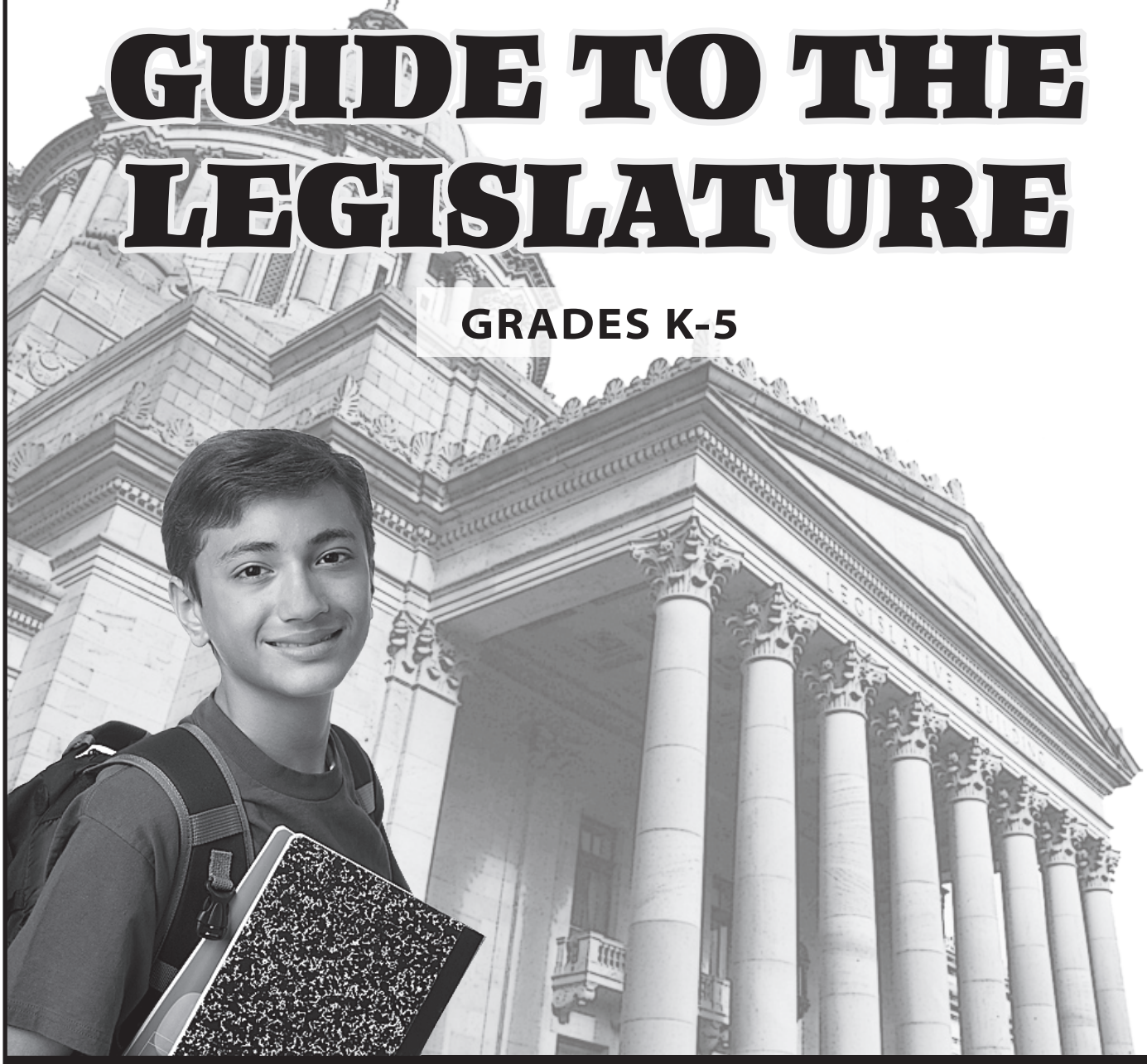
www.leg.wa.gov

A STUDENT GUIDE TO THE LEGISLATURE

GRADES K-5



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

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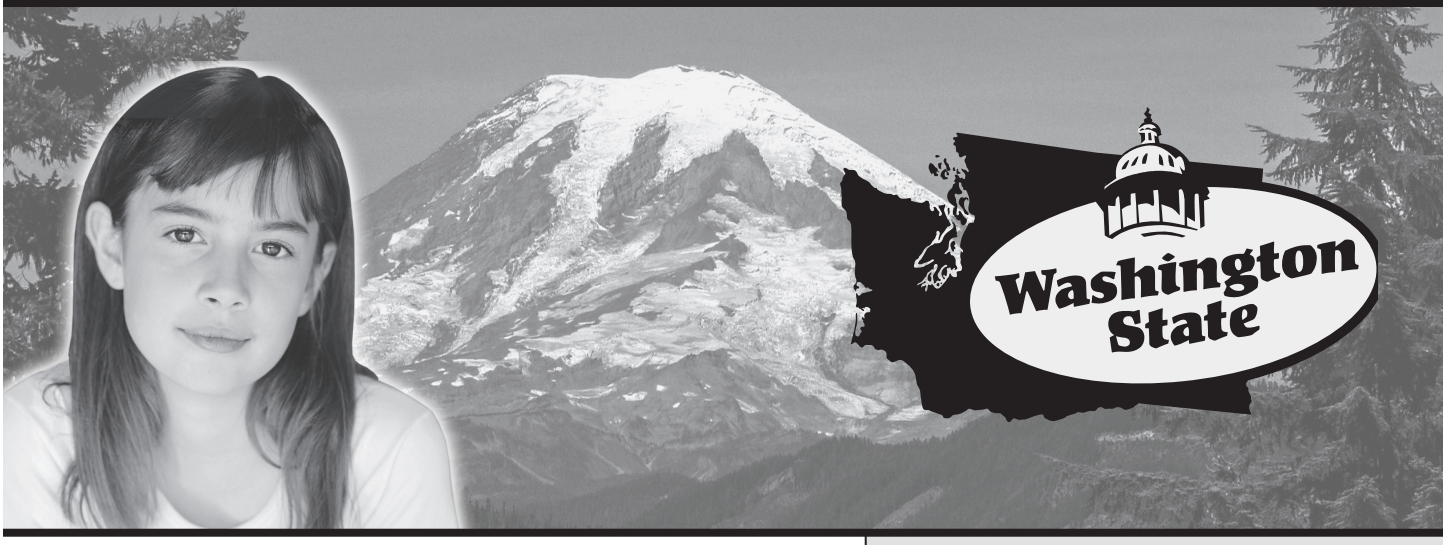
Know Your Legislature



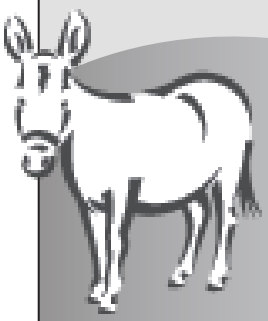
What is the Washington State Legislature?

Ever wondered who decides if your pet is required to get a rabies shot, how long a school day can be, or what topics should be covered in your social studies classes? These important decisions are all made by elected representatives in our state's capitol at the Washington State Legislature.

The Washington State Legislature makes "rules" or laws that govern our state. The Legislature also decides how much government money can be spent each year by writing the state's budget. Our State Legislature is divided into two chambers, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

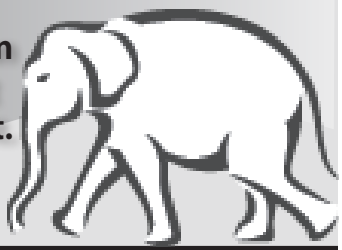
What are the political parties?

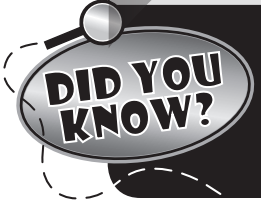
The members of the two chambers are divided into groups or teams, called "political parties." The two major parties are the Democrats and the Republicans. The group having the largest number of members is called the "majority party." The other group is the "minority party."



The Democratic Party mascot is the donkey.

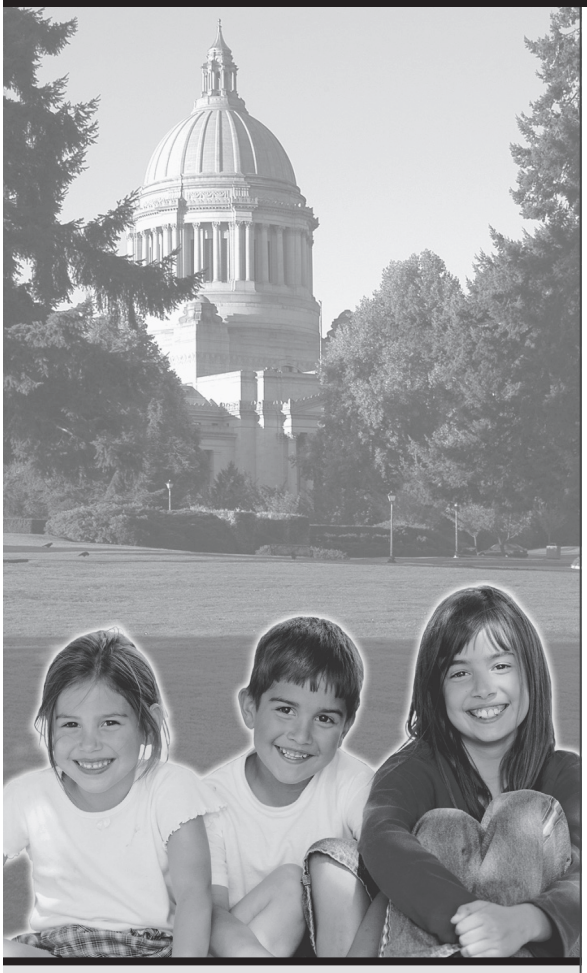
The Republican Party mascot is the elephant.





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

Know Your Legislature



When does your Legislature meet?

Each year the Legislature meets in Olympia to determine and debate issues important to the people of our state. Issues like health care, education, the environment, and the state budget are debated.

The regular session begins every year at the beginning of January and lasts for 105 days in an odd-numbered year and 60 days in even-numbered years.

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

DID YOU KNOW?

Who are your Legislators?

Members of the Legislature or "legislators" serve in either the House of Representatives or in the Senate. Legislators are chosen by the citizens of Washington to represent them and the area where they live. These areas are called districts.

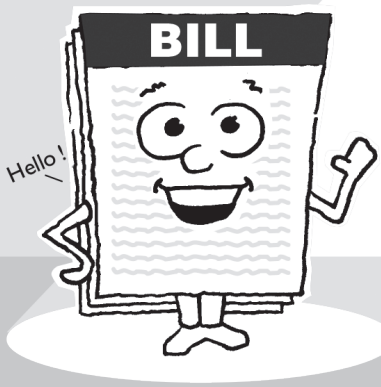
Each member of the Legislature must live in the district that he or she represents. This helps the members of the Legislature to know the people in their district. Each Senator and Representative is responsible for making sure that the people who elected him or her have a voice in all matters concerning the state.

Representatives are elected to serve two-year terms. Senators are elected to serve four-year terms. Currently, 49 Senators and 98 Representatives serve the people of Washington.

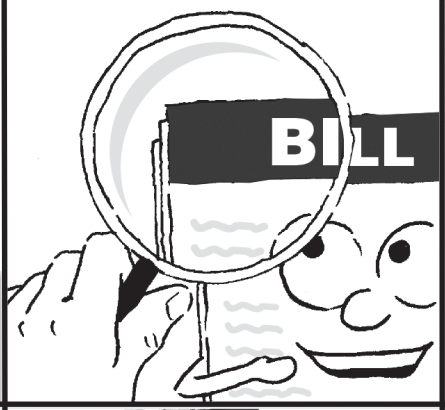
The Washington State Legislature is a part-time citizen legislature, which means most of its members have other careers or jobs besides serving in the Legislature, such as being a nurse, farmer, electrician, or teacher.

How a Bill Becomes A Law

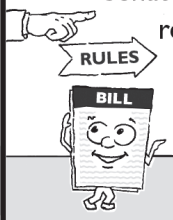
A bill may be introduced in either the Senate or House of Representatives.



A committee studies the bill and often holds public hearings on it.

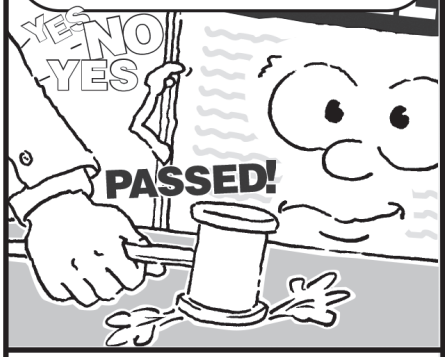


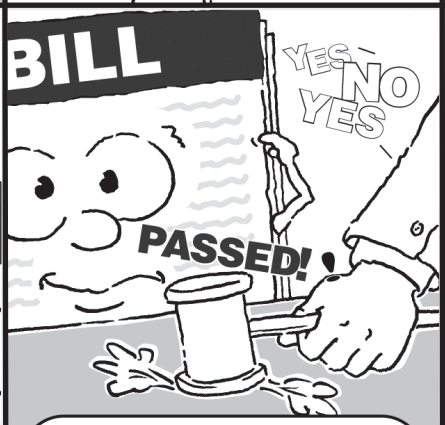
A committee report is read in open session of the House or Senate, and the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee.



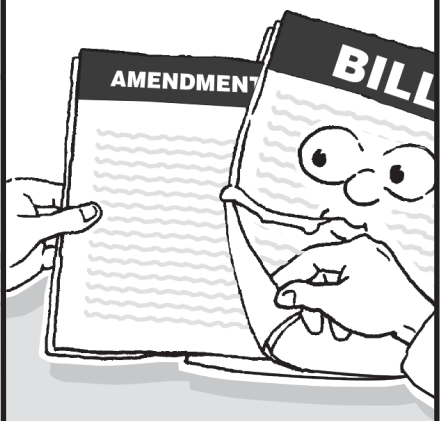
The rules committee decides which bills will be sent to the floor for further consideration and which bills won't.

At the second reading a bill is subject to debate and amendment before being placed on the third reading calendar for final passage.



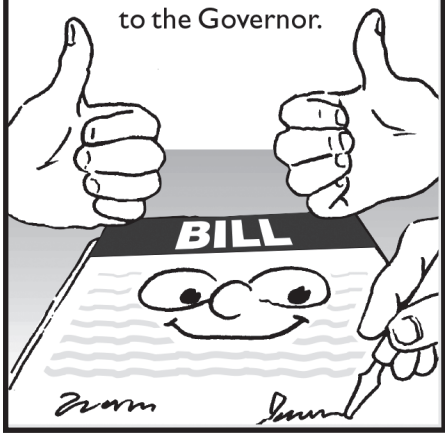


After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure in the other house.

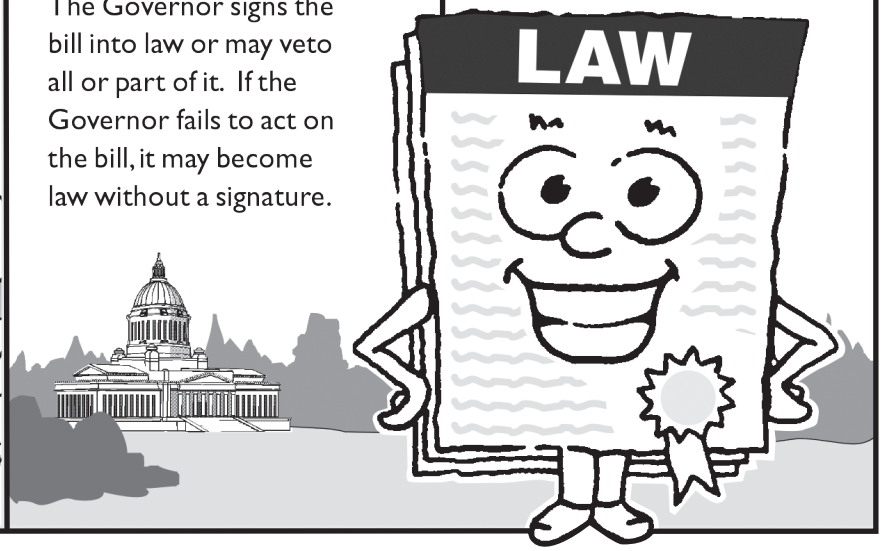


If amendments are made in one house, the other house must concur.

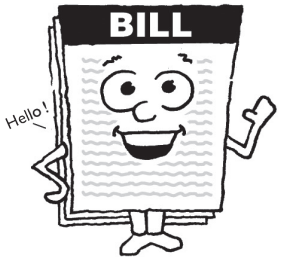
When the bill is accepted in both houses, it is signed by the respective leaders and sent to the Governor.



The Governor signs the bill into law or may veto all or part of it. If the Governor fails to act on the bill, it may become law without a signature.



Help Mr. Bill Become a Law — Maze



Mr. Bill needs help to become a law! Go through the maze and show Mr. bill the right path to take.

Start Here

First Reading: the bill may be introduced in either the Senate or House of Representatives.

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Bill Draft: the idea for the new law is written in proper form.

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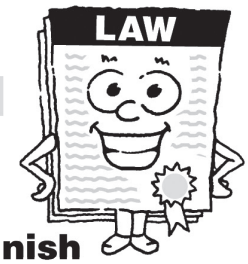
Governor's Action: The Governor reviews the bill and may veto it or sign it into law.



Final Passage: the bill is signed by House and Senate Leaders and sent to the Governor.

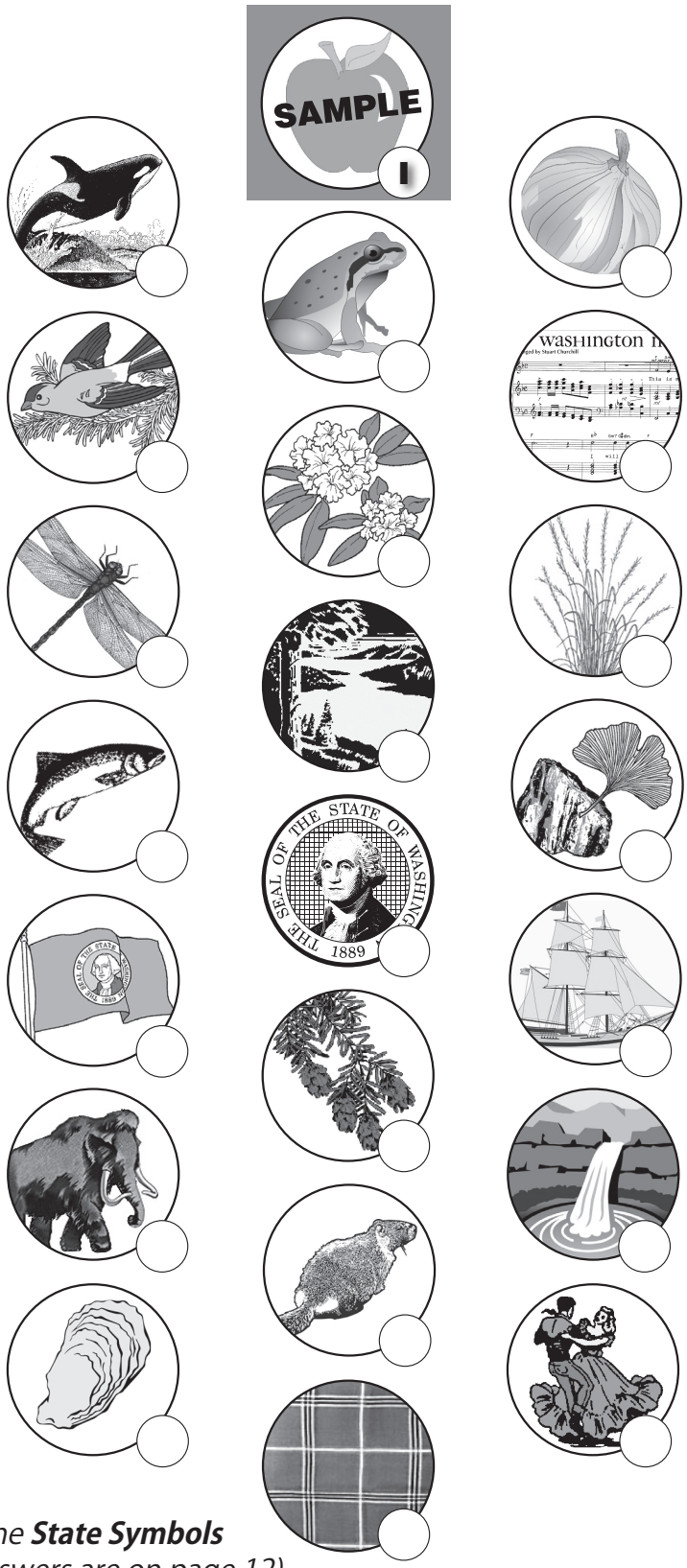
Mr. Bill Becomes A Law!

Finish

*(The **Maze** solution is on page 12)*

State Symbols 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** 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

*(The **State Symbols** answers are on page 12)*

Connect-the-Dots

Connect these dots and you will see one of Washington State's beautiful animals. In 1951, this little creature was made one of our official state symbols by a vote of school children in our state. Can you guess what it is?

*(The **Connect-the-Dots** solution is on page 12)*

Word Search

Search for these legislative terms in the letters below. They may appear in all directions: forward, backward, up, down, or diagonally in the puzzle. Find each word and draw a circle around it like the sample shown.

Amendment	Chamber	Constitution	✓Budget	Speaker
Hearing	Bill	Override	Governor	Page
Law	Senator	Session	Representative	Vote

R	C	K	J	N	O	I	S	S	E	S	M
E	E	H	O	W	P	M	B	I	U	R	A
V	P	W	A	M	E	N	D	M	E	N	T
I	G	N	R	M	T	S	I	V	E	Z	X
T	Y	R	F	O	B	A	N	S	C	B	I
A	P	A	N	E	I	E	T	E	Y	K	N
T	H	W	T	X	L	F	R	N	T	O	G
N	I	O	R	C	L	B	O	A	I	V	A
E	V	Z	E	A	R	H	D	T	E	E	B
S	U	Y	K	B	O	M	U	O	Y	R	W
E	E	G	A	P	W	T	C	R	K	R	A
R	C	O	E	A	I	V	E	B	X	I	L
P	P	I	P	T	Q	X	R	U	H	D	S
E	L	W	S	V	A	Z	I	K	C	E	A
R	G	N	I	R	A	E	H	B	F	V	H
M	O	T	Y	H	M	B	U	D	G	E	T
C	Y	K	G	O	V	E	R	N	O	R	E

*(The **Word Search** answers are on page 12)*

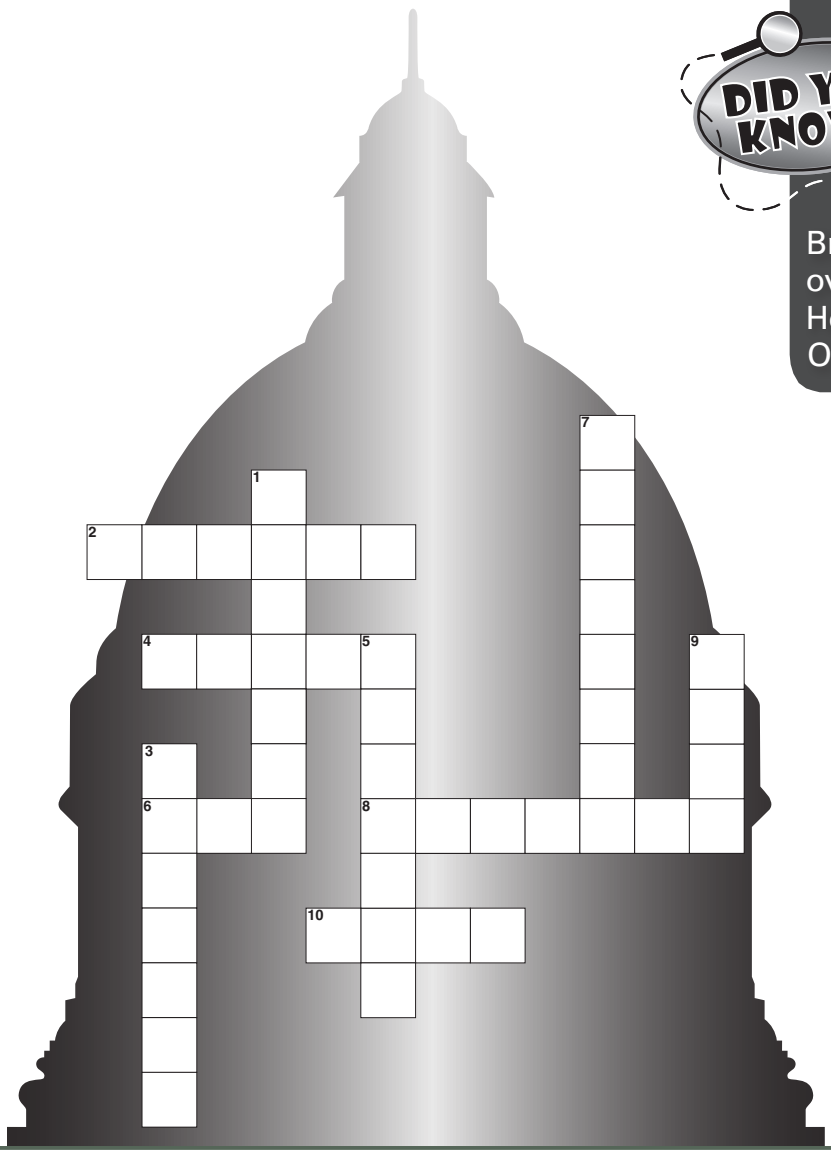
Match Game

Match the answers on the left with the definitions on the right.

Lieutenant Governor	**Legislative session held between regular sessions, usually to handle emergencies.**
Special Session	**As the President of the Senate, this person presides over the Senate.**
49	**The number of legislative districts in Washington State.**
Gallery	**A group of Senators or Representatives which schedules hearings to study bills and receive public testimony.**
Committee	**The length of a Senator's term of office.**
4 years	**Areas where public visitors may observe the Legislature in session.**
Regular Session	**The length of a Representative's term of office.**
Speaker of the House	**The annual meeting of the Legislature, beginning on the second Monday in January each year.**
2 years	**Presiding officer of the House of Representatives**

*(The **Match Game** answers are on page 13)*

Capitol Crossword Puzzle



DID YOU KNOW?

Washington is home to four of the five longest floating bridges in the world: the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge, Lacey V. Murrow Memorial Bridge and Homer M. Hadley Bridge over Lake Washington, and the Hood Canal Bridge connecting the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas.

WORD LIST

BILL
CAPITOL
DISTRICT
ELECTED
HOUSE
JANUARY
NAY
SENATE
VETO

ACROSS:

2. **A Senator is a member of the __ __ __ __ __ __ .**
4. **The __ __ __ __ __ of Representatives is one chamber of our legislature.**
6. **When voting, the legislators vote yea for yes and __ __ __ for no.**
8. **The __ __ __ __ __ __ __ is the building where our Governor and Legislature work.**
10. **When the Governor rejects a bill, it is called a __ __ __ __ .**

DOWN:

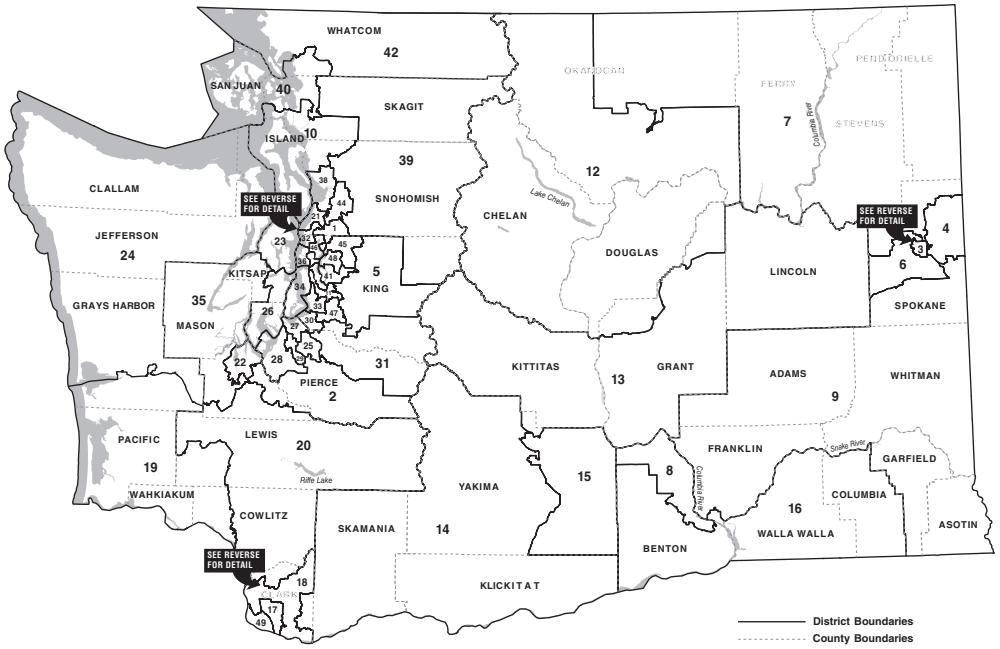
1. **The legislative session starts in __ __ __ __ __ __ __ of each year.**
3. **The months between regular legislative sessions is called __ __ __ __ __ __ __ .**
5. **Members of the Legislature are __ __ __ __ __ __ __ by the citizens of the state.**
7. **Each __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ is represented by one Senator and two Representatives.**
9. **A __ __ __ __ that is signed by the Governor becomes a law.**

*(The **Crossword Puzzle** answers are on page 13)*

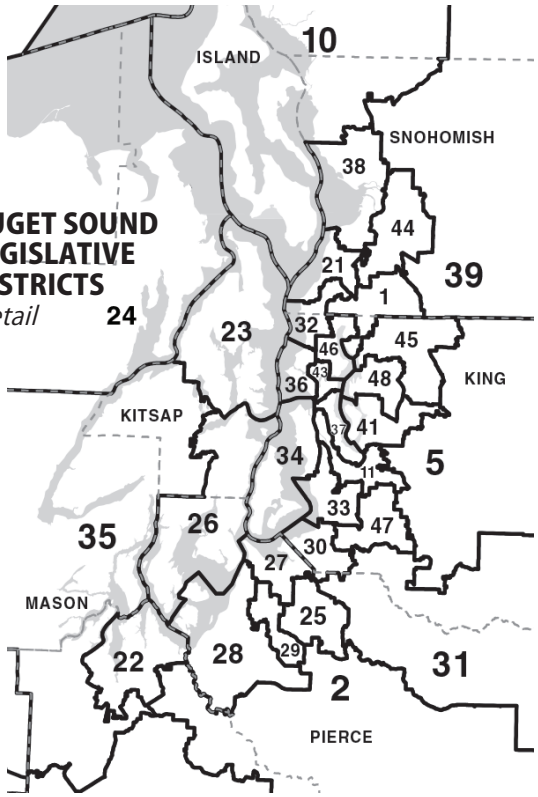
What District Do You Live In?

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.

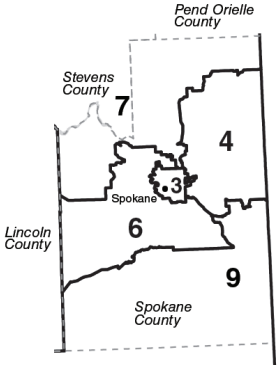
"I live in the _____ District."



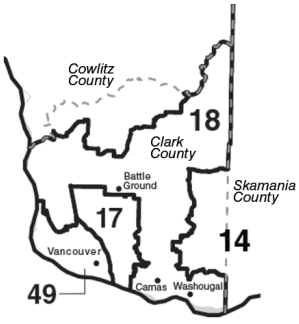
PUGET SOUND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS
Detail



SPOKANE AREA LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS
Detail

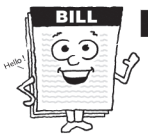


VANCOUVER AREA LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS
Detail



Activities Answers

Help Bill Become a Law



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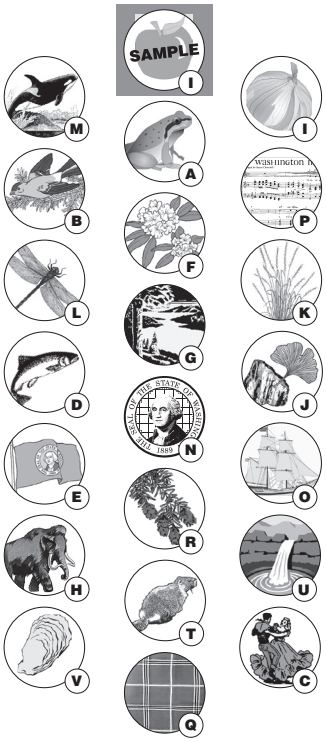
Mr. Bill Becomes A Law!

Finish

State Symbols Answers



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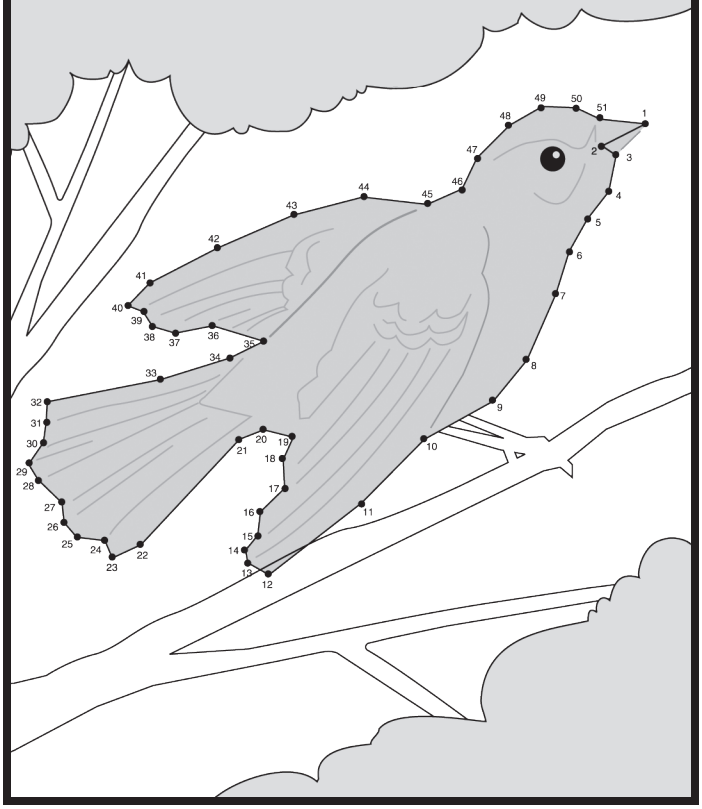

Word Search

R	C	K	J	N	O	I	S	S	E	S	M
E	E	H	O	W	P	M	B	I	U	R	A
V	P	W	A	M	E	N	D	M	E	N	T
I	G	N	R	M	T	S	I	V	E	Z	X
T	Y	R	F	O	B	A	N	S	C	B	I
A	P	A	N	E	I	E	T	E	Y	K	N
T	H	W	T	X	L	F	R	N	T	O	G
N	I	O	R	C	L	B	O	A	I	V	A
E	V	Z	E	A	R	H	D	T	E	E	B
S	U	Y	K	B	O	M	U	O	Y	R	W
E	E	G	A	P	W	T	C	R	K	R	A
R	C	O	E	A	I	V	E	B	X	I	L
P	P	I	P	T	Q	X	R	U	H	D	S
E	L	W	S	V	A	Z	I	K	C	E	A
R	G	N	T	R	A	E	H	B	F	V	H
M	O	T	Y	H	M	B	U	D	G	E	T
C	T	K	G	O	V	E	R	N	O	R	E

Activities Answers

Matching

(Match the answers on the left with the definitions on the right.)

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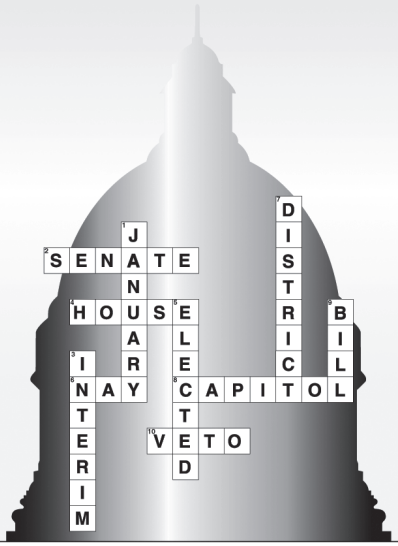
Capitol Crossword Answers



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9. A B I L L that is signed by the Governor becomes a law.

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

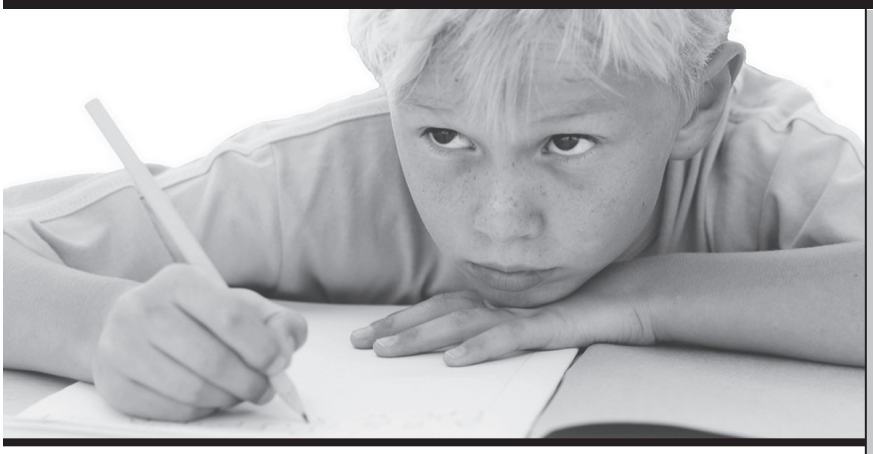
The Legislative Information Center (LIC) is a service provided by the Washington State Legislature. Information and documents about the legislative process can be obtained by:

- 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://leg.wa.gov/CivicEd/Documents/2014StudentGuideK-5.pdf

Contacting Your Legislator



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

The Legislature Online

On the website you'll find resources for finding and contacting your Legislators, researching bills, applying for the Page Program, and much more! Check it out at www.leg.wa.gov.

Visit the Capitol Campus

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

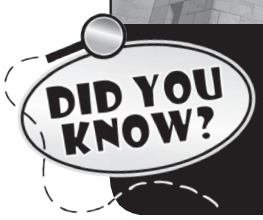
It is best to give them as much advance notice as possible. They can be reached at (360) 902-8880.

Your ideas count too!

Even though 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!**



Washington is only one of seven states that doesn't have a personal income tax.