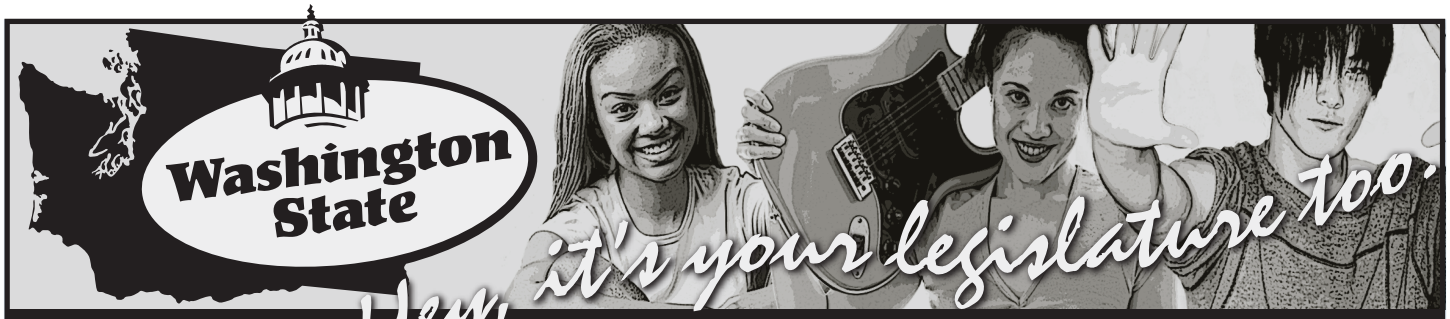

www.leg.wa.gov

A STUDENT GUIDE TO THE LEGISLATURE

MIDDLE / HIGH SCHOOL

Produced by the Washington State Legislature
PO Box 40600 • Olympia, WA 98504-0600 • Phone: (360) 786-7573

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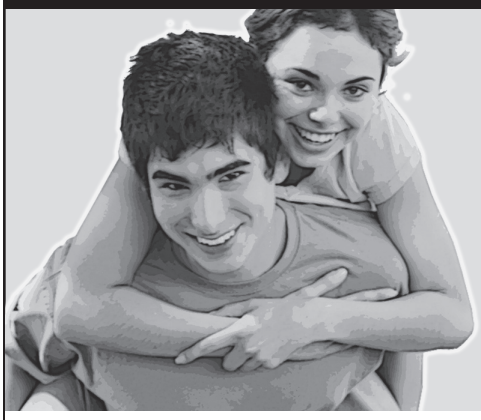
Your Legislature



1. What is the minimum age for minors to work? ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
2. Can teenagers drive between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. without an adult passenger? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Can you talk on your cell phone while driving? ☐ Yes ☐ No

See, state laws really *do* affect your daily lives! Decisions are made at the Washington State Legislature about how old you have to be to work, who can ride in your car, and when you can talk on your cell phone.

It is *your* legislature too, and as a citizen of Washington, you have the power to help decide who our elected officials are and the ability to influence the decision-making process in a real way. By regularly voting in elections and sharing your opinions and ideas with your elected officials, you can start making the changes you seek.

What is the Legislature?

The Legislature is the branch of government that makes new laws and changes old ones. Our State Legislature makes laws *only* for Washington. The Washington State Legislature is also responsible for imposing taxes, writing the state's budget, and regulating other state agencies.

What are chambers?

Like almost every other state in the country, Washington has a bicameral Legislature. This means it has two chambers—the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are 49 state senators and 98 state representatives. Nebraska is the only state with just one chamber, which is called a unicameral Legislature.

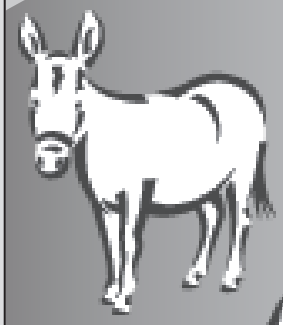
What are Legislative districts?

There are 49 Legislative districts in Washington State. You live in one of these districts along with approximately 137,000 other people. The residents of each district elect one Senator and two Representatives to the Legislature. New district boundary lines are redrawn every 10 years

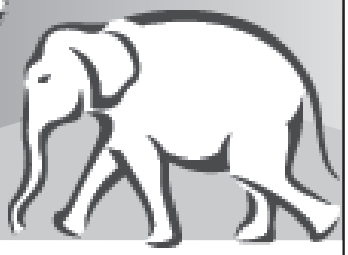
(Continued on next page)

What are the political parties?

Senators and representatives belong to one of the two major political parties in the state: the Democrats and the Republicans. In any given year, the party with the most members is called the "majority party," the other group is referred to as the "minority party."



The Democratic Party mascot is the donkey.



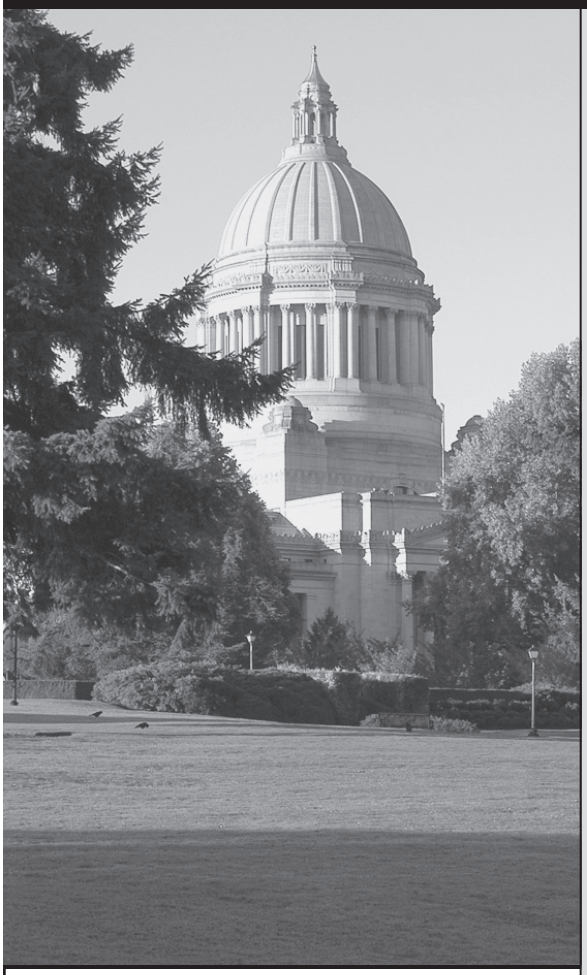
The Republican Party mascot is the elephant.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT THE TOP OF THIS PAGE:
(1) 14, except under special conditions; **(2)** No;
(3) Yes, but only if you have a hands-free device.
And remember, texting while driving is illegal too!

DID YOU KNOW?

The state of Washington is the only state to be named after a United States president.

Your Legislature



(continued from page 2)

after the Census. The shapes of the districts may be changed to reflect changes in the population. This is why western Washington has more districts than eastern Washington—there are simply more people on the west side to be represented!

Who can be a Legislator?

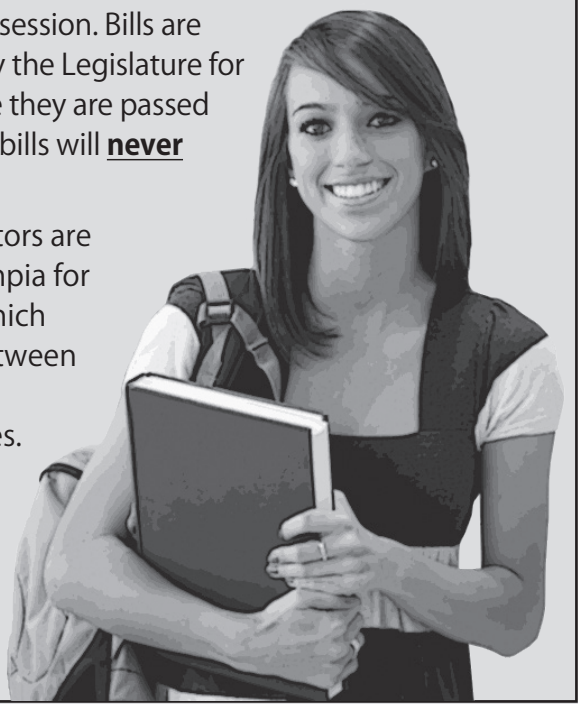
State Senators are elected by the voters in their districts to a 4-year term, and State Representatives are elected for 2 years. To be a Legislator, you must be at least 18 years old, live in your Legislative district, and be a registered voter.

The Washington State Legislature is a part-time *citizen legislature*, which means most of its members have other careers or jobs in addition to their elected position, such as being a nurse, electrician, or teacher.

When does your Legislature meet?

Our State Constitution says that the Legislature will hold *regular sessions* every year, beginning on the second Monday of January. The Legislature operates on a *biennial schedule*, or a 2-year period. A new biennium begins every odd-numbered year and lasts for 105 calendar days. This is known as a *long session*, and it is when the Legislature passes the state budgets. A *short session* is held during even-numbered years for 60 days. All bills that do not pass during the long session are retained for the following short session. Bills are often considered by the Legislature for several years before they are passed into law, and many bills will **never** become law!

Sometimes Legislators are called back to Olympia for *special sessions*, which are usually held between regular sessions to handle emergencies.



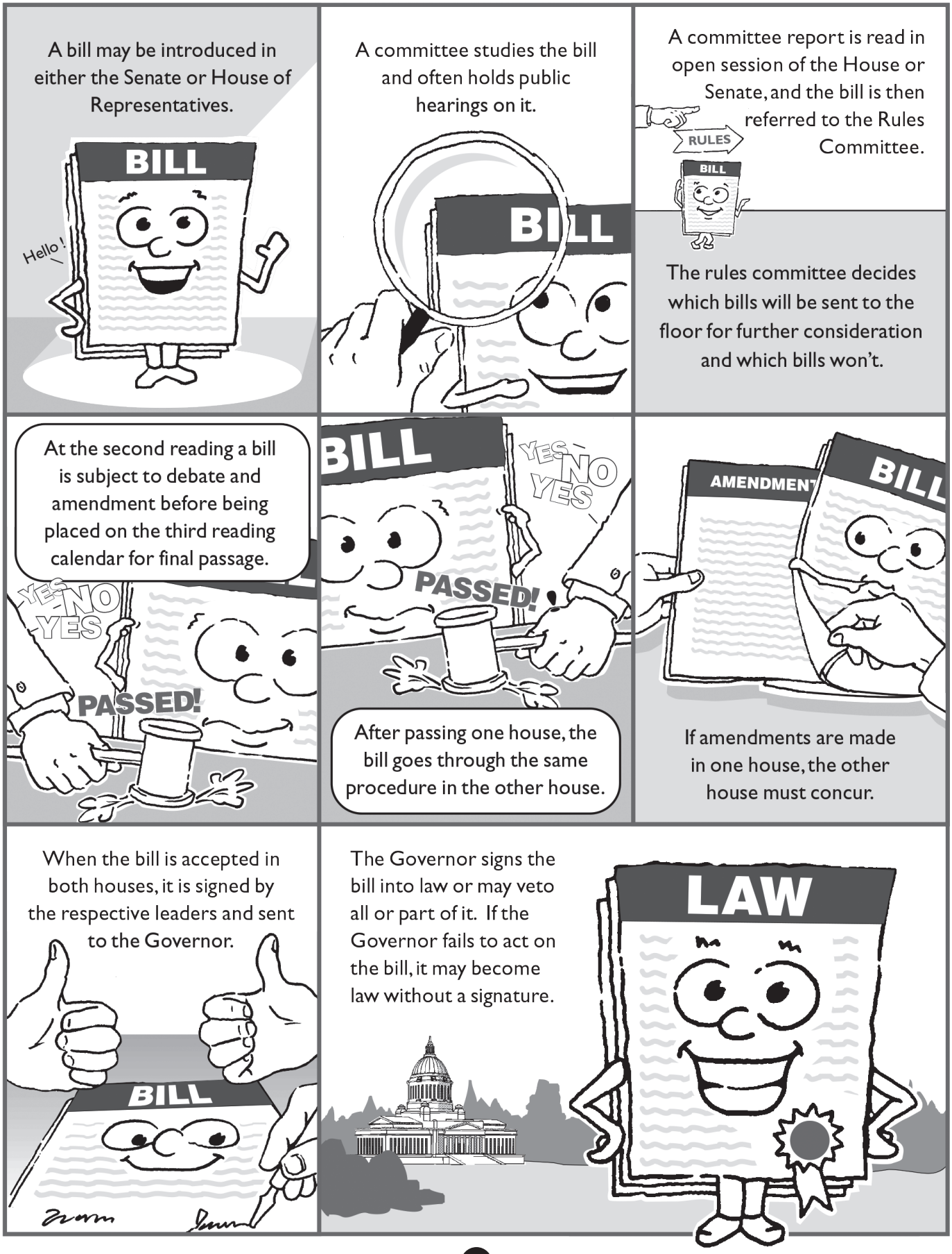
What are committees?

The Legislature has *committees*, or small groups of Senators or Representatives who review proposed laws and study issues. Many bills introduced in the Legislature will receive a *public hearing*, where citizens are given a chance to present their opinions on proposed legislation.

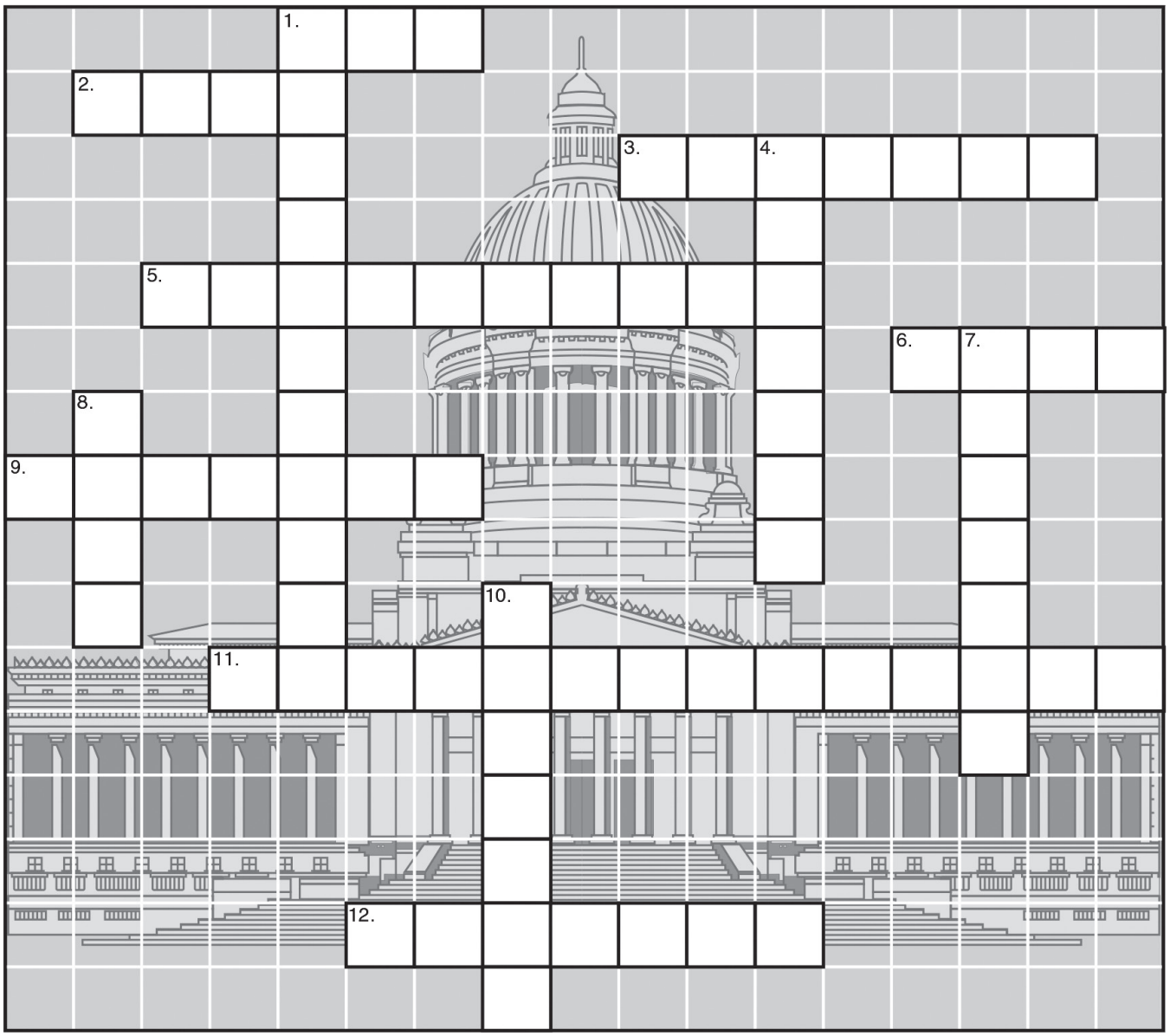
DID YOU KNOW?

Washington state has more glaciers than the other 47 contiguous states combined.

How a Bill Becomes a Law



Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS:

1. A "rule" created by the Legislature.
2. Student helper who runs errands.
3. To end the day's session or meeting.
5. The 42nd state of the United States.
6. A proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration.
9. Represents you in the Senate.
11. Person elected to the House.
12. To assemble for an official meeting.

DOWN:

1. Name given to the entire group of lawmakers.
4. The month when regular session begins.
7. The time between regular legislative sessions.
8. The rejection of a bill by the Governor.
10. A meeting where the public voices its opinions on a bill.

(The answers are on page 18)

Levels of Government

State government provides services for the people of Washington, but federal and local governments have important responsibilities too! The federal level makes decisions that affect the entire country. State governments regulate issues for individual states. Local governments deal with issues for a particular city, county or community. All 3 levels of government are essential to the democratic process.

Match each answer with the correct level of government.
Mark "F" for federal, "S" for state and "L" for local government.

1. Who are the elected officials at each level of government?

_____ Legislator
_____ President
_____ Council Member
_____ Member of Congress
_____ County Executive
_____ Governor
_____ Mayor

2. Where do elected representatives meet?

_____ Your Hometown
_____ Washington, D.C.
_____ Olympia

3. Which level of government has the following responsibilities?

_____ runs the police department
_____ declares war
_____ provides and maintains National Guard
_____ removes snow from city streets
_____ maintains state parks
_____ prints money
_____ runs public libraries
_____ maintains Post Office
_____ writes Washington's budget
_____ gives money to your school district to build a school
_____ runs the Social Security system
_____ collects income tax for the IRS
_____ issues drivers' licenses
_____ passes rules about building heights

(The answers are on page 18)

DID YOU KNOW?

Washington is the birthplace of both Jimi Hendrix (Seattle) and Bing Crosby (Tacoma).

Branches of State Government

Similar to the federal government, state government also has three branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial. Commonly referred to as the "separation of powers," this system ensures that no single branch has too much control over another. Each branch has unique responsibilities and limitations.

Complete the paragraphs about each branch of state government.
You will only need to use each word once.

The head of the _____ branch is the _____, who is elected to ____ year term. This person's job is to _____ the laws of Washington and ____ bills passed by the Legislature. He/she also has the power to ____ proposed laws. State _____ are also part of this branch and manage the daily _____ of state government.

The _____ branch of state government _____ the laws of our state. This branch also determines the state _____. The governing body of this branch is the _____, which is made up of the _____ and _____. _____ are elected to four year terms and _____ serve ____ year terms. Each legislator represents citizens living in their home _____; our state has __ Legislative districts.

The Washington State _____ is the head of the _____ branch. The other levels of this branch are the Court of _____, Superior Court, _____ and Municipal Court. Their job is to _____ our laws. Washington judges are _____ by the people to uphold the State _____.

Word Bank

49
agencies
Appeals
budget
Constitution
district
District Court
elected
enforce
executive
four
Governor
House of Representatives
interpret
judicial
legislative
Legislature
operations
Representatives
Senate
Senators
sign
Supreme Court
two
veto
writes

(The answers are on page 18)

Write Your Own Law

Have you ever wanted to change something in your state? Are there problems that you and your friends have discussed over and over that never seem to get resolved? Now's your chance! Use the space below to identify a problem in your state and describe what you think should be done about it.

1. Problem

Identify a problem that you think should be addressed by state government. How (if at all) is this problem currently being addressed by decision makers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Options

List two or three options for solving the problem. What will happen if nothing is done to address the problem?

Option #1 _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Option #2 _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Option #3 _____

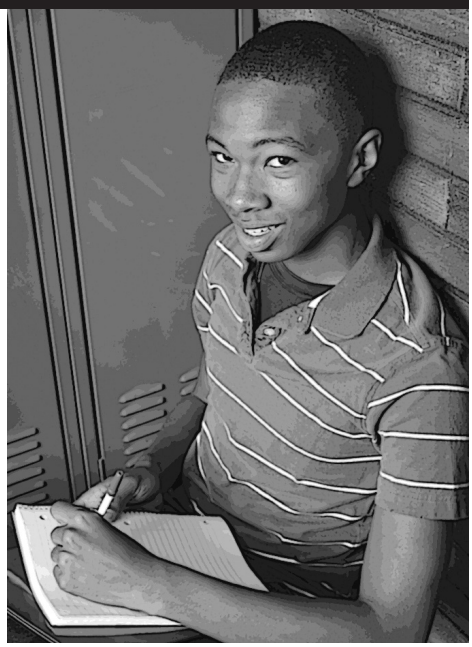
_____

_____

_____

_____

Write Your Own Law



Just like you, other Washingtonians have ideas about how to solve tough problems. Legislators rely on these ideas to help them write new laws and fix old ones. During session, hundreds of ordinary people come to Olympia to talk to legislators about problems in their communities and give them ideas about how to fix things. These people are often referred to as "citizen lobbyists." You can be a citizen lobbyist too! Now that you have identified a problem and thought of some solutions, think about what you would tell your legislator…

3. Your Proposal

Which option do you think is the best and why? Which community members will be affected by these changes? How do you think they will react to your proposal (positively or negatively)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Action

Describe what steps you need to take to implement your proposal. Who do you need to meet with? What other constraints do you anticipate?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Look on page 19 of this booklet to find out how to contact your legislator.
Share your proposal with them, and see what they think!
Who knows, your good idea could become a new bill!

Be a Legislator for a Day!

Since the Legislature is only in session three or four months a year, Legislators spend much of their time in their home districts raising families and working other jobs in addition to their duties as elected officials. This is why we call our Legislature a part-time, citizen legislature. However, even though being a Legislator is technically a part-time job, Legislators' schedules can be very hectic at times when they try to balance everything.

Use the appointment book on the next page schedule the activities below. Try to schedule your busy day as a Legislator, parent and apple farmer. Remember, you might not be able to do everything on the list.

- You are scheduled to give a speech at the Chamber of Commerce meeting at 4 p.m.
- Your daughter's birthday party starts at 6:30 p.m.
- You are supposed to call a contractor to discuss using wind energy to power your farm.
- You are invited to the Youth Alliance's annual kickoff breakfast.
- You have a luncheon meeting with a group of farmers from your district from 12-1 p.m.
- You have a stack of 50 letters to your constituents to sign.
- You are invited to do a radio interview in your district at 11 a.m.
- You must attend a ceremony honoring a constituent in your district at 5 p.m.
- The leader of a local labor union would like to meet with you at 1:30 p.m.
- You are invited to a town hall forum about a controversial issue in your district at 7 p.m.
- One of your constituents would like to meet with you this afternoon to discuss the proposal for a new shopping mall in your district.
- Your son has a dentist appointment at 10:15 a.m.
- You have agreed to attend the opening ceremony for a new assisted living center in your district at 2 p.m.
- You must read three daily newspapers and a weekly newsletter in your district.
- You have 22 constituent emails that need responses.
- A group of concerned citizens would like to meet with you to discuss a new law they'd like you to introduce next session.
- A representative from the small business community wants to discuss upcoming issues with you this morning.
- You need to drop off the apples from your orchard at the local farmers market in the morning.

Legislator's Daytimer

8 a.m.		3 p.m.	
9 a.m.		4 p.m.	
10 a.m.		5 p.m.	
11 a.m.		6 p.m.	
12 p.m.		7 p.m.	
1 p.m.		8 p.m.	
2 p.m.		NOTES	

Match Game

Washington has many official symbols that represent icons that are special to our state. Look at the pictures on the left. ***Using letters "A" through "V," match each symbol name to the correct picture. See sample below.***

A	**Pacific Chorus Frog** State Amphibian, 2007
B	**Willow Goldfinch** State Bird, 1928
C	**Square Dance** State Dance, 1979
D	**Steelhead Trout** State Fish, 1969
E	**State Flag** 1890s
F	**Coast Rhododendron** State Flower, 1959
G	**"Roll On, Columbia, Roll On"** State Folk Song, 1987
H	**Columbian Mammoth** State Fossil, 1998
I	**Apple** SAMPLE State Fruit, 1989
J	**Petrified Wood** State Gem, 1975
K	**Bluebunch Wheatgrass** State Grass, 1989
L	**Green Darner Dragonfly** State Insect, 1997
M	**Orca** State Marine Mammal, 2005
N	**State Seal** 1889
O	**The Lady Washington** State Ship, 2007
P	**"Washington, My Home"** State Song, 1959
Q	**State Tartan** A design for the weaving of cloth, 1991
R	**Western Hemlock** State Tree, 1947
S	**Walla Walla Sweet Onion** State Vegetable, 2007
T	**Marmot** State Endemic Mammal, 2009
U	**Palouse Falls** State Waterfall, 2014
V	**Ostrea Lurida** State Oyster, 2014

(The answers are on page 18)

Symbols of Washington State

State Amphibian

Pacific chorus frog

In 2007, the Pacific chorus frog, Pseudacris regilla, was designated as the official amphibian of the State of Washington.

Because Pacific chorus frogs live in every county in the state and on both sides of the Cascades, they are an excellent choice as an emblem for the whole state. The Pacific chorus frog is charming and makes beautiful sounds. Less than two inches long, they swell their throat sacs to three times the size of their heads to send their calls into the night. This amphibian is useful because it eats insects, including mosquitoes. It is recognizable by the black stripe through the eye to the shoulder, and can be brown, tan, grey or green. A native amphibian, it is preyed upon by bullfrogs, snakes, raccoons, shorebirds, hawks and ducks.

State Bird

Willow Goldfinch

The goldfinch is a delicate little bird with a yellow body and black wings, and although it eventually became the official state bird,

many other birds were considered for the title. In 1928, legislators let school children select the state bird and the meadowlark won hands-down. It was a nice choice but seven other states already had chosen the same bird. Another vote was taken in 1931 by the Washington Federation of Women's Clubs. Many birds were nominated, but the goldfinch won handily over the tanager, song sparrow, junco and pileated woodpecker.

Now there were two state birds and the Legislature decided to leave the final choice to school children. In 1951, children voted for the goldfinch and the Legislature made it unanimous. The bird is now referred to as the American Goldfinch.

State Dance

Square Dance

On April 17, 1979, the square dance became the official Washington state dance. When the pioneers came west, they brought with them a dance called the quadrille, which means square in French. The pioneers liked the simpler term and so the square dance was born. The dance is known for its series of figures and footwork. Dancers are directed by a caller. It is easy to learn, a good form of exercise, and fun.

State Endemic Mammal

Marmota olympus

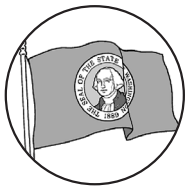
In 2009, the Olympic marmot, the only endemic mammal in Washington state, was designated as the state endemic mammal following a proposal from the 4th and 5th graders at Wedgwood School in Seattle. The Olympic Marmot inhabits the Olympic Peninsula in the western section of Washington. Olympic Marmots are highly social animals and may live in groups of over a dozen animals. Gregarious bonds are made between animals in a family. Olympic Marmots identify each other by touching noses and smelling cheeks. Olympic Marmots hibernate from September to May. During the morning and afternoon on summer days, they feed and spend their time sunbathing on rocks. In the evening, they return to their burrows. Olympic Marmots are relatively easy to see during the summer months along Hurricane Ridge in the Olympic National Park.

State Fish

Steelhead Trout

The steelhead trout is an anadromous fish, meaning it returns to fresh water rivers to

spawn. The scales of the steelhead shine flecks of silver with a gray spotted back from head to tail and an intensely white belly; the two colors separated by a hint of opalescent pink. Steelhead trout is one of the most popular fish for recreational fishing, a major industry in Washington State. The steelhead trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss* was adopted by the Legislature as a state symbol in 1969.



State Flag

The state flag and the state seal are similar. Passed in 1923, Washington law describes the flag as having dark green bunting with a state seal in the center. In the late 1890s, a blue and gold military state flag with George Washington's profile on it flew over many cities and towns throughout the state. But, when it came to a final decision, the current flag was adopted by the Legislature. According to law, the flag of the United States and the flag of the state shall be prominently installed, displayed and maintained in schools, court rooms and state buildings.

State Flower

Coast Rhododendron

In 1892, before they had the right to vote, Washington women selected the coast rhododendron as the state flower. They wanted an

official flower to enter in a floral exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. Six flowers were considered, but the final decision was narrowed to clover and the "rhodie," and voting booths were set up for ladies throughout the state. When the ballots were counted, the rhododendron had been chosen as the Washington state flower. In 1959, the Legislature designated the native species *Rhododendron macrophyllum* as the official flower of the state of Washington.

State Folk Song

"Roll On, Columbia, Roll On"

In the early 1940s, the federal Bonneville Power Administration produced a movie encouraging rural residents in the Pacific

Northwest to electrify their homes and farms with the power being generated by the newly-built Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dams on the Columbia River. As part of the project, BPA hired folksinger Woody Guthrie at $270 for 30 days to write songs for the movie. Guthrie wrote 26 songs, the most popular of which was "Roll On, Columbia, Roll On," an ode to the harnessing of Washington's mightiest river. It was approved as the official Washington state folk song by the Legislature in 1987.

State Fossil

Columbian Mammoth

Following a four-year effort by students from Windsor Elementary School near Cheney to have this behemoth designated as our state fossil, the Legislature recognized in 1998 that the large, hairy prehistoric elephants of the extinct genus *Mammuthus* roamed the North American continent, including the Pacific Northwest, during the Pleistocene epoch (ice ages).

Symbols of Washington State

The first North American mammoths migrated across the Bering Strait from Asia down through Alaska about two million years ago. Nearly all mammoths died out about

10,000 years ago. From studies based on deposits of the Columbian mammoths *M. columbi* it is clear that grasses featured prominently in their diets. The maximum life expectancy of the mammoth would have been 60 to 65 years. The males grew to the size of modern adult elephants; females were about half that size. Several years ago, fossils of the Columbian mammoth were found on the Olympic Peninsula.

State Fruit

Apple

Washington is the nation's top apple-producing state, so it is appropriate that the apple was named a state symbol in 1989, the

centennial year. A favorite fruit around the world, the apple comes in many different colors, sizes and varities. From the beautiful blossoms of spring, to the heavily laden branches in autumn, the apple trees of eastern Washington represent one of the largest industries in the state. The Washington apple is certainly one of the most recognized symbols of the state worldwide.

State Gem

Petrified Wood

The geological history of our state has encompassed many great changes, one of them being the many lava flows from volcanic

fissures. Centuries ago, the interior of Washington was swampy and mild with many trees such as cypress, oak, elm and gingko growing in wet areas. Layers of logs were preserved with each new lava flow, and as the layers grew deeper, many of the logs became waterlogged and lay protected in deep water. Over time, water continued to seep through the lava and permeate the wood with silica. Eventually, the wood fiber was completely replaced by silica thus petrifying many logs. The petrified wood is perfect in form and detail to the original wood. In 1975, petrified wood was adopted as the state gem. The best place to see petrified wood is the Gingko Petrified Forest State Park in Vantage.

State Grass

Bluebunch Wheatgrass

While many state symbols are readily identifiable with the western part of the state, bluebunch wheatgrass is a state symbol

that is unique to eastern Washington. Bluebunch wheatgrass was a blessing to Washington's pioneer farmers and continues to play a major role in our agriculture industry today. It was adopted by the 1989 Legislature as the official state grass. Its botanical name is *Pseudoroegneria spicata* .

State Insect

Green Darner Dragonfly

In 1997, the common green darner dragonfly, *Anax junius Drury*, became Washington's official state insect after a group of students

at Crestwood Elementary School in Kent brought the idea to the Legislature. Students from school districts statewide participated in the selection of the common green darner dragonfly. Also known as the "mosquito hawk," this insect can be found throughout Washington and is a beneficial contributor to the ecosystem because it consumes a large number of insect pests. It is easily recognizable by its bright green head and thorax, it has a 4- to 6-inch wingspan and can fly 25 to 35 mph. There are over 400 different species of dragonflies. Dragonflies existed prior to the dinosaur age and some had up to a 3-foot wing span. "Darner" is one family of dragonflies and the common green *Anax junius* was first sighted and recorded by Drury in 1773.

State Marine Mammal

Orca

As a result of 2-years of research and persuasion by second graders from the Crescent Harbor Elementary School in Oak Harbor, the

legislature designated the orca, Orcinus orca, as the official marine mammal of the state of Washington in 2005. Many people visit Washington state to watch orcas; the orca is a significant symbol for the Native American culture; there are pods of orcas that migrate annually through Puget Sound; and the orca is easily recognizable because of its distinct markings. The designation is intended to promote orca awareness and to encourage protection of the natural marine habitat.

State Oyster

The Ostrea lurida is designated the official oyster of the state of Washington. This native

oyster species plays an important role in the history and culture that surrounds shellfish in Washington state and along the west coast of the United States. Some of the common tribal and other names used for this species are Native, Western, and Olympia.

State Seal

In 1889, jeweler Charles Talcott designed our first state seal using an ink bottle, silver dollar and a postage stamp. Talcott's brother, L. Grant Talcott, lettered the words, "The Seal of the State of Washington, 1889," and another brother, G.N. Talcott, cut the printing die.

State Ship

The Lady Washington

The legislature designated the Lady Washington as the official ship of the state of Washington in 2007.

The Lady Washington was built over a two-year period and launched on March 7, 1989.

The ship was designed by the late Ray Wallace and built in Aberdeen by the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority. Master shipwrights from all over the Pacific Northwest constructed her near the confluence of the Wishkah and Chehalis rivers.

The Lady Washington is a reproduction sailing ship of the original Washington/Lady Washington that sailed from approximately 1750-1798. Her vessel type is a "brig," indicating the configuration of the sails. The Lady Washington is owned and operated by the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Public Development Authority based in Aberdeen.

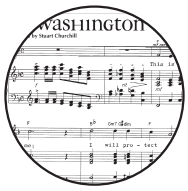
The Office of the Secretary of State for the state of Washington holds a mortgage on the vessel to secure the investment of the people of Washington.

Symbols of Washington State

State Song

"Washington, My Home"

The state song, "Washington, My Home," was written by Helen Davis, arranged by Stuart Churchill, and became the official state song in 1959. But, like the goldfinch, it had some stiff competition from another popular song. Back in 1909, "Washington Beloved" was adopted, sort of, by the Legislature. Professor Edmond Meany, the historian, wrote the words and Reginald de Koven wrote the music. But this song was never formally introduced as a bill and so was not part of the state's code of law. When a state senator from South Bend introduced a bill in 1959 to make "Washington, My Home" our state song, it was approved unanimously.



State Tartan

A tartan is a design for the weaving of cloth consisting of perpendicular bands of contrasting colors on a solid background. The Washington State tartan was designed by Vancouver, USA Country Dancers to commemorate the Washington State Centennial celebration. The background color green represents the rich forests of Washington, the "Evergreen State." The perpendicular bands of contrasting colors represent the following features: blue for the lakes, rivers and ocean; white for the snow-capped mountains; red for the apple and cherry crops; yellow for the wheat and grain crops; and black for the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. The bill, designating a state tartan, was signed into law in 1991.

The Council of the Scottish Tartans Society also affixed its seal to the official Certificate of Accreditation in 1991.

State Tree

Western Hemlock

In 1946, an Oregon newspaper teased Washington for not having a state tree. The Portland Oregonian picked out the western hemlock *Tsuga heterophylla* for us but Washington newspapers decided to choose their own and selected the popular western red cedar. State Representative George Adams of Mason County pleaded with the Legislature to adopt the western hemlock. The hemlock, he said, would become "the backbone of this state's forest industry." Adams' bill passed the Legislature and was signed into law in 1947.

State Vegetable

Walla Walla sweet onion

In 2007, the Walla Walla sweet onion was designated as the official vegetable of the state of Washington.

The Walla Walla Sweet is from Walla Walla and indeed, this sweet onion is only grown properly in the Walla Walla Valley.

The Walla Walla Sweet finds its origins on the island of Corsica. Over a century ago, a retired French soldier named Peter Pieri found a sweet onion seed there and brought it to the Walla Walla Valley. The sweet onion had impressive winter hardiness well-suited for the climate of southeastern Washington.

Soon Pieri and many Italian immigrants in the area began harvesting the seed. After several generations of careful hand selection, the sweet onion developed greater sweetness, size, and shape. Today, there are approximately 40 growers producing Walla Walla Sweet onions on 1,200 acres of farmland in the Walla Walla Valley. Sweet onion season is mid-June through September and, since 1984, Walla Walla has celebrated the Sweet Onion Festival every July.

The measure was a class project for a seventh-grade honors social-studies class at Eatonville Middle School. In prior years, the bill had also been a project of a Kirkland Junior high school.

State Waterfall

Palouse Falls

The tourist industry is a vital part of the state's economy. Palouse Falls has visitors numbering averaging over eighty thousand to one hundred thousand per year. The falls drop one hundred ninety-eight feet identifying them as the last remaining year-round waterfalls left by the ice age floods.

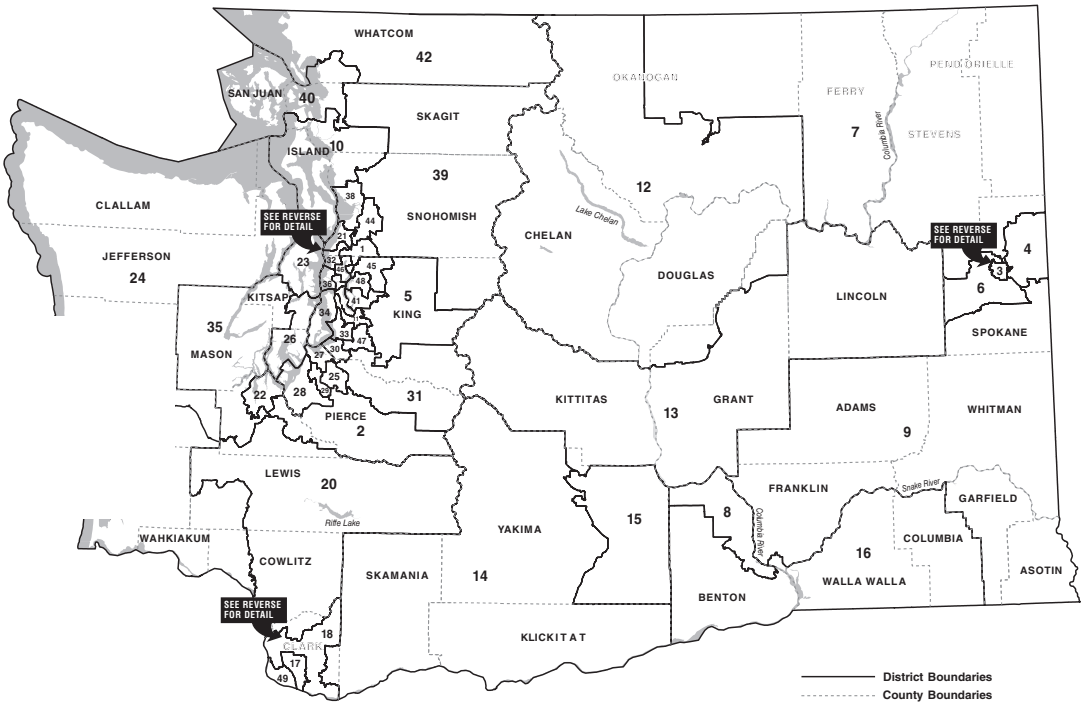
Palouse Falls was named sixth on the top ten best United States waterfalls list, tenth on the list of the world's most amazing waterfalls, and the site of the world record breaking kayak drop.

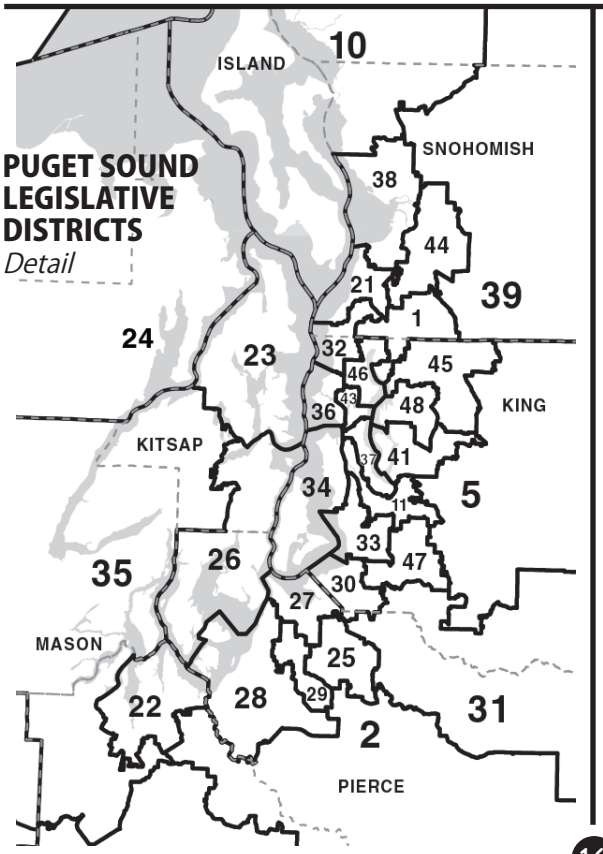
Palouse Falls surrounding area is the location for the oldest documented remains found in the western hemisphere; home of the Palouse Native American culture; birthplace of the Appaloosa horse; and documented in Lewis and Clark's journals.

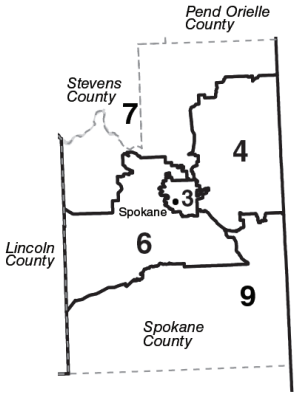
Legislative District Map

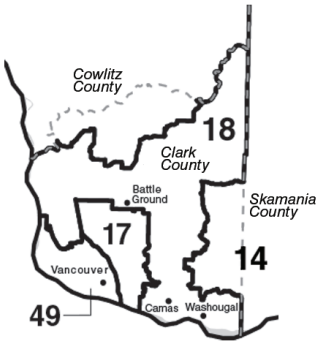
Look on the maps below and find your Legislative District. The Seattle, Spokane and Vancouver area districts are close together so it can be difficult to tell. Need help? Visit the legislative Web site at www.leg.wa.gov. Use "District Finder" to locate your district and the members who represent you.

"I live in the _____ District."









Legislative Terms

Adjourn – to conclude a day's session or committee meeting.

Amendment – a proposal offered to a legislative bill that changes the original language.

Bill – a proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration.

Budget – a legislative document that states the amount of money to be spent on programs and services.

Caucus – a group of people belonging to the same political party to select leaders and discuss issues and policy.

Committee – a panel of senators or representatives which makes preliminary decisions about legislation or other issues and reports its findings to the entire legislative body.

Committee Chair – a legislator chosen to direct the activities of a committee. Committee chairs normally are approved every two years by a vote of either the Senate or House.

Constitution – a document which states the basic principles and laws of the state that determine the powers and duties of government and guarantee certain rights to Washington citizens. Our Constitution was adopted in 1889.

Constitutional Amendment – similar to a legislative bill, a constitutional amendment is a proposal to change the state's Constitution that must be passed by the Legislature and approved by a vote of the citizens.

Convene – to assemble for an official meeting.

District – area represented by legislators. There are 49 legislative districts, each having one senator and two representatives.

First Reading – first of three readings required to pass a bill. Bills on first reading are introduced and sent to a committee.

Governor – political and ceremonial head of Washington State. The Governor is the leader of the executive branch of government.

Hearing – a regularly scheduled meeting of a committee at which the public has an opportunity to voice its opinions about proposed legislation.

Interim – the months between regular legislative sessions.

Law – governing action or a "rule" that is approved through the legislative process.

Page – students ages 14-16 who assist members of the Legislature and staff.

President of the Senate – another name for the Lieutenant Governor, who presides over Senate floor action and debate.

Representative – a citizen who is elected to the House of Representatives for a two-year term. There are 98 representatives in Washington.

Second Reading – bills on second reading are subject to debate and may be amended, returned to committee, or advanced to Third Reading.

Senator – a citizen who is elected to the Senate for a four-year term. There are 49 senators in Washington.

Speaker of the House – representative who is elected by the members of the House of Representatives to preside over House floor action and debate.

Special Session – a legislative session that is usually held between regular sessions to handle emergencies. A special session may be called by the Governor or by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature.

Sponsor – the senator or representative who presents a bill, resolution or amendment for consideration.

Third Reading – the final stage of a bill during which the document is read in its entirety and a vote is taken.

Veto – rejection of a bill by the Governor to the Legislature.

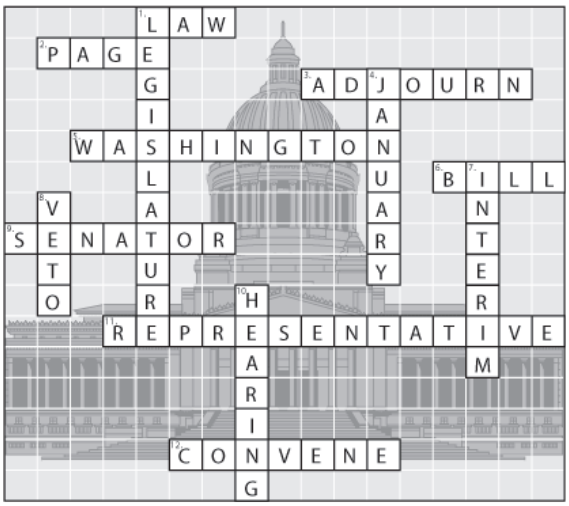
Veto Override – a two-thirds vote of the Legislature (33 votes in the Senate, and 66 votes in the House) which makes law any bill vetoed by the Governor.

During the Great Depression, a series of hydroelectric dams were constructed along the Columbia river as part of a project to increase the production of electricity. This culminated in 1941 with the completion of the Grand Coulee Dam, the largest dam in the United States.

DID YOU KNOW?

Activities Answers

Crossword



ACROSS:

1. A "rule" created by the Legislature.
2. Student helper who runs errands.
3. To end the day's session or meeting.
5. The 42nd state of the United States.
6. A proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration.
9. Represents you in the Senate.
11. Person elected to the House
12. To assemble for an official meeting.

DOWN:

1. Name given to the entire group of lawmakers.
4. The month when regular session begins.
7. The time between regular legislative sessions.
8. The rejection of a bill by the Governor.
10. A meeting where the public voices its opinions on a bill.

Levels of Government

F = Federal S = State L = Local Government

Who are the elected officials at each level of government?			
S	Legislator	L	County Executive
F	President	S	Governor
L	Council Member	L	Mayor
F	Member of Congress		
Where do elected representatives meet?			
L	Your Hometown	S	Olympia
F	Washington, D.C.		
Which level of government has the following responsibilities?			
L	runs the police department	F	maintains Post Office
F	declares war	S	writes Washington's budget
S	provides and maintains National Guard	S	gives money to your town to build a school
L	removes snow from city streets	F	runs the Social Security system
S	maintains state parks	F	collects income tax for the IRS
F	prints money	S	issues drivers' licenses
L	runs public libraries	L	passes rules about building heights

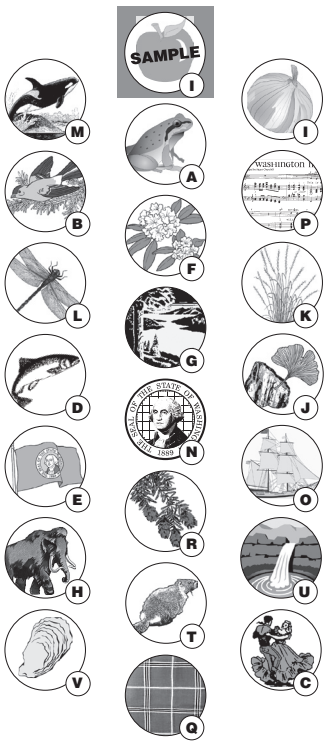
Branches of State Government

The head of the **executive** branch is the **Governor**, who is elected to a **four** year term. This person's job is to **enforce** the laws of Washington and **sign** bills passed by the Legislature. He/she also has the power to **veto** proposed laws. State **agencies** are also part of this branch and manage the daily **operations** of state government.

The **legislative** branch of state government **writes** the laws of our state. This branch also determines the state **budget**. The governing body of this branch is the **Legislature**, which is made up of the **Senate** and **House of Representatives**. **Senators** are elected to four year terms and **Representatives** serve **two** year terms. Each legislator represents citizens living in their home **district**; our state has **49** Legislative districts.

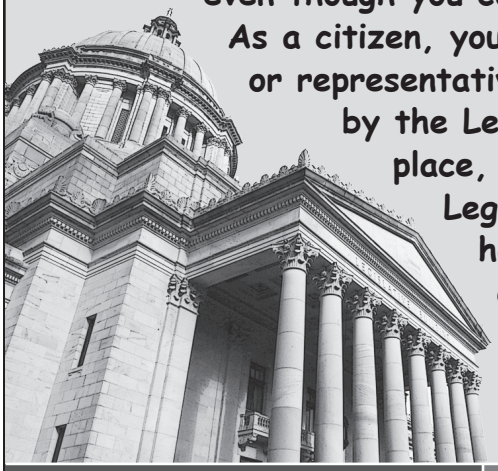
The Washington State **Supreme Court** is the head of the **judicial** branch. The other levels of this branch are the Court of **Appeals**, Superior Court, **District Court** and Municipal Court. Their job is to **interpret** our laws. Washington judges are **elected** by the people to uphold the State **Constitution**.

Match Game

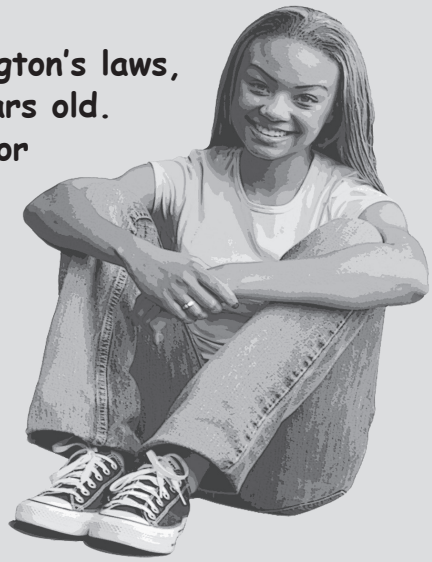


A	**Pacific Chorus Frog** State Amphibian, 2007
B	**Willow Goldfinch** State Bird, 1928
C	**Square Dance** State Dance, 1979
D	**Steelhead Trout** State Fish, 1969
E	**State Flag** 1890s
F	**Coast Rhododendron** State Flower, 1959
G	**"Roll On, Columbia, Roll On"** State Folk Song, 1987
H	**Columbian Mammoth** State Fossil, 1998
I	**Apple** State Fruit, 1989 SAMPLE
J	**Petrified Wood** State Gem, 1975
K	**Bluebunch Wheatgrass** State Grass, 1989
L	**Green Darner Dragonfly** State Insect, 1997
M	**Orca** State Marine Mammal, 2005
N	**State Seal** 1889
O	**The Lady Washington** State Ship, 2007
P	**"Washington, My Home"** State Song, 1959
Q	**State Tartan** A design for the weaving of cloth, 1991
R	**Western Hemlock** State Tree, 1947
S	**Walla Walla Sweet Onion** State Vegetable, 2007
T	**Marmot** State Endemic Mammal, 2009
U	**Palouse Falls** State Waterfall, 2014
V	**Ostrea Lurida** State Oyster, 2014

Get Involved



You have an important role in the formation of Washington's laws, even though you cannot vote until you are 18 years old. As a citizen, you may contact your state senator or representative about laws being considered by the Legislature, laws already in place, or an idea for a new law. Legislators particularly enjoy hearing from students, so we encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with them.



Write a Letter

One of the best ways to communicate is to write a letter. To do so, include your senator's or representative's name and one of the following addresses on a stamped envelope:

For the Senate:
(Senator's Name)
PO Box 40482
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

For the House:
(Representative's Name)
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Become a Page

During Legislative sessions, 14-16 year old Washingtonians can apply to serve week-long terms as Legislative Pages in Olympia. Page activities include running errands for Legislators and staff on the Capitol Campus, meeting new people and learning about the lawmaking process at Page School.

To find out more about the House & Senate Page Programs, visit the Students' Page of the website: www.leg.wa. gov/ legislature/studentpage/

Visit the Capitol Campus

We encourage you to personally visit the state capitol campus in Olympia. The tour office can arrange a fun and interesting tour for your class or your family throughout the year.

It is best to give them as much advance notice as possible. They can be reached at (360) 902-8880.

Surf the Web site

www.leg.wa.gov

On the website you'll find resources for finding & contacting your legislators, researching bills, applying for the Page Program, and much more! Check it out!

Your ideas count too! Even if you can't vote yet, you can still be involved and informed about government. You can:

- ☑ Write a letter or email to your Legislator.
- ☑ Talk to people who can vote.
- ☑ Visit the Legislature's website.
- ☑ Apply to be a Page at the Legislature (14-16 yr olds).
- ☑ Visit the Capitol with your family or your class.
- ☑ Go to town hall meetings in your hometown.
- ☑ Watch the Legislature in action on TVW.

Explore LYAC

The Idea for a Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) was first proposed to the legislature by a ten-year-old student who felt that children's opinions were important but not considered seriously by adults. He worked with his legislator to introduce a bill that established LYAC in 2005. The Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) examines issues of importance to youth and advises the Washington State Legislature on these issues and related legislation. This includes networking with youth around the state to get their ideas and to share information about what is going on that may affect them.

You can be involved with LYAC by sharing your concerns an keeping informed on issues. Email them at lyac@leg.wa.gov. You can also apply for a position on the council. LYAC consist of twenty-two members from around the State of Washington who, at the time of appointment, are ages fourteen to eighteen. Members serve two-year terms, and, if eligible, they may be reappointed for subsequent terms. Final appointments are made by the Lt. Governor based on recommendations and selection criteria developed by the council itself.

Tune into TVW

TVW (Statewide Public Affairs Television) covers all three branches of state government – legislative, executive, and judicial – as well as public policy events of statewide significance. Like C-SPAN at the federal level, it gives citizens unbiased, unfiltered access to state government deliberations.

Check TVW's website for links to a series called *Engaged: Students Becoming Citizens, TVW's* Emmy nominated, ongoing civic education series. It provides students information about participating in government and politics. Students' voices and actions in classrooms and civic events, are filmed through out the state. Browse the web site for more information:
www.tvw.org.

Register to vote

You are eligible to register and vote if you are:

- ☑ A citizen of the United States;
- ☑ A legal resident of Washington State; and
- ☑ At least 18 years old by Election Day.

Now Washingtonians can register to vote online! Just go to the Online Voter Registration section on the Secretary of State's website:
https://www/sos.wa.gov/

For additional copies of this publication or other legislative information, please contact The Legislative Information Center.

The Legislative Information Center (LIC) is a service provided by the Washington State Legislature. Information and documents about the legislative process can be obtained by:

- Calling the toll-free hotline at **1-800-562-6000**
- Calling the office at **360-786-7573**
- Visiting LIC in **Room 106** of the Legislative Building
- E-mailing **support@leg.wa.gov**
- Writing to:

  The Legislative Information Center
  P.O. Box 40600
  Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Please feel free to make copies of this document. You can download the document from the legislative web site at: http://www.leg.wa.gov/CivicEd/Documents/2014StudentGuideforteens.pdf

Revised 1/2016