Mi'kmaw community has not been easy and a sensitive topic due to the intergenerational relationship with the residential school institution, where Indigenous children were taken from their communities and families and subject to lower education and living standards, designed to assimilate Indigenous children into Canadian society. The intent was to eliminate all cultural identity and disrupt the relationship between elders and children by forcing them to speak English and French only, forgetting their traditional languages.
 - ii. The Indian Act had historically "enfranchised" any status Indian when they graduated from a post-secondary university or college. This means that individuals would lose their status as Indians according to the act, and would not be considered part of the Band and expected to live and work outside their home communities.
 - iii. After the Indian Act was amended so there was no discrimination for those graduating from Post-Secondary schools, students faced new forms of discrimination both directly and systemically, which discouraged students from continuing their academic goals.
 - iv. Canadian curricula was often based on learning styles that did not consider or accommodate Indigenous learning styles, which were often one on one and experiential in delivery.
 - v. Attending post-secondary schools often means that students have to live in urban areas, where they would have to move away from home and often experience culture shock where they need to adapt to new environments and navigating new challenges for the first time.
 - vi. Indigenous Administrative Offices often could not hire their own citizens because they lacked the credentials and experience. This created a work culture where many positions were filled by people not aware of and connected to the community or its history.
 - b. Do you face similar barriers to accessing post-secondary education as students in Membertou First Nation?
2. As a class, review the Membertou First Nation education policy:
 - a. Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey is considered a sectoral self-governing organization, they have taken over the responsibility and management of education funding for Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia that was previously managed by the Government of Canada.

- b. Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey was supportive of each member community outlining how they used the funding for education - including sponsorships for post-secondary education such as college and university.
 - c. To ensure everyone had fair access to this opportunity, Membertou's leadership developed their own education department with a policy that outlines who is eligible and the process for applying for sponsorship that can include tuition, residence, meal plans, books, and a monthly living allowance so students can focus on their studies.
 - d. Membertou has a strategic plan to educate all their members with a goal of employing everyone in the community to work for their administration office and business ventures.
3. Hand out [Appendix 1: Is this a good policy?](#) to each student. In pairs or small groups ask students to complete the appendix
 - a. While completing the worksheet, students will be asked to consider each of the key questions posed in the video's introduction to assess whether a policy is good or not. They will also be asked to give the policy they are analyzing a final rating.
 4. While completing the worksheet, students will be asked to consider each of the key questions posed in the video's introduction to assess whether a policy is good or not. They will also be asked to give the policy they are analyzing a final rating.
 - a. Why did they rate it this way?
 - b. Do they have suggestions on how to improve the policy they reviewed?
 - c. Would a policy like this help students in your community access post-secondary education?

About the Policy 101 Video Series

The Policy 101 Series breaks down public policy into digestible content for students through engaging videos, podcasts, and teacher guides. These modules empower students to learn the basics of public policy and critically analyze its implications. The series aims to sow the seeds for a future where youth play an active role in shaping the policies that shape their lives.

Appendix 1: Is this a good policy?

Policy being analyzed:
Does the policy solve a real problem? Good policy should address a specific issue that affects people's lives.
Is it based on evidence? Good policy relies on facts and data, not just opinions.
Is it fair and inclusive? It should consider everyone it impacts, aiming for fairness and equal opportunity.

Is it sustainable? Policies that last and adapt to future challenges help society over time.				
Final rating. Circle one.				
Disappointing	Needs work	Unsure	Good	Great

Appendix 2: Evaluating Impact

Policy being analyzed:

Review the following questions posed by Action Canada Fellows that help evaluate a policy's impact. Choose at least 3 questions to discuss.

1. Is this policy actually solving or addressing the problems that were identified in the first place?
What was the policy trying to do? Did the policy reach its goal?
2. Does the policy have a positive impact?
"Good policy makes good things happen and minimizes the bad things." (Cole)
3. What is the cost of fixing the problem and who is going to pay for that?
"...at the end of the day, you want to really make sure that nobody is left worse off and that you're really trying to improve the lives of people and tackle the problem at hand." (Ziana)
4. Are there unintended consequences to this policy?

Are the people who are impacted happy with how the policy worked?

Were the people impacted involved in creating the policy? Did they see good things happen?

What bias might people have when thinking about this policy? What bias do you have? Critically think about this policy while consciously removing your own bias. Has your opinion of the policy changed?