



A TALE OF TWO  
**TIME  
CAPSULES**

Alberta Legislature Time Capsule

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# Class Activities

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LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY  
OF ALBERTA



## Teacher Notes

Immerse your students in Alberta's history with a variety of activities inspired by the centennial of Alberta's Legislature Building. In a lot of ways the centennial celebrations of the building were really a tale of two time capsules. The time capsules connect us with our past and our future. The centennial celebrations were launched on June 18, 2012, with the unearthing of a time capsule placed beneath the Legislature's cornerstone in 1909, during the building's construction. The contents of this time capsule were revealed at the Party Under the Dome celebration on September 2, 2012. Looking forward to the next 100 years, a new time capsule will be placed beneath the same cornerstone later this year to be opened in 2112. Albertans were invited to help decide what will be included in the next time capsule by voting for their favourite five items from a predetermined list. Almost 6,000 people voted, and based on their vote, the next time capsule will contain:

- student letters with predictions about the future (3,985 votes)
- a roll of 2012 pennies and coin set (3,807 votes)
- newspapers from September of 2012 (3,763 votes)
- photos of the 1909 time capsule unearthing (3,140 votes)
- photos of School at the Legislature classes from the 2012 school year (2,222 votes)

In the spirit of this historic occasion the following time capsule educational activities have been developed to coincide with the Alberta Social Studies curriculum, with particular focus on historical thinking skills, time, continuity and change. They are designed for teachers to complete with their students. The activities can be enhanced by a class tour of the Alberta Legislature or a Virtual Visit.

Please visit [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca) for tour, program and centennial information.



*Time capsule unearthing, June 2012*



*Time capsule reveal, September 2012*



## Activity 1 | Time Capsules – Who Decides?

For teachers who are bringing their classes to the Legislature on a school tour, tour guides are able to draw students' attention to the time capsule display in the rotunda. This gives students the opportunity to see the objects that were considered significant enough to be placed in the time capsule in 1909.

If classes are not able to visit the Legislature in person, have them visit the Alberta Legislature centennial website at [www.assembly.ab.ca/100](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/100) or research news articles to find out what was in that original time capsule. As an introduction to an activity or lesson centred on time capsules, teachers may want to use the questions below to prompt students to think about what they saw in the time capsule while they were on tour:

- Think about the contents of the Legislature time capsule. Those were some of the items that Albertans 100 years ago thought were important enough to include in this time capsule. Why do you think they settled on these items?
- Deciding what to put into the time capsule was important. Why do you think it might have been difficult for people to decide on the items they chose? How do you think they might have decided?
- Is there anything missing that you would have put in? Why?

Questions like these will prompt students to start thinking about the idea of a time capsule as not just a snapshot of a particular time in history but as a way for people to communicate with history, doing so by thinking about what the items say and why they were chosen. A discussion such as this also sets the historical context of the Legislature and can serve as a base lesson should teachers decide to do a time capsule activity in their own classroom.

## Activity 2 | Historical Personas

In this activity students conduct research on a person who would have been influential to the Legislature's time capsule in 1909 or involved in the ceremonial opening of the Legislature in 1912 and create a project based on that person. The nature of the project itself would be up to the teacher, but students should adopt the persona of their research subject in their presentation of that person. By taking on the role of a historic person, students will create a tangible and personal connection with their subject. By limiting their research to people who likely influenced the time capsule or who were a part of the 1912 ceremonial opening, students will develop a better sense of historical thinking and have a greater understanding and appreciation of the context and meaning of the time capsule and the Legislature itself.

People who may have had an impact on the Legislature time capsule and would be options for students to consider researching include:

- Alexander Rutherford, Premier of Alberta 1905-1910
- Arthur Sifton, Premier of Alberta 1910-1917
- George S. Armstrong, Mayor of Edmonton 1910-1912



Or students may choose to research and take on the historical persona of those who would have influenced life in the early years of Alberta's provincehood. Examples may include:

- Early immigrants to Alberta
- Suffragettes
- The aboriginal and Métis communities
- Schoolchildren in 1912

### Activity 3 | Newspaper Editorial

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In this activity students take on the persona of an historical newspaper reporter and write an editorial reviewing either the official opening of the Legislature Building in 1912, the placing of the time capsule in 1909 or both. Students must first research the event, either individually or in groups, or explore the chosen event as a class. After investigating examples of historical newspapers, students will then write their own articles, thus synthesizing what they have learned and presenting their personal thoughts and opinions through the editorial process.

This activity is easily adaptable to fit a number of different grade and ability levels.

### Activity 4 | Create Your Own Time Capsule

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This is an activity that teachers can do with their students in their classroom.

Students will have had the opportunity to see the time capsule up close during their school tours or on Internet photos. An inquiry-based discussion will offer students a general introduction to time capsules and will prompt them to think in a critical and historical manner.

An in-classroom time capsule activity is open to a lot of interpretation for the teacher. Some things to consider:

- Time capsules should be personal and meaningful. Time capsules are by design a window into history, so students should keep in mind that their time capsules will represent part of their own history.
- Items like photos, scrapbooks, movies, books, newspapers, minimodels and other favourite memories are great for time capsules. Each capsule should represent the individual student.
- Teachers can set out categories for the items to fit into such as You, Your School, Your City, Your Country and Your World. Students may think of other categories.
- Classes can decide on a date together for opening the capsule. This might be the last day of the school year, a reunion date relating to their graduation from that school, even a date a few years into the future and a plan to meet at that time.



- Before students begin to make their own time capsules, teachers may wish to provide students with examples of different time capsules and adapt the LearnAlberta.ca resource Clue and Conclusion to help them discover why different time capsules include different objects.
- Following the completion of the capsules teachers should relate the activity back to the Legislature time capsule. Discussion may be focused along the following points:
- The similarities and differences among what students chose to put into their personal time capsules.
- How student location, whether by geographic area, province or country, might affect the contents of the time capsule.
- A comparison and contrast of the items in the Legislature time capsule and the student time capsules. How and why do people place importance on particular objects by including them in the capsules? Are the items very different or are there similarities? Why or why not?
- The key message that students should understand following this activity is that a primary source such as a time capsule can help people understand the past by allowing us to think about it through a historical perspective, thus enabling students to develop a sense of time and place that will define their own identities as Alberta citizens.

### **Extension:**

In addition to the personal items students collect for their time capsules, teachers may choose to have their students write a letter to their future selves. The time capsule activity encourages students to choose personal items that are significant and meaningful to themselves, and a personal letter such as this would be a fitting addition.

Rather than limiting the letter to superficialities, teachers should have students focus their letters around personal goals for the future and their hopes for what they may accomplish by the time the capsules are opened. (It would be helpful to decide on an opening date prior to assigning this activity.) If the time capsules are to be opened many years in the future, students may want to include predictions of what society and the world will be like at that time.

This extension activity directly addresses the Time, Continuity and Change strand of the program of studies; that is, that “understanding the dynamic relationships among time, continuity and change is a cornerstone of citizenship and identity . . . it enables students to understand and appreciate the social, cultural and political dimensions of the past, make meaning of the present and make decisions for the future.”

## **Curriculum Connections**

In addition to addressing the time, continuity and change strand of social studies, an inquiry into the time capsule and associated activities address the following general and specific outcomes of the grade 6 social studies program of studies.



Students will

- Recognize how individuals and governments interact and bring about change within their local and national communities (6.1.1)
- Develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking (6.S.1)
- Develop skills of historical thinking (6.S.2)
- Use primary sources to interpret historical events and issues (6.S.2.1)
- Explain the historical contexts of key events of a given time period (6.S.2.3)
- Express opinions and present perspectives and information in a variety of forms (6.S.8.1)
- Express reasons for their ideas and opinions, in oral or written form (6.S.8.2)
- Respond appropriately to comments and questions, using language respectful of human diversity (6.S.8.4)
- Listen to others to understand their perspectives (6.S.8.5)
- Apply the research process (6.S.7)
- Demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy (6.S.8)
- Develop skills of media literacy (6.S.9)

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