



A Student Guide to the Washington Legislature

Produced by the Washington State Legislature

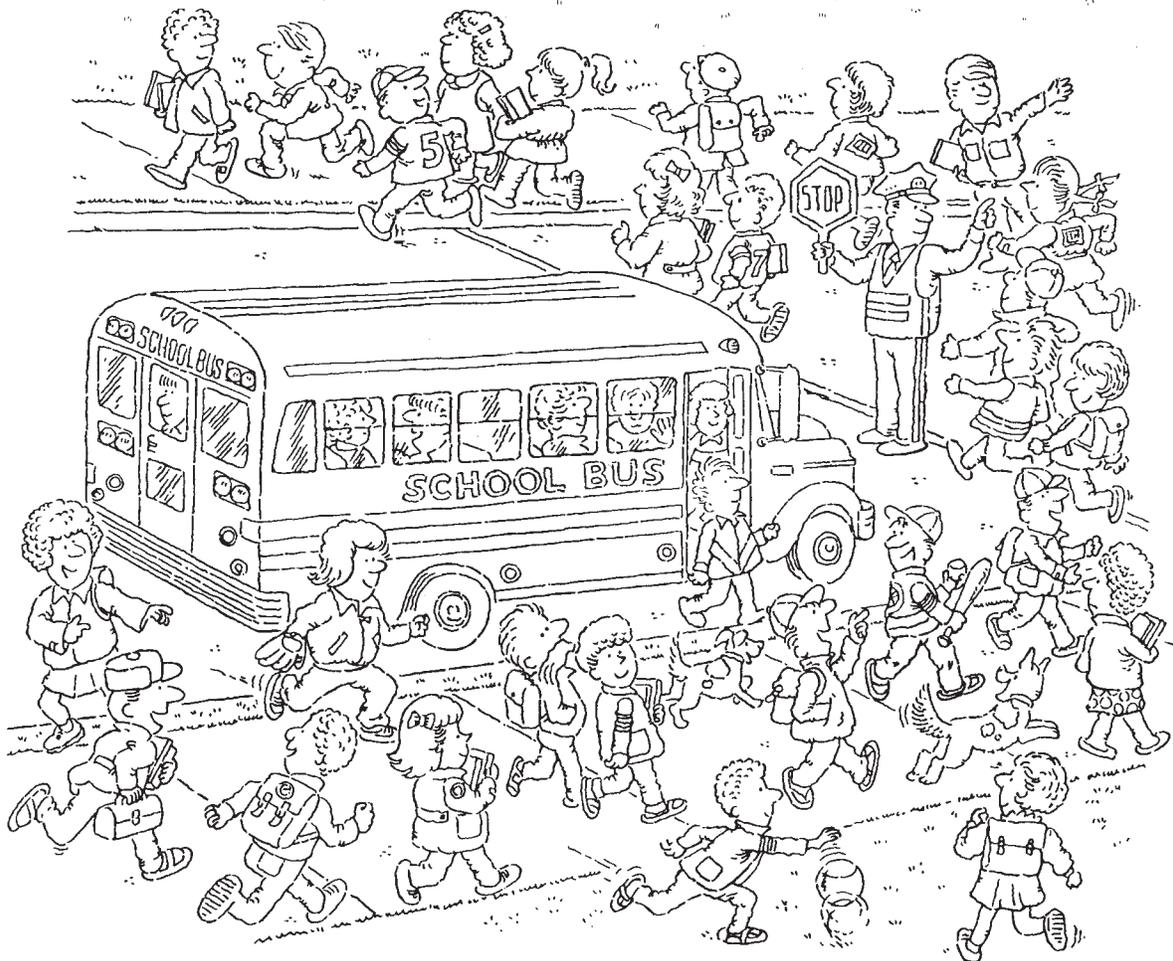


Table of Contents

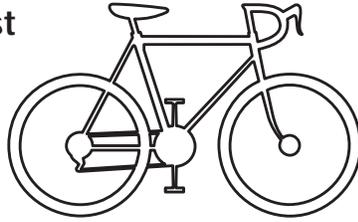
Your Legislature.	1-2	Dot-to-Dot.	10
How a Bill Becomes a Law	3	Crossword Puzzle.	11
Legislative Terms	4-5	Contacting Your Legislator.	12
Word Search.	6	Legislative District Map.	13
Matching	7	Puzzle Keys.	back cover
Symbols of Washington State	8-9		



Produced by the Washington State Legislature • PO Box 40482 • Olympia, WA 98504-0482 • Phone: (360) 786-7550
If you are a person with a disability and need a special accommodation, please contact the
Senate at 786-7550, or the House at 786-7101. TTY 1-800-635-9993.

Your Legislature

How many hours must you attend school?



On which side of the road should you ride your bike?

Is your cat or dog required to have shots for rabies?



The answers to these questions are determined by “rules” or laws which people must follow. These “rules” are created by lawmakers in your state Legislature who are called senators and representatives.

Like almost every other state in the union, Washington has two legislative chambers—the Senate and House of Representatives. Nebraska is the only state which has just one legislative chamber called a unicameral legislature.

Senators are elected by the voters to a four-year term, and state representatives are elected for two years. To be a senator or representative, you must be at least 18 years old, live in your legislative district, and be a registered voter.

There are 49 legislative districts in Washington State. You live in one of these districts along with approximately 100,000 other people! Each district elects one senator and two representatives to the Legislature. Therefore, the Senate has 49 members and there are 98 representatives in the House.

The Washington State Legislature is a citizen legislature, which means most of its members have other careers or jobs besides serving in the Legislature, such as being a nurse, electrician, or teacher. There is a special citizens’ committee which sets legislators’ salaries.

1. There are two types of lawmakers in the Washington Legislature. What are they called?

2. How many legislative districts does Washington have? How many lawmakers represent each district?

Our state Constitution says that the Legislature will meet every year, beginning on the second Monday of January. These are known as regular sessions. It meets for 60 days during even-numbered years and 105 days during odd-numbered years. It meets longer in the odd-numbered years because it must pass a state budget.

continued on next page

Your Legislature

Sometimes legislators are called back to Olympia for “special sessions,” which usually are held between regular sessions to handle emergencies.

When you visit the Senate and House chambers in the State Capitol, you may see senators and representatives in session. Others you may see are the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Pages.

The Lieutenant Governor is elected by all Washington voters and serves as president of the Senate and presides over daily Senate activity. The Speaker of the House is a member of the House of Representatives who has been chosen by members of the House to preside over the House floor action and debate. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for security in the chambers and at public hearings. The students wearing colored jackets are legislative pages who assist legislators and staff by running errands.

You may speak to or write your legislators, testify at a public hearing, or ask for information about the legislative process or a specific bill. They will appreciate hearing from you because you have an important role in the formation of Washington’s laws.

3. Jane Smith is 22 years old and has lived in Snohomish County for ten years. She has never registered to vote. Her uncle was a senator in 1965. Can she run for the Legislature? Why or why not?

4. Refer to the legislative district map on page 13 of this book to find the following information: in which district do you live? Who is your senator and who are your representatives?

The Legislature has committees, or small groups of senators or representatives, which review proposed laws and study issues. Many bills introduced in the Legislature receive a public hearing. Hearings give citizens a chance to present their opinions about proposed laws.

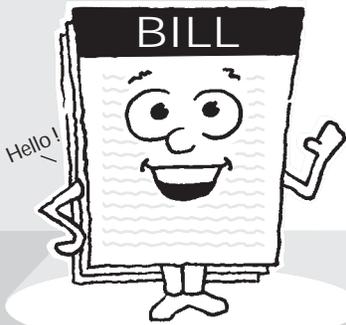
5. Why do legislative committees hold hearings?

6. Who presides over the Senate? Who presides over the House?

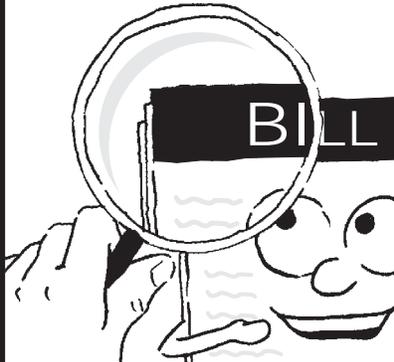
The answers are on the back cover

How a Bill Becomes a Law

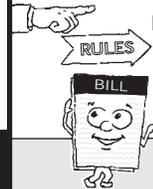
A bill may be introduced in either the Senate or House of Representatives.



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

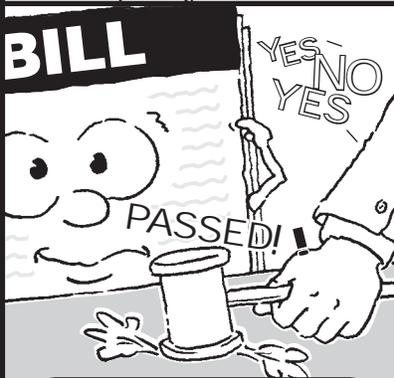
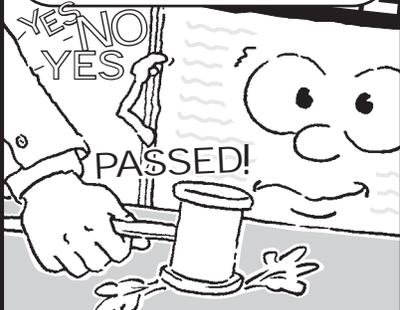


A committee report is read in open session of the House or Senate, and the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee.

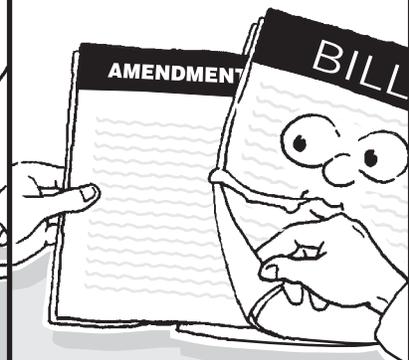


The Rules Committee can either place the bill on the second reading of the calendar for debate before the entire body, or take no action.

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

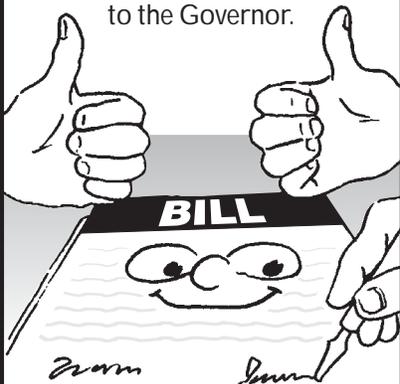


After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure in the other house.

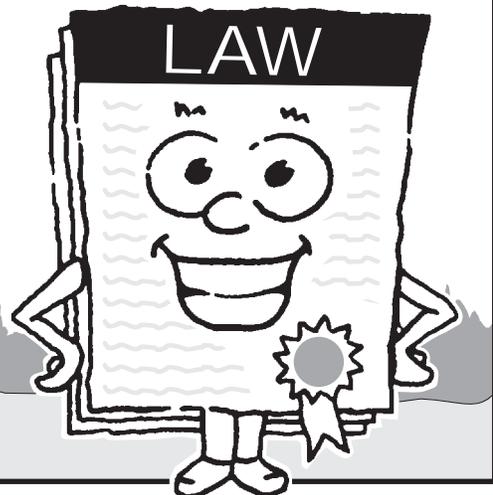


If amendments are made in one house, the other house must concur.

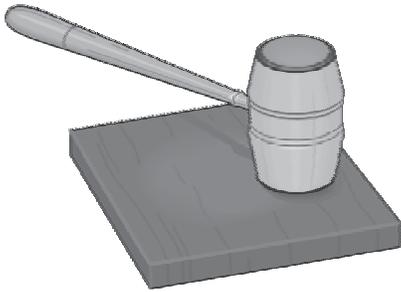
When the bill is accepted in both houses, it is signed by the respective leaders and sent to the Governor.



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.



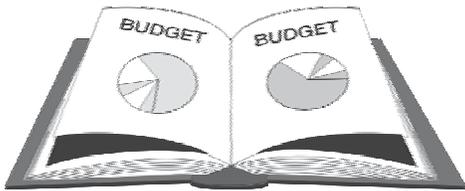
Legislative Terms



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 – the introduction and first reading of a bill by the entire legislative body.

Governor – highest ranking state official.

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.

Legislature – the entire group of senators and representatives. They are elected by citizens to represent them in the creation and modification of laws for the state.

Legislative Terms

Page – the name given to students who are “helpers” to legislators and staff. Pages typically run errands and provide other assistance as needed. Persons who are good students between 14-15 years of age are eligible to become pages.

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

Representative – a person 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.

Sergeant-at-Arms – these employees are responsible for security during legislative sessions and public hearings.

Speaker – 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 for a specific purpose and occurs between regularly scheduled sessions. A special session may be called to order by the Governor or by a vote of two-thirds of both houses 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 – return of a bill by the Governor to the Legislature without his or her signature, usually accompanied by an explanation as to why the Governor thinks the bill should not become a law.



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.

Washington – the name given to the 42nd state in the United States of America. Our state is named after our first president, George Washington.



George Washington

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 key to the puzzle is on the back cover.

- 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



Matching

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

Lieutenant Governor

Legislative session held between regular sessions, usually to handle emergencies.

First Reading

As the President of the Senate, this person presides over the Senate.

Special Session

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

49

When a bill is introduced and read to the Legislature for the first time.

Sergeant-at-Arms

The number of legislative districts in Washington State.

Third Reading

These people are responsible for security in hearings and the legislative chamber.

Committee

The length of a senator's term of office.

4 years

A group of senators or representatives which schedules hearings to study bills and receive public testimony.

Regular Session

The length of a representative's term of office.

Second Reading

The debating and amending stage for a legislative bill.

2 years

The annual meeting of the Legislature, beginning on the second Monday in January each year.

The answers are on the back cover

Symbols of Washington State

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 Flag

The state flag and the state seal are similar. 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. In 1923, the Legislature passed a law describing the flag as having dark green bunting with a state seal in the center. This has been our official flag ever since.



State Nickname -

"The Evergreen State"

On November 11, 1889, Washington became the 42nd state to enter the Union. It is the only state named for a president. Washington was nicknamed "The Evergreen State" by C.T. Conover, a pioneer Seattle realtor and historian, for its abundant evergreen forests. The nickname was adopted by the Legislature in February 1893.

State Motto - Alki

Al-ki or Alki is an Indian word meaning "bye and bye" or "hope for the future." This motto first appeared on the territorial seal designed by Lt. J.K. Duncan of



Governor Stevens's surveying expedition. On one side it pictures a log cabin and an immigrant wagon with a fir forest in the background; on the other side, a sheet of water being traversed by a steamer and sailing vessel, a city in perspective; the Goddess of Hope and an anchor is in the center. The figure is pointing at the significant word "Alki." According to Professor Edmond Meany, settlers from the schooner "Exact" first named their settlement on Alki Point "New York." The new settlement grew more slowly than its East Coast counter-part, so the name was changed to New York-Alki, meaning New York, bye and bye.

State Flower - Coast Rhododendron

In 1892, before they had the right to vote in national or state elections, 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 women throughout the state. When the ballots were counted, the rhododendron had been chosen as the Washington State flower.



State Tree - Western Hemlock

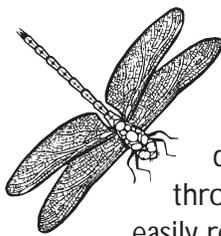
In 1946, an Oregon newspaper teased Washington for not having a state tree. The Portland Oregonian picked out the western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) for us, but Washington newspapers decided to

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.



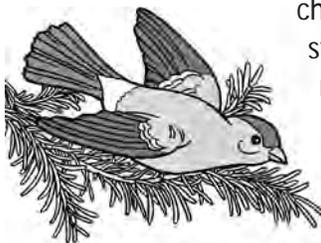
**State Insect -
Green Darner Dragonfly**

In 1997, the Common Green Darner Dragonfly became Washington's official state insect. The Green Darner dragonfly, also known as the "Mosquito Hawk" dragonfly, can be found throughout Washington. It's easily recognizable by its bright green head and thorax. It has a 4- to 6-inch wingspan and can fly 25 to 35 mph.



State Bird - Willow Goldfinch

The Willow Goldfinch, or Wild Canary, is a delicate little bird with a yellow body and black wings, and although it eventually became Washington's official state bird, many other birds were considered for the title. In 1928, legislators let school

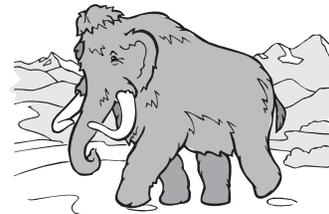


children select the state bird, and the meadowlark won hands-down. It was a nice choice but seven other states already had chosen the same bird. A new vote was taken in 1931 by the Washington Federation of Women's Clubs. Many birds were nominated, but the

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.

**State Fossil -
Columbian Mammoth**

- Washington's state fossil is the Columbian Mammoth. Students from Windsor Elementary School near Cheney led a four-year effort to have this behemoth designated as a state symbol in 1998. The Columbian Mammoths died out about 10,000 years ago. Several years ago, fossils of these mammoths were found on the Olympic Peninsula.



State Marine Mammal - Orca Whale

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.



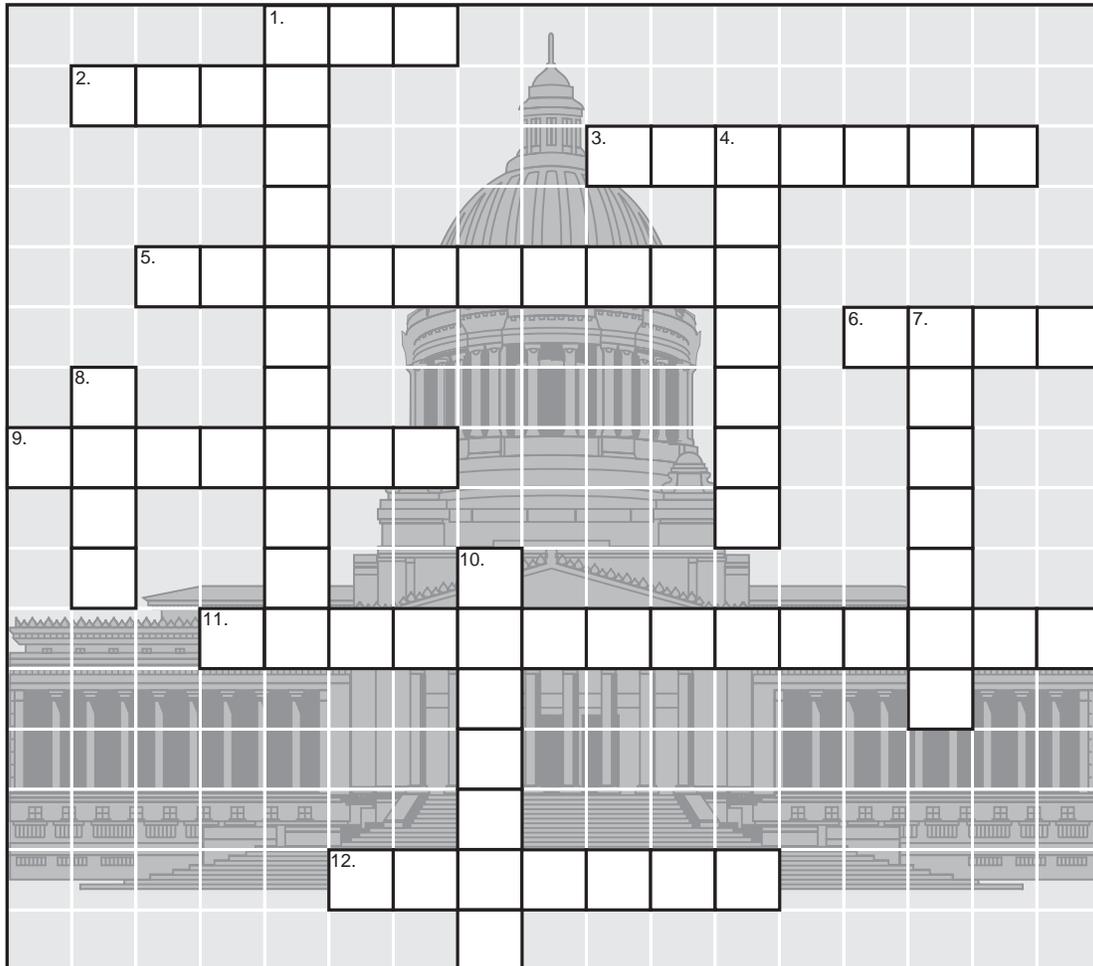
Dot-to-Dot

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 answers are on the back cover

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 the back cover

Contacting Your Legislator

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.

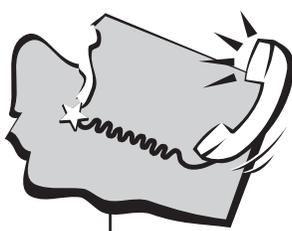
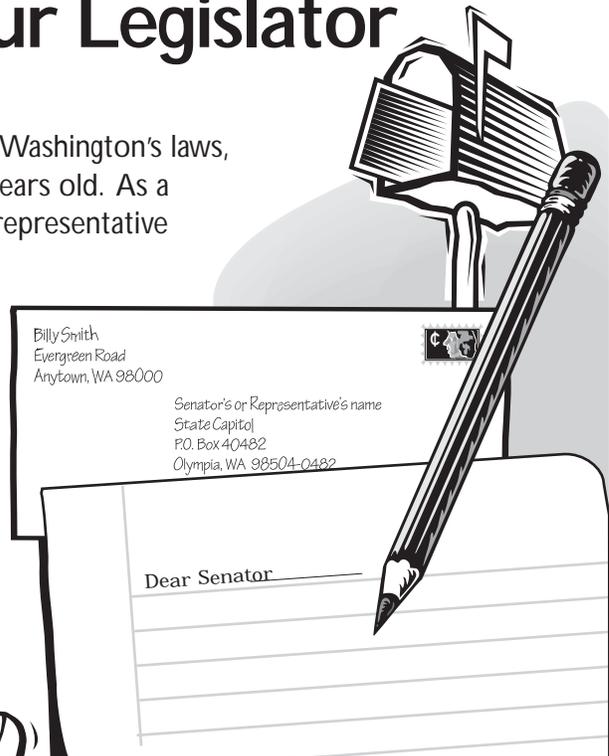
One of the best ways to communicate is to write a letter. To do so, you need only to include on the stamped envelope your senator's or representative's name and one of the following addresses:

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



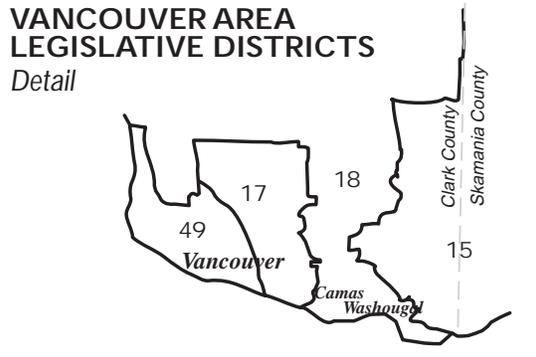
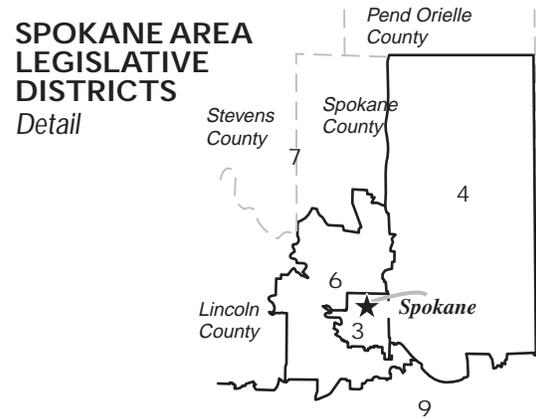
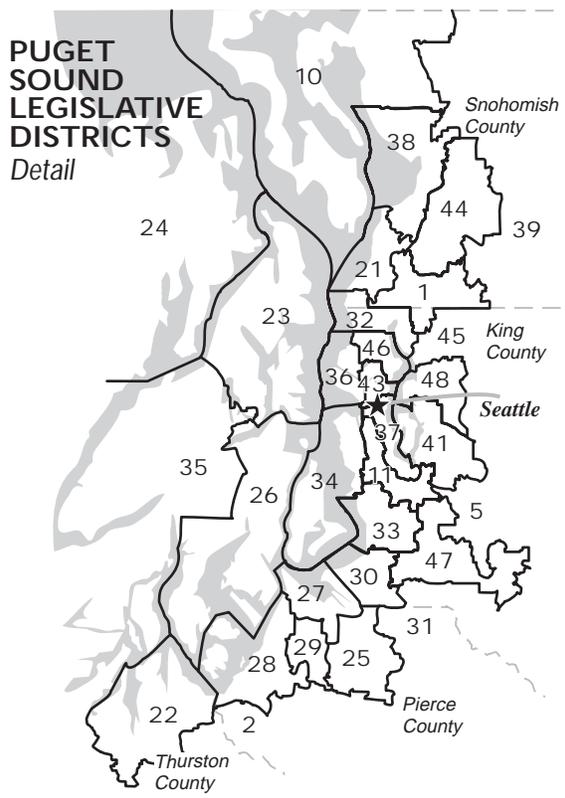
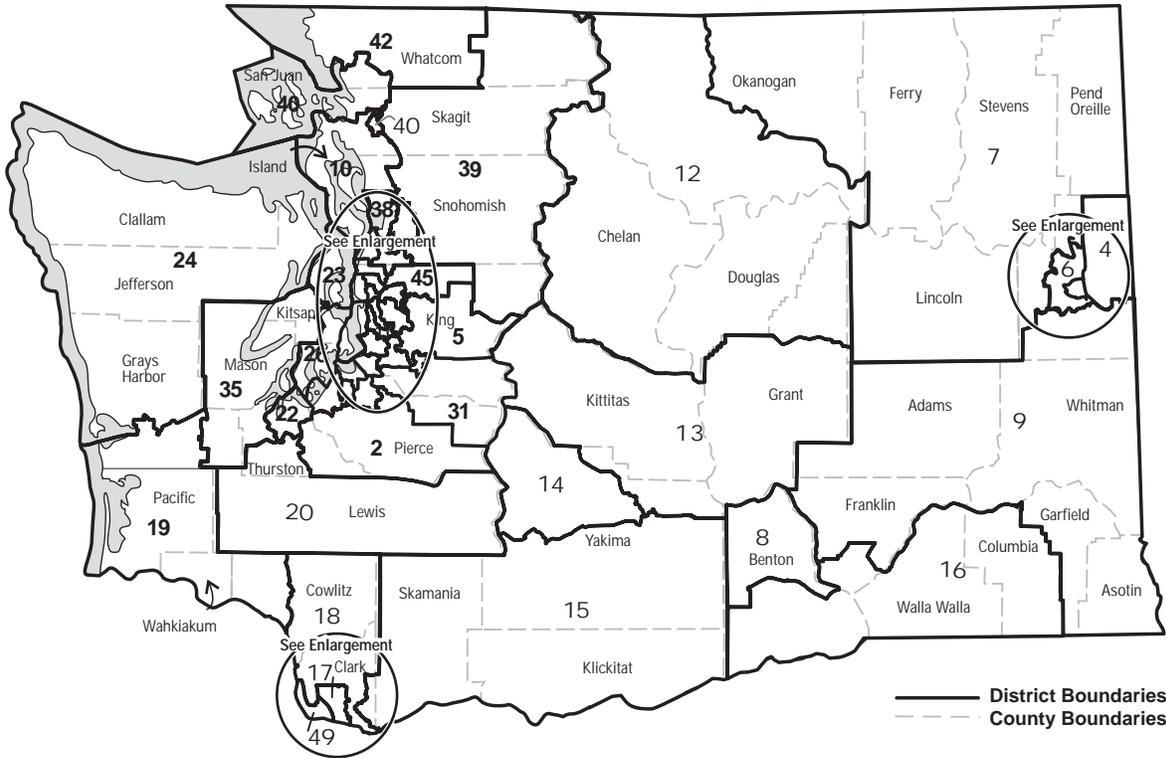
You may contact your legislators by calling them, too. Washington is one of only a few states in the country with a toll-free legislative hotline. Some days our operators field as many as 1,200 phone calls! If you call 1-800-562-6000, you will reach helpful staff who will type up your message and send it to your legislators.

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) 586-TOUR.



You also can "visit" the Legislature at our Internet web site at <http://www.leg.wa.gov>. The Senate has a kids' homepage which we hope you will use. In most cases you can send electronic mail to your legislators.

Legislative District Map



Puzzle Keys

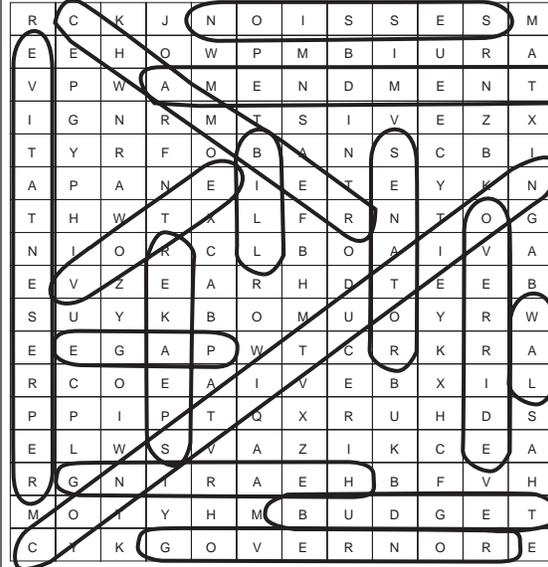
Answers to questions on pages 1 and 2:

1. Senators and representatives.
2. 49. One senator and two representatives.
3. No, Jane Smith cannot run for the Legislature because she is not a registered voter.
5. Hearings are held to give senators and representatives a chance to study bills and give people an opportunity to testify and give their opinions on bills.
6. The Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate, and the Speaker presides over the House.

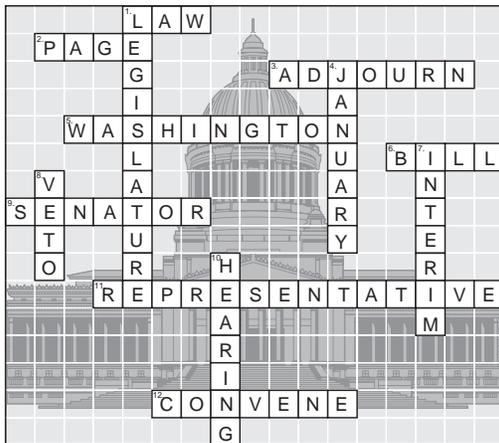
Answer to the question on page 10:

The Willow Goldfinch, our state bird.

Word Search



Crossword Puzzle



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Matching

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Lieutenant Governor | Legislative session held between regular sessions to handle emergencies. |
| First Reading | As the President of the Senate, this person presides over the Senate. |
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| 49 | When a bill is introduced and read to the Legislature for the first time. |
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