

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

# The Mock Legislature

A STUDENT DEBATE

TEACHER  
Manual

# Teacher Manual



[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)  
→ Teachers' Corner



**Contact Us**  
Visitor Services  
108 Street and 98 Ave  
Edmonton, Alberta  
**780.427.7362**  
[visitorinfo@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:visitorinfo@assembly.ab.ca)

---

The Legislative Assembly Office gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for their contributions to the development of this resource:

## Educational Content Review

---

- **Glenda Bristow**  
Program Coordinator, St. Paul Regional School Division,  
St. Paul
- **David Bryce**  
Technology Consultant, Edmonton
- **Linda Couillard-L'Abbé**  
Teacher, Springfield Elementary School, Peace River
- **Wally Diefenthaler**  
Educational Consultant, Edmonton
- **Rick Homan**  
Teacher, Winston Churchill High School, Lethbridge
- **Carol Anne Konkin**  
Teacher, Michael A. Kostek Elementary School, Edmonton
- **Susan Mackay**  
Teacher, Tom Baines Junior High School, Calgary
- **Corvin Urbach**  
Teacher, Lacombe Composite High School, Lacombe

## Illustrations

---

- **Brent Mottershead**  
Illustrator

Permission is granted to make copies of any or all parts of this resource for educational, not-for-profit use only.

© Legislative Assembly of Alberta

---

# Welcome to the Mock Legislature!

The Mock Legislature activity is designed for teachers who wish to incorporate an interactive learning activity into their teaching of Alberta's provincial government and law-making. Through participation in the Mock Legislature debate simulation students will better understand the legislative process and the role of key players in the Legislative Assembly.

The background information and activities will assist you in preparing your class for an exciting learning experience as part of a field trip to the Legislature, or they can be used to help you stage a simulation in your own classroom.

## **This teacher manual offers you**

- three information sections which explain key concepts relevant to the Mock Legislature activity and provide background information and references
- classroom activities designed to reinforce the learning of key concepts and to help students prepare for the Mock Legislature. All activities can easily be modified to suit the needs of your class

## **The manual also includes**

- information on booking a visit to the Alberta Legislature
- supplementary materials for the class activities
- sample Bill and debate ideas
- the Mock Legislature script with opportunity for student input
- a glossary of key terms
- resource references for further research
- suggestions for follow-up activities

To supplement student learning, a separate student handbook accompanies this manual and can be photocopied for class distribution. Each chapter in the student handbook contains simplified background information and exercises for students that correspond to the more comprehensive information in this teacher manual.

**Now it's time to prepare for the Mock Legislature!**

# Contents

## **Introduction** 1

Curriculum Connections 1

Teacher's Checklist 3

Visiting the Alberta Legislature 4

## **1. Making Laws in Alberta** 5

The Role of the Legislative Assembly 5

The Alberta Legislature: What's It All About? 5

How Does a Bill Become a Law? 5

What Is a Debate? 7

Figure 1.1: Developing a Bill Proposal for Debate 8

## **2. The Legislative Assembly** 9

Daily Routine, Ceremony and People 9

The Daily Routine: What Does It Look Like? 9

Ceremony: Connecting Symbols and Traditions 10

The People of the Assembly:

Who Are They and What Do They Do? 11

## **3. The Mock Legislature** 15

Getting Ready 15

How To Use the Mock Legislature Script 15

Props, Costumes and Arranging the Room 16

## **Class Preparation Activities** 18

Activity 1: Explore an Issue 18

Activity 2: The People of the Legislative Assembly 20

Activity 3: Hold a Caucus Meeting 22

## **Classroom Resources** 25

## **Class Follow-up Activities** 43

## **Glossary of Legislative Terms** 44

## **Useful Links** 50

# Introduction

## Curriculum Connections

From Social Studies Grade 6 Program of Studies, Alberta Education (2007)

### General Outcome 6.1\* Citizens Participating in Decision-making

Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the dynamic relationship between governments and citizens as they engage in the democratic process.

#### Specific Learning Outcomes\*

#### The Mock Legislature

**6.1.1** Students will recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities.

Students will understand and appreciate the process of policy-making at the provincial level.

**6.1.2** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of democracy.

Students will explore the function of political representation in Alberta's Legislative Assembly.

**6.1.5** Students will analyze the structure and functions of Alberta's provincial government.

Students will become familiar with the structure and functions of Alberta's provincial Legislature.

Students will discover how the role of the Lieutenant Governor fits into the law-making and ceremony of the Legislative Assembly.

Students will discover how the government is responsible for making laws, instituting taxes, and providing services.

Students will investigate and simulate the roles of MLAs, cabinet Ministers, and officers of the Assembly and will be able to identify the distinct responsibilities of each role.

**6.S.1** Students will develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking.

Students will distinguish fact from opinion, identify bias, evaluate ideas, and generate original ideas and solutions as they work to shape a piece of Alberta legislation.

**6.S.4** Students will develop skills of decision-making and problem solving.

Students will collaborate with others as they look for ways to make an impact on proposed legislation.

Specific Learning Outcomes*	The Mock Legislature
6.S.5 Students will demonstrate skills of co-operation, conflict resolution, and consensus building.	Students will experience how debate, negotiation, and group action contribute to problem solving and decision-making in the Legislative Assembly.
6.S.7 Students will apply the research process.	Students will research an issue using various media.  Students will work in groups to research key players in the Legislature and a topic of legislative interest and to present their ideas during the legislative process.
6.S.8 Students will demonstrate skills of oral, written, and visual literacy.	Students will participate in a debate where they must verbally present persuasive ideas, listen to other viewpoints, and improvise relevant responses.

Teachers will find that aspects of the Mock Legislature can also be applied to meet specific learning outcomes of other subjects, including Language Arts, Drama, Art, and Career Development.

## Teacher's Checklist

If you plan to bring your students to the Legislature to do the simulation, you are encouraged to make the most of the experience by preparing the class.

This checklist can help you with your planning. It is suggested that, at a minimum, the key components from Activities 1, 2 and 3 (as listed in bold text) be completed prior to your class's arrival at the Legislature.

- 
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book your visit to the Legislature (see page 4).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make copies of the Student Handbook and distribute.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review Section 1: Making Laws in Alberta: The Role of the Legislative Assembly.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assign Think About activities from Student Handbook.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Activity 1: Explore an Issue.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Select an issue to be debated.</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Develop a Bill proposal.</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Develop main arguments for and against the proposal.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review Section 2: The Legislative Assembly: Daily Routine, Ceremony and People.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assign Think About activities from Student Handbook.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Activity 2: The People of the Legislative Assembly.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assign roles to students for simulation.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assign roles to students for simulation.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review Section 3: The Mock Legislature: Getting Ready.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Activity 3: Hold a Caucus Meeting.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Complete the Mock Legislature script</b> (Note – the online version can be completed electronically)</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Teacher Blueprint and have a copy on hand.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare follow-up activities and assessment to be completed when you return to your school.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|
- 

**Questions? Please contact us. We are always pleased to help you!**

# Visiting the Alberta Legislature

## Why book a visit to the Legislature?

### If you book a visit to the Legislature, your students will be able to

- participate in the Mock Legislature simulation in one of our classrooms, which are designed to look like the real Legislative Assembly Chamber, complete with Members' desks, costumes and props
- tour the Legislature Building and the Interpretive Centre
- watch the Legislative Assembly in action (when the Assembly is in session)
- participate in any of our other guided activities or a self-guided grounds tour

Ask our Visitor Services staff for more information when booking your visit.

### If you plan to visit the Legislature, there are a few things to keep in mind.

- Students benefit most from the Mock Legislature activity if they have completed the advance preparation. A trained tour guide will be on hand to facilitate the activity and answer questions.
- Program length for a Legislature tour, including the Mock Legislature debate, is 2.75 hours.
- Dates fill up quickly, so make your booking as early as possible. Have an alternative date in mind.
- This resource is also available in French. French-speaking tour guides may be available if requested in advance.
- Please call to let us know if your group will be late.
- If your group has any time constraints, please let your tour guide know in advance.

---

## TO BOOK YOUR VISIT, PLEASE CONTACT:

### Visitor Services

780.427.7362

Toll free 1.780.310.0000

visitorinfo@assembly.ab.ca

### For more information:

[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Teachers' Corner

---



# 1. Making Laws in Alberta

## The Role of the Legislative Assembly

During the Mock Legislature activity your students will explore and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a fictional Bill on its way to becoming legislation. They will practise research skills and consensus building in developing their positions on the **issue**.

Debate is a useful activity for students to develop oral presentation skills and to practise critical thinking, listening and researching. In fact, a good debate is dependent on research and investigation. Debate is also an important part of Alberta's real legislative process.

### Activity: "Explore an Issue" (page 18)

## The Alberta Legislature: What's It All About?

Alberta is divided into 87 constituencies. When a provincial election is held, the voters of each **constituency** elect one representative to the Legislature. The **political party** with the most elected Members of the Legislative Assembly forms the **government**, and its leader becomes the Premier. This is the party that will determine government policies until the next election.

### "Think about" activity (Student Handbook page 2)

The governing party introduces **Bills** which, when they have been debated and approved, become laws of the province. Government **departments** carry out their work according to the policies and laws established in the Legislature, overseeing such concerns as health care, education and environmental protection.

## How Does a Bill Become a Law?

Laws in Alberta are passed by the **Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)**. When a law is first proposed, it is called a Bill and is introduced into the Legislature for **debate**. Several steps are involved between the introduction, or **first reading**, of the Bill and the final stage of **royal assent**. Once a Bill has been approved, the resulting act becomes **law**. Not all Bills come into force once they have received royal assent. Depending on the **proclamation** clause at the end of a Bill, some laws take effect at a later date upon proclamation.

### "Think about" activity (Student Handbook page 3)

notes

Bolded words in these sections can be found in the glossary. Each word is bolded only once.

The Student Handbook contains "Think about..." sections where students can record their ideas. These questions appear throughout this manual and can be used for classroom discussions.

#### **Think about...**

If you were Premier, what would be some of your duties?

#### **Think about...**

Where do MLAs get ideas to propose Bills?

Why is it important for MLAs to talk to citizens about future Bills?

On certain issues members may be free to vote according to their conscience even if it means opposing the decision of caucus.

It is customary for Bills to pass through first reading without opposition. At this point the details of the Bill are still in the early stages, and all members want to learn more about the Bill before they decide to support or oppose it.

At the end of each reading members vote by saying “aye” or “no.”

During Committee of the Whole the Speaker leaves the Chamber, and the Chair conducts the meeting.

The opposition plays an important role throughout these stages by pressuring the government to make changes to the Bill. By the time the Bill reaches third reading, it may look very different from when it was tabled in first reading.

### Think about...

It will often take weeks or months for a Bill to go through all the steps before it finally becomes a law. Do you think it is good or bad that it can take so long to make a law? Why?

notes

Before a government Bill is introduced, the government caucus discusses the idea, consults interested citizens and groups and works with lawyers who draft the legal text. Once the caucus approves the Bill, its members are expected to support the Bill in the Legislature. **Private Members** (MLAs who are not **cabinet Ministers**) may also propose Bills.

## Stages of a Bill:

### First Reading

In any given meeting of the Legislative Assembly a Bill may be proposed at a scheduled time during the daily Routine when Introduction of Bills is called by the Clerk. The Member sponsoring the Bill (usually a cabinet Minister if it is a government Bill) makes a motion for first reading, stating the Bill's title and summarizing the intent of the Bill. At this point the Speaker calls for a vote. All members routinely approve Bills at first reading.

### Second Reading

At second reading debate is limited to the principle or the intent of the Bill.

The sponsoring Member outlines why the Bill was introduced. Members of all parties can speak to the Bill. The Speaker then calls for a second vote.

### Committee of the Whole

If a Bill passes second reading, members of the Assembly then meet as **Committee of the Whole** to discuss it in detail. This is where much of the in-depth debate takes place. Sometimes at this stage **amendments** are made to the Bill. When debate is finished, the committee reports the Bill to the Assembly along with any amendments that were agreed to.

### Third Reading

This is when the sponsor of the Bill summarizes the Bill's benefits while the opposition states why they agree or disagree. A final vote is taken once debate is finished.

### Royal Assent

When a Bill has passed third reading, it must receive royal assent before it becomes a law. This is formal approval by the monarch's representative, the **Lieutenant Governor**. Some laws do not come into effect immediately but do so at a later date upon proclamation.

---

**“Think about” activity (Student Handbook page 4)**

---

## What Is a Debate?

### **“Think about” activity (Student Handbook page 6)**

The purpose of a legislative debate is to consider a proposal for a new law. During a debate multiple ideas, opinions and possible solutions are expressed. The process of debate brings these different ideas into the open and allows all sides to challenge each other and attempt to show why their position is better.

A simple debate has one group supporting an issue and one group opposing it. A moderator runs the debate. This person is nonpartisan. He or she recognizes whose turn it is to speak and tells them when their time to speak is over. In the Legislative Assembly and the Mock Legislature activity the moderator is the Speaker or the Chair of Committees.

### **Key components of a debate**

- Opening statements: Each side has an opportunity at the beginning of the debate to briefly state one or two major reasons for supporting or opposing the issue (or Bill). In the Mock Legislature this occurs during the Bill's first reading.
- Supporting arguments: Each side uses examples from their research as evidence that their position on the issue is the best. In the Mock Legislature activity this happens during second reading and Committee of the Whole.
- Rebuttals: Each side responds to specific points the other side has made in order to defend their own position. During debate it is very important for each side to listen to the other and to think about what the other side has just said. In the Mock Legislature students will make rebuttals during Committee of the Whole.
- Closing statements: Each side summarizes their major points. They may wish to restate a strong supporting example that makes their position especially convincing. In the Mock Legislature this happens in third reading of the Bill.

---

## **RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING**

- *Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature*, 7th edition  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Learning Resources
  - The Tuba Bill  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Student Zone
- 

notes

### **Think about...**

Think back to a time when your class had to make a decision together. What steps did you take as a class to come to a decision? Is it important to consider your classmates' ideas? Why?

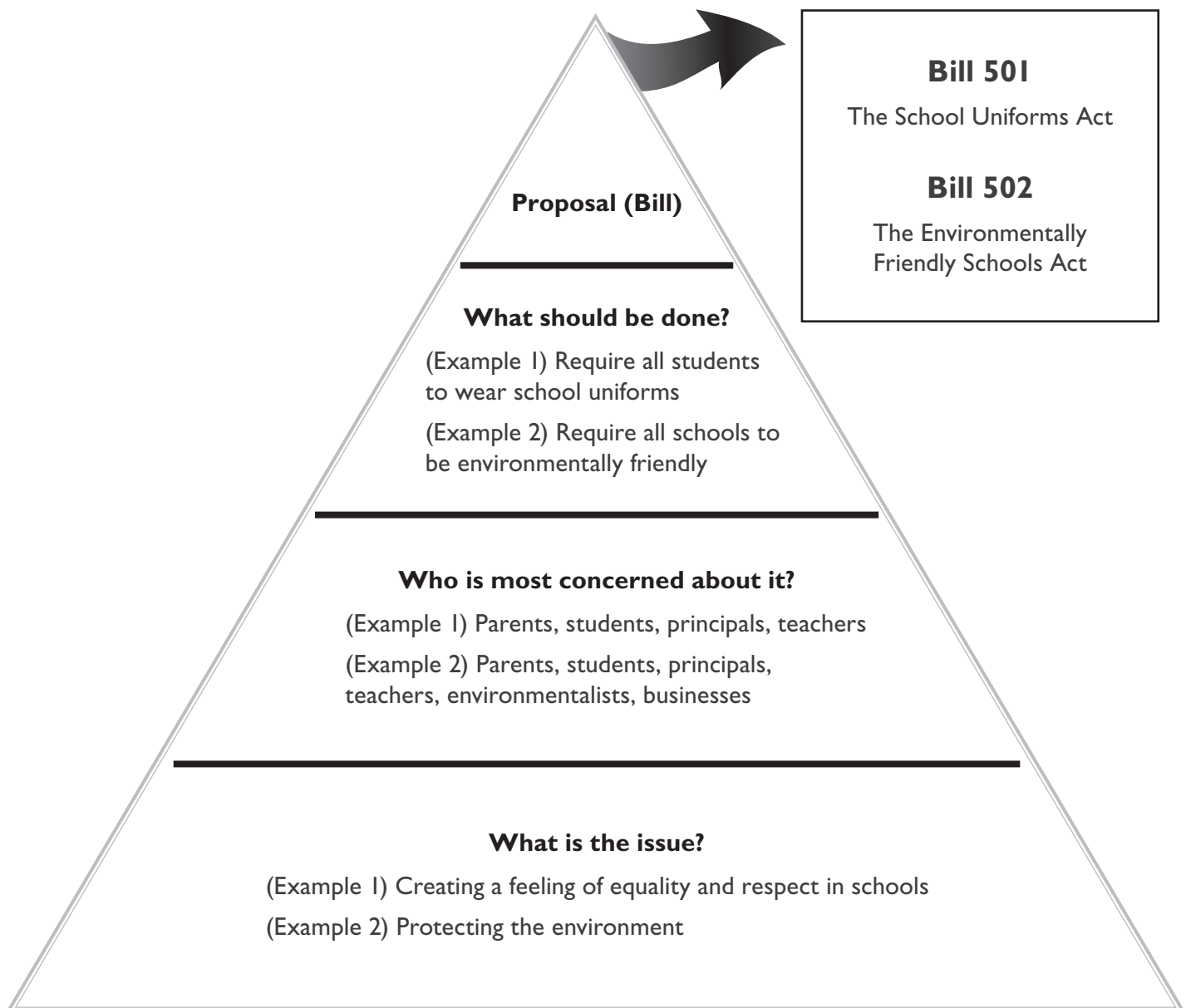
### **Classroom idea:**

Using these guidelines, stage a simple debate in your classroom. Choose a topic for which there are differing opinions. Divide your class into two groups and take 10 minutes to have one group develop arguments that support one opinion while the other group develops arguments for an opposing opinion. Moderate the discussion yourself and ensure that each side presents all of the key components of a debate.

### **Think, pair, share:**

Have students work in pairs to complete the Components of Debate chart on page 8 of the Student Handbook.

Figure 1.1: Developing a Bill Proposal for Debate



## 2. The Legislative Assembly Daily Routine, Ceremony and People

Visitors are often fascinated by the **ceremony** and **tradition** as played out in the Alberta Legislature. The Mock Legislature simulation presents an opportunity for students to develop a personal awareness of the roots of Canadian parliamentary democracy by participating in traditions and practices that have been carried out for centuries.

### **Activity:** The People of the Legislative Assembly (page 20)

### The Daily Routine: What Does It Look Like?

A daily sitting of the Legislative Assembly follows a routine, much like students follow during a day at school. At school the morning bell rings to let students know it is time to take their seats. There is usually a morning routine of the national anthem, announcements and sometimes a prayer. After this routine students get down to work.<sup>1</sup>

MLAs usually meet for several weeks in the spring and fall, Monday through Thursday afternoons. Sometimes they will have meetings in the evenings. When the meeting is about to begin, a bell rings to let the MLAs know they need to be in the Chamber. A prayer is read, announcements and introductions are made, Bills are introduced, documents are tabled, and then MLAs get to work discussing and debating Bills, motions and expenditures.

### **“Think about”** activity (Student Handbook page 11)

The sitting begins with the Chamber doors opening to reveal the **Sergeant-at-Arms** carrying the ceremonial **Mace** into the Chamber and escorting the Speaker of the Assembly. Everyone in the Chamber stands for the Speaker’s procession. The Speaker is followed by the **Clerk of the Legislative Assembly** and the other **table officers**. The Sergeant-at-Arms lays the Mace at the end of the Assembly table with the crown of the Mace pointing towards the government members.

Now the Speaker guides the Assembly through the following procedures:

- Opening prayers\*
- Introduction of visitors/guests
- Ministerial statements

<sup>1</sup> From Legislative Assembly of Ontario Discovery Tour. [www.ontla.on.ca](http://www.ontla.on.ca)

**Session** refers to the regular sitting of the Legislative Assembly. A session begins with the Speech from the Throne and continues until **prorogation** or **dissolution**.

**Think about...**  
Why do you think the Legislative Assembly follows a routine?

In the Mock Legislature your students will enact only the procession and the procedure noted with an asterisk (\*).

## Think about...

Look around your classroom for familiar symbols. Is there a reason why certain symbols can be found in your school? How do you feel when you participate in school traditions and ceremonies?

Maces were actually battle weapons used by the King's bodyguards. Later they became symbols of royal authority. Today their use in parliamentary chambers symbolizes the power and authority of the Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor is not permitted to enter the Chamber uninvited. To let the Speaker know that the Lieutenant Governor is waiting outside the Assembly, the Sergeant-at-Arms knocks three times using the Black Rod.

Although some Lieutenant Governors have been former MLAs or MPs, in this role they must remain nonpartisan.

- Members' statements
- Reports by committees
- Petitions
- Notices of motions
- Introduction of Bills (Bills are introduced but not debated )\*
- Tabling reports
- Oral question period
- Orders of the day (MLAs debate the Bills that have been presented)\*

## Ceremony: Connecting Symbols and Traditions

When your students perform the Mock Legislature, they will enact some ceremonies which have been part of the Assembly's long history. It is important that students understand the meaning behind the symbols and traditions that are involved in the Mock Legislature.

### "Think about" activity (Student Handbook page 14)

#### The Mace

The Mace is a heavy, decorated, gold staff which symbolizes the authority of the Assembly to make laws for the province. During the meeting it rests on the Assembly table. The crown of the Mace points toward the government side of the Chamber, indicating which party has the power to govern.

#### The Black Rod

The Black Rod is a symbol of the Legislative Assembly's independence from the monarchy. Alberta's Black Rod is carried by the Sergeant-at-Arms when the Lieutenant Governor, the Governor General or the Queen is escorted to the Chamber. The tradition is for the Sergeant-at-Arms to use the Black Rod to knock three times on the Chamber doors to request the Speaker's permission for the Lieutenant Governor to enter the Chamber to deliver a royal message such as the **Speech from the Throne**.

## Royal Assent

The British Parliament needs the monarch's approval before a Bill can officially become law. This tradition is still practised in Alberta when the Lieutenant Governor grants royal assent to legislation. This means that once a Bill has passed through all the necessary readings and the Lieutenant Governor has approved the Bill in the Chamber, the Bill will become a law. Sometimes the law takes effect upon proclamation at a later date.

## The People of the Assembly:

### Who Are They, and What Do They Do?

The Legislative Assembly **Chamber** is where the Assembly meets. Each person who has a role in the Legislative Assembly has a specific place to be during a sitting.

The Speaker sits at the head of the Chamber. Members of the governing party sit to the Speaker's right. Opposition members sit across from them. Sometimes a government has such a large **majority** that there aren't enough seats on the government side. Some of the government members would then have desks placed on the opposition side but separated by an aisle. In some cases, when the government has a **minority** of seats in the Chamber, some opposition members may have to sit on the government side.

There are many people involved in the law-making process. Each of these people has certain duties.

### Lieutenant Governor

The Lieutenant Governor is the **monarch's** representative. The Lieutenant Governor is not a member of the Assembly and only enters the Chamber upon invitation.

This person grants royal assent to Bills which have passed third reading. The Lieutenant Governor also opens and closes sessions of the Assembly, reads the Speech from the Throne and dissolves the Assembly for an election. (This is called **dissolution**.) The Lieutenant Governor also officially appoints the Premier and swears in the cabinet.

### Speaker

The Speaker is an MLA who presides over debate in the Chamber.

This person is responsible for enforcing the rules of the Chamber and ensuring that all MLAs are treated fairly. The Speaker must serve all MLAs equally no matter which party they belong to. The Speaker does not normally vote on Bills except in the case of a tie. The Speaker is also responsible for the Legislative Assembly Office, whose staff provide support for the MLAs and the Assembly as a whole.

The Lieutenant Governor of each province are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada.

The term "Speaker" dates back to 1377, when the Speaker was responsible for telling Parliament about the monarch's wishes and advising the monarch about Parliament's resolutions.

## Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)

An MLA has a dual role as the representative for a constituency (also called a **riding**) and as a legislator. Each of Alberta's constituencies elects one representative.

While some have additional duties within their parties or within the Assembly, all are responsible for

- listening to and speaking on behalf of their constituents
- discussing Bills and motions with other Members and debating them within the Assembly
- helping constituents with government programs and services
- attending caucus meetings to discuss party policies
- attending legislative and caucus committee meetings

## Government MLAs

These MLAs belong to the party with the most elected representatives in the Assembly.

- **The Premier** is the head of government and has overall responsibility for everything the government does.
- **Cabinet Ministers** head various government ministries such as health, education, seniors or agriculture. The Premier chooses them from the MLAs in his party. They sponsor new Bills that concern their ministries.
- **Private Government Members** are also often referred to as backbenchers. These MLAs belong to the party that has the most representatives in the Assembly. These individuals are not cabinet Ministers. They sit behind Ministers and debate and vote in the Assembly.
- **The Chair of Committees** runs the meeting during committees of the whole Assembly. This person is usually a private government Member. His or her role during committee is similar to that of the Speaker during regular session. The Chair can vote during session but not during Committee of the Whole unless there is a tie vote. The Chair of Committees is also the Deputy Speaker.

## Opposition MLAs

The opposition includes all elected MLAs from parties other than the governing party as well as those who sit as independents.

The Premier and cabinet form the Executive Council.

The term "cabinet" dates back to early parliamentary history when the King's advisers met in a small room that lent itself to secret discussion.



- **The Leader of the Official Opposition** leads the party that has the second greatest number of elected MLAs.
- **Members of the opposition** examine, question and suggest alternatives to government policies. They bring questions about government policies and actions to the attention of the public.

Some of the opposition members are appointed by their party to present policies of their party and respond to those of the government. They are known as **critics** and ensure that the government stays accountable to the public by continually questioning government activities. The remaining are private opposition Members, and they also debate and vote in the Assembly.

### Table Officers

- **The Clerk of the Assembly** is the adviser to the Speaker. This person calls the **daily order of business**. The Clerk also has overall responsibility for the various administrative services that MLAs need to do their work such as financial administration and library services.
- **The Law Clerk** is a senior procedural adviser and is also responsible for approving amendments and petitions and helping to draft rulings on procedural issues.
- **Parliamentary Counsel** is the group of legal advisers who advise the Speaker and MLAs on Assembly procedure. Throughout the year they help draft new laws for MLAs and provide legal and procedural advice to MLAs, committees and staff who support the Assembly.
- **The Committee Research Co-ordinator** conducts procedural research, keeps Assembly records and helps produce the Assembly's daily agenda (the Order Paper) and the minutes (Votes and Proceedings).

The Clerk's position dates back to the 14th century, when a Clerk's most important skills were reading and writing. In those days few members of the Parliament possessed these skills, so the Clerk read petitions, Bills and resolutions to the Assembly.

### Sergeant-at-Arms

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for security in the Chamber and the galleries. The Sergeant-at-Arms also carries the Mace into the Chamber each sitting day. The Sergeant-at-Arms leads the Speaker's procession into the Chamber to signal the start of the day's **sitting**.

### Pages

Pages help members during sittings of the Assembly by delivering messages and materials to MLAs, table officers and the Speaker in the Chamber. They are normally Alberta high school and first-year university students.

## **Hansard**

The people who work for **Hansard** produce the official report of the debates of the Legislative Assembly and its committees. Besides transcribing and editing well over 30,000 words spoken by MLAs every day that the Assembly meets, they ensure all proper names are spelled accurately. They produce final transcripts of House debates within nine hours.

## **The Media (Reporters )**

The role of the media is very important in a democracy as it ensures that the public is aware of the decisions made by their elected representatives.

The media take notes throughout the debates, interview MLAs afterwards (particularly cabinet Ministers and opposition critics) and report this information through television, radio, newspapers and online.

### **“Think about” activity (Student Handbook page 20)**

#### **Think about...**

Now that you know what each person does in the Legislative Assembly, which role would you like to try out for a day? Why?

---

## **RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING**

- *Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 7th edition  
Part III: Rules and Traditions  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Learning Resources
  - Module on Parliamentary Democracy, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Athabasca University  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Learning Resources
  - Background Resources for Educators, Parliament of Canada  
[www.parl.gc.ca/education](http://www.parl.gc.ca/education)
-

# 3. The Mock Legislature

## Getting Ready

notes

In the preceding sections your students learned the basics of parliamentary democracy and law-making in Alberta. By now they have selected a topic, developed arguments for debate and been assigned roles to play in the Mock Legislature activity.

When they perform the Mock Legislature, your students will see how the traditional and ceremonial aspects of parliamentary democracy are fused with the procedures of the law-making process. The script provided will give them the opportunity to enact the roles they have researched and present the ideas they have formed, helping them understand how the real Legislative Assembly operates.

This section will assist you with final preparations.

### **Activity: Hold a Caucus Meeting (page 22)**

## How To Use the Mock Legislature Script

The script provided is a work in progress. You will have to work with your students to complete the script using the knowledge they have gained from their preparatory activities.

Read through the script, and pay special attention to blank areas. This is where your students will write in their debate arguments or relevant information (the name of the Bill and the name of the person being addressed).

### **A few important points about procedure:**

Our script is mainly a guideline for the order of proceedings for a Bill to become law. There are a number of things to keep in mind as you go through the script.

- During debate all statements are addressed to the Speaker. When a member begins to speak, they always start with “Mr. Speaker” or “Madam Speaker.”
- During Committee of the Whole Members address all statements to the Chair (“Mr. Chair” or “Madam Chair”).
- If there are noisy outbursts, the Speaker calls for order. The Speaker politely reminds everyone that they may only speak one at a time.
- The Speaker stands when he/she addresses the Assembly. No one else speaks or moves while the Speaker is standing.

- The Clerk and members also stand when they are speaking.
- After an MLA has made a point, the other party members usually show their support by thumping on their desks with one hand.
- Members are referred to by position and not by name; for example, “The **Honourable** Minister of Education” or “The Honourable Opposition Member.”

## Props, Costumes and Arranging the Room

### Props

When you visit the Legislature, props will be provided for you. You may want to use props during your own classroom Mock Legislature to make it more authentic.

- A mace (see Classroom Resources for How to Make a Mace Activity)
- Black Rod
- Trays (one for each Page; used for carrying messages)
- Microphone or notepad and pen (for the media)
- Daily calendar for Clerk’s table (to demonstrate change of day between scenes)

### Costumes

Costumes are also provided when you visit the Legislature. Suggested attire for your classroom debate:

- **MLAs:** suit jackets
- **Speaker, Clerk, Law Clerk:** robes
- **Sergeant-at-Arms:** white gloves, black suit jacket, black pants or skirt
- **Pages:** black pants or skirt
- **Lieutenant Governor:** suit or dress
- **Media:** no official outfit but should be neatly dressed

## Arranging the Room

In the Mock Legislature everyone has a distinct role to play and a specific place to be. When you visit the Legislature, your simulation will take place in a room designed to resemble the actual Legislature Chamber. A floor plan is included in this manual so that you can set up your classroom to look like the Legislature Chamber (see Classroom Resources section).

---

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

- *Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 7th edition  
Part III: Rules and Traditions  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Learning Resources
  - *Compendium of House of Commons Procedure*  
[www.parl.gc.ca/education](http://www.parl.gc.ca/education) → Background Resources for Educators → House of Commons
-

# Class Preparation Activities

## Activity 1: Explore an Issue

### Lesson Overview

In a legislative debate MLAs present opinions held by their constituents and their political party. They use facts, data, opinions and statements that they have collected through talking to people and doing research. In the following activity students will explore the many perspectives involved in forming a new government policy.

This activity may take up to three class periods but can be shortened to meet classroom needs. If you have time constraints, consider using one of the sample topics in the Classroom Resources section (page 25).

### Specific Learning Outcomes (page 1)

- Students will recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their communities. (6.I.1)
- Students will develop skills of critical and creative thinking. (6.S.1)
- Students will apply the research process. (6.S.7)

### Concepts

Students should be familiar with concepts from Section 1, Making Laws in Alberta, including these terms: interest groups, issue, law, Bill, debate.

### Preparation and Resources

- Copy Figure 1.1 (page 8) on transparency, or photocopy one for each student as a visual guide.
- Reserve school resource centre for research period.
- See Sample Bill and Debate Ideas (page 25) to get you started.

### Activity

#### Period 1

1. Review with students the key concepts necessary for this activity.

The interest groups you involve will depend on the topic your students have agreed upon. You may have to do some research to find out what groups are involved in certain issues.

Activity option:  
Have students introduce a new school rule rather than provincial legislation. Follow the same steps. Some ideas: the school cafeteria will only serve healthy food; all teachers must wear the school colors every day. Be creative!

- Why do Alberta citizens elect MLAs? What do these people do for us in the Legislature?
  - Where do the government and MLAs get ideas for new laws?
  - If you had the chance to make a new Alberta law, what would it be?
2. Brainstorm possible ideas for a proposal for legislation. Consider current events and topics of local interest. You will want to pick an issue for which students will be able to see both negative and positive aspects. As you consider topics, be sure that you can identify the components in Figure 1.1 (page 8).
  3. Divide your students into interest groups. For example:
    - parents
    - students
    - teachers and principals
    - businesspersons
    - environmentalists

## Period 2

4. Have each group research the issue. Encourage students to use a number of different resources in their research. For example:
  - Internet resources (online articles)
  - newspapers and periodicals
  - television and radio news coverage
  - their MLA
  - local organizations concerned with the topic
5. Have each group develop key points explaining why they support or oppose the Bill or why they support or oppose certain aspects of the Bill.

## Period 3

6. Have students present a summary of their group's position to their classmates. These arguments will be used later on in Activity 3 and the Mock Legislature simulation.

# Activity 2: The People of the Legislative Assembly

## Lesson Overview

There are many people at work in the Chamber during a sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Each person plays a special role in ensuring that the work of the Assembly runs smoothly. For the Mock Legislature simulation students require an understanding of these people, their roles and their places in the Chamber.

This activity requires one class period.

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will analyze the structure and function of Alberta's Legislative Assembly, including roles and responsibilities. (6.1.5)
- Students will be familiar with the seating arrangement of the Chamber and the role to which they have been assigned for the simulation.

## Concepts

Students should be familiar with the roles of the different people in the Legislative Assembly and the concepts in Section 2, The Legislative Assembly.

## Preparation and Resources

- Copies of Chamber Matching Game (page 32 / also in Student Handbook)
- Photocopy and cut out Student Role Cards for Mock Legislature (pages 33-38)

## Activity

1. Have students complete the Chamber Matching Game independently or in teams.
2. Discuss student answers. Encourage them to support their answers.
3. Assign students to each of the roles for the Mock Legislature. The number of students required for each role is listed below. However, you will find that the numbers of students can be flexible depending on your class size.
4. Hand out role cards to students. Have students review their cards and make note of their place in the Mock Legislature based on the Chamber Matching Game.



## Roles for the Mock Legislature

### Nonpartisan roles

- Speaker (1 student)
- Pages (1 student for a small class, 2 for a larger class)
- Clerk (1 student)
- Law Clerk (optional for a small class)
- Sergeant-at-Arms (1 student)
- Lieutenant Governor (1 student)
- Media reporters (optional; 1 or 2 students)

### Government MLAs

- The Premier (1 student)
- Cabinet Ministers (6 students. Assign portfolios if you wish)
- Private government Members (the remaining members of the governing party that are not part of cabinet)
- Chair of Committees (1 student)

### Opposition MLAs

- Leader of the Official Opposition (1 student)
- Members of the opposition (assign the remaining students)

**notes** You may delegate these roles to your students in any way that works for your classroom. You may even want to have an election for some of the roles.

Assign more students to the government side party than to the opposition.

If there is a minority government, the opposition has more votes, and the Bill will likely be defeated.

# Activity 3: Hold a Caucus Meeting

## Lesson Overview

In this activity students will combine what they have learned in the previous two activities to fill in the blank spaces in the Mock Legislature script. The script provides room for students to write their own arguments, questions or statements based on the Bill proposal your class has developed.

This activity requires one class period.

## Lesson Outcomes

- Students will develop skills of problem solving and decision-making. (6.S.4)
- Students will demonstrate skills of co-operation, conflict resolution and consensus building. (6.S.5)
- Students will demonstrate skills of oral literacy. (6.S.8)
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of democracy. (6.I.2)

## Concepts

Students require an understanding of concepts from Sections 1 and 2, including caucus, daily order of business, Speaker's procession, ceremony, tradition, governing party, opposition, cabinet, critics, nonpartisan, table officers, royal assent, media as well as the stages of a Bill and the components of debate.

Students require an understanding of the Bill proposal developed by your class

(Activity 1) and a familiarity with the role they have been assigned (Activity 2).

Students should be familiar with the notes on costumes and procedures in Section 3, The Mock Legislature.

## Preparation and Resources

- Copies of Mock Legislature script

## Activity

1. Tell students it is time for a caucus meeting, which is their final preparation before the real meeting.
2. Divide students into three groups:
  - those who have been selected to be part of the government (including the Premier and Chair of Committees)
  - those in the opposition party
  - those who have been chosen for the nonpartisan roles (Speaker, Clerk, Law Clerk, Pages, Sergeant-at-Arms, Lieutenant Governor, media)
3. At this stage students will work through the script in their groups (or in pairs within these groups).

The government caucus will

- decide on ministerial positions for its Members,
- make sure that each government Member has an opportunity to make a point during the debate,
- decide which Minister is sponsoring the Bill, and
- develop an introduction and closing statement.

The opposition caucus will

- decide on shadow cabinet positions for its Members,
- make sure that each opposition Member has an opportunity to make at least one point during the debate,
- develop an introduction and closing statement, and
- discuss how they will vote at second and third readings.

The students in the nonpartisan roles\* will

- become familiar with their characters' lines and stage directions,
- anticipate government and opposition arguments,
- create questions for the press conference/scrum, and
- assemble any materials needed for their role such as pens, notebooks, cameras, et cetera.

4. Once students have completed their scripts and assembled props and costumes, your class is ready to participate in the Mock Legislature simulation. Turn to the Teacher's Blueprint (Classroom Resources, page 39) to guide you through set-up and facilitation.
5. To stage a Mock Legislature in your classroom, refer to the Teacher's Blueprint.

\*People in the nonpartisan roles would not normally meet with the media although they do in this activity.

Note: With the exception of the media, the students in the nonpartisan roles should be made aware that these would not normally be the responsibilities of these roles.



# Classroom Resources

## Sample Bill and Debate Ideas

### The School Uniforms Act

Use the following as a guide for what to consider when your students are selecting and framing an issue for debate for the Mock Legislature. You will probably find it easiest to select an idea for proposed legislation that interests your students. If you choose one of these topics, encourage students to frame these points in their own words.

#### Sample Bill: The School Uniforms Act (Bill 501)

#### 1. Main purpose for proposing this Bill

The government should be able to identify at least one main purpose for the Bill.

For example:

- This Bill will improve public education for all students in Alberta by creating a positive learning environment.

#### 2. Details of the Bill

As a class decide on a number of key details which will be subject to debate. For example:

- Under this law all students attending school in Alberta will be required to wear a uniform to school and to school functions.
- Schools are responsible for deciding what the uniform will look like.
- Breaking this law will result in a fine to the student of \$100.

#### 3. Reasons the government is proposing this Bill

This is where the government identifies all the specific reasons Albertans would benefit from this law. For example:

- Families won't have to spend as much money on clothing because students will not be expected to buy trendy, brand-name clothing.
- Students won't get picked on by bullies, because everyone will be wearing the same thing.

- Students will be able to focus on school better because they will not be distracted by what others are wearing.
- It will be easier for students to decide what to wear in the morning.
- Uniforms will make the school look good and improve its reputation because everyone is dressed nicely.
- Teachers will be able to find their classes easily when they go to big events or on field trips, because everyone is dressed the same.
- Uniforms will improve school spirit and pride.
- Students will not come to school wearing clothing with profane words or images.
- The proposed fine of \$100 is suitable because students should be held responsible for what they wear.

#### 4. Reasons the opposition opposes this Bill

Here the opposition points out it disagrees with the government's ideas and may offer alternatives. For example:

- Students should have the freedom to wear what they want. Telling students what to wear goes against students' individual freedoms.
- More students will drop out of a school if they are being told what to wear.
- Without student input the uniforms might end up looking ugly.
- The cost of these uniforms could be very high, depending on where the school decides to buy them. Families won't have the opportunity to get their school clothes at discount stores.
- The uniforms will be distracting if they are itchy or uncomfortable.
- Schools would be boring if everyone looked the same, and students would not be able to show their individuality.
- The punishment is unfair because students cannot afford to pay \$100, and their parents will end up paying for their child breaking the law.
- Some styles and colours of clothing don't look good on everyone.

# Sample Bill and Debate Ideas

## The Environmentally Friendly Schools Act

Use the following as a guide for what to consider when your students are selecting and framing an issue for debate for the Mock Legislature. You will probably find it easiest to select an idea for proposed legislation that interests your students. If you choose one of these topics, encourage students to frame these points in their own words.

### Sample Bill: The Environmentally Friendly Schools Act (Bill 502)

#### 1. Main purpose for proposing this Bill

The government should be able to identify at least one main purpose for the Bill.

For example:

- This Bill will help to improve the environment and make schools more environmentally friendly.

#### 2. Details of the Bill

As a class decide on a number of key details which will be subject to debate. For example:

- In three years all schools in Alberta must be more environmentally friendly by reducing the amount of energy they use.
- Schools in Alberta will only operate during the late spring, summer and early fall, when there is more daylight to reduce the electricity used for lighting classrooms. Students will go to school longer in the summer and will not go to school in the winter.
- All schools must use solar power.
- Schools must reduce their use of computers and electronics.
- Students will be prohibited from bringing lunches and snacks in disposable bags and wrappers.

#### 3. Reasons the government is proposing this Bill

This is where the government identifies all the specific reasons Albertans would benefit from this law. For example:

- If schools are only open during seasons with many hours of daylight, schools will reduce the energy they use to light their buildings.
- This Bill will help schools save money because their electricity bills won't be so expensive. The money saved can be used for other things to improve the school, like buying new gym equipment or library books.
- Computers and electronics consume a lot of energy, so their use should be limited.
- This Bill will reduce the amount of garbage waste in schools because everyone will have to use recyclable lunch containers.
- Solar power is a renewable resource that will end up saving schools money in the long run.
- Students will get a longer vacation in the winter than they do now, so they will have lots of time for skiing, making snow forts, playing hockey, et cetera.
- Getting to school in the winter can be dangerous because of ice and snow.
- This Bill will reduce the number of traffic accidents that happen in the winter because there will be no school buses on the road during this season.
- Many students are more tired in the winter because it is darker; if they go to school in the summer, they will be more energetic and will learn better.
- Batteries and ink cartridges contribute to the amount of toxic waste, so their use should be limited.

#### **4. Reasons the opposition opposes this Bill**

Here the opposition points out it disagrees with the government's ideas and may offer alternatives. For example:

- Students won't be able to concentrate if they go to school in the summer because they will want to be playing outside in the nice weather.
- Most families take vacations in the summer.
- There are no day camps or programs for young people to go to in the winter when their parents are at work. Parents will have to find someone to take care of their young children.



- This Bill will cause many big, expensive changes for schools in Alberta. Installing solar panels is very expensive, and this money would be better spent on educational programs.
- Schools and students depend on computers every day. Students must learn to use technology in today's society.
- It will be impossible to stop kids from bringing snacks in plastic wrappers because most store-bought snacks are packaged that way.
- Schools will have to get rid of their vending machines that sell plastic wrapped foods. Many schools depend on these vending machines to make money for school teams and clubs.
- School will become boring if teachers can't use electronics like TVs, projectors and computers in the classroom.
- Buildings still have to be heated in winter so pipes don't freeze. Why heat empty buildings?

---

### OTHER DEBATE IDEAS

- Cellphone use in schools
  - Youth curfew laws
  - Junk food in schools
  - Segregated (boys/girls) schools
-

# Chamber Matching Game

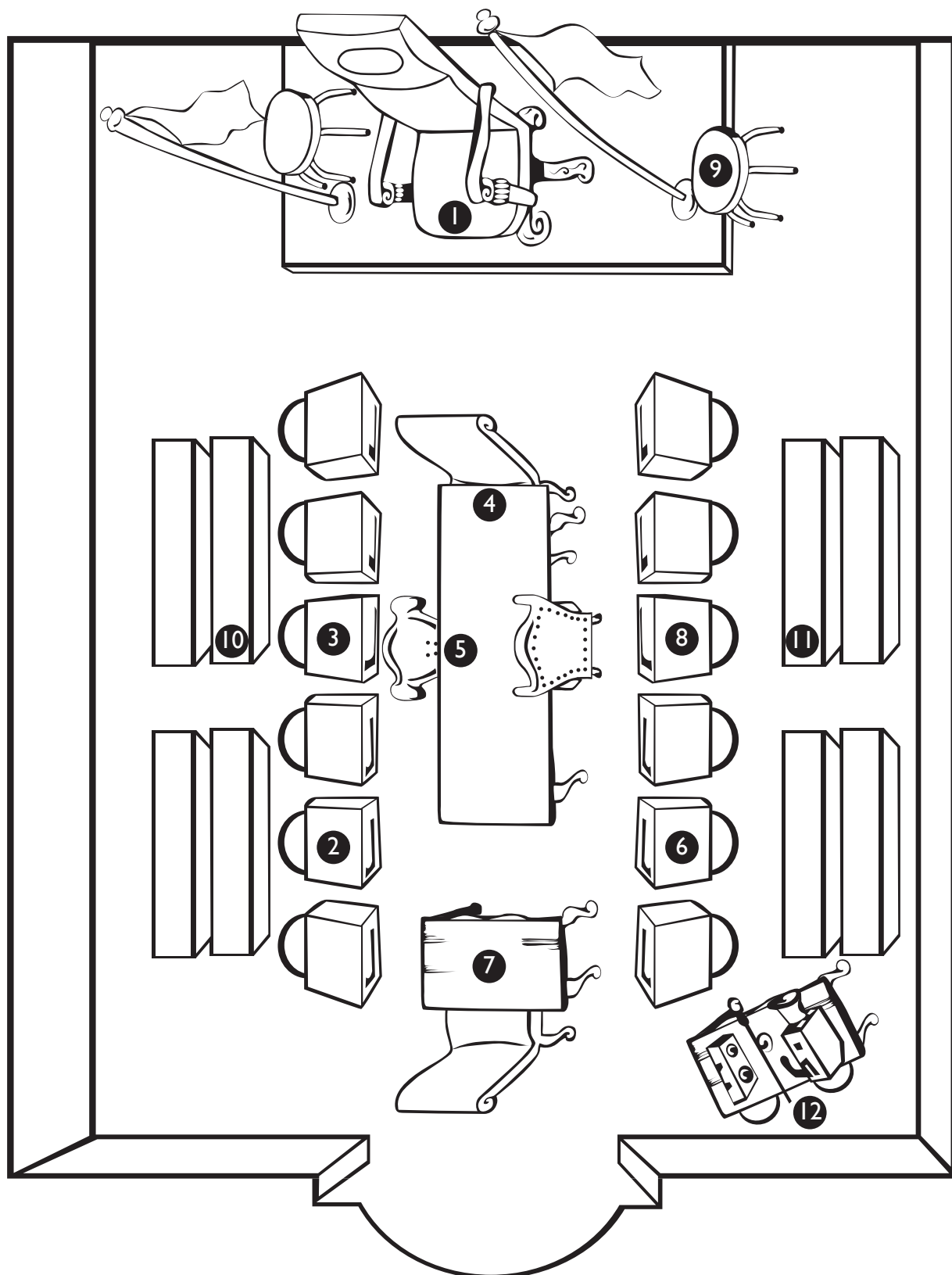
Using the Mock Legislature Chamber floor plan, match the title of each person with the correct seat in the Chamber, and then write down that person's most important duty.

Title of Person	Seat	What is this person's most important duty in the democratic process?
Government Minister		
Media		
Leader of the Official Opposition		
Critics		
Premier		
Private Government Member		
Page		
Law Clerk		
Clerk		
Sergeant-at-Arms		
Speaker		
Private Opposition Member		
Lieutenant Governor	●	
Chair of Committees	●	

● Where does the Lieutenant Governor sit when giving royal assent? \_\_\_\_\_

● Where does the Chair of Committees sit when moderating the debate? \_\_\_\_\_

# Mock Legislature Chamber Floor Plan



## Answer Key:

Title of Person	Seat	What is this person's most important duty in the democratic process?
Government Minister	2	Head of a government department
Media	12	Interviews members after session and informs citizens about the activities of their elected representatives
Leader of the Official Opposition	8	Leader of the party with the second most elected representatives
Critics	6	Opposition members chosen to research and question the activities and policies of a specific ministry
Premier	3	Head of Government. Leader of the party with the most elected representatives
Private Government Member	10	Elected government MLA without a cabinet position
Page	9	High school student assisting the members, the Speaker and the House officers
Law Clerk	5	Assists the Clerk in his/her duties
Clerk	4	Primary adviser to the Speaker
Sergeant-at-Arms	7	Head of security inside the Chamber
Speaker	1	Keeps order in the Chamber during session
Private Opposition Member	11	Opposition Member without a critic position
Lieutenant Governor	10	Queen's representative in Alberta
Chair of Committees	4	Chairs debate during Committee of the Whole

- 10 Where does the Lieutenant Governor sit when giving royal assent? 1
- 4 Where does the Chair of Committees sit when moderating the debate? 4

# Student Role Cards for Mock Legislature

Photocopy and cut out these cards to give to students once roles for the Mock Legislature have been assigned.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SPEAKER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You chair the meetings of the Legislative Assembly.</li> <li>• You treat all Members of the Assembly equally. You do not take a side on the Bill being debated, and you do not vote.</li> <li>• You must call on people who wish to speak, and they will always address you as Mr. or Madam Speaker.</li> <li>• You keep order in the Chamber.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PREMIER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are the head of government in Alberta.</li> <li>• You are the leader of the party that has the most elected representatives in the Legislative Assembly.</li> <li>• You pick the cabinet Ministers and help decide government Bills.</li> <li>• You answer questions during Oral Question Period.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are the Queen's representative for the province of Alberta.</li> <li>• You are only allowed into the Chamber when invited by the Speaker.</li> <li>• You give final agreement to the passage of a Bill through royal assent.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are the leader of the party with the second most elected representatives in the Legislative Assembly.</li> <li>• You introduce Bills and present alternatives to government policies.</li> <li>• You question the government in Oral Question Period (you ask the first question).</li> </ul>

### **CLERK**

- You assist the Speaker in his/her duties.
- You advise the Speaker in matters relating to House procedure.
- You direct the daily Routine.
- You read out the names of the Bills that will receive royal assent.

### **SERGEANT-AT-ARMS**

- You are responsible for security inside the Legislative Assembly Chamber and galleries.
- You carry the Mace and lead the Speaker's procession.
- You carry the Black Rod and escort the Lieutenant Governor into the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

### **PAGE**

- You assist the Speaker, Sergeant-at-Arms, Clerk and members so that they do not need to leave their desks during the debate.
- You assist members by delivering messages.
- You open the doors whenever the Sergeant-at-Arms escorts people to and from the Legislative Assembly.
- You cover the Mace before the Lieutenant Governor enters the Chamber.

### **CHAIR OF COMMITTEES**

- You chair the Committee of the Whole.
- You treat all Members of the Assembly equally.
- You do not take a side on the Bill being debated, and you do not vote during Committee of the Whole. You may debate and vote in regular session.
- You must call on people who wish to speak, and they will always address you as Mr. or Madam Chair.
- You take the Clerk's seat in Committee of the Whole.

### **GOVERNMENT MINISTER**

- You are appointed by the Premier.
- You present government Bills to the Legislative Assembly.
- You debate and present arguments supporting government Bills.
- You vote for government Bills.
- You answer questions during Oral Question Period.

### **MEDIA**

- You pay attention to the proceedings.
- You may record the session.
- You interview members after the sitting is over.
- You report on the happenings of the day.

---

**OPPOSITION MEMBER**

- You present alternatives to government policies.
- You debate and may present arguments opposing government Bills.
- You may vote against government Bills.

---

**PRIVATE GOVERNMENT MEMBER**

- You debate and usually support government Bills.
- You usually vote for government Bills.

---

**LAW CLERK**

- You approve amendments and petitions.
- You help to draft rulings on procedural issues.

---

**PRIVATE GOVERNMENT MEMBER**

- You debate and usually support government Bills.
- You usually vote for government Bills.

---

**OPPOSITION MEMBER**

- You present alternatives to government policies.
- You debate and may present arguments opposing government Bills.
- You may vote against government Bills.

---

**PRIVATE GOVERNMENT MEMBER**

- You debate and usually support government Bills.
- You usually vote for government Bills.

---

**OPPOSITION MEMBER**

- You present alternatives to government policies.
- You debate and may present arguments opposing government Bills.
- You may vote against government Bills.

---

**PRIVATE GOVERNMENT MEMBER**

- You debate and usually support government Bills.
- You usually vote for government Bills.

---

**OPPOSITION MEMBER**

- You present alternatives to government policies.
- You debate and may present arguments opposing government Bills.
- You may vote against government Bills.

---

**PRIVATE GOVERNMENT MEMBER**

- You debate and usually support government Bills.
- You usually vote for government Bills.

---

**OPPOSITION MEMBER**

- You present alternatives to government policies.
- You debate and may present arguments opposing government Bills.
- You may vote against government Bills.

---

**PRIVATE GOVERNMENT MEMBER**

- You debate and usually support government Bills.
- You usually vote for government Bills.



### **GOVERNMENT MINISTER**

- You are appointed by the Premier.
- You present government Bills to the Legislative Assembly.
- You debate and present arguments supporting government Bills.
- You vote for government Bills.
- You answer questions during Oral Question Period.

### **OPPOSITION MEMBER**

- You present alternatives to government policies.
- You debate and may present arguments opposing government Bills.
- You may vote against government Bills.

### **GOVERNMENT MINISTER**

- You are appointed by the Premier.
- You present government Bills to the Legislative Assembly.
- You debate and present arguments supporting government Bills.
- You vote for government Bills.
- You answer questions during Oral Question Period.

### **OPPOSITION MEMBER**

- You present alternatives to government policies.
- You debate and may present arguments opposing government Bills.
- You may vote against government Bills.

### **GOVERNMENT MINISTER**

- You are appointed by the Premier.
- You present government Bills to the Legislative Assembly.
- You debate and present arguments supporting government Bills.
- You vote for government Bills.
- You answer questions during Oral Question Period.

### **MEDIA**

- You pay attention to the proceedings.
- You may record the session.
- You interview members after the sitting is over.
- You report on the happenings of the day.

---

### **GOVERNMENT MINISTER**

- You are appointed by the Premier.
- You present government Bills to the Legislative Assembly.
- You debate and present arguments supporting government Bills.
- You vote for government Bills.
- You answer questions during Oral Question Period.

---

### **MEDIA**

- You pay attention to the proceedings.
- You may record the session.
- You interview members after the sitting is over.
- You report on the happenings of the day.

---

### **PAGE**

- You assist the Speaker, Sergeant-at-Arms, Clerk and members so that they do not need to leave their desks during the debate.
- You assist members by delivering messages.
- You open the doors whenever the Sergeant-at-Arms escorts people to and from the Legislative Assembly.
- You cover the Mace before the Lieutenant Governor enters the Chamber.

---

### **PAGE**

- You assist the Speaker, Sergeant-at-Arms, Clerk and members so that they do not need to leave their desks during the debate.
- You assist members by delivering messages.
- You open the doors whenever the Sergeant-at-Arms escorts people to and from the Legislative Assembly.
- You cover the Mace before the Lieutenant Governor enters the Chamber.

# Teacher's Blueprint for Mock Legislature in the Classroom

If you carry out the Mock Legislature in your own classroom, use this blueprint to guide your students through the simulation.

(If you visit the Legislature, a trained tour guide will facilitate the simulation in the specially designed Mock Legislature Chamber.)

## Preparation/Set-up

- Arrange desks in room according to Mock Chamber floor plan (see page 31).
- Ensure that props are in place, students are in costume, and each student has a copy of the script.
- Review the passage of a Bill if needed.

## Scene I: The Procession and First Reading

- Arrange students in procession outside Chamber doors in this order:
  - Sergeant-at-Arms (carrying the Mace)
  - Speaker
  - Clerk
  - Law Clerk
  - Pages (one Page should hold door open and then follow)
- Ensure that all other students are in their desks prior to the procession.
  - The Lieutenant Governor and media should be seated offstage but may watch the proceedings until their entrances in scenes 5 and 6.
  - The Chair of Committees is a government Member and should be seated with the government until scene 3.
- The Speaker may use a different opening prayer as appropriate.
- This scene is where a Bill is first introduced by a government Minister. All MLAs typically vote yes at this stage because the Bill is still in its early stages.

The Lieutenant Governor would not normally be present in the Chamber during the law-making process until it is time for royal assent.

The Pages can be used to send messages to other people in the Chamber.

notes

- Ensure that all students stand when speaking and sit when finished unless otherwise noted in stage directions.

*Before moving on to scene 2, remind students that in the real Legislature a lot of time passes between the first reading and the next stage of the Bill as MLAs and their staff are studying and researching the Bill in more detail.*

## Scene 2: Second Reading

- In this scene government members will articulate their main reasons for proposing the Bill. The opposition will outline its general reasons for opposing the Bill. The Bill will move on to the next stage because the government has a majority of MLAs who will vote yes.

*Before moving on to scene 3, ask students to review the difference between the purposes of the first and second readings.*

## Scene 3: Committee of the Whole

- In this scene the MLAs will discuss the Bill in detail. All comments are now directed to the Chair of Committees.

*Before moving on to scene 4, ask students to think about the importance of the committee stage.*

## Scene 4: Third Reading

- In this scene the government and opposition each summarize some of their main conclusions about the Bill. The Bill will likely pass this reading because the government members form the majority.

*Before moving on to scene 5, ask students what might happen if it were a minority government.*

*Remind students that a Bill does not immediately become law after it has passed third reading. What comes next?*

## Scene 5: Royal Assent and Adjournment

- In this scene the Lieutenant Governor requests permission to enter the Chamber and grant royal assent to the Bill. Following this, the Assembly will vote to adjourn. (Have a facsimile of a Black Rod ready to pass to one of the Pages.)

- When the meeting is adjourned, the Sergeant-at-Arms leads out the Speaker, Clerk, Law Clerk and Pages.

*Before moving on to scene 6, ask students to consider why the Lieutenant Governor must give royal assent to Bills.*

## Scene 6: Press Conference/Scrum

- Arrange media and MLAs to be interviewed where everyone can watch the interview.
- Ask students to consider how the media plays an important role in the lawmaking process.

## Conclusion

- Discuss:
  - Why is law-making such a long process? Is it good or bad that it takes so many steps to make a law?
  - Why are there so many rules in the Assembly (rules about standing when you speak, addressing the Speaker, waiting to be called on to speak...)?
  - If this became a real Alberta law, how would it change your life? How would it affect other Albertans?
  - If Albertans are unhappy with this new law, what can they do about it?
- Have students help put away materials, costumes and desks.
- Reconvene students to complete follow-up activities.

In the Legislature media are permitted to watch the proceedings from a special press gallery. However, interviews are conducted outside of the Chamber.

As MLAs, students can anticipate questions from the media and prepare their responses in advance, but they are also encouraged to improvise their answers to the media questions.

Members of the media do not interview nonpartisan officials such as the Speaker, Clerk or Sergeant-at-Arms about legislation.

## How to Make A Mace

To begin each sitting day, the Sergeant-at-Arms carries the Mace into the Chamber. At one time the Mace was a weapon of war. Today the Mace is the symbol of the Legislature's authority to make laws. In this activity you can make your very own mace to use in your Mock Legislature.

### Materials

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

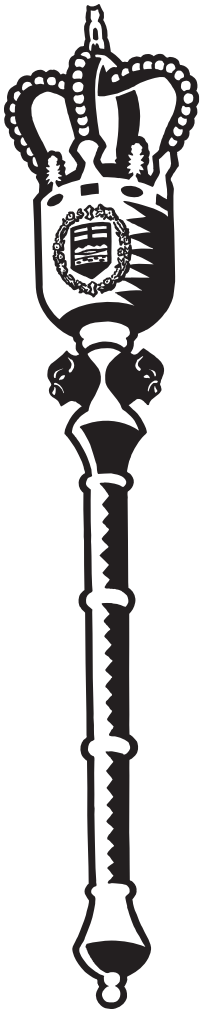
### Directions

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.
6. Use your mace as part of your classroom debate!

---

### REFERENCE

- *Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature* 7th edition  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Learning Resources
- 



# Class Follow-up Activities

## Mini Career Fair

- Have students research the Legislature Page program. Request to have a current or past Legislature Page speak to your students about the program. For more information contact the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms (780.422.9259).
- Invite an MLA or officer of the Assembly to visit your classroom. Assign students to prepare questions in advance.

## Media Report

- Have the media write up a newspaper article about the Bill and the debate that went on in the Mock Legislature. Include pictures that may have been taken and quotes from interviews with MLAs. Distribute the finished copy to the class.
- Have the media film a news clip. Include a summary of what happened in the Mock Legislature and interviews with MLAs. Have the students “broadcast” the finished news clip to their classmates.

## Personal Reflection

- In their journals have students write about their experience in the Mock Legislature. Some things to think about:
  - Three things I learned about the Legislature that I didn’t know before...
  - If I could have any job in the Legislature, I would be... because...
  - If I were a Member of the Legislative Assembly...

## Virtual Visit [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) -Visitor Information

- Take your students to the school computer lab for a virtual visit to the Legislature. The Virtual Visit includes follow-up activities and critical challenges for students as well as video clips of grade 6 students interviewing the Lieutenant Governor, various MLAs, officers of the Assembly and government officials. Students can even take photos to use for presentations.

# Glossary of Legislative Terms

*\*Additional selected terms appear in the Teacher Manual for reference purposes and are not included in the Student Handbook.*

## A

**Amend:** To change or improve.

**Amendment:** A change proposed to a motion, a Bill, a written question or a committee report with the intention of improving it or providing an alternative.

**Associate Minister:** a cabinet member who is responsible for assisting with a specific portfolio within a department.

## B

**Backbencher:** An MLA who is not a Minister and does not sit on the front benches reserved for cabinet Ministers or for opposition party officials.

**\*Bicameral:** A Legislature which has two separate Chambers. In Canada they are the Senate and the House of Commons. Generally, the two Chambers have equal privileges and powers but are quite distinct from each other. The Legislative Assembly of Alberta is unicameral.

**Bill:** A suggestion for a law that the Legislative Assembly is asked to consider.

**Black Rod:** The ceremonial baton carried by the Sergeant-at-Arms as a symbol of authority, used when accompanying the Lieutenant Governor on occasions such as royal assent or the Speech from the Throne.

**Budget:** The plan of where the government is going to get money this year and how it will spend its money.

## C

**Cabinet:** The group of Ministers who work closely with the Premier. (See **Cabinet Minister**.)

**Cabinet Minister:** A Member of the Legislative Assembly who is usually head of a ministry.

**Caucus:** A group composed of Members of the Legislative Assembly from the same political party. Private caucus meetings are held regularly.

**Ceremony:** A formal action that follows special customs, rules or traditions.

**Chair:** The presiding officer at a meeting of the Legislative Assembly or a committee.

**Chamber:** The meeting room in which all Members of the Legislative Assembly meet to discuss and to vote. (See **Legislative Assembly**.)

**Civil Servant:** Someone who works for the administrative service of a government, called the civil service or public service. This includes government ministries and various agencies.

**Clerk of the Legislative Assembly:** The principal person in the Chamber who advises the Speaker and MLAs about rules in the Legislative Assembly.

**\*Coalition:** The joining together of two or more political parties to form a government or an opposition.

**Committee:** A group of Members of the Legislative Assembly selected to study a specific subject or Bill and to write a report on it.

**Committee of the Whole:** All Members of the Legislative Assembly will meet to consider Bills.



**\*Confederation:** The agreement by the provinces to join in order to form the nation of Canada and create a federal Parliament. This happened in 1867 with four provinces (Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia). Other provinces and territories joined at later dates.

**Constituency:** The area in Alberta that an MLA represents in the Legislative Assembly (also known as a **riding** or **electoral district**). During debate the Member is identified by the name of the riding rather than by his or her own name.

**Constituent:** A person living in an area represented by an MLA in the Legislative Assembly.

**Constitution:** The set of fundamental principles and established practices which a country follows outlining the system of government and the civic rights of its citizens.

**Critic:** An MLA in an opposition caucus, especially the Official Opposition, who reviews a government portfolio. Like the Ministers they shadow, opposition critics hear concerns and ideas from various persons and interest groups from anywhere in the province.

## D

**Daily Order of Business:** The daily agenda of business that may be taken up by the Legislative Assembly.

**Debate:** A discussion of any subject by MLAs.

**Democracy:** A country that is governed by people who are elected by its citizens to make decisions on their behalf.

**Dissolution:** The bringing to an end of a Legislature either at the conclusion of its five-year term or by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor. It is followed by a general election.

## E

**Elect:** To choose one person from a group of several people by voting. The person with the most votes is elected.

**Election:** The selection of a person or government by voting. In Alberta elections for MLAs must be held at least every five years.

**Electoral District:** (See **Constituency**.)

## F

**First Reading:** The first step in a Bill becoming a law; it is the introduction of the Bill to the Assembly. The Bill usually passes unanimously as it has yet to be debated and analyzed.

## G

**Government:** The group with the authority to run the business of the province; this is the Premier and cabinet.

**Government Business:** Period of time set aside each day for dealing with items of business presented by the government in the Assembly.

**Government House Leader:** The MLA responsible for managing the government's business in the Legislative Assembly. This person is also a Member of the cabinet.

## H

**Hansard:** The official printed record of what is said in the Legislative Assembly.

**Head of Government:** The Premier is the head of government and looks after the business of the province.

**Head of State:** The monarch (queen or king) is the head of state of Canada. The Lieutenant Governor represents the monarch in Alberta.

**Honourable:** A title given to Lieutenant Governors, Premiers, cabinet Ministers and sitting MLAs. Terms such as “Honourable Member for...,” “Honourable colleague,” and others are used by Members of the Legislative Assembly as a courtesy as traditionally they are not allowed to address each other by name.

**House Leader:** The member of a party who is responsible for its management in the Assembly. The Government House Leader determines a schedule of House business through consultation with the House leaders of the other recognized parties.

**Independent Member of the Legislative Assembly:** An MLA who does not belong to a political party.

**Interest Groups:** Groups of businesses, associations and people with a common interest who try to persuade the government to promote that interest.

**Issue:** A subject for debate or discussion which involves more than one point of view.

**Law:** A rule for all of Alberta made by the Members of the Legislative Assembly through discussion and voting.

**Law Clerk:** A senior procedural adviser and is also responsible for approving amendments and petitions and helping to draft rulings on procedural issues.

**Leader of the Official Opposition:** The leader of the political party with the second-largest number of MLAs elected.

**Legislative Assembly:** The elected Members of the Legislative Assembly together form the Legislative Assembly. This term also refers to the Chamber, where they meet regularly.

**Legislative Process:** The process by which Bills are approved by the Legislative Assembly and become laws. A Bill goes through three readings and study by a committee. After approval by the Legislative Assembly it receives royal assent and becomes law. The new law comes into effect either on receiving royal assent or upon proclamation at a later date.

**Lieutenant Governor:** The representative of the monarch (queen or king) in Alberta who acts on the monarch's behalf with the advice of the Premier and cabinet. The Lieutenant Governor summons, prorogues and dissolves the Legislative Assembly, reads the Speech from the Throne and gives royal assent to Bills. The Lieutenant Governor receives diplomatic representatives and performs many ceremonial and social duties.

**Local Government:** The council that manages the business of a municipality (village, town or city). The council members are elected by the people living in that area. (Also known as **municipal government**.)

## M

---

**Mace:** A large, heavy and richly ornamented staff that represents the power and authority of parliament. When the Speaker enters the Chamber on a working day, the Sergeant-at-Arms places the Mace on the table in front of the Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Chamber.

**Majority:** The governing party has more than half of the total number of MLAs elected to the Legislative Assembly.

**Mayor:** The head of a municipality (village, town or city).

**Media:** The radio, television, Internet, magazines and newspapers and the journalists who work for them.

**Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA):** A person elected to the Legislative Assembly. There are 87 Members of the Legislative Assembly, representing all of the areas of Alberta.

**Members' Statements:** A daily period when MLAs who are not cabinet Ministers can speak for up to two minutes each on matters they consider to be important.

**Ministry:** A section of the civil service devoted to a specific section of government business, usually headed by an appointed Minister. (e.g., ministries responsible for education, health or finance).

**Minority:** The governing party has more members than any other single party but not more members than all the other parties together.

**Monarch:** A queen or king. The head of state of Canada is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada.

**Municipal Government:** (See **Local Government**.)

## N

**Nonpartisan:** Neutral, not connected to any one political party.

## O

**Official Opposition:** The political party with the second-largest number of MLAs elected.

**Opposition:** MLAs belonging to parties other than the governing party. In the Chamber opposition MLAs sit across from the cabinet. The role of the opposition is to criticize government policies, suggest alternatives and make sure the public is aware of what the government is doing or plans to do.

**Oral Question Period:** The order of business when Members ask the Premier or cabinet Ministers questions of current importance related to their responsibilities. Fifty minutes each day are allotted to this order of business.

## P

**Pages:** Students who work part-time in the Legislative Assembly to assist MLAs during sittings by distributing documents and relaying messages.

**Parliamentary Procedure:** The rules and traditions that determine how the Legislative Assembly carries out its business.

**Partisan:** A member of a political party influenced by the ideas and beliefs of that party.

**Petition:** A letter, often signed by many people, making a specific request to the Legislature.

**Political Party:** A group of people who have the same beliefs about how the province should be run.

**Poll:** A survey that asks questions to find out what people think about a certain topic.

**Portfolio:** The term used to describe the responsibilities of a member of cabinet.

**Premier:** The head of government and leader of the governing party. The Premier is also a Member of the Legislative Assembly and represents a constituency.

**Presiding Officer:** The person chairing a meeting of the House (Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Chair of Committees).

**Private Member:** A Member of the Legislative Assembly who is not a cabinet Minister.

**\*Proclamation:** Notice that a Bill or a section of a Bill that has received royal assent has become law. Also an official notice or order issued by the Crown. A session is begun and ended by proclamation.

**\*Prorogation** ends a session of the Assembly but does not dissolve the Legislative Assembly. The Lieutenant Governor prorogues the Legislative Assembly at the request of the Premier. Any Bills that have not received royal assent by the time the Legislature is prorogued will have to be reintroduced in the next session. All committee work ceases with prorogation as well.

## Q

---

**Queen:** Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Queen of Canada. (See **Monarch**.)

## R

---

**Reading (of a Bill):** A word used for the stages where a Bill is debated in the Legislature before it is passed into law.

**Report:** A written or verbal statement by a committee to the Assembly giving the results of an inquiry, asking for additional powers or returning a Bill after consideration, with or without amendments.

**\*Responsible Government:** The political executive – the Premier and cabinet – must have the support of the majority in the Legislative Assembly to stay in power. If it loses that support, it must resign or call for an election.

**Riding:** (See **Constituency**.)

**Routine Proceedings:** A time set aside daily in the Legislative Assembly to table documents, present petitions, introduce Bills and consider other routine business.

**Royal Assent:** The Lieutenant Governor approves a Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly to make it law. Royal assent may take place in the Assembly Chamber or in the Lieutenant Governor's office.

## S

---

**Second Reading:** The second step in a Bill becoming a law; at this stage the sponsoring Member outlines the principles of the Bill that was introduced. Members of the opposition parties can speak and may suggest alternatives to the Bill.

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** The head of security inside the Chamber; also attends to the Speaker when he or she enters or leaves the Assembly Chamber and is responsible for the Mace and the Black Rod.

**Session:** One of the time periods into which a Legislature is divided, usually consisting of a number of separate sittings.

**Sitting:** A meeting of the Legislative Assembly within a session.

**Speaker:** The Member of the Legislative Assembly who is elected by the other Members to run their meetings and to keep order in the Legislative Assembly. The Speaker ensures that rules and traditions are respected. The Speaker has a diplomatic and social role in hosting visits by heads of state and heads of government who come to the Legislative Assembly. The Speaker is elected to the position by other Members by secret ballot at the beginning of a new Assembly or when a vacancy occurs. The Deputy Speaker assumes this role when the Speaker is absent.

**Speaker's Procession:** The Sergeant-at-Arms with the Mace, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Clerk of the House and other officials walk formally from the Speaker's Office to the Legislative Assembly before the opening of a sitting.

**Speech from the Throne:** A speech prepared by the government and delivered by the Lieutenant Governor at the start of a session. The speech is delivered in the Assembly Chamber and outlines the government's policies and the legislation it plans to introduce during the session.

## T

**\*Table:** To place a document before the Assembly or a committee for consideration, historical preservation or consultation.

**Table Officers:** The Clerk, Law Clerk, Parliamentary Counsel and Committee Research Co-ordinator.

**Third Reading:** This stage of the passage of a Bill follows Committee of the Whole. The sponsor of the Bill summarizes its benefits, and the opposition parties state why they agree or disagree with the Bill. A final vote is taken once debate is finished.

**Tradition:** Something that is done a certain way because it is the way it has been done for many years. There is often a story behind the tradition.

## V

**Vote:** 1) The way citizens choose a representative in an election. Eligible Albertans vote for their representatives by secret ballot. 2) The process MLAs use to make a decision. In the Legislative Assembly Members can vote either verbally or by standing in their places.

## W

**Whip:** The Member who is responsible for keeping other Members of the same party informed about House business and ensuring their attendance in the Assembly, especially for a vote in the Chamber.

---

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

- Glossary of Parliamentary Terms – Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Learning Resources
  - Parliamentary Terms – Parliament of Canada  
[www.parl.gc.ca/education](http://www.parl.gc.ca/education) → Glossaries
-

---

### USEFUL LINKS

- Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Teachers' Corner
  - Virtual Visit to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Visitor Information → Virtual Visit
  - Elections Alberta  
[www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca) → Education → Resources
  - Alberta Education  
[www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca) → Teachers
  - ATA Social Studies Council  
[www.atasocialstudies.ca](http://www.atasocialstudies.ca) → Resources
  - Parliament of Canada  
[www.parl.gc.ca/education](http://www.parl.gc.ca/education) → Classroom Resources
  - Parliament of Canada (Education)  
[www.parl.gc.ca/education](http://www.parl.gc.ca/education)
-









