

What does the judicial branch do?

- The **judicial branch** includes Canada's courts of law. All members of the judicial branch come from the legal profession.
- The Supreme Court of Canada is the highest court in Canada. It has the final word on all legal questions in the country, including questions about the rules for making and applying laws.
- The judicial branch is separate from the other branches and acts as a check on their powers. It interprets and applies all law in Canada, including the rights of Canadians. This means that the judicial branch has the main responsibility for making sure the rights of Canadians are respected.

judicial branch: the part of government that interprets and applies the law by making legal judgements



How does the judicial branch

connect to peace, order and good government for all Canadians?

How do judges see their role?

The oath of office is to apply and define the law to the best of our ability. We are judges — we are not politicians. Our role is to interpret and apply the law. It is the most important part of what I do.

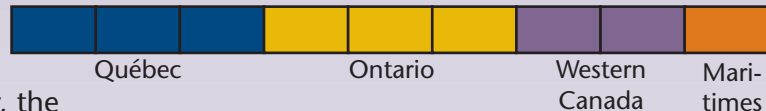
There are many challenges to the job. First of all, the questions presented are very challenging questions. They are questions of difficulty. To some extent, we deal with many of society's issues. We have examined issues of equality, discrimination, criminal process, social questions, and a whole host of other concerns.



Mr. Justice Frank Iacobucci served as a judge of the Supreme Court of Canada from 1991 to 2004.

WHO BECOMES A SUPREME COURT JUDGE?

The Supreme Court has nine judges from four regions of Canada.



For most of Canada's history, the PM and cabinet have appointed Supreme Court judges when positions became vacant — when a judge retired, for example.

In February 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper changed the appointment process. The PM and cabinet now nominate judges, who then go through a review by a committee of MPs. In 2007, the PM still had the power to appoint the judge of his choice.



This photo shows the judges of the Supreme Court in 2005. The court always has an uneven number of judges to prevent tie decisions.



Check for an update on appointing Supreme Court judges. What's the procedure today?



Steps to Persuasive Communication

In this chapter, you are exploring how Canada's federal political structure works. You have investigated the roles and responsibilities that government members have, and how they use the system to respond to issues that affect Canadians. For the chapter task, you will need to persuade others about your ideas on the question, "As Canada's prime minister, how would you respond to what you believe is the most important issue about government today?" What techniques will you use to be most persuasive?



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PERSUASIVE?

Remember the Nine on 9 team you met on page 14? They have some tips on persuasive communication.

Persuasiveness is the ability to convince someone of something.

In my opinion, persuasiveness means having the power to influence people to act and think in a certain way.

I had to be persuasive when I wanted a new computer. I persuaded my parents to let me buy it by explaining positive points. I told them that a computer would help me learn and study. I did the research into what a good computer could offer me and explained to them the many benefits it would have on my grades and standard of living. I was very effective, and now I have a computer!



Try this!

With a partner, brainstorm some ideas of things you would like to persuade others about. For example, how could you persuade a friend to attend a political debate, or encourage your principal to run a mock federal election in your school? What could you say to be most persuasive?

Think of one of the ideas on your list and use these steps to practise being persuasive. Share your ideas with a small group. Who was most persuasive? Why? How could you have been more persuasive?

1

State your idea.

What do you want to persuade others about? State your idea clearly.

2

Know your audience.

No matter who your audience is, always be friendly and have their best interests in mind. Try to show how your idea connects to them.

3

Support your idea with evidence.

You can't persuade anyone if you can't back it up! Find at least three facts, examples or reasons that show why your idea is a good idea. Make sure your evidence is accurate.

4

Choose formats that fit your evidence.

There are many ways to communicate your idea. Think about which ways would get your evidence across the best. You can use charts, visuals or other tools to help you communicate your idea.

5

Organize your points.

Organize your points in a logical order and present your most powerful point last. You can use charts, visuals or other tools to help you communicate your idea.

MY PLAN

Introduction

- State my idea.

Good point

Better point

Best point

Conclusion

- Restate my idea and summarize my reasons.

