



# Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

Parliamentary Education Office

## Glossary for English Language Learners (ELL)

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**Amend:** To change something.

Example: The [Opposition](#) wanted to **amend** the bill.

**Architect:** A person who designs buildings.

Example: Francis Mawson Rattenbury was the **architect** of the [Parliament Buildings](#).

**Bill:** A written idea for a new [law](#).

Example: The [government](#) introduced a new **bill**.

**Birdcages, the:** The name of the [government](#) buildings used until 1898.

Example: **The Birdcages** were built in 1859.

**Britain:** England, Scotland and Wales.

Example: Many visitors come to Canada from **Britain**.

**British:** The people or culture of [Britain](#).

Example: The **British** flag is red, white and blue.

**British Columbia (B.C.):** The name of a [province](#) in Canada.

Example: **B.C.** is a beautiful [province](#).

**Budget:** A plan for how to spend money.

Example: The [government](#) makes a new **budget** every year.

**Cabinet:** The [Premier](#) and [Ministers](#) in charge of [government](#) departments.

Example: The **Cabinet** meets to make decisions.

**Capital:** The city where the [Legislative Assembly](#) is located.

Example: Victoria is the **capital** of British Columbia.

**Caucus:** A group of [elected](#) people ([MLAs](#)) in the same [political party](#).

Example: The government **caucus** meets together.

**Ceremonial:** Something that is used at special times.

Example: The **ceremonial** entrance is opened for the [Lieutenant Governor](#).

**Chamber:** The room where the [Legislative Assembly](#) meets.

Example: The **Chamber** is on the second floor of the [Parliament Buildings](#).

**Clerk of the House:** The most senior employee of the [Legislative Assembly](#).  
Example: The **Clerk of the House** gives advice to the [Speaker](#) and MLAs.

**Coat of Arms:** A group of [symbols](#).  
Example: This is British Columbia's **Coat of Arms**.

**Colony:** Land controlled by another country that is far away.  
Example: British Columbia was a [British colony](#).

**Confederation:** The agreement made in 1867 to create the country of Canada.  
Example: British Columbia joined **Confederation** in 1871.

**Constituency:** The area that an [MLA](#) represents (also called a riding).  
Example: Each [MLA](#) has an office in their **constituency**.

**Constitution:** The rules or documents that explain how a country or a [province](#) is governed.  
Example: The B.C. **Constitution** Act was [amended](#) in 2001.

**Debate:** To talk about something.  
Example: The [MLAs](#) **debated** in the [Chamber](#).

**Elect:** To choose one person from a group by [voting](#).  
Example: In British Columbia, we **elect** the people who make our [laws](#).

**Election:** [Voting](#) for a person.  
Example: [Provincial elections](#) are held every four years.

**Federal government:** The [government](#) for all of Canada.  
Example: The **federal government** is in Ottawa.

**Fort:** A building that is made for defense.  
Example: **Fort** Victoria was built in 1843.

**Government:** 1) The group of people who run a country or a [province](#).  
2) The [political party](#) that came in first in the last [election](#).  
Example: In the [Chamber](#), **government** members sit on the right of the [Speaker](#).

**Head of State:** The person who [represents](#) a country or a [province](#).  
Example: British Columbia's **Head of State** is the [Lieutenant Governor](#).

**Law:** Rules for people to follow.

Example: There is a new [election law](#) in B.C.

**Legislative Assembly:** A group of people [elected](#) to make laws.

Example: The **Legislative Assembly** of B.C. meets in Victoria.

**Lieutenant Governor:** The person who represents Her Majesty the Queen in a [province](#).

Example: The **Lieutenant Governor** came to the [Parliament Buildings](#).

**Mace:** A decorated pole that is a [symbol](#) of the authority of the [Legislative Assembly](#).

Example: The **mace** is made of silver and gold.

**Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs):** The people who are [elected](#) to make laws for the [province](#).

Example: The **MLAs** [debate](#) and pass [laws](#).

**Minister:** A member of the [Cabinet](#) who is the head of a [government](#) department (ministry).

Example: The **Minister** of Health makes decisions about health care in British Columbia.

**Monarch:** A queen or king.

Example: Queen Victoria was a British **monarch**.

**Opposition:** The [political party](#) that came second in the last [election](#).

Example: In the [Chamber](#), members of the **opposition** sit across from the [government](#).

**Parliament Buildings:** The place where the [Legislative Assembly](#) meets.

Example: The **Parliament Buildings** opened in 1898.

**Political Party:** A group of people with the same ideas about how to run a country or [province](#).

Example: There are different **political parties** in British Columbia.

**Premier:** The head of a provincial [government](#).

Example: The **Premier** is also an [MLA](#).

**Province:** A geographical area in Canada that has its own system of [government](#).

Example: British Columbia is one of ten Canadian [provinces](#).

**Question Period:** A time when opposition members ask [ministers](#) questions.

Example: **Question Period** can be exciting to watch.

**Representative:** A person who acts for someone else.

Example: The [Lieutenant Governor](#) is the Queen's **representative**.

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** The person in charge of security at the [Parliament Buildings](#).

Example: The **Sergeant-at-Arms** takes care of the [mace](#).

**Speaker, the:** The [MLA](#) who keeps order in the [Chamber](#).

Example: **The Speaker** makes sure members follow the rules.

**Symbol:** Something that represents someone or something else.

Example: The dogwood is one of British Columbia's official **symbols**.

**Vote:** To choose someone or something, by saying yes or no.

Example: They **voted** for their [MLA](#).

**Voter:** Someone who has the right to [vote](#) in an [election](#).

Example: A **voter** in British Columbia has to be 18 years old.