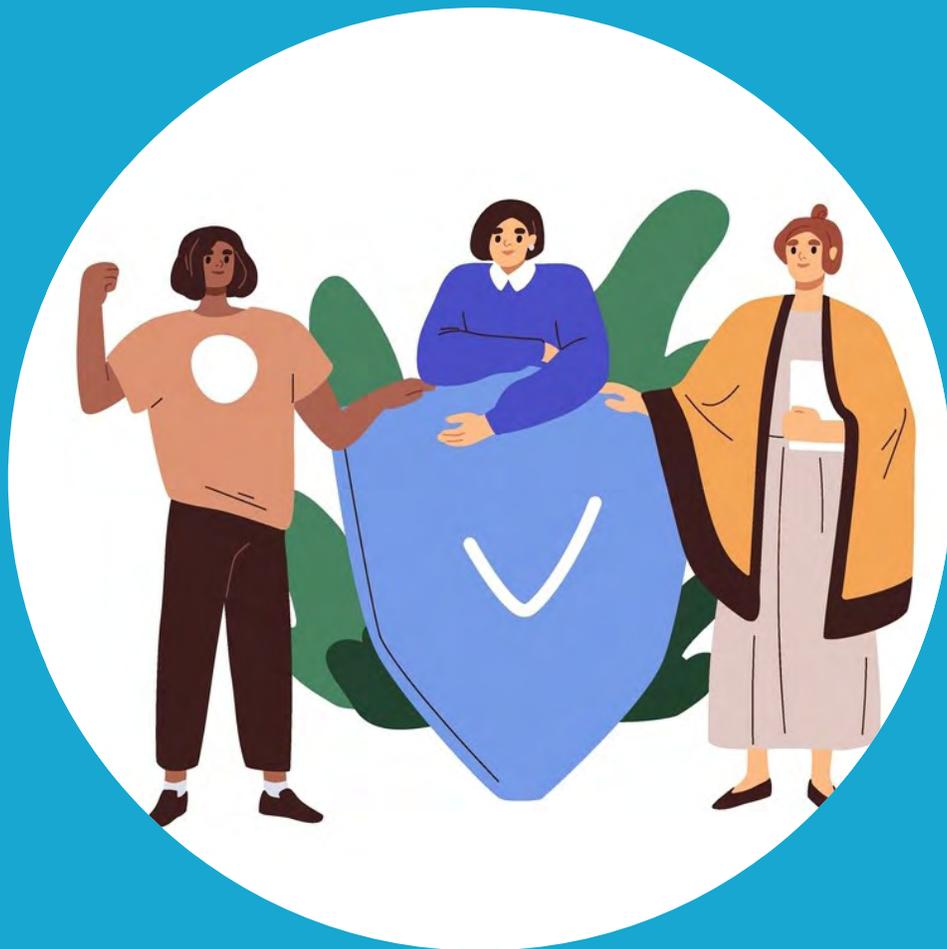


A Look Through History: The Evolution of Abortion Rights

Teaching Guide





Éducaloi is a Quebec non-profit organization whose mission is to make the law accessible and easy to understand and use in daily life.



We need you!

Tell us what you think and we'll create tools that meet YOUR needs.

Scan the QR code or click on this link. It will take less than 5 minutes.



[Link to the survey](#)



IMPORTANT NOTICE

August 2025 version

None of the information in this guide can be considered a legal opinion.

Teachers in Quebec may use and reproduce this guide in an educational context and for non-commercial purposes only. Éducaloi must be credited. Any other reproduction or use is prohibited without the written consent of Éducaloi.

© ÉDUCALOI



Table of Contents

Presentation of the Activity	4
Preparing the Activity	7
Become familiar with the Teaching Guide	7
Required material	7
In-Class Procedure	7
Period 1 – Learn About the Right to Abortion	8
Defining concepts	8
Quiz on the right to abortion today	8
Period 2 – How Abortion Rights Evolved – Then vs. Now	8
Period 3 – Find Out About the Role of the Supreme Court of Canada	9
Present the role of the Supreme Court	9
Activity - Judge for a Day: You Get to Decide!	9
Instructions on reading documents related to the case	10
Period 4 – Complete the Activity	11
Write the judgment	11
Period 5 – Recap of What Was Learned	11
Finalize the written judgment	11
Presenting the judges’ decision	11
Present additional resources and conclusion	12
Period 6 – Evaluation	12
Evaluation 1 – The Right to Abortion	13
Answer key – Evaluation 1 – The Right to Abortion	14
Evaluation 2 – How the Right to Abortion Has Evolved	15
Answer key – Evaluation 2 – How the Right to Abortion Has Evolved	16
Judgment Evaluation Grid	17



Presentation of the Activity

What you need to know	In this activity, the students will learn about how the right to abortion evolved in Canada as well as the role of the Supreme Court of Canada and how the court works.
Target audience	Secondary Cycle Two students.
Summary	<p>The students discover how the right to abortion evolved in Canada.</p> <p>This Teaching Guide allows a learning and evaluation opportunity for teachers who wish to grow their students' knowledge.</p> <p>The students participate to an activity inspired by a Supreme Court decision that led to the decriminalization of abortion in Canada. The students are encouraged to play the role of Supreme Court judges and write a judgment based on the right to abortion.</p> <p>The teacher acts as the chief justice and presents what the majority of students have decided. The teacher also presents the dissenting opinions of the budding judges.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discover how the right to abortion has evolved.• Discover the current legal framework of the right to abortion.• Learn about the role of the Canadian and Quebec charters.• Learn about the role of the Supreme Court of Canada, how it works, and how its judges make their decisions.

<p>Knowledge and subject-specific competencies</p>	<p>Culture and Citizenship in Québec</p> <p>Secondary IV</p> <p>General theme: Justice and the law. Main concept: Legal and judicial institutions. Specific concept (mandatory): Courts and legal recourses.</p> <p>Secondary V</p> <p>General theme: Search for meaning and world views – Social and cultural integrity.</p> <p>Mandatory concepts: Choices related to adulthood, Parenthood, Individual and collective responsibilities related to sexuality.</p> <p>General theme: Social groups and power relations – Social inequalities.</p> <p>Compulsory concept: Controlling women’s bodies and reproductive capacities.</p> <p>Competency 1: Studies cultural realities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzes social relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Characterizes relations between individuals, groups and institutions. – Situates these relations in time and space. <p>Competency 2: Reflects on ethical questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines a variety of points of view: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Considers points of view and experiences. – Compares reference points. – Contextualizes reference points.
-----------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



Knowledge and subject-specific competencies (continued)	History of Québec and Canada Program content: 1945–1980 The modernization of Québec and the Quiet Revolution. Historical knowledge: feminism. Competency 2: Interprets a social phenomenon. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defines the object of interpretation.• Analyzes social realities.
Duration	One to five periods of 75 minutes. Possibility of a sixth period of 75 minutes to give more time for the activity and/or to complete the optional evaluation.
Material included	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One copy of the Teaching Guide,• One copy of the Student Workbook,• The PowerPoint presentation.
Material to print	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Student Workbook (one per student).



Preparing the Activity

Become familiar with the Teaching Guide

- Read the **Student Workbook**, the **PowerPoint presentation** and this document (**Teaching Guide**).
- Print the material.

Required material

- An interactive whiteboard or any other device to present the **PowerPoint Presentation**,
- The documents to print:
 - **Student Workbook** (one per student).

In-Class Procedure

One to five periods of 75 minutes are recommended for the activity.

- One period to present the right to abortion (short version of the Teaching Guide).
- Four other periods to carry out the entire activity (long version of the Teaching Guide).

An optional period is suggested to give more time for the activity and/or the evaluation.



Period 1 – Learn About the Right to Abortion

Defining concepts

- Define abortion with the students using slide 5.
- Define the right to abortion starting at slide 6.
- Present the right to abortion today.
- Ask students to complete the **Student Workbook** and correct its content.

25
minutes

Quiz on the right to abortion today

- Take the quiz provided in the **PowerPoint** (starting at slide 9) and share the correct answers.
- You can take the quiz as a group or divide the students in two teams and have them compete against each other.

50
minutes

Period 2 – How Abortion Rights Evolved – Then vs. Now

- Present the history of abortion starting with slide 14.

75
minutes



Period 3 – Find Out About the Role of the Supreme Court of Canada

Present the role of the Supreme Court

Starting at slide 21

10
minutes

The proposed activity is loosely based on the case that led to the *R. v. Morgentaler* decision and to the decriminalization of abortion in Canada.

Activity - Judge for a Day: You Get to Decide!

Your students are asked to play the role of a Supreme Court of Canada judge, and you'll play the role of chief justice. In this role, you'll have to read the opinion of the judges who make up the "court" and present the majority's opinion to the class as well as a few "dissenting" opinions.

The students must carefully read the documents related to the case. Then, they have to answer a few questions before sharing their decision with the chief justice (you!). The case and the specific questions students will have to answer are found in the **Student Workbook**, on pages 9 to 15.

Note that the goal of this activity is for students to analyze the situation, write their judgment and present reasonable arguments to support their decision. The students are not required to make the same decisions that the judges have in the past.

Activity Steps

During period 3, the students:

- Understand the activity and the work to be done:
 - Read the scenario and the questions to be answered.
- Read the case's documents:
 - This step can be done individually or as a class.
 - Slide 28 and following introduce the content of the case's documents.
 - The texts can also be found on pages 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 of the **Student Workbook**.



During period 4, the students will have to:

- Write their decision:
 - Each student must write a text supporting their position to answer the question they were asked.

During period 5, you will have to:

- Present the budding judges' decisions to the class:
 - Before starting class, read each student's position.
 - You will present the decision taken by the majority of the class, in your role as chief justice. Also share a few dissenting opinions.

Variation

You could ask the students to present their judgment in class. Note that this option takes more time.

Judgment Evaluation Grid

You can find this grid at the end of the **Teaching Guide** (p. 17) if you wish to evaluate this activity. You can modify it according to your objectives.

It is recommended that you present this grid to the students before carrying out the activity so that they have a better understanding of what is expected of them.

Instructions on reading documents related to the case

65
minutes

This step can be done individually or as a class.

Individually:

- For 50 minutes, students read the documents related to the case and answer the comprehension questions (pages 9 and 15 in the **Student Workbook**).
- During the last 15 minutes of the period, correct the comprehension questions.

As a class:

- Present the documents' content starting at slide 28.
- When specified in the notes in the **PowerPoint**, refer the students to the pages in the **Student Workbook** so that they're able to answer the comprehension questions.
- Correct the comprehension questions.



Period 4 – Complete the Activity

Write the judgment

60
minutes

- Each student writes their judgment.
- At the end of the period, collect the judgments and carry a quick analysis of the texts submitted by the students to identify the position taken by the majority of the class.
 - Compile the number of students who chose option a) and compare with the number of students who chose b) in question 4 of the **Student Workbook** (p. 7).
 - Note that the students may have chosen a) or b) using different arguments. If you have time, you can present the different arguments during period 4 or 5.

Variation

You can give your students more time or ask them to finish writing their judgment at home.

Period 5 – Recap of What Was Learned

Finalize the written judgment

15
minutes

- Give students time to finalize their written judgments, if necessary.
- If the students have finished writing, start the class by presenting the judges' decision.

Presenting the judges' decision

30
minutes

- Present the content of slide 42.
- Present the decision that was taken by the majority of the students.



- Then, ask the following questions to stimulate the students' reflections:
 - Was your decision the same as the majority?
 - What are the arguments that support your decision?
- Lastly, remind the students what the majority of the Supreme Court judges decided in the *R. v. Morgentaler* and ask them the following question:
 - Is the decision taken by the “judges” in the class similar to the one taken by the Supreme Court judges?

Present additional resources and conclusion

- Present slide 43 and 44's contents.
- Present the additional resources found on slide 45. These resources are also found on page 16 of the **Student Workbook**.

Period 6 – Evaluation

In the following pages, we suggest an activity (pages 13 to 16) to evaluate the competency Reflects on ethical questions in Culture and Citizenship in Québec.

Evaluation 1 can be used if you're only doing period 1. **Evaluation 2** should be used if you're doing all periods.

To encourage a deeper reflection, we recommend that the students be allowed to consult the documents for the activity (or their notes) during the evaluation.



Evaluation 1 – The Right to Abortion

Culture and Citizenship in Québec

Name: _____

Group: _____

10

1) Define what abortion is.

2

2) Define what is the right to abortion is.

2

3. Martine is pregnant. She wants to have an abortion. Does her partner have to agree before she can get an abortion? Justify your answer.

3

4. Jeanne is 36 years old. Claude is 17 years old. Camille is 13 years old.

a) Do they all have the right to get an abortion?

3

b) Does their age change their right to get an abortion? Justify your answer.



Evaluation 1 – The Right to Abortion

Culture and Citizenship in Québec



Name: _____

Group: _____

10

1) Define what abortion is.

It is when someone chooses to end a pregnancy.

2

2) Define what is the right to abortion is.

The right to abortion is a right that allows women to make their own decisions about their bodies and pregnancies. It can also include the legal aspects (laws) that deal with abortion.

2

3. Martine is pregnant. She wants to have an abortion. Does her partner have to agree before she can get an abortion? Justify your answer.

Example of a correct answer: No. Martine does not need her partner to agree. Anyone who wants to have an abortion can have one without giving a reason or asking for their partner's authorization.

3

4. Jeanne is 36 years old. Claude is 17 years old. Camille is 13 years old.

a) Do they all have the right to get an abortion?

Yes.

3

b) Does their age change their right to get an abortion? Justify your answer.

Example of a correct answer: Yes. Since Camille is under 14 years of age, she needs her parents' or tutors' authorization. Jeanne and Claude can decide on their own.



Evaluation 2 – How the Right to Abortion Has Evolved

Culture and Citizenship in Québec

Name: _____

Group: _____

10

1) Define what an abortion is.

2

2) Define what the right to abortion is.

2

3) Summarize what the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is.

3

4) What role did the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* play in the evolution of abortion rights?

3



Evaluation 2 – How the Right to Abortion Has Evolved



Culture and Citizenship in Québec

Name: _____

Group: _____

10

1) Define what an abortion is.

It is when someone chooses to end a pregnancy.

2

2) Define what the right to abortion is.

The right to abortion is a right that allows women to make their own decisions about their bodies and pregnancies. It can also include the legal aspects (laws) that deal with abortion.

2

3) Summarize what the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is.

Example of a correct answer: The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a federal law that has been part of the Canadian Constitution since 1982. The Charter includes many rights, for example: the right to life, liberty and security. Generally, the laws adopted by governments have to respect the rights protected by the Canadian Charter.

3

4) What role did the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms play in the evolution of abortion rights?

In the Morgentaler case, the Supreme Court decided that a section about abortion rules in the Criminal Code did not respect women's rights and freedoms protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (e.g., the right to security). Because of this decision, that section in the Criminal Code was taken down and abortion was not longer illegal.

3



Judgment Evaluation Grid

Nom : _____

Indicators	1	2	3	4	5
The student follows the instructions for writing the judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student follows all instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student follows most of the instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student more or less follows the instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty following the instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student does not follow the instructions.
The student uses the resources, draws information and presents coherent arguments in their judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student uses all of the supporting material and presents excellent arguments in their judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student uses the supporting material and presents good arguments in their judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student uses more or less the supporting material and presents satisfactory arguments in their judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty using the supporting material and presents more or less satisfactory arguments.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student does not draw from the supporting material and presents arguments that have few relevant or coherent elements.
The student demonstrates a full understanding of the legal issues around the abortion question.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student shows their understanding of legal issues related to topic of abortion with clarity and precision.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student shows their understanding of legal issues around the topic of abortion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student more or less shows that their understanding of legal issues around the topic of abortion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student has difficulty showing their understand of legal issues around the topic of abortion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student does not demonstrate that they understand the legal issues around the abortion question.

/ 15

Your Opinion

To better support you and create tools adapted to your needs, we want to hear about your experience and opinions.

Take this short survey by scanning the the QR code or by clicking the link.

It will take you less than 5 minutes.

Thank you for your participation!



[Link to the survey](#)

Other Tools for You!

Did you like this tool? We have more! Here's a list of the workshops and teaching guides we offer to help you teach key legal concepts.

You'll surely find what you're looking for!

Workshops Given by Legal Experts

Our workshops are free, interactive, and introduce participants to the justice system. They are led by volunteer legal professionals. The goal of these workshops is to help young people develop legal skills. They offer knowledge and tools that are practical and useful in students' daily lives.

Now it's your turn! All that's left is to [register](#) to your account and request the workshop you're interested in!

- [READY, SET, INVEST!](#)

Students step into the shoes of an investor to reflect on legal and ethical business practices before making investment decisions.

- [WORKING: NOT AT ALL COSTS!](#)

Students become aware of harassment in the workplace through a quiz and scenarios. They also learn about possible remedies and resources they can turn to if they experience or witness harassment.



- **BEAT THE BUZZER!**

In this game, teams square off to answer questions about legal issues in the lives of 12-to-17-year-olds.

- **BULLYING: WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?**

Students learn about the legal aspects of bullying such as criminal law, sharing of intimate images, the right to control images of themselves and possible recourses. Students then take a position on these issues.

- **THE SMALL CLAIMS COURT IS IN SESSION!**

Students stage a mock civil trial between a consumer and a business. They discover the various players involved and experience what a trial is like in this court.

- **THE LAW: IT'S NOT LIKE IN THE MOVIES!**

By staging a mock criminal trial, students discover the roles of various players in the Quebec justice system, the different steps in a trial and basic criminal law concepts.

- **THE RULES OF THE GAME!**

In this game show activity, students debate legal issues affecting the lives of young adults: work, housing, consumer rights, the criminal justice system, and more.

- **OUR CONFLICT, OUR SOLUTION!**

Conflicts don't always end up in court with lawyers battling it out! In this scenario, groups of high school students who have a disagreement arrive at a win-win solution. This activity introduces students to mediation as an alternative method to prevent and resolve disputes.

- **PICK YOUR SIDE!**

Students take a position on issues that stimulate debate. They learn that the concept of justice evolves constantly and is shaped by the clash of ideas and changing societal values. Students then discuss why they chose one side over the other. The volunteer legal professional presents relevant legal information and encourages students to reflect on the issues raised.



Our Teaching Guides: Ready-To-Use Resources

Our teaching guides can be used in a range of grades. They are of various lengths and activity types. Turnkey, they can be led by the teacher and are specifically adapted to secondary school students.

Make your choice and download them free of charge.

Secondary – Cycle 1

- [ARE YOU OLD ENOUGH?](#)
Students learn which responsibilities and freedoms the law gives them according to their age.
- [THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM FOR TEENAGERS](#)
This activity explains how the criminal legal system often treats teenagers differently than adults.
- [THE INTERNET AND THE LAW](#)
This activity provides an overview of prohibited online activities and recommends solutions if a child is being harassed online.

Secondary – Cycle 2

- [BIOETHICS: SAVIOUR BABIES](#)
This activity involves a class debate on two hot topics in biotechnology: the selection of human embryos and the use of a baby's tissues or organs to cure another person. Students then draft a bill on these topics.
- [INSIDE THE COURTROOM: THE KEY PLAYERS AND STEPS OF A CRIMINAL TRIAL](#)
This activity explains the roles of people who play a part in a criminal trial, and the steps in the process.
- [INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY](#)
Clear explanations about trademarks, copyrights, patents, and more!
- [DISCRIMINATION AT SCHOOL?](#)
This teaching tool lets students explore the themes of justice, tolerance and the accommodation of differences.
- [LEGAL CAREERS](#)
This activity introduces students to a variety of jobs that involve the law.



- **A RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

This teaching tool gets students thinking about why privacy rights are protected. Activities include discussion questions and a writing exercise.

- **LEGAL CAREERS IN THE INDIGENOUS CONTEXT**

In this activity, students learn about the variety of law-related jobs. It was designed with the realities of Indigenous people in mind.

- **THE RIGHTS OF YOUTH**

Students step into the shoes of a judge, lawyer or social worker to write a persuasive or explanatory text on the rights of youth.

- **DON'T FIGHT, MEDIATE!**

Students are asked to take on specific roles in a simulated mediation session to resolve a conflict between two teens and their families.

- **UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT: WITNESS EXAMINATION AND CROSS EXAMINATION**

Students learn the basics of the criminal justice system, the steps involved in questioning witnesses and the role of each player in a criminal trial. Students then take part in a mock trial with the help of a script. This activity appeals to students' sense of justice. They will role-play, analyze a situation, take a position and formulate questions to get to the truth.

CCQ: Resources for Teachers

TRAINING 101: CULTURE AND CITIZENSHIP IN QUEBEC, THE LEGAL CONCEPTS

Follow our training session, which covers the legal concepts found in the new CCQ course, improve your understanding of general legal concepts, and increase your confidence to teach them!

TRAINING LEGAL CONCEPTS IN THE CCQ PROGRAM: SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Listen to this hands-on training session. You'll get an overview of all the tools available to you. This will help you use them more easily and find all the resources you need.



Videos: Legal Education

You can use these videos and tutorials when discussing legal concepts with your students:

- [LE DROIT EN CLASSE : AGIR EN LIGNE](#) (Being online, French with English subtitles)
- [LE DROIT EN CLASSE : PROCES SIMULE](#) (Mock criminal trial, French with English subtitles)
- [LE DROIT EN CLASSE : LE CONSENTEMENT](#) (Sexual consent, French with English subtitles)

Order a Poster

These materials are great tools to reinforce the learning done in class. All that's left is to order them and display them:

<https://educaloi.gc.ca/en/order-educalois-products/>

- [AGE OF CONSENT TO SEXUAL ACTIVITIES](#)
- [CYBERBULLYING ... IT CAN BE A CRIME!](#)
- [WORKING: NOT AT ALL COSTS!](#)

To Learn More

Visit legallifeskills.ca for complete information about our workshops and teaching guides.

If you have any questions, please contact us at scolaire@educaloi.gc.ca.