

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

## ANSWER KEY

7-8



LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY  
OF ALBERTA

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# Learner's Activities

## Pre-tour Materials

The pretour activities prepare you for the Legislature tour. They include reading, listening and speaking activities that expose you to the vocabulary that you will encounter on the tour and give you a chance to use that vocabulary. They also introduce you to some of the background knowledge you will need to make the tour more educational.

1. Symbols: Jigsaw Reading and Worksheet
2. Quotes from Chief Crowfoot: Pronunciation
3. Understanding the Treaties: Listening
4. You and your MLA: Reading Comprehension
5. You and Your MLA: Role-play

# Symbols

## Jigsaw Puzzle



### **Official Flower: Wild Rose**

The wild rose, or prickly rose (*Rosa acicularis*), was designated the floral emblem of Alberta in 1930. Its bright pink blossoms enhance the countryside in all parts of the province. The wild rose is also useful: its colourful red berries (or hips) feed many species of birds and add a unique flavour to teas and jellies.



### **Official Bird: The Great Horned Owl**

A king assigned Alberta its first coat of arms, but it was the province's citizens (primarily schoolchildren) who chose the official bird. They voted in 1974 for the great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), a year-round resident of the province. The Legislature approved their choice in 1977. A resourceful and resilient bird, the great horned owl exemplifies the best traits of Alberta's people both past and present.



### **Official Tree: The Lodgepole Pine**

The lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*), a western tree prevalent in the Rocky Mountains, became Alberta's official tree in 1984, a culmination of four years' effort by the Junior Forest Wardens of Alberta. Lodgepole pine was an important source of railroad ties during Alberta's settlement and since has played an important role in Alberta's economic development. It has even been suggested that the lodgepole pine may have been used by certain First Nations to make teepee poles (hence its name). Even today the long, straight lodgepole pine is in great demand in the lumber industry.

# Symbols



## Official Mammal: Bighorn Sheep

In 1989 the Assembly designated the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) Alberta's official mammal after contacting Alberta schools to gauge their support of this choice. The bighorn sheep is commonly seen in the Rocky Mountains and was given its scientific name in 1804 by botanist George Shaw as based on his observations near Exshaw. With its proud carriage, crowned by magnificent horns, the bighorn sheep is a majestic inhabitant of our province.



## Official Fish: The Bull Trout

In 1995 the bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) became the provincial fish of Alberta. Bull trout are actually a char and closely related to other members of the char family, such as lake and brook trout. Bull trout generally have light-coloured spots on their bodies and do not have any dark spots or markings on their dorsal fins. Depending on their environment and food supply, they can weigh 20 pounds (approximately 9 kilograms) or more and can live more than 20 years.



## Official Grass: Rough Fescue

Rough fescue (*Festuca scabrella*) is a perennial bunchgrass with stiff, narrow leaves that are rough to the touch. Alberta has the largest area of rough fescue grassland in the world and is the only place in North America where all three types—plains, foothills and northern fescue—occur. Fescue grasslands provide vital food for wildlife and livestock year-round. On May 7, 2003, rough fescue was adopted due to the efforts of the Prairie Conservation Forum.



## Pronghorn Antelope

Representing Alberta on the Alberta coat of arms, the pronghorn were (and still are) very common on the prairie and an important source of food for First Nations people and early settlers. They have white patches on their rumps, sides, bellies and necks and are the fastest land mammal in North America.



## Bison

The largest mammal in Alberta, bison were an important source of food, clothing, shelter and tools for the First Nations people. Like the beaver, bison also played an important part in the fur trade. By the end of the 19th century, bison had been hunted almost to extinction.



## Alberta Tartan

A tartan is a woven cloth with horizontal and vertical bands of colors. Alberta's tartan pays tribute to the Scottish component of our heritage. The colours represent our abundant natural resources: green for forests, gold for wheat fields, blue for clear skies and lakes, pink for wild roses and black for coal and petroleum. The tartan was designed by the Edmonton Rehabilitation Society for the Handicapped (now Goodwill Industries) and was officially recognized in 1961.

# Symbols



**Beaver**

The beaver was a key part of the fur trade that led to the exploration and settlement of both Alberta and Canada. It became a symbol of the Hudson's Bay Company and later a symbol of Canada. At the peak of the fur trade 100,000 beaver pelts were being shipped yearly to Europe to satisfy the demand for beaver-pelt hats. By the middle of the 19th century, the beaver was almost extinct. Fortunately, the demand for beaver pelts ended as silk hats came into fashion in Europe.



**Crown**

Headgear worn by a king or queen as a symbol of sovereignty, often made of precious metal and ornamented with gems.



**Lion**

A symbol of the British Empire, the lion represents power and strength.



**Provincial Shield**

The Provincial shield represents the geographic features that are seen as you travel from east to west: wheat fields in the east of the province, then the prairies, the foothills and in the far west, the Rocky Mountains.



**Red Cross**

The red cross of St. George is a reference to the Hudson's Bay Company. Fur traders and explorers with Hudson's Bay Company played a critical role in the early settlement of Alberta.



**Wheat**

Wheat played an important role in the farming communities that developed in Alberta and in the economy of Alberta. Huge wheat fields are a significant feature of the Alberta landscape.

# Symbols

## Jigsaw Reading and Worksheet

### Answer questions

What animal represents Canada and was an important part of the fur trade in Alberta? **Beaver**

How did a change in clothing fashion keep this animal from going extinct? **Silk hats, instead of beaver pelt hats, came into fashion in Europe.**

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When did the wild rose become an emblem of Alberta? **1930**

How is it useful? **It's berries feed many species of birds and can be used in teas and jellies.**

---

What mammal was hunted almost to extinction and was a particularly important source of food and materials for First Nations people in Alberta? **Bison**

---

What is Alberta's official grass? **Rough fescue**

Why is it important for the economy of Alberta? **It provides food for wildlife and livestock year-round.**

---

What is the official bird of Alberta? **The great horned owl**

Who chose this bird to be a symbol of Alberta? **Schoolchildren in Alberta**

---

The lodgepole pine is Alberta's official tree. How was this tree historically significant? **It was a source of railroad ties during Alberta's settlement and used for teepee poles.**

Is this tree still important in Alberta? **Yes; it is in great demand by the lumber industry.**

---

Alberta's official mammal is described as majestic, with a proud carriage and magnificent horns.

What is this animal? **Bighorn sheep**

Who did the government check with before they decided that it would be the official mammal? **Alberta schools**

---

The bull trout is Alberta's official fish. What does it look like? **Light coloured spots on bodies and no marks on fins**

How heavy can it grow? **20 pounds/9 kilograms**

How long can it live? **20 years**

---

What do the following colours in Alberta's tartan represent?

Green **forests**

Gold **wheat fields**

Blue **clear skies and lakes**

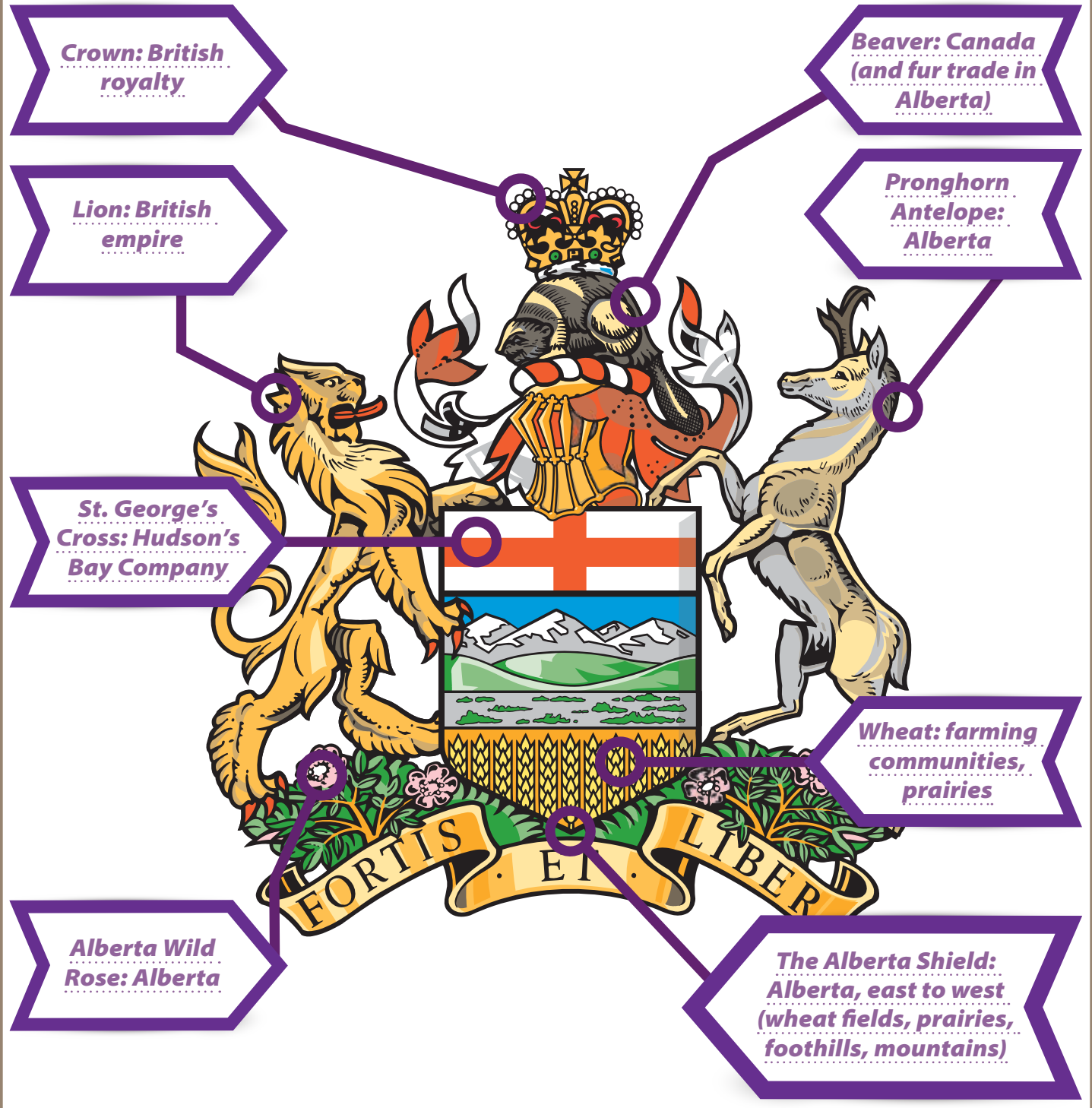
Pink **wild roses**

Black **coal and petroleum**

What is the organization that designed the tartan now called? **Alberta Goodwill Industries**

---

Look at Alberta's coat of arms below. What are each of the symbols and what do they represent?





# Chief Crowfoot

## Part 1: Introduction to Chief Crowfoot

Which nation did Chief Crowfoot lead? *The Blackfoot First Nation*

Where was that nation originally from? *Southern Alberta*

What was the number of the Treaty he signed with the Canadian government? *#7*

What does he wear around his neck? *A medal*

Why did he receive this item? *He received it for signing the treaty.*

What does he wear on his head? *An owl skull*

What does this item symbolize? *It symbolizes protection, power and leadership.*

What does he have at his side? *A spiked riding crop*

What does this item symbolize? *It reminds us of his horse, another symbol of power.*

What does he carry over his arm? *A pipe bag*

What does this item symbolize? *It symbolizes his prominence as a spiritual leader.*

# Chief Crowfoot

## Part 2: Understanding the Crowfoot Legacy

### Pre-listening

1. Look at the vocabulary listed below. With others in your group, talk about what the words and phrases mean. Use your English dictionary to look up three words or phrases that you are not familiar with and record their meanings and collocations below.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plains                 | <input type="checkbox"/> To have a spot             | <input type="checkbox"/> To be crippled by something |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff of life          | <input type="checkbox"/> Life as they knew it       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ailments                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teepee                 | <input type="checkbox"/> To come to an end          | <input type="checkbox"/> Transform                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Robes                  | <input type="checkbox"/> To be all over             | <input type="checkbox"/> Throngs                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extensively            | <input type="checkbox"/> Extinction                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Barely enough               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To see an end in sight | <input type="checkbox"/> Envisioned                 | <input type="checkbox"/> A welfare state             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To the detriment of    | <input type="checkbox"/> To be brought to its knees | <input type="checkbox"/> Dictator                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To secure something    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gopher                     | <input type="checkbox"/> To make or break something  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A land base            | <input type="checkbox"/> Adapting                   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A gamble               | <input type="checkbox"/> Perpetual                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To till the ground     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mourning                   |  |

2. Based on the vocabulary list, what do you think the tone of the video will be?

### ***Sad, negative, distressing, pessimistic, et cetera***

3. Based on what you know about Chief Crowfoot from the quotes you examined earlier and what you learned on the Legislature tour, make at least three predictions about what you might hear in the video:

.....

.....

.....

The video can be found at [YouTube.com](#) – Click on this.

# Chief Crowfoot

## First Listening

0:00 - 1:25

On the plains it was the buffalo that were the stuff of life. They provided **food, teepee covers, robes to wear, everything.**

By the 1860s **a tremendous amount of buffalo were being killed.**

By 1877, **when the treaty was going to be negotiated, there were still buffalo, but Crowfoot was a man of foresight. He could see an end in sight, could see the Blackfoot people would have nothing. Crowfoot could have chosen war, but when he and other chiefs were chosen to go to Ottawa, he realized the newcomers would soon overrun his land. So he chose peace. He knew that any battle with the white people would be to the detriment of his people. The reason he stayed out of the war is that his people would have lost.**

1:25 - 2:22

When Chief Crowfoot signed Treaty 7 in 1877 **he secured a land base for his nation. It was a gamble that the treaty would lead to a better future. The government promised his people food, medicine, education. "They saw education as the new buffalo." They were asking for a new way to make the transition. Even Chief Crowfoot tried to learn how to farm. He wanted to make sure there was a spot for them in the future, that they wouldn't be overrun by the white people.**

2:23 - 3:03

But soon after Crowfoot signed Treaty 7, **life as they knew it had come to an end. The buffalo had been hunted to near extinction.**

By 1880 **it was all over. The buffalo were gone. They came to the time that Crowfoot had envisioned and feared. They now had to rely on the white man, the government of Canada, the Queen. Surviving by eating gopher, having no clothing, and their Teepees were shattered. They were not adapting very well.**

3:03 - 3:42

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, **the Blackfoot Nation was brought to its knees, crippled by disease and starvation. Crowfoot was in a state of perpetual mourning, his children dying off one by one. Only three were left. They had died of various ailments. This situation continued on until Crowfoot's death in 1890.**

3:43 - 4:30

If any tribe could transform from buffalo hunters to reserve dwellers, it was the Blackfoot. ***They still numbered in the thousands and had a decent land base thanks to Chief Crowfoot. This has enabled them to maintain an integrity that encourages leadership. So when cattle were introduced (1890s), people embraced it and became quite good farmers. When coal mining was introduced, people were willing to go down to the mines and work, with the idea of self-sufficiency.***

4:30 - 5:58

Even so, by 1905 ***as the province of Alberta born, the Blackfoot were dying. The government was convinced that many of the Indians would not be able to make the transition. With throngs of settlers coming west to buy up land for farming, the Blackfoot had barely enough to eat. Food they received from the Indian Department was barely enough to keep them alive. Some Indians went and got jobs on nearby ranches. Some went to the Red Deer River for hunting. They did whatever they could to adapt.***

5:58 - 7:30

But things got tougher still after the First World War. The government, hungry for more resources, went after land reserved for Indians. Largest land grab.

In 1918, ***the government pressured the Siksika Nation to sell half its reserve for a million dollars. It was huge amount of money. But the government didn't use it to train the Indians to farm or be businessmen. They used it to build a jail so that the Indians could be put in jail! A sociologist said that the money created the first welfare state on a reserve in Canada. People stopped farming, it made them more dependent on outside help.***

7:32 - end

But Chief Crowfoot taught his family independence ***Crowfoot's grandson, Joe Crowfoot, became chief. He believed his people could succeed as farmers and ranchers. He passed his farm on to his son, Cecil Crowfoot (he lives in Edmonton). In the 1940s Cecil didn't rest until he had the biggest farm. But these were limitations. The Blackfoot could do little without the government's permission. The face of the government was the Indian agent. A dictator. They could break or make an Indian on the reserve, and became the all-powerful on the reserve. Greater than any chief, than Crowfoot, because he held life and death, with the food supply and he had control through the mounted police, to stop people from... sometimes even to take retribution. Cecil: "I couldn't get land... they stopped me. I had a lot of money. I bought trucks and I started drinking."***

# Comprehension Questions

The following questions encourage you to explore causes and consequences.

- 1. Consequences:** Why were the buffalo so critical to the Blackfoot nation's survival? What did they lose when the buffalo were gone? *Buffalo provided everything...food, teepee covers, robes, et cetera. When the buffalo were gone, they lost their ability to survive.*
- 2. Causes:** Why did Crowfoot sign Treaty 7? List at least two factors. *(any two of the following)*  
*Crowfoot could see that the buffalo were disappearing and the Blackfoot people would have nothing.*  
*Crowfoot could see the newcomers would overrun his land.*  
*He knew that a battle would hurt his people; they would lose.*  
*He wanted peace and land.*  
*Government promised food, medicine, education: a way to transition to new world.*
- 3. Causes:** Why did the Blackfoot have to rely on the government to keep them alive?  
*Because the buffalo were gone (no food, no clothes, no teepees). Starvation and disease.*
- 4. Consequences:** What did Chief Crowfoot pass on to his people?  
*A land base*  
*Leadership*  
*The ability to adapt/desire to be self-sufficient (farmers, coal mining, worked as hired hands, hunting, stampede)*
- 5. Causes:** What factors limited the Blackfoot people's ability to become independent and self-sufficient?  
*The "land grab" as the government bought half of the Siksika land for one million dollars (the money was used as welfare money, while the land could have been used for farming).*  
*The Indian agent had control over the people on the reserve, they did not allow Cecil Crowfoot, for instance, to expand his farm. So he had lots of money, but could do nothing productive with it.*

## Detailed analysis

- 6.** What do the following sentences mean?
  - a.** "It was a gamble that the treaty would lead to a better future."  
*The treaty was risky; it may or may not lead to a better future.*

b. "They saw education as the new buffalo."

***Buffalo was their means of survival, so they hoped that education would be their new means of survival.***

7. Complete the sentences using the correct verb tense (present or past perfect or conditional untrue), then explain to your partner why that verb tense was chosen:

c. Hugh Dempsey ***has written*** extensively on the Blackfoot people.

***Present perfect: This happened at an unspecified time in the past, and he is still alive (at the time of the video) and may still be writing.***

d. Crowfoot could ***have chosen*** war.

***Conditional untrue: an untrue possibility in the past.***

e. The reason he stayed out of the war is that his people would ***have lost*** .

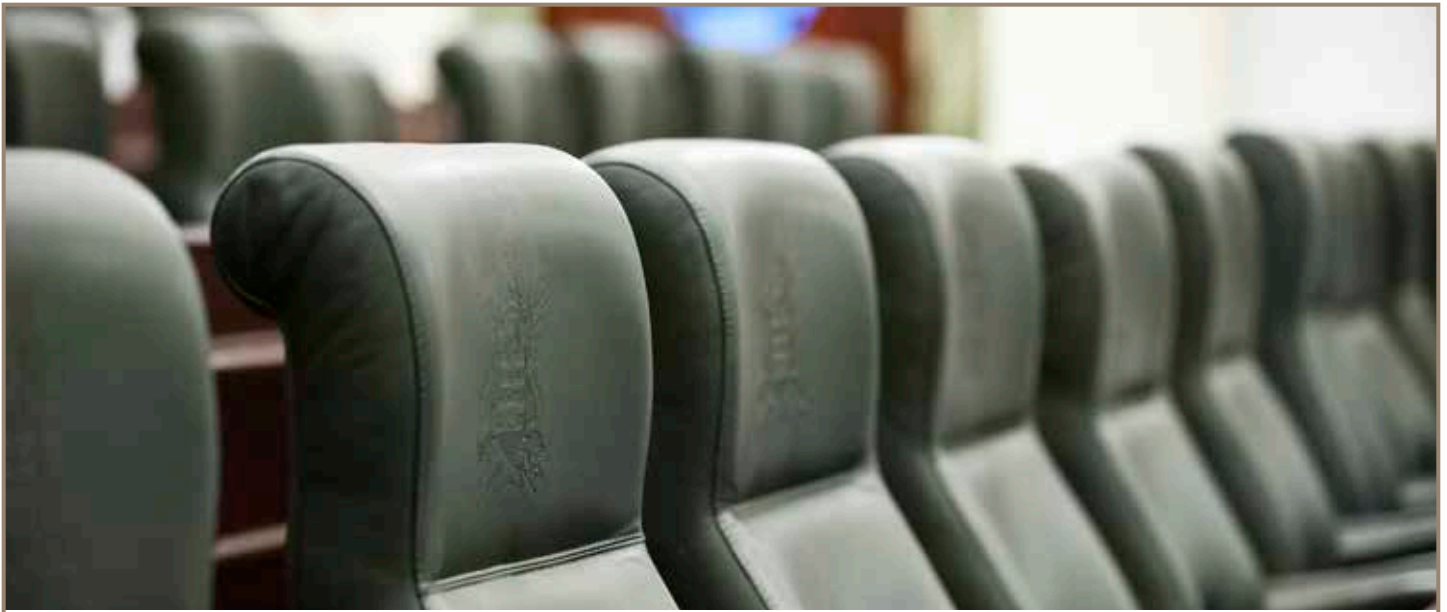
***Conditional untrue: If an action had happened in the past, this would have happened.***

f. The buffalo ***had been hunted*** to near extinction.

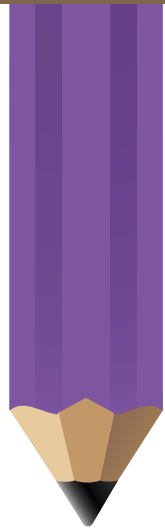
***Past perfect: an action that was completed prior to another time in the past (soon after Crowfoot signed Treaty 7).***

g. [His children] ***had died*** of various ailments.

***Past perfect: an action that was completed prior to another time in the past (By end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).***



# You and Your MLA



## Reading Comprehension

A Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) is elected to represent people in his or her riding or constituency at the provincial level of governance. You will read an article titled *You and Your MLA*. The article explains how MLAs represent the people of Alberta.

### *Predict*

Before you read the article, predict what you will learn.

1. What do you think the article will say about the duties and responsibilities of an MLA?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What kind of person do you think would make a good MLA?

## Vocabulary

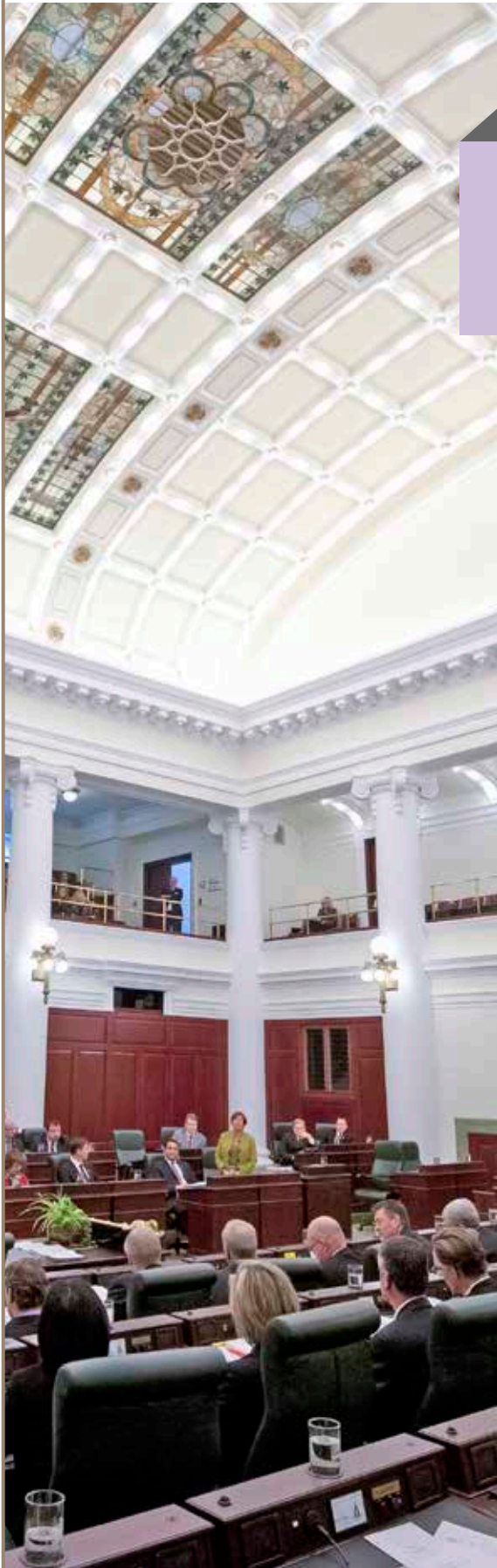
Sometimes you need a dictionary to figure out the meaning of a word or phrase. But sometimes there are enough clues in the context for you to make a reasonable guess as to the meaning of the word or phrase. The following words are bolded in the article. Find them in the article. Read the sentences before and after the word or phrase. Based on the context, make a reasonable guess about the meaning of the word or phrase.

(Note: the following answers are not formal definitions, but they represent what learners could reasonably infer from the context)

1. Constituency: ***The area or region an MLA represents***
2. Constituent: ***A person that an MLA represents***
3. Eligible: ***To have the right to do something, the state of being allowed to do something***
4. Rural: ***Not in the city; not urban, in the countryside***
5. Unanimous: ***Everyone agrees (Note: UNI means "one" and a related word is "unified".)***
6. Caucus meetings: ***Private meetings with other MLAs in the same party***
7. Cabinet Ministers: ***MLAs in charge of a specific government ministry***
8. Backbencher: ***An informal term for an MLA in the governing party who is not a minister***
9. Landslide election victory: ***Where one party wins most of the seats in an election***
10. To shadow: ***To follow (i.e., as in soccer, where one player will be assigned a player on the opposite team, an opposition MLA will be assigned one or more government ministers to critique)***



# You and Your MLA



## Underline Key Ideas

**Read the article quickly.** As you read, underline the responsibilities and duties of MLAs in Alberta's democratic form of governance. Then answer the questions that follow.

### *You and Your MLA\**

Until the 1970s being a Member of Alberta's Legislative Assembly was for most a part-time job. Hours were long during sittings, but Members were able to hold other jobs when sessions were adjourned. Things have changed. The once part-time, sessional lawmaker has become a full-time MLA, facilitator, guest speaker, troubleshooter and goodwill ambassador. Modern communication, especially television coverage and web-streaming of question period and the increasing demand for governments to provide more and better services have transformed an MLA's relationship to his/her constituents and have radically changed the nature of the job.

Today we are more aware of the decisions our MLAs are making, and we want greater involvement in that decision-making. We want to tell them what we think and we want them to listen to us. To be there for us 12 months of the year, today's MLAs have offices in their **constituencies** and in the Legislature and may take calls at home at all hours of the day or night seven days a week. Gone is the part-time MLA. Their jobs are now full-time and then some.

### *Serving the Constituency*

First and foremost, MLAs represent their constituents and to represent means, above all, to communicate on behalf of. In the Assembly Chamber MLAs earn their living with their voices, making the views of their constituents known by introducing Bills and debating and discussing concerns with other Members. To represent you in the Assembly, your MLA communicates your concerns to other elected Members and to various government ministries.

But that is only a small part of your MLA's role as your representative. MLAs perform most of their duties in their constituencies, out of sight of cameras and reporters. Here they earn their living with their ears, listening to the problems, questions, ideas and opinions of the people who elected them.

\* Reprinted with permission from *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition (2016), p.22-30.

## Who Is Represented?

MLAs represent all their constituents, regardless if they are **eligible** to vote, didn't vote or their candidate was defeated.

Whether you are a farmer wondering about crop insurance, a businessperson wanting to expand your business, a senior citizen with a question about your pension or a worker applying for workers' compensation benefits, your MLA is willing to help you. MLAs from other constituencies may also be able to assist you. Often their role is simply to direct you to the people most qualified to deal with your concern, but your MLA may even become an advocate for you if your own attempts to solve a problem have been unsuccessful. MLAs also deal with special-interest groups. Do you belong to a group concerned about the environment, child care, health, impaired or distracted driving, education or any other important issue? Your group may want to meet with your MLA, who may take up your cause by proposing a new law or resolution in the Assembly or by writing a letter to a government ministry.

If you live in a **rural** area or constituency, your MLA may drive as many as 80,000 kilometres a year just getting around in your constituency and from the constituency to the Legislature. Rural Albertans expect their MLAs to be part of the communities they serve, attending graduations, anniversary celebrations and public events. Rural MLAs also meet with officials from municipalities, improvement districts, school and hospital boards, chambers of commerce and so on. Urban MLAs get together with individual Albertans and various organizations as well, both to seek their advice and to help them. While urban MLAs may not travel as far to keep in touch with their constituents, they often have more people to represent. In addition to meeting with their constituents, MLAs spend time becoming informed about matters of public interest, preparing speeches and going to meetings to talk about policies and issues.

## Taking a Stand

Of course, no MLA can agree with all constituents because people's opinions are never **unanimous**. MLAs often have to take sides and which side they take depends on party platforms, constituents' points of view and the MLAs' personal beliefs.

MLAs try to determine how most people feel about a given issue. Through public meetings, day-to-day contact and local media forums MLAs gather information from as many constituents as possible. They then discuss the issue in private meetings called **caucus meetings**, with other MLAs from the same party. The caucus members decide as a group what their party's position will be. Voting in the Legislature tends to be along party lines, according to what the caucus decided beforehand; however, a number of parliamentary reforms enacted in 1993, one of them allowing free votes on some bills and motions, means that members may vote as they see fit rather than according to their caucus position. If some MLAs feel that the caucus position does not reflect what their constituents want or that it would not be beneficial to their constituents, they can and sometimes do speak against the position of their caucus.

## Your MLA as a Cabinet Minister

It is not uncommon for constituents to contact **Cabinet Ministers** as well as their own MLAs. Because Cabinet Ministers are MLAs in charge of specific government ministries, they are in a position to influence ministry policies and programs. Ministers may remain Ministers but not MLAs when the House has been dissolved for an election. As well as representing you, Ministers are ultimately responsible for whatever their ministries do.

## Your MLA as a Private Government Member

Private government Members are often called **backbenchers** because in the Assembly they sit in the back rows, behind the Cabinet Ministers. However, the correct term for any Member who is not in cabinet is "private Member." A private government Member is a private Member who belongs to the governing party.

Like other MLAs the private government Member is there to hear your concerns and to try to act on them. He or she has the additional advantage of belonging to the same party as the Cabinet Ministers, who of course play a key role in determining programs and policies.

Historically Alberta has been a province of **landslide election victories** for the winning party. As a result, governing parties of the past have had a large number of private government Members, whose role in the Assembly was limited

to supporting decisions made by ministers. Recently, however, these private Members have had a greater part in both the Assembly and all-party standing and select special committees. They sit on government and legislative committees and even sponsor government Bills other than money Bills (that is, Bills that have the approval of cabinet before being introduced and, therefore, a good chance of passing and becoming law). In addition, private government Members, will in the same way that opposition Members do, introduce their own Bills, called private Members' public Bills and raise their constituents' concerns in the Legislature.

### *Your MLA in Opposition*

You may also want to take your concern to an MLA from one of the opposition parties. The role of an opposition party is to criticize government activity, hold the government accountable, propose improvements and present itself to the public as an alternative to the party in office.

Opposition parties assign some of their MLAs to be critics of specific departments. Collectively opposition critics are called a shadow cabinet. For example, a resource development critic takes up problems with the Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Minister, suggesting alternative policies and development priorities and keeping energy policies in the public eye. You might see a resource development critic on the job if you watch Oral Question Period. Critics may have more than one Minister to **shadow** and would have to be familiar with the policies, practices and plans of each ministry. Opposition critics, like the Ministers they shadow, hear concerns and ideas from various persons and interest groups from anywhere in the province.

### *Your Participation is Vital*

You must do your part so that your MLA can represent you effectively. One of your obligations as a constituent is to be informed. Not every issue will interest you, of course, but if a policy or issue is important to you, learn as much as you can about it before approaching your MLA. Sometimes just unearthing basic facts can help you come up with ideas or solutions. MLAs rely on their constituents for information and ideas.

If you really want to get involved at the policy-making level, join a political party. Look in the White Pages, on the Internet, or through social media. Although parties are most visible during an election campaign, you can join at any time. And, remember, all MLAs began their careers as ordinary party members trying to make a difference in how our province is governed.

Your vote is critical, but before casting your ballot in an election, find out as much as you can about each candidate's position so that you can choose the one who most closely reflects how you feel about issues that are important to you. Even if you don't contact your MLA or work for a political party, voting is an important contribution to the democratic process.

### *Getting in Touch*

If you need to find out who your MLA is, check your telephone directory under the government of Alberta or call either Elections Alberta at 780.427.7191 or the Legislature information line at 780.427.2826. They will let you know your MLA's name, address and telephone number. This information is also easily accessed online at **[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)**.

If you decide to write to your MLA, state your question or concern as completely as you can. You may also telephone your MLA at his or her constituency or Legislature office during regular office hours as well as write or phone the appropriate Cabinet Minister or opposition critics.

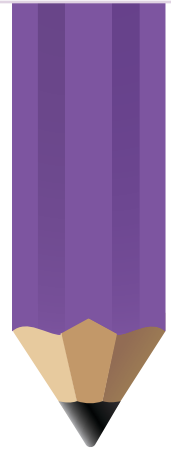
MLAs strive to be available, accessible and accountable to their constituents. They can reach these objectives through open communication with you, the constituent.

# You and Your MLA

## Scan for Information Across Paragraphs; Make Inferences

1. Scan through the article to clarify misconceptions and find advice for the following people. Note: you will have to read through a variety of sections to respond. Write your response in the space provided. Take turns role-playing, giving advice.

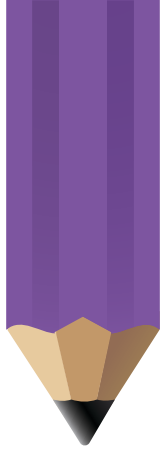
*Oh no! The person I voted for lost the election! And now the government wants to close a long-term care centre for seniors in my area. I have no one to represent my opinion!*



### Sample Answer

***Whether or not you voted for him/her, your MLA represents you. Find out as much as you can about why the government is closing the care centre. Then you have some choices. You can contact your own MLA with your concerns. Or you might want to contact the government minister in charge of Health. Or, since it is the government who is making this decision, you could contact an MLA in an opposition party who shadows the health minister. Phone the Legislature information line 780.427.2826 or Elections Alberta to find out how to contact your MLA.***

# You and Your MLA



*Oh no! I live a long way from the city. A power company is building a dam, and I'm concerned about the effect of the dam on our community and environment. I've never bothered to vote and now I wish I had! I'm worried that no one will represent our concerns!*

## *Sample Answer*

***It doesn't matter where you live or whether you've ever voted. You have an MLA who is supposed to listen to your concerns and represent you.***

***Do your research; find out as much as you can about the situation (get all the facts). Then contact either your MLA or the Minister for the Environment (or both) by phone or letter. You might even want to contact the resource development critic (opposition MLA). You can phone 780.427.2826 to find out how to contact your MLA.***

2. You underlined the duties and responsibilities of MLAs in Alberta. Based on what you underlined, infer at least eight skills, abilities or personal characteristics that an MLA needs to have.

### Sample Answers

- An MLA must be resourceful (in order to find ways to help constituents)
- Be resourceful (to find ways to help constituents)
- Be a good researcher (to find out about issues, to find help)
- Be flexible; be available at all times (so your constituents can contact you)
- Be a good communicator (in order to communicate views of constituents to the Assembly)
- Be persuasive; be able to debate, convince (to support or oppose bills and concerns to other MLAs and government ministries)
- Be a good listener (to listen to problems, concerns, questions, ideas of constituents)
- Have a desire to help others
- Be able to drive/handle being on the road (for rural MLAs especially, who may drive 80,000 km in a year)
- Get along well with others; be a good networker; be good at meeting people, connecting with people; be charming/charismatic (to be able to connect with Albertans, organizations, officials, board members, et cetera)
- Be knowledgeable about public interest topics (to be able to give speeches, attend meetings to talk about policies and issues)
- Be able to write speeches (to give speeches at meetings and public events)
- Be a good public speaker (to give speeches at meetings and public events)
- Be willing to take a stand; support an opinion (to convince your own caucus, to convince the public)
- Be a critical thinker (for opposition MLAs who need to critique the government's actions)

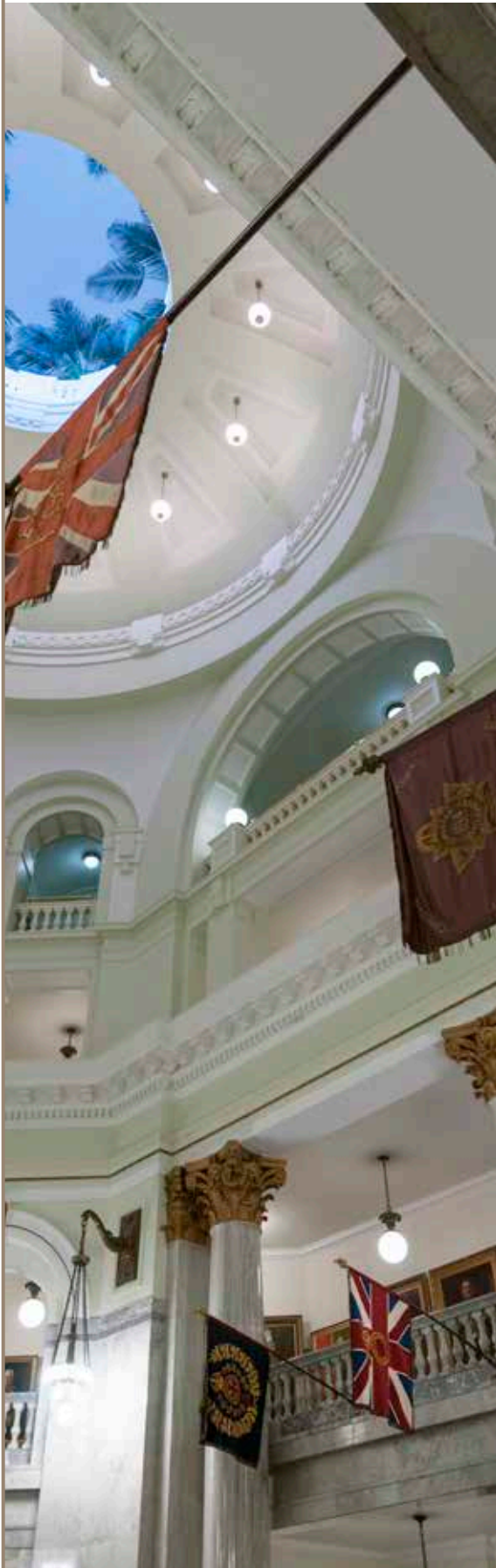


Compare your list with a partner's list.



Explain why each characteristic is particularly important for an MLA.

# Two Styles of Governing



## Pre-reading

### Vocabulary

Following is a selection from the article you will read. Using clues from the context match each bolded word with one of the definitions that follow:

In Canadian Legislatures members introduce **Bills** in the House at first reading. All Bills are introduced in complete form and read almost exactly the same as they would should they become the law of the province. Bills are then debated in three stages-second reading, Committee of the Whole and third reading-and must pass each stage to go on to the next. **Passage** is by a simple majority of members present for the vote. Government Bills-Bills that receive the prior approval of cabinet-usually pass with few, if any, **amendments** while Bills introduced by private Members are much less likely to be passed. After passing third reading, Bills are granted **royal assent** by the Lieutenant Governor before officially becoming law.

In bicameral state Legislatures in the United States Bills may be introduced in the House of Representatives or the Senate. In some states representatives may introduce a Bill in **skeleton form** to see if the idea will **fly** before going to the trouble of **drafting** a complete Bill. Once introduced, Bills are referred to a committee that studies them, changing them where necessary to ensure their eventual passage or **blocking** further consideration. The committee reports its findings to the House or the Senate, depending on where the bill originated, and successful Bills are **considered** there for some time before being put to a vote. Voting in state Legislatures is not necessarily along party lines, as it is in Canada and often a Bill **sponsored** by a Member from the majority party will not have enough support from that party to pass. State Legislatures also **make no distinction** between government Bills and private Members' Bills; however, some Bills in some states must have a two-thirds majority to pass. Bills that pass **one body** then **undergo** the same process in the other. If Bills are successful, depending on the state, the Governor signs them into law or may **veto** all or parts of them.\*

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\* Most of the content above was excerpted from *The Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature, 9th Edition (2016)*

# Two Styles of Governing

## Vocabulary Answers

Words from excerpt	Definitions
<b><u>Skeleton form</u></b>	<b>1.</b> An incomplete, unfinished version (e.g., of a Bill or text), an outline
<b><u>Bills</u></b>	<b>2.</b> Ideas for new laws, or suggested changes to old laws
<b><u>Drafting</u></b>	<b>3.</b> The act of writing a version (e.g., of a Bill or text)
<b><u>Make no distinction</u></b>	<b>4.</b> To see no difference between two things; treat two things equally
<b><u>Passage</u></b>	<b>5.</b> Movement from one stage to another, to can also refer to a group's acceptance of a proposal.
<b><u>Body</u></b>	<b>6.</b> An organized group of people (e.g., a committee, a Senate, a Legislative Assembly)
<b><u>Royal assent</u></b>	<b>7.</b> Formal agreement or acceptance of a law by the monarch (King or Queen) or his/her representative
<b><u>Blocking</u></b>	<b>8.</b> Preventing something from happening or progressing
<b><u>Considered</u></b>	<b>9.</b> To think about something carefully, to debate or discuss
<b><u>Veto</u></b>	<b>10.</b> To reject a decision, proposal or Bill
<b><u>Sponsored</u></b>	<b>11.</b> Introduced and supported by someone
<b><u>Amendments</u></b>	<b>12.</b> Additions, deletions or other changes (to a Bill or other formal document)
<b><u>Undergo</u></b>	<b>13.</b> To experience to go through some process or procedure



## Focus on Meaning

1. Which of the following statements best captures the main idea of the reading?
  - a. The Canadian and American governments are both democracies.
  - b. The American system of government is more democratic than the Canadian system.
  - c. The Canadian system of government is better than the American system of government.
  - d. ***The Canadian and American systems of government are quite different.***
  - e. The monarchy plays a part in the Canadian system of government, but not in the American system of government.
  
2. Indicate whether the following statements are true for the **U.S.**, **Canada** or **both**:
  - f. ***Both*** The British parliamentary system has influenced the government.
  - g. ***U.S.*** Citizens vote directly for their head of state or province (i.e., Governor or Premier).
  - h. ***Canada*** The head of the province/state is also the head of the governing party.
  - i. ***U.S.*** Elected officials know exactly how long it will be until the next election.
  - j. ***Canada*** Elected officials seldom openly disagree with their party's stands on specific issues.
  - k. ***Canada*** The head of state/province (i.e., Governor or Premier) can introduce and vote on Bills.
  - l. ***Canada*** Bills proposed by a ruling party are more likely to become law in this country.
  - m. ***U.S.*** A Bill that is proposed usually goes through many changes before it becomes law.
  - n. ***Both*** Ideas for new laws can come from elected officials or citizens, and they are discussed, debated and finally voted on by Members of the Legislature.

3. Before the Legislature tour you read an article about the roles and responsibilities of MLAs in Alberta. Based on what you remember from that article, the Legislature tour and the information in this article, contrast the roles and responsibilities of the **Lieutenant Governor** in Alberta with the roles and responsibilities of an **MLA**.

*Sample Answer*

***An MLA is elected by the citizens of a region to represent their interests; in contrast, the Lieutenant Governor is not elected but is appointed by the Premier as a representative of the Crown. The Lieutenant Governor's role is more symbolic than powerful. He or she can assent to Bills, but does not propose or debate Bills. He or she opens and closes sessions but does not vote to make decisions during the sessions. MLAs, on the other hand, are elected to make decisions on behalf of their constituents. They can propose Bills, debate Bills and vote to support or defeat Bills. The decisions they make affect the province directly.***

4. What word best describes the tone of the article?
- o. Neutral***
  - p. Biased**
  - q. Opinionated**
  - r. Persuasive**

# Analyze the Structure of the Article

## *Comparing and Contrasting*

1. This article compares and contrasts American and Canadian systems of government. With a partner discuss how the writer uses paragraphing and vocabulary choices to indicate whether he is talking about the U.S. or Canada. Write down your observations:

## *Sample Answer*

***Some (but not all) sections begin with a sentence or short paragraph that points out similarities between the Canadian and U.S. systems. Whether or not this paragraph is there, the writer consistently has a paragraph about Canada followed by a paragraph about the U.S. This makes the structure of the article clear.***

***The paragraph about Canada includes words like “Canada”, “Canadian”, “provinces”, the “Premier.”***

***The paragraph about the U.S. generally starts out with “In the United States” or “In state Legislatures,” which shows that the writer is now going to contrast the U.S. system with the Canadian system. In this paragraph the writer uses words like “states” and “Governor”, which remind the readers that the topic is the U.S. system.***

2. In a few sections of the paper the author uses explicit comparison or contrast vocabulary. Reread the following sections, and then fill in the middle column in the table below:

	Language from the article	Other useful language
Pointing out similarity	<b><i>Both, both, both</i></b>	<b><i>Like A, B...</i></b> <b><i>Similarly, ...</i></b>
Addition of another similarity or difference	<b><i>As well, ...</i></b> <b><i>Also... (end of last paragraph)</i></b>	<b><i>Another difference between A and B is...</i></b> <b><i>A and B also differ in how they...</i></b>
A move from talking about similarities to talking about differences	<b><i>In spite of their obvious similarities,</i></b> <b><i>However,</i></b> <b><i>However,</i></b>	<b><i>Although they have many superficial similarities, A and B are really quite different.</i></b> <b><i>While it is true that they both ____,</i></b> <b><i>Although they both ____,</i></b> <b><i>Despite their similarities,</i></b>
Pointing out difference	<b><i>Are quite different</i></b> <b><i>Clearer</i></b> <b><i>In very different ways</i></b> <b><i>less obvious</i></b> <b><i>...does not...instead</i></b> <b><i>Is not necessarily...as it is in Canada.</i></b>	<b><i>In contrast,</i></b> <b><i>More/less</i></b> <b><i>Comparative words with "er"</i></b> <b><i>A and B differ in terms of who/what/how/where/when they...</i></b> <b><i>In contrast to A, B...</i></b> <b><i>One difference between A and B is...</i></b>
Introducing examples or explanations	<b><i>For example,</i></b>	<b><i>For instance,</i></b> <b><i>This means that</i></b> <b><i>In other words,</i></b>



# Countering an Argument

## Writing a Paragraph

*Ideas that might be relevant in the counter–argument paragraph:*

- Many of the players in Canada’s government are appointed, not elected. E.g., Lieutenant governor, Senate, Premiers, Prime Minister.
- Canadians do not elect their Prime minister or Premier; they are chosen by their parties.
- In Canada, representatives are mostly constrained to vote according to the party lines. Party unity is important, and MLAs seldom vote against their party’s policies or criticise their party’s stand on an issue.
- If the governing party passes a Bill in Canada, it generally becomes law. (In the U.S. more checks and balances; Bills will be revised and changed more, and individual representatives can choose how to vote on a Bill.)
- Canadians have a Senate – like the U.S. – but their Senate is not elected.

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta - Visitor Services**

*English Language Learners: Answer Key – 7 to 8*

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