

# ALBERTA MACE

Educational Resource

December 2019

## A Symbol of the Assembly's Authority

Both Britain and Canada have long recognized the symbolic importance of the Mace. The Mace appeared in the British Parliament as early as the 15th century although as an emblem of authority of the royal Sergeant-at-Arms it was carried long before that. As the monarch's power decreased and Parliament's grew, the Mace became Parliament's symbol as well. The modern Mace thus represents the Parliament's or Assembly's authority as well as the monarch's.

### Tips for a successful school visit

- Review the Confirmation of Visit to ensure that all information is correct.
- Discuss expectations with students and volunteers. Teachers and parents are asked to turn off their cellphones, model good listening, supervise and remain with the students at all times.
- Ensure the bus driver is aware of the current drop off and pick up location (effective September 2018).

### What's Happening at the Legislature in December?

05 – Legislature Grounds Light Up and first night of Celebrate the Season

12 – [Thursdays to be Discovered \(TBD\) Movie: It's a Wonderful Life](#)

19 – [TBD Movie: The Muppet Christmas Carol](#)

25 – Legislature Building and Visitor Centre closed

31 – Visitor Centre open until 9 p.m. for New Year's Eve



Alberta Legislature (courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

### In This Issue

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- Alberta's Maces
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## Did You Know?

The first letter of the gems and semiprecious stones featured on the crown of our current Mace spell out the word Alberta (amethyst, lazurite, bloodstone, emerald, ruby, topaz and agate).

The first Mace came out of retirement to be carried into the Chamber on March 15, 2006, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Assembly's first sitting.

The cushion that the Mace sits on, while it is in the Chamber, is made of beaver pelt dyed a dark green colour.

## The Medieval Mace

Like so many other features of the Legislative Assembly, the Mace has a history going back to medieval England, where a battle mace referred to a metal club with a spiked head. Along with lances and sword the battle mace was used as a lethal weapon by mounted warriors as its spikes and blades could penetrate armour.

Two kings of the 12th century, Richard I of England and Philip II of France, armed their bodyguards with maces, which were used in both battle and in royal ceremonies. Gradually, the Mace became a symbol of the monarch's authority instead of a real weapon. As the Mace developed symbolic stature, its appearance changed accordingly. The spikes and other warlike apparatus were replaced by jewels, precious metals and other lavish decoration, and the royal coat of arms became the Mace's most important emblem. As a result, the coat of arms was made larger and moved from the bottom of the shaft to the top.

*Although the Mace has no constitutional significance, it is important as a symbol because the Assembly cannot conduct its business unless the Mace is present.*



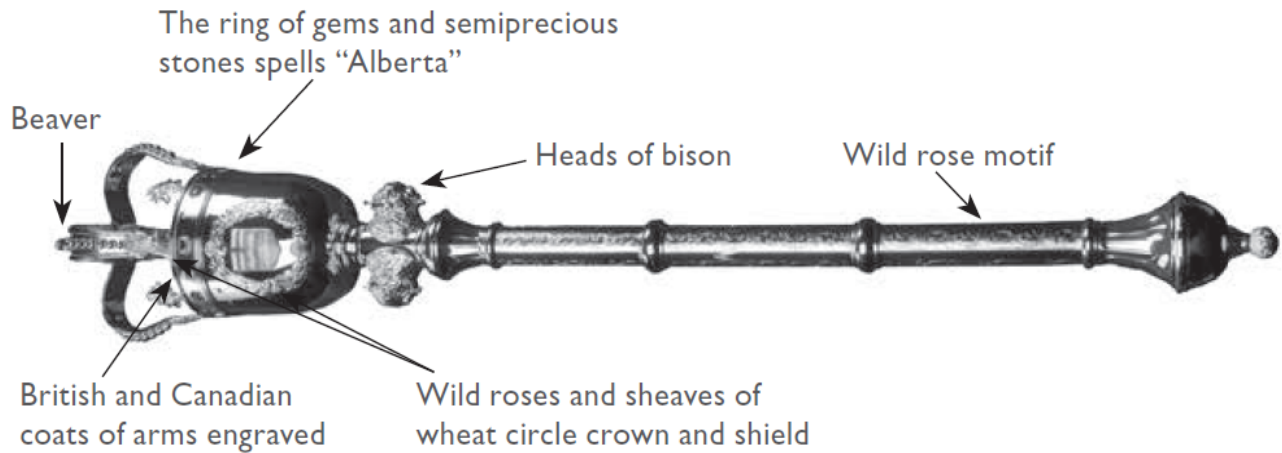
Alberta's first Mace  
(courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

## Alberta's First Mace

In Alberta the first Legislature was caught off guard just before its first sitting; there was no Mace. Because nobody so much as suggested that a sitting could be held without it, Alexander Rutherford's Liberal government ordered the rush construction of one from Watson Brothers Jewelry of Calgary.

Watson Brothers hired Rufus E. Butterworth to create Alberta's first Mace, which he made entirely from scrap in only a few weeks' time. Its shaft was plumbing pipe, and it is rumoured to have been mounted on a toilet tank float. Ornamental decorations around the orb were made from old shaving mug handles, bits of an old bedstead and other scraps of wood. A piece of red velvet and a coat of gold paint provided the finishing touches.

Remarkably, the makeshift Mace was used for 50 years.



## Our Mace Today

Alberta's first Mace was finally replaced on February 9, 1956, when the provincial employees' union presented a new Mace to the Legislative Assembly in honour of Alberta's 50th anniversary. The new Mace was designed by Lawrence B. Blain of Edmonton and built by the English silversmithing firm Joseph Fray Limited in Birmingham, England.

The Mace is about three feet long and contains 5,669 grams of sterling silver overlaid with gold. A figure of a beaver mounted on the traditional crown adorns the top of the Mace. Both the royal coat of arms and the Canadian coat of arms are displayed on the orb. Sheaves of wheat, representing Alberta's prairies, and wild roses, the floral emblem of Alberta, are engraved on the crown. The headband of the crown features seven gems and semiprecious stones. Two bison heads are positioned just below the orb of the Mace, which features the coat of arms of Alberta, and the shaft is decorated with wild roses and capped with a sheaf of wheat.



**Sergeant-at-Arms carrying Alberta's Mace** (courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

## In the Chamber

The Sergeant-at-Arms carries the Mace into the Chamber each sitting day as part of the Speaker's procession.

When the Assembly is sitting, the Sergeant-at-Arms places the Mace on the table with the orb and cross facing the government side of the Chamber.

When the Speaker leaves the Chamber and the Assembly sits as a Committee of the Whole, the Mace is moved to brackets on the underside of the table.



## Resource Links

[Citizen's Guide](#)

[Ask an Expert](#)

[Mock Legislature Resources](#)

[House of Commons: Procedure and Practice](#)

[Put it Back: UK Lawmaker Grabs Mace](#)

[The Maces of Canadian Provincial and Territorial Legislatures](#)

[The B.C. Talking Stick](#)

[Know Your Mace: Alberta](#)

## Resource Videos

[Speaker's Corner](#)

[Mock Legislature Activity: Video](#)

[Parliament of Victoria's Mace \(Australia\)](#)

[University of College Cork's Mace \(Ireland\)](#)

[Put it Back: UK Lawmaker Grabs Mace](#)

[UK Parliament: Guide to the Chamber](#)

[Redesign Parliament mace to include Indigenous contributions](#)



**Current Mace in the Chamber** (courtesy of the Legislative Assembly Office)

## Activities

These three suggested activities ask students to further examine the connection between Albertans and the provincial Mace. Refer to the resource links and videos for more activities and background information.

### Consider

Use the included resource link to learn more about the British Columbia Talking Stick. Research other ceremonial objects and choose one that the Alberta Legislature could adopt to represent its diverse history and people. What are its origins? How does it connect to the people of Alberta? How would it be used in our parliamentary proceedings?

### Write

When the Mace isn't present in the Chamber, we aren't able to pass laws in Alberta. Imagine it is the night before a big debate at the Legislature. The Sergeant-at-Arms goes to put the Mace back in the vault and realizes that it is gone! Who stole the Mace, and will we get it back in time for Session? Act as the detective on the case, and complete the story of the Mace Mystery.

### Design

If you had been the one to design Alberta's Mace, which symbols and materials would you have chosen? Use the Make a Mace activity outline on the next page to design and create a prototype of your very own Mace.

# Make A Mace

In this activity you can make your very own mace to use in your Mock Legislature classroom debate.

## Materials

- cardboard cylinders (from paper towels)
- construction paper
- plastic containers (from yogurt or ice cream)
- scissors
- glue or tape
- coloured markers
- buttons, sequins, plastic jewels, glitter or other decorations

## Directions

1. On the bottom of the plastic container trace the circumference of the cardboard cylinder. Cut out the traced circle.
2. Draw the crown of your mace on construction paper and cut it out. The crown should be taller than the plastic container. Decorate your crown with markers and decorations. Glue it onto the plastic container.
3. To make the staff of the mace, tape a few cardboard cylinders together end to end.
4. Decorate the staff with markers. You can draw symbols of Alberta, like bighorn sheep, lodgepole pine trees, the great horned owl, bull trout, wild roses, bison, beavers, wheat and others.
5. Insert the staff of the mace into the hole of the container. Use tape to hold it in place.

# Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Honour and value the traditions, concepts and symbols that are the expression of Canadian identity (Social Studies, Values and Attitudes)
- Engage in active inquiry and critical and creative thinking (Social Studies, Skills and Processes)
- Use primary sources to interpret historical events and issues (Social Studies, Historical Thinking)
- Listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts (English Language Arts, General Outcome 1)
- Impose standards on designed objects and invent improved versions (Fine Arts, Level Three, Reflection: Component 2)
- Interpret artworks for their symbolic meaning (Fine Arts, Level Three, Reflection: Component 3)

Alberta Education Program of Studies

## Contact Us

Please let us know if you enjoyed this resource and if there are any other topics you would like to see covered.

Also, if you try any of the suggested activities, we would love to see examples of your students' work!

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Unless indicated otherwise, the included information has been taken directly from the Legislative Assembly Office's *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* (9th edition, 2016) or from the Legislative Assembly Office's Agora Interpretive Centre.

