

## Politics

Canada became a country in 1867. Our system of government is called a Constitutional Monarchy, where Queen Elizabeth the II is the Head of State, and a Parliamentary Democracy where we vote for the members of our government. Below you will find out about two members of government, Michaëlle Jean and David Shepherd, that have contributed to Canada.

### Here is a list of activities you will work on:

- KWL Chart
- Reading
- Listening / Video

Look at the KWL chart below. What do you already know about Michaëlle Jean and David Shepherd? Write what you already know in the "K" column. What do you want to know about Michaëlle Jean and David Shepherd? Write down what you want to know in the "W" column of the chart.

**KWL chart**

K	W	L
What I know about Michaëlle Jean and David Shepherd	What I want to know about Michaëlle Jean and David Shepherd	What I learned about Michaëlle Jean and David Shepherd

--	--	--

## Reading



**Michaëlle Jean (1957-Present)**

The Right Honorable Michaëlle Jean was the 27th Governor General of Canada from 2005-2010. The Governor General is the representative of the Queen in Canada. Michaëlle Jean was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She immigrated to Canada with her family in 1968.

Jean attended the University de Montréal, where she received a bachelor's degree in Italian and Spanish. She became fluent in five languages, French, Haitian Creole, English, Italian, and Spanish.

In 1986, Michaëlle Jean returned to Haiti to conduct research for an article on the island's women. A producer noticed Michaëlle Jean's work and invited her to be a researcher for a film about the Haitian elections that would air on Radio-Canada, the French language arm of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. When Radio-Canada hired her, she became the first black person on French television news in Canada.

With her husband, Jean-Daniel Lafond, Michaëlle Jean made several documentaries in the 1990s, including *Tropique Nord* (Tropic North), about the black experience in Québec, the award-winning *Haiti dans tous nos rêves* (Haiti in All our Dreams).

In August 2005, Prime Minister Paul Martin announced Jean's appointment as governor general. Jean became the first black person to serve as governor general. The descendant of enslaved Africans, she used her office to passionately emphasize freedom as a central part of the Canadian identity. Reflecting on her experience as an immigrant, Jean argued that it was time to "eliminate the spectre" of the two solitudes, French and English, which had long characterized Canada's history.

### **Coat of Arms of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean Governor General of Canada**



In the centre of the coat of arms is a sand dollar, which is a special talisman for Michaëlle Jean. Sand dollars are marine creatures found on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada and Northern United States.

The Royal Crown symbolizes the vice-regal function and service to all Canadians.

Above the shield, the sea shell and broken chain allude to the famous sculpture *Marron inconnu* by Albert Mangonès, displayed in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, depicting an escaped enslaved African blowing a sea shell to gather and call to arms his fellow sufferers around the whole island. For Michaëlle Jean this image evokes the victory of her ancestors over barbarism and, more broadly, the call to liberty.

Beside the shield are two Simbis, water spirits from Haitian culture who comfort souls, purify troubled waters and intervene with wisdom and foresight. Moreover, the Simbis' words are enlightening and soothing. These two feminine figures symbolize the vital role played by women in advancing social justice. They are shown in front of a rock set with a palm tree, a symbol of peace in Haitian history, and a pine tree representing the natural riches of Canada.

The motto *Briser les solitudes*, which means "Breaking down solitudes", is at the heart of the objectives Michaëlle Jean intends to follow. An annulus inscribed with the motto of the Order of Canada, *DESIDERANTES MELIOREM PATRIAM* (*they desire a better country*), encircles the shield, and the insignia of a Companion of the Order of Canada is suspended from the shield.



**David Shepherd (1973-Present)**

David Shepherd is an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) representing Edmonton Centre.

David Shepherd is a lifelong resident of Edmonton. He graduated from MacEwan University's music program in 1995 and spent several years working as a musician and studio engineer. He has also earned a BA in Professional Communications

through Royal Roads University in Victoria, British Columbia. He has lived in Edmonton-Centre since 2008.

Shepherd has spent five years in the public service with the Canada Revenue Agency, Alberta Health, and, most recently,

He has held a variety of positions facilitating public understanding of government policy and services.

David Shepherd is also an avid cyclist and passionate advocate for active transportation, working with community groups to improve safety and accessibility on Edmonton's streets and promote community engagement. Shepherd is an active supporter of Edmonton's arts scene, and has spent three years working with the North Edge Business Association to promote businesses in Central McDougall and Queen Mary Park. Through this work, he has developed a reputation as a powerful communicator and thoughtful commentator and contributor to politics and public policy.

### **Listening/ Video**

Information from the videos and audios will also be included in the quiz.

Watch the following videos on government in Canada and on David Shepherd

Students vote 2015 - Educational tools

Levels of Government

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7C8uDuhLqvg>

Government and Democracy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgBBfM8SYPA&index=1&list=PLJAwzEsZJnuOCkD2UVsUWHQGJ-V4R2Jyt>

David Shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nndI8WxW9PI>

### **Helpful Definitions**

**Constitution:** a set of rules that guides how a country, state, or other political organization works

**Parliament:** the lawmaking group of the government

**Head of State:** the chief public representative of a country, such as a president or monarch, who may also be the head of government.

**Constitutional Monarchy:** a form of government in which a monarch (example: king or queen) acts as head of state of a country

**Parliamentary Democracy:** is a form of government where voters elect the parliament, which then forms the government.

### **References**

*This is for more information. You do not have to study the references.*

The Governor General of Canada

<https://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=3>

Encyclopedia Britannica Kids

<http://kids.britannica.com/elementary/article-352996/constitution?>

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

[https://www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=mla\\_bio&rnumber=31&leg=29](https://www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=mla_bio&rnumber=31&leg=29)

<http://www.albertandp.ca/davidshepherd>

[http://archive.gg.ca/heraldry/emb/03/index\\_e.asp](http://archive.gg.ca/heraldry/emb/03/index_e.asp)