

# The Prime Minister

Did you know the prime minister is the head of the government of Canada? The prime minister can be from any part of Canada, but when in office, he or she lives with their family in Ottawa, Ontario, in a large home on Sussex Drive. The governor general officially appoints the prime minister. As prime minister, there is no fixed term in office, but general elections are held every four years.

As the leader of the federal government, the prime minister is the most powerful person in Canadian politics. This is because he or she is the leader of the

political party that holds the majority of seats in the House of Commons. The prime minister selects the cabinet from members of his or her political party. The cabinet helps the prime minister make decisions about how to run the country. The prime minister speaks for the government of Canada and represents Canada in international relations.

The prime minister has many duties while holding office. He or she has the authority to appoint senators, cabinet members, and other important positions such as deputy ministers, and ambassadors. Other responsibilities of the prime minister include appointing people to oversee federal boards and government agencies, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the National Library. The prime minister also advises the governor general on the need and the date for a federal election.

The biggest and most difficult task for the prime minister is to try to make sure the concerns of each province and territory are taken care of. The prime minister has an important role in meeting with the premiers of the provinces and territories to discuss topics of concern for the whole country. Meetings with the premiers are called First Ministers Conferences.

## Brain Stretch!

Did you know you can write a letter to the prime minister and not use a stamp? Write a letter to the prime minister as a citizen of Canada. Share your feelings about being Canadian. Make sure to thank the prime minister in advance for a reply.

Here is the address:

Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A2



Office of the prime minister in Ottawa, Ontario

## Thinking About: The Prime Minister

1. Using the information from the reading and your own ideas, tell why the prime minister has a very important job.

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2. Circle the correct answer for the statement below.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| a) The prime minister is the leader of the political party that holds the majority of seats in the House of Commons. | <b>TRUE</b> | <b>FALSE</b> |
| b) The easiest task for the prime minister is to make sure the concerns of each of the provinces are met.            | <b>TRUE</b> | <b>FALSE</b> |
| c) The prime minister speaks for the government of Canada and represents Canada in international relations.          | <b>TRUE</b> | <b>FALSE</b> |
| d) Meetings with the premiers are called First Leader Conferences.                                                   | <b>TRUE</b> | <b>FALSE</b> |
| e) The prime minister lives with his or her family in Ottawa in a large home on Sussex Drive.                        | <b>TRUE</b> | <b>FALSE</b> |