

*AB Grade 9 Social Studies and/or Social 30 – 2;  
Role of the Prime Minister in Canada’s Government*

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October 17, 2016

# PRIME MINISTER SONG; Questions for the classroom

Prime Minister: Language Arts question

Would you want to be the potential ‘Prime Minister’ that the song is talking about? Why or why not?

Social Studies;

## INTRODUCTION TO ‘MY PRIME MINISTER’ WEB QUEST

The italicized phrases come from the song entitled ‘My Prime Minister’, from the web site [www.arturostreasure.com](http://www.arturostreasure.com) . This song contains a number of references to the actual roles and responsibilities of a Canadian Prime Minister within government. If you understand the references, it may help you to learn and remember how the Canadian government functions and how a Canadian Prime Minister leads her or his government. See also; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAhTPKmeycl> )

*First lyric reference; ‘I always see you at the center’ (No web quest associated with this lyric)*

Slipped in a reference to the ‘political spectrum’ here. Check out this website to help understand where the idea of the political spectrum comes from: [www.daniellazar.com/wp-content/uploads/the-political-spectrum.doc](http://www.daniellazar.com/wp-content/uploads/the-political-spectrum.doc)

\*The political beliefs of Canada’s Prime Ministers have been more or less around the center of Canada’s political spectrum.

*Second lyric reference; ‘You could start a political party’ (See <http://www.mapleleafweb.com/features/political-parties-and-party-system-canada-history-operation-and-issues.html> to help you answer thenext 2 questions)*

1. What is a ‘political party’? \_\_\_\_\_

How is a political party formed in Canada? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are the rules, in Canada’s federal level of government, for a political party to have ‘official party status’? <http://thoughtundermined.com/2014/10/22/the-oddity-of-officially-recognized-parties/>

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*Third lyric reference; ‘They’d have a convention, so they could make you leader’*

- 2. In what ways are leaders of political parties selected in Canada? Give some recent examples. <http://www.bradtrost.ca/commentary/2006/11/24/the-process-of-selecting-party-leaders/>

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*Fourth lyric reference; ‘Your party’d win, you’d be the Prime Minister’*

- 3. Describe the process by which a person becomes the Prime Minister of Canada. List the steps in order, as specifically as possible. (The number of lines may not relate to the number of steps to be listed)

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4. The song doesn’t discuss the difference between a ‘majority government’ and a ‘minority government’. What is the difference? (See <http://studentsguide.tumblr.com/post/4528415419/majority-minority-coalition> , but take note; it is older. There are now more seats in the House of Commons. The basic principles are still true, though).

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*Fifth lyric reference; ‘to be a Member of Parliament’*

5. How does a person become a member of Parliament? (See page 4 of [http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Legislative/Canada/CanHC\\_Org.pdf](http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Legislative/Canada/CanHC_Org.pdf) - an excellent summary generally of the Canadian Parliament.

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*Sixth lyric reference; ‘I take federal offense’*

6. This line, like some others, takes a bit of license with the English Language... and in this case with Canadian politics too. ‘Federal offense’ is actually an American legal phrase. How do we describe Canada’s federal justice law? (See [http://www.slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=laws\\_canada\\_legal](http://www.slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=laws_canada_legal) )

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*Seventh lyric reference; ‘You should choose cabinet’*

7. What is the ‘cabinet’ of the federal government of Canada, and how is the cabinet selected?  
(See page 6 of the document listed under question 6)

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*Eighth lyric reference; ‘Sometimes you might pick a new Senator’*

8. Under what conditions might a Prime Minister have the opportunity to pick a new senator?

(Condition #1: See the beginning of <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/senate/> .  
Condition #2: See the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph under the heading ‘Senate Powers’, same web site)

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9. Why is the selection of Senators a subject of some controversy in a democratic system?  
(<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/senate/> - under the heading ‘Senate Reform’ )

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*Ninth lyric reference; ‘You’d make sure the money got spent’*

10. In terms of law, what is a ‘Matter of Confidence’ in Canada’s government; who gets to introduce a bill related to ‘confidence’, and why, and what happens when a law related to ‘confidence of the house’ does not pass a vote after third reading?

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/marleaumontpetit/DocumentViewer.aspx?Sec=Ch02&Seq=3&Language=E>

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*Tenth lyric reference; 'I think it's the House of Commons-sense'*

11. Canada has 2 'houses' of parliament (otherwise known as a 'bicameral' system). One house is the 'Senate', and the other is the 'House of Commons'. Which house is the Prime Minister usually part of? ( See page 6 of <http://www.parl.gc.ca/marleauontpetit/DocumentViewer.aspx?Sec=Ch02&Seq=3&Language=E> )
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*Eleventh lyric reference; 'should get life inside the sin bin' ( See <http://www.yourdictionary.com/sin-bin> )*

12. A non-government, but Canadian, reference here – 'sin bin' is slang for a location related to some sports' physical structure. What sports are they, and what is the more common term for 'sin bin'?
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13. LONG ANSWER QUESTION - How democratic are the ideals of the person whose point of view is given in the song? Explain your answer with reference to the lyrics of the song.

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