

Read this short review, and then complete the “Show What You’ve Learned” in Theme 1.

In Theme 1, you learned that the Government of Canada is a constitutional monarchy. This means that Canada is completely independent, but it has a monarch as its head of state. The monarch is represented by the governor general at the federal level and by lieutenant governors at the provincial level.

The government consists of three branches:

- legislative
- executive
- judicial

The **legislative branch** is made of:

- the House of Commons whose elected members are responsible for making all laws and policies that ensure Canada is run in a responsible manner
- the Senate whose members ensure that laws and policies are fair to all Canadians

The **executive branch** includes:

- the monarch’s representative who must sign all bills before they become laws
- the prime minister who leads the cabinet and oversees all aspects of government
- the cabinet that is made up of ministers in charge of departments

The lessons on the **judicial branch** included information including:

- rules, laws, and justice
 - rules keep people safe; they keep the peace and ensure quality of life for everyone
 - rules made by government are called “laws” and are meant to control or change your behaviour as well as to protect you
 - the courts enforce laws

You also looked at the steps taken when someone is arrested for a crime. After an arrest, the police must release the person or lay charges if the evidence indicates that the person has committed a crime. During this process, the same legal system that is laying the charges will also protect the rights of the individual because one is assumed to be innocent until proven guilty. Guilt or innocence is determined during a trial, and a judge then decides on the punishment. Only those who break the law repeatedly or commit very serious crimes serve jail time. The focus for all others is to attempt to rehabilitate the person.

Having a judicial system that is independent of the legislative and executive branches is very important to a democratic nation such as Canada

You also learned that Canada has three levels of government:

- federal
- provincial
- municipal

Government powers are divided among these three levels, and each level has its own region and citizens to govern.

- The federal government is responsible for anything that affects the country as a whole. Canada is a very large country, which makes meeting the needs of the various regions difficult.
- To overcome this challenge, each province has its own government.
- A provincial government has control over the issues that affect people's daily lives. These include property and civil rights, natural resources, education, and social services.
- Municipal governments are local and deal with areas of responsibility that address the immediate needs of people living in an area.
- Municipal governments are of several types that reflect the size and the population of the area.