Canada’s Voting System

1. Define the term “First Past the Post.

First Past the Post means the candidate with the most votes wins the seat and the Party with the most seats will rule. The candidate may not have over 50% of the total votes cast, but they have more than any other candidate.

1. Explain the difference between the terms majority and plurality.

Majority means more than 50% or more than half.

Plurality means more than anyone else but not more than half.

1. What is the major problem associated with First Past the Post?

The ruling party may not have a majority of the votes. A second problem is that the percentage of seats won often do not match the percentage of votes cast or the Popular Vote.

1. Explain how Proportional Representation system functions.

The voters vote for a party and not a candidate. After the election, the party is awarded the number of seats that reflect its popular vote.

Ie. 10% of the popular vote x 300 seats = 30 seats.

1. State a positive and negative element of a PR voting system.

Positive: The # of seats a party has relates exactly to the percentage of votes it received.

Negative: No local representation. You can’t vote for a candidate.

1. Explain how a Preferential System functions.

Voters rank the candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the lowest votes is dropped off , the votes they had received are redistributed to their supporter’s second choice. This process continues until there is a winner who has a majority of support.

Australia does this and our Political Parties use this method to choose a leader.

1. State positive and a negative element of Preferential voting.

The winner has the support of a majority of voters in the end.

1. Should Canada change its voting system? Explain the reasons for your opinion.

No. Because our country is so large, we need elected local representation, so I would say absolutely no to Proportional Representation.

However, if we were to have a Preferential system in each riding, I suppose that could work fine.