

Quick Facts: Canadian Government

Canada is a constitutional monarchy:

Constitution:

- A legal document which identifies the principles (laws) by which a nation is governed.
- Canada's first constitution was the British North America Act (BNA Act)
- In 1982 it was renamed the Constitution Act

Monarchy:

- A system of government in which the head of state is usually a hereditary monarch (usually a king or queen)

Canada is also a parliamentary democracy:

- A system of government in which the public chooses politicians in an election to represent the general population in parliament.
- This is known as responsible government or:
 - o The notion that a Prime Minister and his cabinet must have the support or the confidence of the elected members of the parliament
- Canada's parliament is divided into two houses (bicameral):
 - o House of Commons
 - 338 elected members, each representing a riding (constituency)(seat) known as Members of Parliament (MP)
 - 1 per 100,000 people
 - o Senate
 - 105 members appointed by the prime minister
 - More or less represent four regions of Canada (ON-24, PQ-24, Maritimes-24, West-24, other-9)

Canada is also a federation:

Federalism

- A system of government in which political power is divided into different levels of government.
 - o The central (federal) government based in Ottawa deals with those concerns that affect the whole country.
 - Section 91 of the BNA Act:
 - Post Office, Banks, Criminal Law, Defence, Taxation, Interest rates
 - o Provincial governments that deal with provincial issues.
 - Section 92 of the BNA Act:
 - Education, Municipal Government, Hospitals, Roads, Marriage, Local Taxation

Top Jobs in the Canadian Government

Head of State: the reigning monarch of England

Right now: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of England (and Canada)

Queen's Representative in Canada: Governor General of Canada

Right now: Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Mary Simon

Prime Minister of Canada: Generally is the leader of the political party that wins the most seats in an election

Right now: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada

Three Branches of Government:

Executive Branch: responsible for running the government includes the prime minister and the cabinet (Members of parliament chosen by the Prime Minister to run the various government departments)

Legislative Branch: Responsible for creating laws that govern our country. This includes the House of Commons and the Senate

Judicial Branch: Responsible for applying and interpreting the laws of Canada. This includes federal and provincial courts with the highest court of appeal being the Supreme Court of Canada, which is also responsible for interpreting our constitution, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Political Spectrum

- The designation political beliefs on a continuum (line) from radical to reactionary.
- Comes from the French Revolution
- In Canada from Socialist (left) to Conservative (Right)