



6

What does representative democracy involve?

Chapter Focus Questions

- What is the function of representatives?
- How do associations represent their members?

In Chapter 3, we saw how direct democracy worked in ancient Athens, where all citizens voted to make decisions. In Chapter 4, we looked at the Iroquois Confederacy as a form of representative government, where leaders who represented the views and needs of citizens made decisions on behalf of citizens. In this chapter, we examine one of the many forms of democracy: representative democracy. Representative democracy can be found throughout our society — in schools, clubs, organizations and governments. In **representative democracy**, decisions are made by representatives who have been elected or chosen by the people they represent. Representatives are **accountable**, or held responsible for, communicating with their people, making reasonable decisions on their behalf, and working to help them.

What are we learning in this chapter?

Many groups and organizations in Canada govern themselves with elected representatives. This chapter examines two of them: l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) and the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA). Through these examples, we will learn how elements of representative democracy provide people with a voice for their ideas, beliefs and for exercising their rights.

Why are we learning this?

Where do we find elected representatives? In classrooms? Sports teams? Associations? Governments? Elected representatives play a vital role in our society, since they speak on behalf of other people. Representatives participate in decision making and often take on active roles in other ways, to support the people or group they represent. Since all elected representatives work for the people they represent, it is important to understand what they do, why they do it, and how they function. Knowing how representation works is important because it is a way to participate in decision making.

What experience do you have with representatives? For example, group projects in social studies often require one group member to answer questions or present the conclusions of the whole group. What responsibilities does that person have to the group?

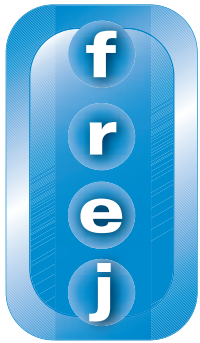


Chapter 6 Inquiry Task

SKILLS at Work

You will find research skills important in this task, especially formulating questions and drawing conclusions. Check out the Skills Centre for research tips.

- formulate questions to be answered through research
- draw and support conclusions based on researched information



Conducting an interview about the responsibilities of elected representatives

Introduction

When groups need to elect representatives, they often form a “search team.” A search team looks for people who would like to be candidates. A **candidate** is a person who wishes to be voted for or chosen to represent a group of people.

To begin the process, search teams need to research and identify what they believe are important general characteristics for an effective elected representative. Often search teams will compile a questionnaire, based on these identified characteristics, and will use the questionnaire to interview people who want to be candidates.

The task

Part 1: Researching

Your first job is to choose an elected representative in a group, organization, or government and e-mail that person asking questions about

- what responsibilities they have as representatives
- how they demonstrate they are taking care of the needs of those they represent
- the qualities of a good representative

Part 2: Looking at responses

Critically look at response to your e-mail, and the responses sent to your classmates, and decide what are the common main tasks of any elected representative.

Part 3: Creating interview questions

Imagine that you are a member of a search team. A number of people have expressed interest in representing your organization. The next step is to interview the candidates. Create interview questions that will help you know what a candidate believes is important about his or her role as a representative and how that responsibility will be carried out.

Part 4: Role playing

With a partner who is acting as an elected representative, role play being on a search team and asking your interview questions. Then, switch roles and answer your partner's interview questions. You can use this experience to make changes to the questions on your interview.

You will be evaluated on your e-mail, your interview questions and your responses when you are being interviewed.

Things to think about before starting the task

- identifying an elected representative you would like to interview
- finding an e-mail address for that representative
- formulating your own vision of what being an elected representative involves



Turn the page to see how Alexandre went about this task. How can what he did provide a model for you? What would you do differently than Alexandre?

SKILLS at Work

E-mail can be a good way to contact people. It lets them respond at their convenience, when they have time to think through your questions. How could you find the e-mail address of an elected representative?

- seek responses to inquiries from various authorities through electronic media



Getting Started

How has Alexandre gone about this task?

Part 1: Researching

Alexandre asked his parents for examples of organizations he could contact with elected representatives. They had several suggestions, including

- the community association for their neighbourhood
- the basketball association for Alexandre's league
- the 4-H council for their region

Alexandre has decided to contact the president of the community association.



To: Patricia Li, president, South Acres Community Association

From: Alexandre, Grade 6 student

Dear Mrs. Li:

I am doing a social studies project about the responsibilities of elected representatives. Could you please help me by answering these questions?

1. What are your responsibilities, as an elected representative of the community association?
2. What makes a good representative?

What would you add to Alexandre's list of questions?

Part 2: Looking at responses

Alexandre's group is examining the responses they got from their e-mail inquiries. What are some other ways they could share their information? What's an effective way for you to share information with your classmates?

How do you use technology at your school to share information?



Part 3: Creating interview questions

Alexandre has reviewed the responses he and his classmates received from the wide variety of elected representatives they contacted. With this background, Alexandre is working on questions he would ask a person who wanted to become a representative.

Interview Questions for People Who Want to Become Representatives

*How would you
~~Do you think it's important to stay in touch with the people who elect you?~~*

How does Alexandre's change make his question more effective?

Part 4: Role playing

Alexandre is asking Eric the interview questions he has formulated. Find out more about interview skills on page 165.



SKILLS at Work

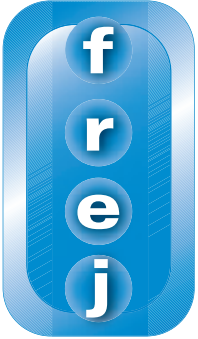
What steps can you take to listen carefully and respond appropriately during an interview? Review these skills before you complete this part of the task.

- respond appropriately to comments and questions
- listen to others to understand their perspectives



Communicate

What is the function of representatives?



What's important?

Recognize that representatives express the ideas and vision of the people they represent.

The School Rules Project

Sharn attends Crawford Plains School in Edmonton. In September, her school set up a student council. Each class from Grade 1 to Grade 6 chose a boy and a girl to represent them on the council.

The school staff wanted students to create their own school rules. So, the representatives collected “rule ideas” from their classmates. They brought the ideas to council, where discussion was intense. Finally, they agreed to a list that used language students of all grades could understand.

I can do my very best by

- doing what I’m asked
- taking my homework home and turning it in on time
- studying
- celebrating good readers and those who practise reading
- spending time in class wisely and productively

Pause

How was keeping the exact word choices of the students part of the democratic process?

Some teachers wanted to change the rule about “doing what I’m asked” by adding “the first time I’m asked.” They decided, however, to support the exact words the representatives had chosen. Their reason? Allowing students to create and abide by their own choices was part of a democratic process.

What's important?

Recognize that representatives need to make decisions that consider the needs of everybody.

Choosing Special Days

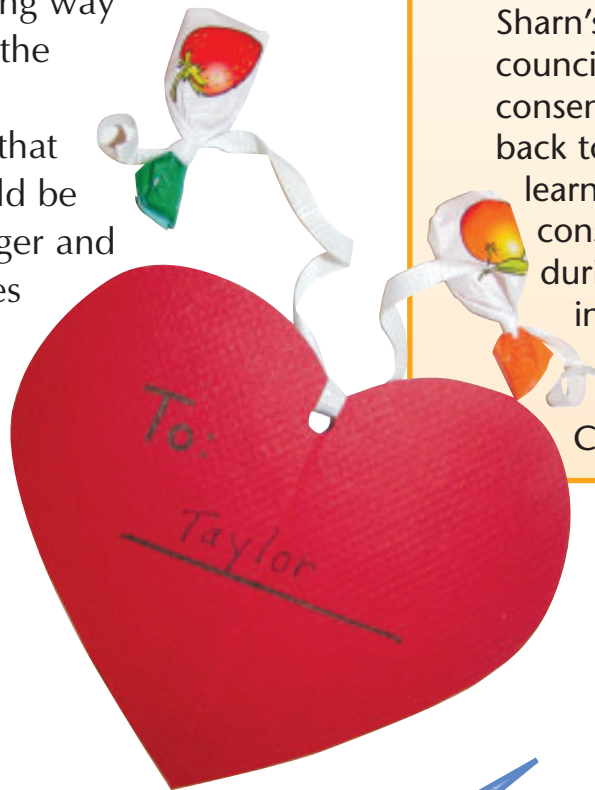
Later in the school year, Sharn's school council thought it would be really exciting to have students choose "special days." Once again, the representatives sprang into action. They collected their classmates' red hot ideas and presented them to the school council.

Pajama Day? Crazy Hair Day? Sometimes a representative presented an idea in such an exciting way that everybody agreed. Sometimes the representatives negotiated and combined great ideas. They found that they needed to consider what would be best for all the students, both younger and older. Sometimes the representatives simply let an idea drop if it wouldn't work for everybody.

After final decisions were made about special days, the representatives had to make plans and communicate what was happening. Often the older representatives helped the younger students write announcements.

Pause

1. What skills for participating in groups has Sharn demonstrated as a representative? Think back to the personal guideline you created in Chapter 1.
2. In what way did Sharn's student council use consensus? Think back to what you learned about consensus during your investigation of the Iroquois Confederacy.



I wanted to have a bake sale for Valentine's Day, but we realized that it would take a lot of time to organize and a lot of dough! So, we decided to have a candygram sale instead. I didn't really mind dropping my bake sale idea. Perhaps we can do it another time.



What's important?

Recognize that representatives are accountable for communicating with the people they represent.

Think About the Task

Read what Brittany says about her job as a representative for patrols at her school. What communication skills can you identify that she needs as a representative? What could you add to your interview questions for candidates, based on Brittany's experience?

This year, I was chosen as a school patrol captain. That involves working out a schedule and being responsible for up to 15 patrollers. An important part of my job is to make sure that there is always somebody on the job, or to fill in myself — so I've often patrolled twice a day.

Patrollers have really important jobs and we must be very reliable. When somebody starts to miss a lot of shifts, I talk with them and try to encourage them. I remind them how important our job is. It's also important to know when I can't help and need support from a teacher.

Communication is important. I represent the patrollers, so I need to know if there is a continuing problem that needs sorting out. I get their ideas about solving the problem. When a solution is worked out, I let everybody know what has been decided — including the patrollers, students, parents and school staff. That is sometimes done through the school newsletter. I like the way a representative is responsible for making communication happen in many different ways.

This job is fun. I get to meet and know new kids and be a **role model**. And, I'm really looking forward to the patrollers' picnic!



Pause

How is Brittany accountable to: all the students in the school? the patrollers? teachers? parents?

How do associations represent their members?

What's important?

Recognize that associations have a unique role in representing specific groups of people.

A Community Association

Mr. Grundy stood in front of the class with an open dictionary in his hand. “We will be learning today about associations, — an association is a group of organizations or people united for a joint purpose, who elect leaders to carry out the **association's** aims.”

Snapping the dictionary shut, he continued. “Let me tell you about a brand new association. My wife and I live in a newly developed community that has many young families. Getting into recreation programs is a real problem. ”

“So,” he continued, “a community meeting was organized yesterday to get people together to talk about our community's needs. There seemed to be lots of concerns. Representatives from a tai chi club and a judo club said they would hold community classes if they could find a room. A group of young mothers wanted to start a play group. After a lot of discussion, it was decided to start an association and elect representatives to look into our needs and come up with some ideas.”

He smiled. “Guess who is standing in front of you now?” The class looked really puzzled — wasn't he Mr. Grundy, their teacher? “You are looking at the new Wildrose Community Association's first-ever president, as of last night. It's going to be exciting.



Pause

What factors make Mr. Grundy's group an association?
What could this new association do to help support its members?



How does l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) provide its members with a voice?

The ACFA Organization

L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) has represented Alberta's Francophones since 1925. The ACFA has a membership of more than 5000 Francophones across the province. It officially speaks for Francophones in Alberta. ACFA representatives meet with government officials to present the Francophone perspective and to ensure that the rights of Francophones are respected. The ACFA supports the initiatives of different Francophone organizations, from many communities in Alberta, in several areas of activity.

An important association for Francophones in Alberta is the ACFA.

Representing the members of an association is always a challenging job. Representatives must listen to the many voices coming from the group. These voices express different opinions, reflecting a variety of needs and aspirations. For ACFA representatives, these voices include a growing number of Francophone newcomers from many different countries. To meet the growing challenge of its diverse membership, the ACFA began in 2007 to review its aims as an organization.

Local ACFA Decision Making

The ACFA has offices or branches in 14 centres throughout Alberta in four geographic regions. Each branch works closely with other local and regional Francophone organizations to provide a wide range of services to the French-speaking and non-French-speaking residents of the area. Some branches organize local events such as la cabane à sucre (maple sugar festival), le Ciné-Club (French film club), and la Journée volleyball (volleyball tournament).



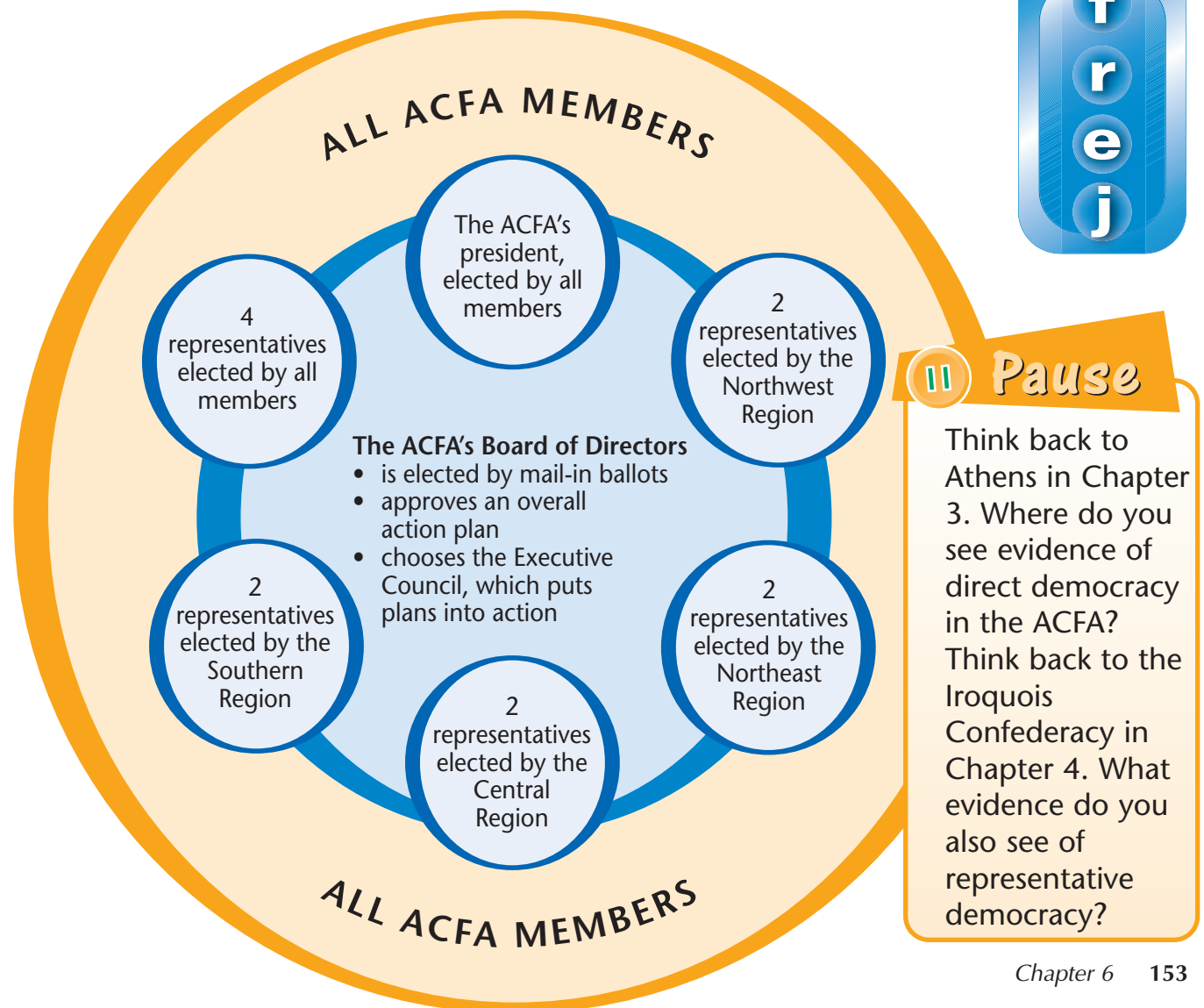
Provincial ACFA Decision Making

The ACFA's **Annual General Meeting** provides an opportunity for members to review the previous year's activities and discuss issues. The members of the ACFA are the **electorate** of the ACFA: the people who elect the association's representatives.

ACFA members elect a **Board of Directors**, with 13 representatives: 2 from their region, a president, and 4 **members at large**. Members at large are representatives from anywhere in the province. At one time, elections were held during the Annual General Meeting, but this meant only those who attended the meeting could vote. Now, each member has a mail-in ballot. How does this new procedure reflect fairness and equity?

The ACFA's Board of Directors approves an overall action plan and chooses the members of the Executive Council. The Executive Council makes sure the plans are put into action.

How do ACFA members elect their representatives?



What's important?

Understand why the ACFA has regional offices throughout Alberta.

SKILLS at Work

How does this map reflect the system for electing ACFA representatives?

- interpret maps to broaden understanding of issues



Geographic Thinking

ACFA Centres, 2008



The regional organization of ACFA and its Board of Directors provide easy access for ACFA members, and help ensure that regional concerns are heard and dealt with.

Pause

Which fundamental freedom in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that associations such as the ACFA can exist? Review the rights and freedoms in the Charter on pages 124 to 129.

What's important?

Understand how the ACFA helps Francophones exercise their historical and constitutional rights.

A Monument to Alberta Francophone History

In 2007, a monument was put up on the grounds of the Provincial Legislature in Edmonton on behalf of all Francophone Albertans. It is a sculpture called “L’Empreinte francophone,” or “The Francophone Imprint.” This monument is an example of how the democratic decision-making process works in the ACFA.

Issuing the Proposal

While the ACFA usually initiates its own projects, it considered a proposal from the Honourable Ken Kowalski, the speaker or chairperson of Alberta’s Legislative Assembly in 2007. Wishing to recognize the Alberta Francophone community, he proposed that the ACFA create a monument to commemorate the contributions of Alberta Francophones to the building of the province.

The Decision-Making Process

First, the members of ACFA’s elected Board of Directors discussed the project. They decided it would fit their aim of promoting the Francophone community, and securing recognition for its historic and current presence in Alberta. Next, the members of the Executive Council got to work. They organized a special committee for the project that included historians, community members, and an artist, Monsieur Herman Poulin from St. Paul.

Process

When a project is taken on by an organization that represents people, it requires a detailed process and the involvement and support of the membership.



These are members of the ACFA’s Board of Directors in 2007. Because they represent Francophones from across Alberta, these people provide a way for Francophones to make decisions, organize events, and speak as a group.

Following the Flow

M. Poulin worked on several drawings, incorporating or using the ideas of the special committee. These were submitted to the committee for approval. In the meantime, the Executive Council sponsored a province-wide Francophone school competition to name the monument. The special committee chose their top three sculpture designs and submitted their recommendations to the Executive Council. The Executive Council made the final choice: a union of the fleur-de-lis representing Francophone heritage and a wild rose representing Alberta.

Next, the Executive Committee organized a fund-raising campaign to pay for the monument. This included getting it cast in bronze in the United States.

The Monument Takes Shape

As M. Poulin worked on the monument, he noticed flakes of clay falling to the ground. These gave him an idea. These flakes were sent to Francophone communities throughout Alberta and many Francophones put their thumbprints into the clay. The monument became known as “L’Empreinte francophone,” or “The Francophone Imprint.” The monument was then cast and proudly placed on the Legislature grounds. In talking about the monument, Jean Johnson, the ACFA’s president, expressed the hope that people visiting the monument would touch it and connect with the hands and the imprints of the many Francophones of Alberta who helped shape our province.

This is “L’Empreinte francophone.” How does this monument represent Francophone history and identity in Alberta? As part of your answer, think about the role of the ACFA in the monument’s development, and how the ACFA provides its members with a voice.



These Francophone students attended the ceremony where the monument was unveiled. How did the ACFA provide them with a voice in decisions about the monument?



La Cité francophone

The ACFA helped the Francophone community in Edmonton establish “La Cité francophone,” a central location for services in French such as a theatre, bookstore, daycare, restaurant, employment centre and school board offices.

ACFA: A Voice for Francophones in Alberta

What is the purpose of l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta?



- to advance and broaden the vision of Alberta's entire Francophone community
- to bring together, plan, mobilize, support and inspire the vital forces of Alberta's Francophone community
- to defend the official language rights of the Francophone citizens of Alberta
- to provide a voice on issues that concern the Francophone community of Alberta as a whole

How does the ACFA make decisions?

- Members discuss issues and activities at an Annual General Meeting.
- Members who are 16 years of age and older can attend the Annual General Meeting and vote.
- The vote of every member is equally important.
- Members elect representatives to the Board of Directors. These include representatives for each region, members at large, and a provincial president.

How do ACFA representatives keep connected with their members?

- regular regional and annual meetings
- the ACFA website
- the weekly newspaper *Le Franco*
- centres in each region
- personal contact — e.g., attendance at ACFA events
- regular information bulletins mailed to members
- regular e-mail updates to members regarding coming events across Alberta

What are other ways that the ACFA supports the Francophone community?

- organizes events and supports initiatives that foster and promote Francophone identity
- provides services in the French language, such as volunteer workshops for Francophone organizations and workers
- supports Francophone businesses and job-seekers
- supports Francophone education, a constitutional right
- coordinates the design and **implementation** of an overall development plan for the Francophone community in Alberta
- initiates projects in areas judged by the community to be priorities – e.g. health care, historical projects — and negotiates on its members' behalf with various levels of government to make their projects come about.



Think About the Task

What importance might personal attendance at events have for representatives? What importance might newspapers and other media have? Formulate questions based on your conclusions for your candidate interview.

The ACFA publishes *Le Franco*, a French-language newspaper in Alberta. How does a newspaper provide opportunities for members of the ACFA to influence the association's elected representatives?

The ACFA in Action!

SKILLS at Work

Use the images on this page and the next to identify ways the ACFA provides a voice for Francophones in Alberta. How do the activities represented here provide opportunities for ACFA members to foster their identity? To contact their representatives? To communicate with all Albertans?

- critically evaluate ideas, information and positions



This is a poster for Accès Emploi (Access Employment), an organization that promotes training and job opportunities for Francophones in Alberta. The ACFA supports many organizations such as this one.

freedoms
representation
equity
justice

ACFA's Board of Directors meets with many kinds of decision makers, including business people and government officials. This shows a meeting between the ACFA and Alberta's premier in 2007. ACFA president Jean Johnson has on a blue striped tie. Premier Ed Stelmach is standing to the left of M. Johnson.





In this photo, ACFA members enjoy a *cabane à sucre*, which celebrates the making of maple syrup in the spring. A ribbon of maple syrup is poured on snow, where it becomes thick. It is then rolled up on a spoon or a stick – *et voilà*, a delicious traditional treat!

Centre de Santé Communautaire Saint-Thomas (Saint Thomas Community Health Centre) in Edmonton is an example of how the ACFA exercises the constitutional rights of Francophones as one of Canada's official language groups. The centre — the first of its kind in Alberta — offers bilingual health services. The idea for the centre came from the ACFA's members, who voiced a need for health services in the French language. The ACFA represented its members' needs to the City of Edmonton, Alberta's government and Canada's government. The centre opened in 2006.



Each year, the ACFA sponsors *La Fête franco-albertaine*, an event where people gather to enjoy Francophone performers. It is held in a different region of Alberta each year, and everyone is welcome. This photo shows *La Fête* in Jasper.

How does the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) represent its people?

What's important?

Know how the MNA represents Métis people in Alberta. You will see both of the terms Métis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA) and Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA).

The Organization of the Métis Nation of Alberta

The **Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)** has an organization that allows its members to take part in decision making. It speaks for the **Métis** people officially. It presents the Métis perspective and works to protect Métis rights in Alberta.

Local MNA Decision Making

Everybody who belongs to the MNA comes from one of six regions. The members of each region elect a president and a vice-president as representatives for their region. These elected officials form a provincial council, which can make decisions on a provincial level.



Audrey Poitras was first elected president of the Métis Nation of Alberta in 1996.

I see my role as president as an opportunity to give back to my community. My responsibility is to represent the Métis people of Alberta to the best of my abilities. I need to be knowledgeable about concerns from all across the province, and to watch for opportunities that might better the lives of Métis Albertans.

Pause

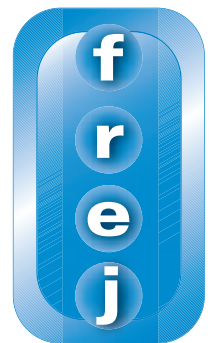
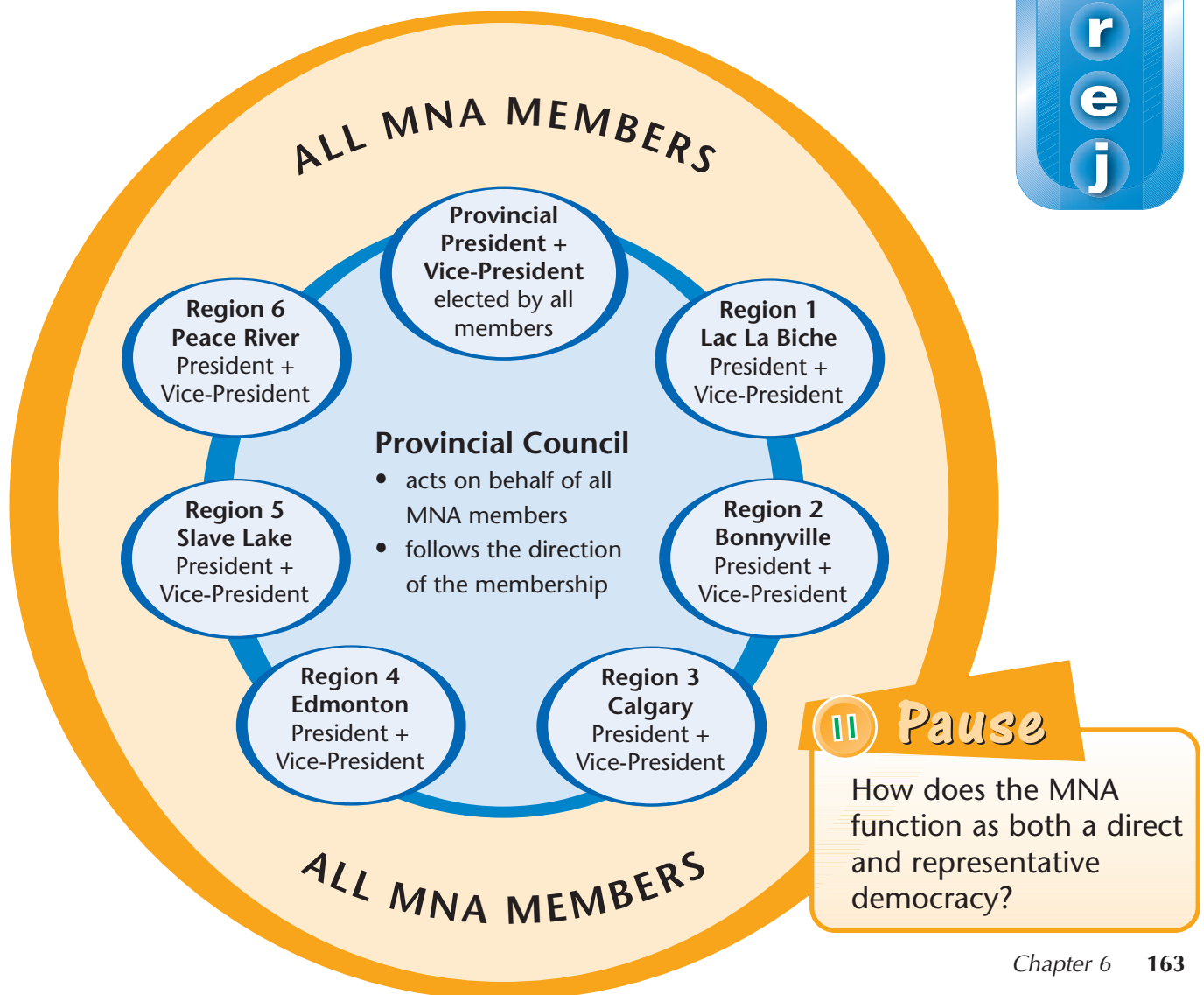
Read what Audrey Poitras says on this page. She is an elected representative of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Choose a word that summarizes one important quality about her as a representative. Why is it important to have effective representatives in a representative democracy?

Provincial MNA Decision Making

The Annual **General Assembly** of the MNA includes all MNA members. It meets once a year. At these meetings, members discuss and vote on MNA provincial aims and programs. This is an exciting time for members to exchange ideas and maintain contact with others. In this respect, the MNA is a direct democracy. The MNA is also a representative democracy.

Every three years, the Métis of Alberta elect a provincial president and vice-president, who head the MNA's **Provincial Council**. The Provincial Council also includes the president and vice-president from each region. The Provincial Council works hard to gather input from each region, carry out the directions of the General Assembly, and advise MNA members.

How do MNA members elect their representatives?



SKILLS at Work

The members of the Métis Nation of Alberta elect representatives according to regions in the province.

How do the regions reflect fairness and equity?

In what way is the idea of regions similar to the structure of the Iroquois Confederacy?

- interpret maps to broaden understanding of topics being studied
- identify geographic problems and issues and pose geographic questions.

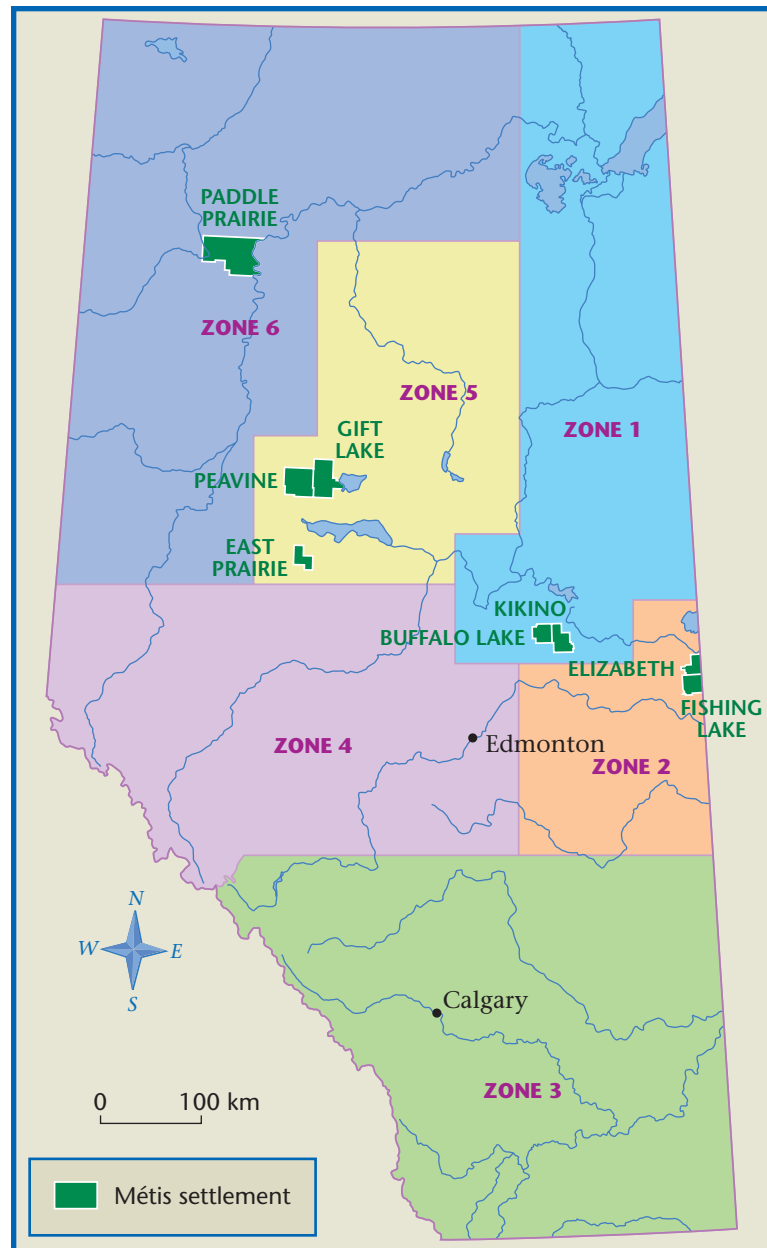


Geographic Thinking

What's important?

Understand that the Métis Nation of Alberta elects representatives from across Alberta.

Métis Electoral Zones, 2007



What's important?

Investigate how to conduct an interview.

Amethyst's Interview about the MNA

Amyethyst wanted to learn about the MNA and how it achieves its goals. She decided to interview people to gather information.

Here are some steps for organizing interviews. How did Amethyst go about these steps?

Step 1: What questions should you ask?

- Know why you are asking a question. Decide what you want to achieve.

Amethyst needed to know ways that MNA helps represent Métis people, and she wanted information on special MNA projects.

- Generate a maximum of five good questions that need more than just “yes” or “no” for an answer.

Amethyst asked: “Using an example of a project, how does the MNA make decisions?” She asked this instead of: “Does MNA undertake projects?” Her question gave her much more information.

Step 2: How can you find out who to ask?

- Sometimes personal contacts can help direct you.

Amethyst knew that her grandfather was a member of the MNA. She asked his advice about people to interview. He suggested she talk to Trevor Gladue, the vice-president of the MNA.

- Organizations and associations are listed in the telephone directory or can be found using a search engine. The organization will tell you who to speak to.



To find lists of associations in your area, check “associations” in the yellow pages. Can you find the Métis Nation of Alberta? What other associations can you find?

Think About the Task

How could the steps on this page help you identify a representative to interview for your chapter task? How could it help you prepare questions to ask the representative?

SKILLS at Work

Communication is often about listening instead of talking. Listening is an important interview skill. What have you learned about listening skills so far in social studies? What listening skills have you included and practised in your guideline for participating in groups?

- listen to others to understand their perspectives



Communicate

Step 3: How should an interview be conducted?

- Write out your questions and record your answers, or print out e-mail responses.

Amethyst wrote down her questions on a sheet of paper. She left spaces between her questions, so she had room to make notes about the answers. She took the paper with her when she met Trevor Gladue.

- At the end, review your information to make sure it is correct and you have the answers you need.

Check out what Amethyst learned about the MNA on the next page.

- Be polite, and thank the person for helping you.



Amethyst is standing in the centre of this photo. MNA vice-president Trevor Gladue is standing on the left. Dr. Herb Belcourt, wearing the white shirt, is standing on the right. Amethyst interviewed Trevor Gladue on the advice of Dr. Belcourt, who is her grandfather.

What's important?

Understand the steps taken when the MNA proposes a project enlisting government support.

What did Amethyst find out about Métis Crossing?

Métis Crossing is an example of how the MNA provides its members with a voice. It is also the story of how dreams can become reality. A number of Métis people wanted to have a place that would acknowledge Métis culture, history, language and accomplishments. This idea was brought to the MNA Provincial Council.

After much discussion and consultation, the Provincial Council approved the development of a site at Métis Crossing where visitors could experience Métis culture. The MNA also decided to appeal to the provincial government for financial help. **Lobbying** means trying to influence government decisions. The MNA lobbying was successful and the government provided the association with a grant.

SKILLS at Work

What process led to the completion of Métis Crossing? What role did the MNA play in the process? Use the information on this page to construct a decision-making flow chart.

- use charts to interpret information



Métis Crossing is located near the town of Smoky Lake, Alberta. Smoky Lake is about 100 kilometres northeast of Edmonton. Use this information to locate Métis Crossing on a map.

MNA: A Voice for the Métis in Alberta

What is the purpose of the Métis Nation of Alberta?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to improve the education, health, social and economic conditions of Alberta's Métis people• to speak on behalf of the Métis to governments, industry and communities• to provide Métis people opportunities to participate in government policy and decisions• to promote Métis rights• to apply for government grants, and carry out government programs and services
How does MNA make decisions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All members have equal decision-making powers.• A General Assembly each year discusses policies and activities.• All members elect a provincial president and vice-president.• Each of the 6 regions has a regional council with an elected regional president and vice-president and Métis representatives.• The Provincial Council of the MNA includes the provincial president and vice-president, and the presidents and vice-presidents from each region. It has 14 members.
How do MNA representatives keep connected with their members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• regular regional and annual meetings• the MNA website• the MNA magazine <i>Otipemisiwak</i>• offices in each region• personal contact, such as attending Métis cultural events and participating in special initiatives

What are other ways that the MNA supports Métis people?

- programs in the areas of health, education, families, housing and justice
- MNA-supported programs and events
- support of Métis businesses and employment



The MNA publishes this magazine, called *Otipemisiwak*. *Otipemisiwak* means “the free, independent people” in the Métis language Michif. The magazine provides news of the activities of the MNA — for example preservation of heritage and education for Métis students — and encourages MNA members to send in articles and photos. How do you think this magazine might help the MNA provide a voice of for Métis in Alberta?

The MNA Makes a Difference

SKILLS at Work

Use the images on this page and the next to identify ways the MNA provides a voice for the Métis in Alberta. What objectives of the MNA do they show? What responsibilities and procedures? How could this information help you think of questions for your candidate interview?

- critically evaluate ideas, information and positions



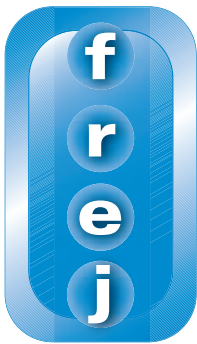
This photo shows MNA provincial president Audrey Poitras participating in the Métis Trans-Canada Relay in 2005. During the event, Métis people travelled the trails their ancestors used during the fur trade in western Canada.



Regional representatives bring their regions' concerns and issues to the provincial council. This photos shows a meeting in Lethbridge of members of the MNA's region 3. Why is it important for representatives, including young people like the woman in this photo, to go to meetings? How much time do you think this takes?



The MNA supports Métis performers. This photo shows the Little Wheelers from Edmonton. Why do you think it might be important for associations to involve young people?



MNA president Audrey Poitras, on the right, negotiated an agreement with Alberta's government about hunting and fishing. The agreement recognized the rights of the Métis under Canada's constitution, as an Aboriginal people of Canada.



This photo shows MNA president Audrey Poitras meeting with the premiers of the Northwest Territories and Canada's western provinces. At meetings such as these, she speaks on behalf of her electorate: the members of the MNA.



What are your responsibilities to your representatives?

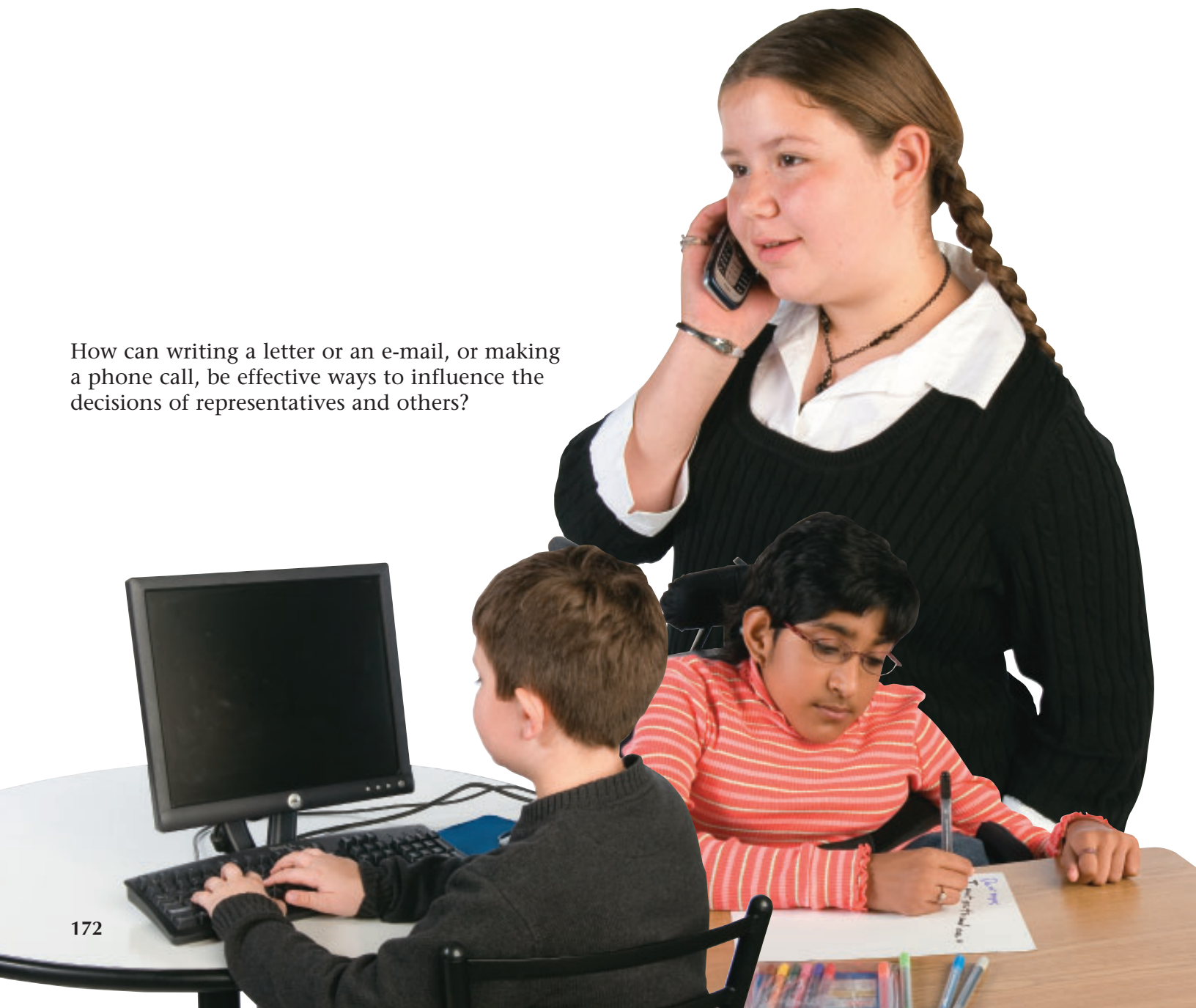
In this chapter, we have looked at the responsibilities of representatives to stay in touch with the people they represent.

What about the responsibilities of people – including Grade 6 students – to make their concerns known to representatives?

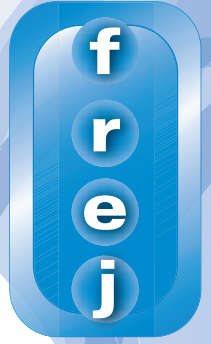
The next chapter will look at ways for you, and everyone, to take action on issues that concern you.

Becoming an active citizen is a way to take part in our democracy.

How can writing a letter or an e-mail, or making a phone call, be effective ways to influence the decisions of representatives and others?



Review! Review!



1. What is the difference between representative democracy and direct democracy?

General Charles Mitchell Elementary School has 175 students in eight classes. Some students have suggested that the school should sponsor Jump Rope for Heart, which is an educational fundraising campaign. It involves students doing skipping activities while raising money to support lifesaving heart and stroke research. Undertaking this commitment will need the majority of students to agree to support the campaign.

The school can either use direct voting or use student representatives in the eight classes to make the decision. Use a T-Chart to show the differences between direct and representative democracy using the school as an example.

2. What is the function of representatives in a representative democracy?

Use a graphic organizer (mind mapping/webbing, flow charting or outlining) to construct a model to show how representatives are responsible to the people that elect them.

3. How does l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) provide its members with a voice in exercising historical and constitutional rights?

Imagine you have new neighbours who are Francophone. They are looking for jobs in French, a health clinic offering care in French, and a Francophone school for their two children. Use specific examples from this chapter to explain what services are available and how the ACFA helped make them available.

4. How does the Métis Nation of Alberta Association represent its people?

Métis Crossing was a project that was started by the MNA because of a desire by members to have a place that would tell the Métis story and allow visitors to experience Métis culture. Getting the project going, however, took cooperative effort and representation.

Retell the story of the beginnings of Métis Crossing including ways that representation was necessary to help advance the project.