

# Canadian Unity: The Calgary Initiative



1. To write the final draft of the Calgary Declaration, the premiers dismissed their advisors and civil servants from the meeting and wrote it themselves. Why do you think they did this? Discuss the difficulties of finding consensus among 11 people. What do you think is the best way to reach consensus in a group setting?
2. Rewrite the seven principles of the Calgary Declaration in your own words. Share them with a partner. Discuss whether or not you find this helpful.
3. There are a number of websites that have been set up to distribute information about Canadian unity. Examine one of these and evaluate its effectiveness in explaining the current political issues:
4. Read the Calgary Declaration and complete the following tasks:
  - a. Read the introduction and make a list of the key words and phrases that, in your opinion, communicate the essential message of the declaration.
  - b. Now examine the section “Framework for Discussion on Canadian Unity.”
    - i. Summarize each principle of the framework in point form. What do you notice as you do this exercise?
    - ii. The framework’s principles relate either to *the nature of Canada’s federation* and/or to *the nature of its citizenry*. Beside your summary of each principle, put an “F” for federation or a “C” for citizenship.
    - iii. In your own words, compose brief descriptions of what *individual rights* and *collective rights* you think Canadians currently enjoy. Then, beside each of the seven principles outlined in the “Framework” section of this document, write down *individual* or *collective*. What conclusions can you make?
    - iv. Share your findings with at least two other groups and then discuss as a class which right should take precedence in a society: the individual or the collective. Be prepared to explain your reasoning.
  - c. Finally, examine the section “Guidelines for the Process of Public Consultation.” Explain in your own words the overall intent of this section. Suggest reasons why each point was included in the Guidelines.
5. The public consultation process was a large part of the Calgary Declaration. Here is a one of the questionnaires that was distributed to citizens to gauge their reactions. Answer the questions for yourself!
  - a. Overall do you support the framework?
  - b. What are the elements in the framework that you particularly like?
  - c. Are there any elements in the framework that concern you? Why?
  - d. Are there any other elements that you feel should be addressed?
  - e. Do you think the interests of Ontarians are reflected in this framework?
  - f. An important consideration in thinking about our future as a country is what it means to each of us to be a Canadian. What does it mean to you to be Canadian?
6. Read the “Western Alienation” article and identify what you feel are the significant issues in the theme of western alienation and how they relate to the Calgary Declaration. How are these issues similar to or different from concerns that have been expressed by sovereignists in Quebec?