

What to Expect When You're:

Getting Started

Getting Oriented

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Staying Engaged

Election Day is October 21

# what to expect when you're ELECTING

Presented by  
The Samara Centre  
for Democracy

## 2 Getting Oriented



Welcome to the second What to Expect When You're Electing, a series created to help you navigate Canada's federal election. This week: **what to consider when deciding who to vote for.** Remember, there's more than one way to make your decision!

For more explainers, go to [samaracanada.com/what-to-expect](https://samaracanada.com/what-to-expect).

### LEARN ABOUT:

- The importance of weighing different factors when making your voting decision
- What a party platform is and how it's developed
- Why leaders and local candidates matter

### 1 What should I consider when deciding who to vote for?

It's impossible to know everything about the political parties, candidates, and issues in a federal election. But four things that can help get you oriented are:

1. Political party platforms
2. Party leaders
3. Local candidates
4. Past performance of government

This may seem like a lot, but once you start to learn more, you'll know which of these you value most!

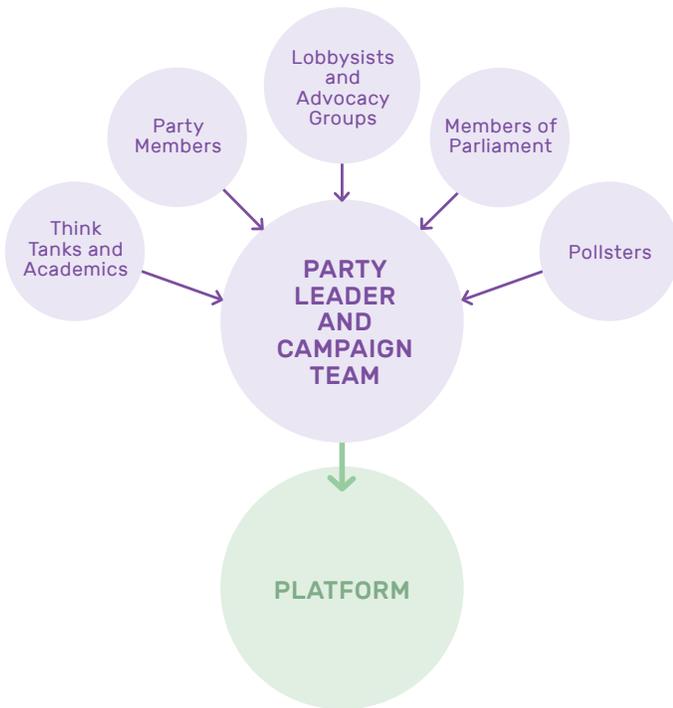
### 2 Okay, let's start from the top. What are party platforms?

A **platform** sets out what a party plans to do if its candidates are elected. It can cover big national issues, like climate change or income taxes, and more local issues, like public transit or a manufacturing plant. Candidates campaign on their party's platform. A party's platform gives you a good idea of their goals and values.



### 3 Where do platforms come from?

The positions and priorities laid out in a party's platform can come from many different sources:



Anyone who can vote in a federal election can become a member of a political party and vote on what positions they think the party should take on different issues. However, the **party leader** and their campaign team make the final decision about what makes it into the platform.

Some parties allow you to become a member even if you aren't yet a Canadian citizen or old enough to vote!

### 4 If platforms tell us what a party will do if elected, why should I care about party leaders?

Platforms present a plan for what a party hopes to do based on what it knows today. But who do you want leading the country when the unexpected happens? One of the leaders will become prime minister and represent Canada on the world stage, and the others will take up the important job of reviewing federal laws and spending plans.

### 5 Then why bother learning about the local candidate running in my constituency?

**Local candidates** matter too. As we described in [our first explainer](#), your vote goes towards electing your MP, who represents you in the House of Commons. Your MP votes on laws, reviews spending plans, and contributes towards running the country. Your MP can also raise local issues to the federal government and help constituents if they have difficulty accessing federal government services (like employment insurance, veterans' benefits, or immigration services).

**CONSTITUENT** = Anyone who lives in an MP's constituency

### 6 Why does the past performance of a party, leader, or candidate matter?

Elections give you a chance to decide whether the party, leader, and local candidate who won the last election did a good job representing your concerns and governed the country well. If they did, you may want to vote for them. If they didn't, you have the chance to vote for someone else.

## Still have questions? Want to learn more?

Visit [samaracanada.com/what-to-expect](https://samaracanada.com/what-to-expect) or email [info@samaracanada.com](mailto:info@samaracanada.com)

### Coming up next:

How to find accurate, reliable information about parties, candidates, and leaders

The **Samara Centre for Democracy** is a non-partisan charity dedicated to strengthening Canada's democracy. To learn more, visit [samaracanada.com](https://samaracanada.com).

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