

*The Mock Legislature*

A STUDENT DEBATE

TEACHER  
Manual

# Teacher Manual



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# 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 with the more comprehensive information in this teacher manual.

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





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# 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.	<p>Students will become familiar with the structure and functions of Alberta's provincial Legislature.</p> <p>Students will discover how the role of the Lieutenant Governor fits into the law-making and ceremony of the Legislative Assembly.</p> <p>Students will discover how the government is responsible for making laws, instituting taxes, and providing services.</p> <p>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.</p>
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.



*Introduction*

6.S.5 Students will demonstrate skills of cooperation, 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.





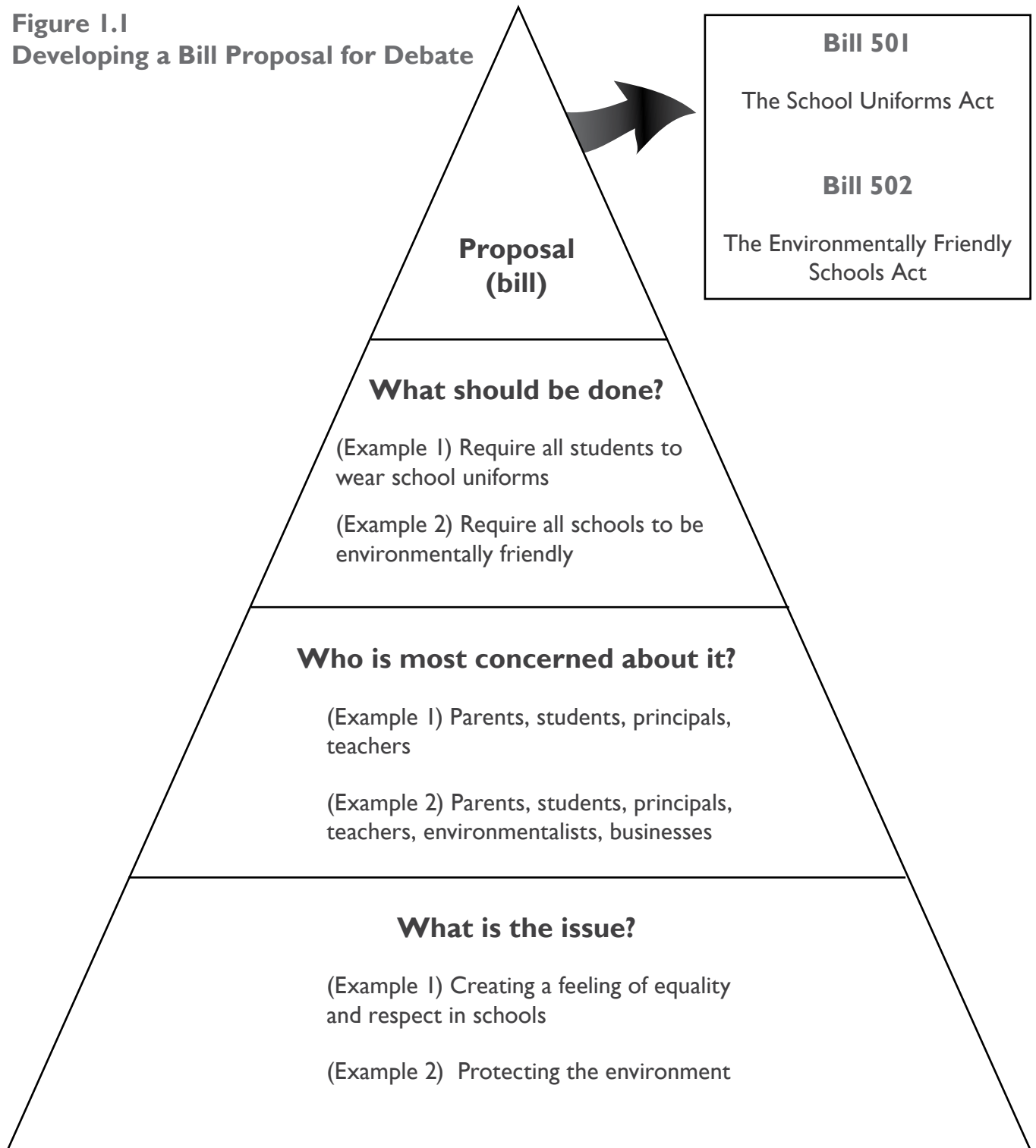








**Figure 1.1**  
**Developing a Bill Proposal for Debate**































## *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 cooperation, 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, shadow cabinet, 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**

- I. Tell students it is time for a caucus meeting, which is their final preparation before the real meeting.















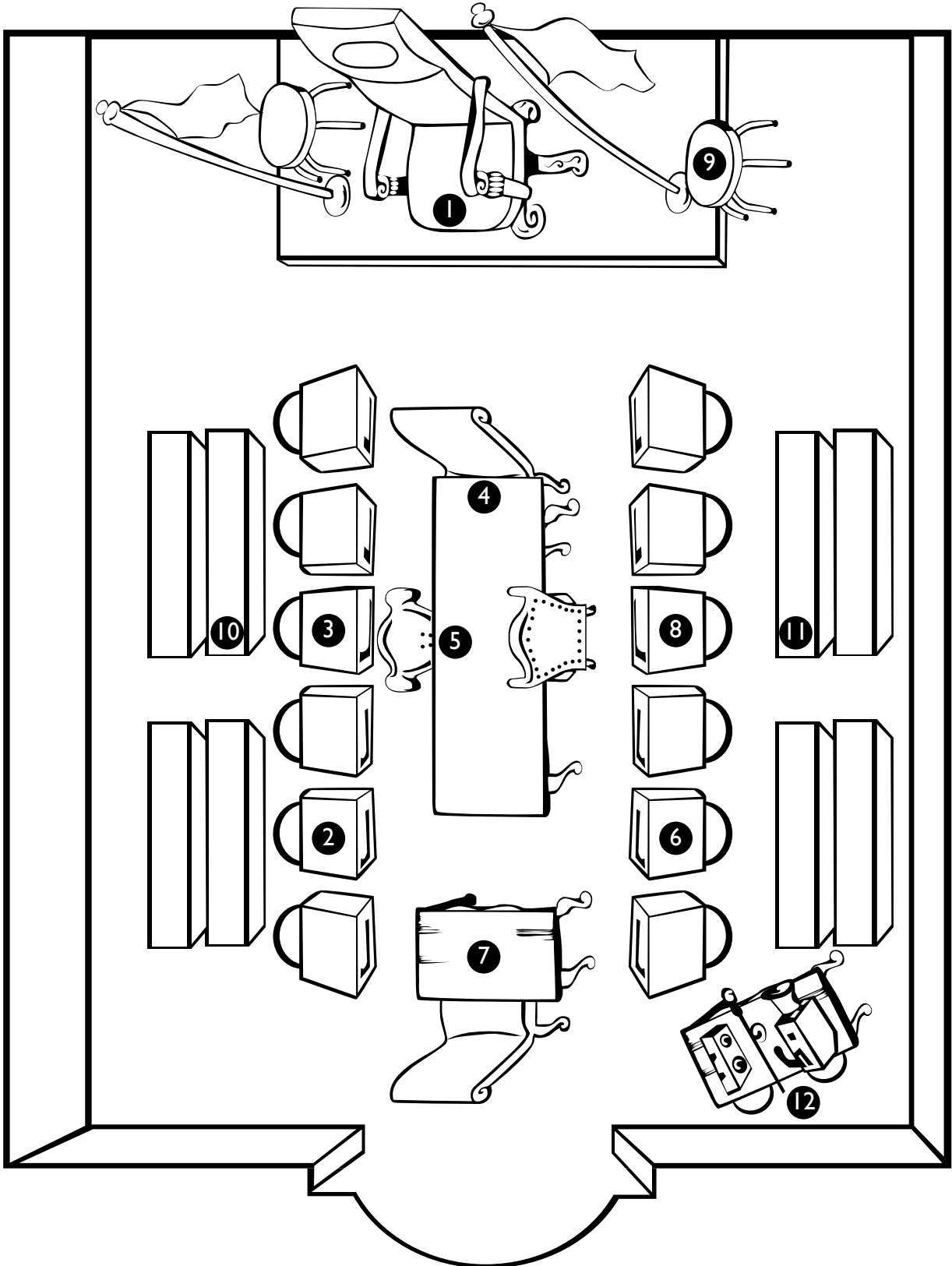
# Chamber Matching Game

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		
Shadow Cabinet		
Premier		
Private Government Member		
Page		
Clerk Assistant		
Clerk		
Sergeant-at-Arms		
Speaker		
Private Opposition Member		
Lieutenant Governor	●	
Chair of Committees	●	

- Where does the Lieutenant Governor sit when delivering 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
Shadow Cabinet	6	Opposition member 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
Clerk Assistant	5	Assists the Clerk in his/her duties
Clerk	4	Primary advisor 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 shadow cabinet position
Lieutenant Governor	●	Queen's representative in Alberta
Chair of Committees	●	Heads the Committee of the Whole and moderates the discussion

● Where does the Lieutenant Governor sit when delivering royal assent? 1

● 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.

## SPEAKER

- You chair the meetings of the Legislative Assembly.
- You treat all members of the Assembly equally. You do not take a side on the bill being debated, and you do not vote.
- You must call on people who wish to speak, and they will always address you as Mr. or Madam Speaker.
- You keep order in the Chamber.

## PREMIER

- You are the head of government in Alberta.
- You are the leader of the party that has the most elected representatives in the Legislative Assembly.
- You pick the cabinet ministers and help decide government bills.
- You answer questions during Oral Question Period.

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

- You are the Queen's representative for the province of Alberta.
- You are only allowed into the Chamber when invited by the Speaker.
- You give final agreement to the passage of a bill through royal assent.

## LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

- You are the leader of the party with the second most elected representatives in the Legislative Assembly.
- You introduce bills and present alternatives to government policies.
- You question the government in Oral Question Period (you ask the first question).

## 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, Clerk Assistant, 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 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 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.

## CLERK ASSISTANT

- You are responsible for producing the Assembly's daily agenda and the minutes.
- You perform the same functions as the Clerk when necessary.

## PRIVATE GOVERNMENT MEMBER

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

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### 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.
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## 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 yogurt or ice cream)
- scissors
- glue or tape
- coloured markers
- buttons, sequins, plastic jewels, glitter, or other decorations

### Directions

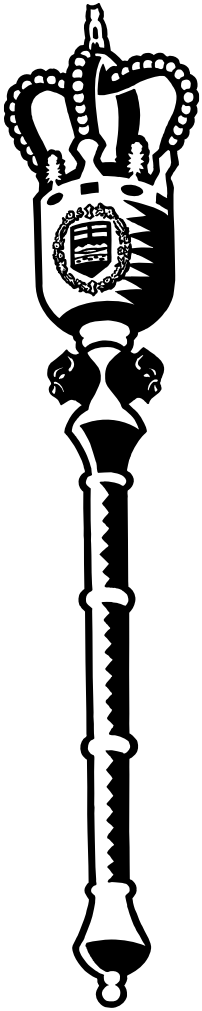
1. On the bottom of the plastic container trace the circumference of the cardboard cylinder. Cut out the traced circle.
2. Draw the crown of your mace on construction paper and cut it out. The crown should be taller than the plastic container. Decorate your crown with markers and decorations. Glue it 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 mountain 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!

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### Reference

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**Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature**, page 40.  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Public Information → Learning Resources





# 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, or a committee report with the intention of improving it or providing an alternative.

## 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 government department.

**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 departments 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 money bills or other important legislation.

**\*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 opposition member who is responsible for shadowing a specific cabinet minister and his or her department.

## 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.

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

**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 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:** A Member of the Legislative Assembly 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.

## L

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

**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 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 83 Members of the Legislative Assembly representing all of the areas of Alberta in the Legislative Assembly.

**Members' Statements:** A daily 15-minute period when MLAs who are not cabinet ministers can speak for up to two minutes each on matters they consider to be important.

**Minority:** The governing party has less than half of the total number of MLAs elected to the Legislative Assembly. In order to remain the government, it has to cooperate with the opposition members.

**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. The role of the Official Opposition is to offer voters an alternative to the current government in the next election.

**Opposition:** The party or parties and independent members who do not belong to the governing party. The role of the opposition is to provide knowledgeable criticism of the government and to propose ways to improve its policies and legislation.

**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 Assistant:** A lower level cabinet member who is responsible for a specific portfolio within a department.

**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 in the chair at 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 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 generally takes place in the Assembly Chamber but has often taken place in the Lieutenant Governor's office.

## S

**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.

**Shadow Cabinet:** The group of MLAs in each opposition caucus, especially the Official Opposition, who act as party critics for each government portfolio. Like the ministers they shadow, opposition critics hear concerns and ideas from various persons and interest groups from anywhere in the province.

**Sitting:** A meeting of the Legislative Assembly within a session. A sitting may last for only a few minutes or may extend over several days.

**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 Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Sergeant-at-Arms with the Mace, 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, Clerk Assistant, Clerk of *Journals* / Table Research, and Parliamentary Counsel.

**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.

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### Resources for Further Learning

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- Dictionary of Parliamentary Terms  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) → Public Information → Learning Resources
- Glossary of Parliamentary Procedure – House of Commons  
[www.parl.gc.ca/education](http://www.parl.gc.ca/education) → Background Resources for Educators → House of Commons



