

Canada's electoral system is referred to as a "single-member plurality" or "first-past-the-post" system. In every electoral district, the candidate with the most votes wins a seat in the House of Commons and represents that riding as its member of Parliament, or MP. This means that candidates need not receive more than 50 percent of the vote (an absolute majority) to be elected.

Any number of candidates may run for election in an electoral district, but each candidate may run in one electoral district only, either independently or under the banner of a registered or eligible political party. Each party may endorse only one candidate per riding. Candidates who run for election without party affiliation may be designated as "independent" or as having "no affiliation."

Source: Elections Canada:  
<[www.elections.ca/home.asp?textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/home.asp?textonly=false)>

The "popular vote" or voter share refers to the total percentage of voters that voted for a particular party.

Discuss the following questions:

- 1) Why is this system called a first-past-the-post system?
- 2) What could happen if there are several different parties running in an electoral division?
- 3) Use figures to explain how it might be possible to obtain a majority government (more than 50% of the seats in the House of Commons) with a minority of the popular vote or total voter share.

