



One-Minute Democracy Quiz

Answers

- 1) Every vote is equal – it doesn't matter who you support or where you live.**

False. Voters are not equal with first-past-the-post voting. For example, in the 2006 federal election, more than 650,000 Green Party voters elected no one at all. Meanwhile, fewer than half-million Liberal voters in Atlantic Canada alone elected 20 Liberal MPs. More than 400,000 Conservative voters in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver elected no one.

- 2) Election results are fair – what we say at the ballot box is what we get.**

False. The current voting system routinely distorts results. A party winning 40 percent of the votes may get 60 percent of the seats. Another party winning 20 percent of the votes may get 10 percent of the seats or none at all.

- 3) A party must win a majority of votes to form a majority government.**

False. In fact, since World War I, Canadians have had only four majority governments elected by a majority of voters. In 1993, the Liberals won a majority of seats with less than 39 percent of the votes.

- 4) Government is always formed by the party that wins the most votes.**

False. In the 1990s, two provincial majority governments were formed by parties that came in second in the popular vote.

- 5) Voters who oppose the government are always represented by opposition parties.**

False. Under the current voting system, the opposition almost always has fewer seats than deserved. In the 1987 New Brunswick election, not a single seat went to opposition parties that were supported by 40 percent of the voters.

- 6) **Canada has more women in parliament than either Turkmenistan, Laos or Eritrea.**

False. Canada has only 21 percent women in the House of Commons, far less than comparable Western democracies and many other countries using proportional voting systems.

- 7) **Canada ranked 108th in the world in voter turnout in the 1990s.**

False. It's even worse. Canada ranked 109th.

- 8) **Most older European nations use 12th century voting systems, while Canada uses a modern voting system.**

False. Most European countries moved to various types of proportional voting systems over the past 50 to 100 years. Canada, along with Britain and the US, remain the only major western democracies still using the antiquated first-past-the-post voting system.

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