

# CALENDAR CONUNDRUM

## Planning, Resources and Activity Options (Secondary)

The Calendar Conundrum activity provides an opportunity for students to explore a “day in the life” of an MLA. It is a tool that allows students to use collaboration and inquiry to increase understanding and develop vocabulary. This activity, including preparation, can be completed in 2-4 lessons. Teachers may arrange the preparation and activity to best suit the needs of their students.

### Objective

Students will develop an enhanced understanding of, and appreciation for, the role, responsibilities, workload and scheduling challenges experienced by an MLA.

### Resources

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia: [Learning Resources](#)

Online Learning Resource: [Discover Your Legislature](#)

Brochure: [Members of the Legislative Assembly / Députés](#)

Booklet: [Democracy and Parliament / La démocratie et le Parlement](#)

Webpage: [Members of the Legislative Assembly](#)

### Recommendations for Teacher/Student Preparation

*Depending on current level of understanding*

Using the website of the [Legislative Assembly of British Columbia](#), which includes a glossary and other information and resources, review the definitions or descriptions of the following terms/activities:

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| a. Member of the Legislative Assembly              | i. Select Standing Committee |
| b. A Bill  | j. Caucus                    |
| c. The House                                       | k. Caucus meeting            |
| d. What it means to “Speak on a Bill in the House” | l. Legislative Assistant     |
| e. Lobby group                                     | m. Whip                      |
| f. Constituency                                    | n. Budget debate             |
| g. Committee Clerk                                 | o. Minister                  |
| h. Committee Chair                                 | p. Parliamentary committee   |
|  | q. Legislature               |

## Introduction

### *Part 1*

Begin with a class discussion. Responses may be recorded on the board or chart paper:

- How many hours a day do your parents/guardians work?
- What do they do for a living?
- How many hours a day do you work?
- What do you do?
- What jobs or careers would you consider to be demanding?
- What are things that can get in the way of managing your time?
- Do you think that politicians, or the people who work with them, have demanding jobs? Why or why not?

### *Part 2*

Introduce/review the responsibilities of the provincial government using the booklet [Democracy and Parliament / La démocratie et le Parlement](#).

### *Part 3*

Introduce/review the role of an MLA using the brochure [Members of the Legislative Assembly / Députés](#).

Discuss the current MLA for your electoral district. What do your students know about them? [Find you MLA](#).

### *Part 4*

Introduce the Calendar Conundrum activity. Read through the schedule itself as well as the agenda entries that students are to work with. Follow the Activity Options for elementary students at the end of this document.

## Possible Follow-up Activity:

Write a letter/letters to your MLA. Let them know what you have learned about what they do and what you think of the roles they play in our provincial government.

## Activity Options (Secondary)

**Day of the Week:** Monday

**Timeframe:** 7:30 am to 7:30 pm

**Timing:** the agenda templates have been broken into 30 minute increments, but students must note the time commitment accorded to each potential agenda entry and plan accordingly.

## Individual Activity and Think-pair-share:

**Materials:** Each student is given an agenda template and list of potential agenda entries

1. Each student fills in the blank agenda spaces with agenda entries as they see fit.
2. Each student answers the following open-ended questions in short written form:
  - Q1.** *Some of the agenda entries are personal in nature (not related to the MLA's or Cabinet Minister's work). If you included any of them, why?*
  - Q2.** *Look again at your choices. Are there any themes that emerge or similarities between the agenda items you chose? If so, what might that mean?*
3. (Optional) **Think-pair-share:** Students pair-up to share their completed agendas and discuss their choices.

## Small Group Activity (3 or 5 students per group):

**Note:** it is preferable to divide the class into groups of 3 or 5 (or any odd number) as it may be necessary for students to vote amongst themselves on which agenda entries to include.

**Materials:** The group is given one agenda template (either for an MLA or Cabinet Minister), the associated list of potential agenda entries, the associated envelope with surprise/urgent agenda entries and coloured pens or pencils.

1. The group reviews the list of potential agenda entries and decides collectively which entries to include.
2. Once all agenda spaces are filled, the group opens the envelope containing 4 or 5 surprise/urgent agenda entries.
3. The group chooses which original agenda entries to remove in order to accommodate at least 3 of these new requirements.
4. When the agenda is complete once again, the group discusses the following questions:
  - Q.1** *As a group, how did you decide what to include and what to leave out?*
  - Q.2** *How can our personal opinions or biases impact group decision-making?*
  - Q.3** *Look again at your choices. Are there any themes that emerge or similarities between the agenda entries you chose? If so, what might that mean?*

5. Each group nominates a student to speak on the group's behalf, and to report out their key takeaways to the class.

### **Engaging Core Competencies at Various Grade Levels:**

- comparing varying perspectives and perspective taking
- Assessing significance
- Explaining and inferring different perspectives on political issues, decisions, or developments
- Assessing how underlying conditions and the actions of individuals or groups affect events, decisions, and developments, and analyzing cause and consequence

### **Suggested Extension Activities:**

- Alone or in small groups, come up with a draft job description for an MLA. Have students include or choose from a list of competencies that will be needed to do the job.
- In small groups or as a class, explore Indigenous forms of governance and determine how priorities or notions of time might be different for Indigenous leaders, governments or communities.
- Recast the activity to center on a typical day when MLAs are in their Constituencies. Examine different priorities that might emerge in a community setting.

*The Parliamentary Education Office would like to thank Education Steering Committee member Michele Cumberland for her contributions to this document.*