

# what to expect when you're ELECTING

Presented by The Samara Centre for Democracy

## 7 Staying Engaged

Welcome to the final explainer in the What to Expect When You're Electing series! This week: **a look at Canada's new Parliament, what happens next, and how you can stay involved.**

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

### LEARN ABOUT:

- How votes translate into seats
- Minority governments (and coalitions)
- Ways to stay involved in between elections

### 1 What happened last night?

The ballots were counted and the candidate who received the most votes in each constituency now represents that community as its new Member of Parliament (MP). Here are the results at a glance:

	Number of MPs (seats in the House of Commons)	Popular vote (proportion of votes for the party)
Bloc Quebecois	32	7.7%
Conservative Party	121	34.4%
Green Party	3	6.5%
Liberal Party	157	33.1%
New Democratic Party	24	15.9%
People's Party	0	1.6%

As you can see, some parties received a lot more or fewer seats than their popular vote would suggest. Our current electoral system rewards parties with broad support from Canadians across the country, and can also reward smaller parties with support concentrated in certain regions and ridings.

Learn more about how our electoral system works at [samaracanada.com](http://samaracanada.com)!

### 2 What does our new Parliament look like?

#### Women

29% (2019)  
26% (2015)

#### Indigenous

3% (2019)  
3% (2015)

#### People of colour

14% (2019)  
14% (2015)

#### Immigrants

13% (2019)\*  
13% (2015)

\*Approximate numbers

### 3 Who won the election?

The numbers above indicate that the Liberal Party can form a minority government. In Canada, governments aren't won—the previous government remains in power if it can maintain the **confidence** of the House of Commons. This tradition exists so that our government always has the support (or “confidence”) of the majority of MPs, and by extension, the people of Canada.

If the Liberal Party can maintain the confidence of the House, the leader will remain prime minister and continue governing. If confidence is lost, another party will be given the chance to form government (and another confidence vote will be held).

The first test of the confidence of the House of Commons after an election is usually a vote on the throne speech (when the government first sets out its work plan).

### 4 What's a minority government?

A **minority government** means that the Liberal Party won fewer than half of the 338 seats in the House of Commons (fewer than 169 seats). If it forms government, it cannot pass legislation (laws) without support from other political parties or individual MPs.

### 5 What's a coalition government?

You have likely heard this term mentioned in the news

during the past week, and depending on the election results, you may be hearing a lot more about it! A **coalition government** is created when two or more political parties jointly form government after an election and agree to share power (and Cabinet posts) in order to have the support of enough MPs to maintain confidence. Parties can also cooperate by agreeing to pass confidence votes or by negotiating on an issue-by-issue basis.

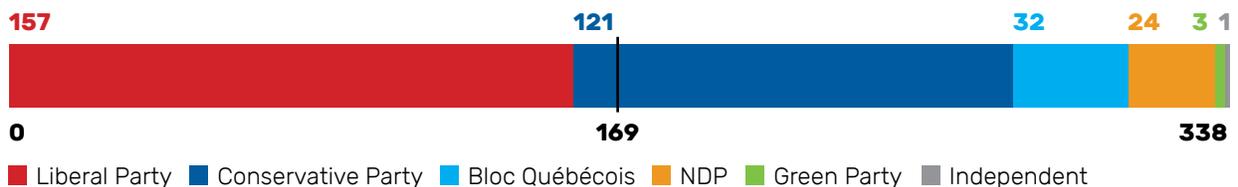
### 6 Okay, so once the government is formed, is that it?

In terms of setting up which party and prime minister will lead our government, that's it! (Although, let's be honest, that was a lot.) But you can still weigh in on political decisions. After an election campaign is when some of the most substantial opportunities to get involved in politics are open to you, because this is when the direction of the country is being negotiated and decided on.

If you take anything from this series, let it be this: **there are many ways for you to become involved in politics.** You can join a political party, participate in government consultations, support an advocacy group, protest in the streets, or simply let your MP know what you think about an issue. In our democracy, there is a place for you.

For more ideas on how to stay engaged, check out our [Political Participation Checklist!](#)

#### SEAT COUNT



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