A STUDENT GUIDE TO THE LEGISLATURE

GRADES K-5
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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

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.

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.
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.

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

Committee Review: a committee studies the bill and may make changes. This bill is approved and sent to the Rules Committee.

Second Reading: the bill is debated and may be changed again by the entire chamber.

Opposite Chamber: the bill is sent to the opposite chamber and goes through the same steps again.

Rules Committee: the bill is reconsidered and is sent to the chamber floor.

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!

(The Maze solution is on page 12)
Washington has many official symbols that represent things that are special to our state. Look at the pictures on the left. Using letters “A” through “S,” 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 |
| 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 |

(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.

{The Word Search answers are on page 12}
Match the answers on the left with the definitions on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lieutenant Governor</th>
<th>Legislative session held between regular sessions, usually to handle emergencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Session</td>
<td>As the President of the Senate, this person presides over the Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>The number of legislative districts in Washington State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant-at-Arms</td>
<td>A group of Senators or Representatives which schedules hearings to study bills and receive public testimony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>The length of a Senator’s term of office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>These people are responsible for security in hearings and the Legislative chamber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Session</td>
<td>The length of a Representative’s term of office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker of the House</td>
<td>The annual meeting of the Legislature, beginning on the second Monday in January each year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Presiding officer of the House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The Match Game answers are on page 13)
Capitol Crossword Puzzle

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.

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.

(What 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."
## Activities Answers

### Matching

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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### Capitol Crossword Answers

ACROSS:
1. The legislative session starts in **J A N U A R Y** of each year.
2. A Senator is a member of the **S E N A T E**.
3. The **H O U S E** of Representatives is one chamber of our legislature.
4. When voting, the legislators vote **Y E A R** or **N A Y** for no.
5. The **C A P I T O L** is the building where our Governor and Legislative work.
6. **V E T O** is the state.
7. Each **D I S T R I C T** is represented by one Senator and two Representatives.
8. **S T O P** 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://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/legislature/studentspage/k-5guide_web.pdf](http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/legislature/studentspage/k-5guide_web.pdf)
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!

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.

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