

# PRIME MINISTERS OF CANADA NOTE SHEET

(Last edited October 24, 2016)

(For reference, use YouTube music video “Prime Minister” on the Art Koop channel, and/or the ‘Final P.M. Video Storyboard’ Activity that goes with the Prime Minister song on [www.arturostreasure.com](http://www.arturostreasure.com) )

(This note sheet goes with a ‘Jigsaw’ style activity, in which small groups of students do research on a Prime Minister or Prime Ministers and then present their information to the class. When your classmates present their information to you, the work of the students not presenting is to listen to the information provided and to record it on the note sheet).

All the Prime Ministers of Canada through to the 2015 election (and probably to the following election) are represented in some way in the ‘Prime Minister’ music video. The note sheet that follows on the next page provides the order in which the Prime Ministers are presented in the video, but that is not the same as the order in which they became Prime Ministers. It ended up being that way for artistic reasons, because of how the available images went with the song.

The information gathered on the note sheet is in the categories of ‘Name of Prime Minister, and Name of Party’, ‘Term or Terms in Office,’ ‘Way into Office of Prime Minister’, ‘Majority or Minority government’, and ‘Way Out of Prime Minister’s Office’.

## **TERM OR TERMS IN OFFICE**

Since there is no ‘term limit’ for Prime Ministers in the way that there is for Presidents of the United States, Prime Ministers may continue in their governing role for multiple terms, and those terms need not be consecutive. Also, a Prime Minister is not elected directly by citizens for that role for a defined term, and in Canada a government may change before the maximum 5 year period is up, so the length of each term can vary considerably.

## **Way Into Office of Prime Minister**

Again, since a Prime Minister is not elected directly to the office of Prime Minister by citizens in the way that a President is in the United States, but is rather the leader of the party that is elected to the largest number of seats in the House of Commons, a person can become Prime Minister in a number of different ways. Most often, the leader of the party that wins the most seats during an election becomes the Prime Minister. On our note sheet, you could write ‘**Party Leader at Election**’. Sometimes, however, a Prime Minister may resign from his or her position, or may lose the confidence of his/her party, and a new party leader may be elected who then also becomes Prime Minister. On your note sheet, you could write

**'Elected Party Leader Mid Term in Government'**. A Prime Minister may die while in office, and then the second-in-line (chosen with the blessing of the Governor General) becomes acting Prime Minister until a party leadership election can take place. On your note sheet, you could write **'Chosen after previous PM death'**. Or, the governing party could lose the confidence of the House of Commons by losing a major vote, and a new leader for a coalition government could become Prime Minister in the middle of the term – **'Chosen Coalition Leader after Non-Con Vote'**.

### **Majority or Minority Government**

Since Canada has more than 2 political parties, it means that a **party may form the government by having the most representatives in the House of Commons, but may not actually have more than half the seats**. The situation described in the previous sentence is called a **'Minority Government'**, and it can work as long as enough opposition party members vote in favour of each major bill presented in the government. Historically in Canada, however, minority governments tend not to last as long as Majority Governments, and soon fall and lead to a new election. When a party has representatives elected to more than 50% of the seats in the House of Commons, the situation is known as a **Majority Government**. In this column, note for each term that a Prime Minister is in office whether he/she is a member of a majority or minority government.

### **Way Out of Office**

A person may cease being Prime Minister when

- His or her party experiences the loss of confidence of the House of Commons, and a new leader is chosen from a coalition government (**coalition takeover**)
- His or her **party loses an election**
- He or she **resigns**
- He or she **dies**
- The party he or she represents replaces the person as leader (**replaced as party leader**)

**Sources of Information** - The following sources have proven helpful in finding information about Prime Ministers of Canada; <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/FederalGovernment/PrimeMinisters/Gallery.aspx> \*\*\*; <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/prime-ministers> (This one is missing John Turner, at least); <http://canadaonline.about.com/od/primeminister/a/pms.htm> (Note; to this date, there are only 22 Prime Ministers. The last 2 rows are for future use); <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/when-the-majority-doesn-t-rule-1.728726>

Name of Prime Minister (provided), & Party Represented (please include)	Term or Terms in Office (First day to last day, each term)	Way Into Office Each Term	Majority or Minority Government	Way Out of Office Each Term
Example; Sir John A. MacDonald, <b>Liberal-Conservative</b>	1867.07.01 - 1873.11.05 1878.10.17 - 1891.06.06	Party Leader at Election Party Leader at Election	Majority Majority	Lost election Died in Office
Alexander Mackenzie,				
Louis St. Laurent,				
Stephen Harper,				
Sir Wilfred Laurier,				
John Joseph Caldwell Abbott,				
John Sparrow David Thompson,				
Richard Bedford Bennett,				

Name of Prime Minister (provided), & Party Represented (please include)	Term or Terms in Office (First day to last day, each term)	Way Into Office Each Term	Majority or Minority Government	Way Out of Office Each Term
Charles Tupper,				
Robert Laird Borden,				
Mackenzie Bowell,				
John George Diefenbaker,				
William Lyon Mackenzie King,				
Louis Stephen St. Laurent,				
Martin Brian (Brian) Mulroney,				
Lester Bowles Pearson,				

Name of Prime Minister (provided), & Party Represented (please include)	Term or Terms in Office (First day to last day, each term)	Way Into Office Each Term	Majority or Minority Government	Way Out of Office Each Term
Joseph Jacques Jean (Jean) Chrétien,				
Pierre Elliott Trudeau,				
Charles Joseph (Joe) Clark,				
A. Kim Campbell,				
John Napier Turner,				
Paul Edgar Philippe Martin,				
Justin Trudeau,				