

The ABC's of Parlements au primaire



Student's version

Aspirations, Bases and Complementary Activities
of a student council inspired by the National Assembly of Québec

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École des Deux-Ruisseaux (Gatineau)
École L'Accueil (Québec)
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The Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant of the National Assembly of Québec wishes to sincerely thank all of the persons involved in carrying out the Parlements au primaire.

The
ABC's
of

Parlements
au
primaire

Student's version





Message from the President of the National Assembly and President of the Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant



The publication of *The ABC's of Parlements au primaire* guide gives me the perfect opportunity to congratulate my colleague and Vice-President of the Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant, Jacques Chagnon, for having implemented this new activity focussing on participation and education on democracy. I also wish to underline the contribution of the members of the board of directors of the Fondation as well as that of all of the National Assembly resources and those hailing from the education

sector who designed this student council model embodied in the Parlements au primaire.

I am wholeheartedly convinced that this new project will be highly successful, similarly to other initiatives carried out by the Fondation, such as the Parlements au secondaire, the parliamentary internships for university students and the conferences on parliamentarism and democracy.

The Parlements au primaire contribute to the efforts deployed by our institution to increase the interest of young Quebecers in parliamentarism and democracy and to make them active and knowledgeable citizens. This activity joins those of the educational mission of the Québec National Assembly, which include the Parlement écolier, a parliamentary simulation tailor-made for 6th-grade students and which takes place each year at the Parliament Building, and the tour of educational institutions by the President of the National Assembly.

Once again, I would like to thank the artisans of the Parlements au primaire as well as all of the schools that, I am sure, will take part in large numbers in this project which fosters respect among young people of democratic values and institutions.

The President of the Fondation
Jean-Charles-Bonenfant and
President of the National Assembly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Y Vallières', written in a cursive style.

Yvon Vallières



Message from the Vice-President of the National Assembly and Vice-President of the Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant



Created through an Act unanimously adopted by the National Assembly of Québec in 1978, the Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant is a non-partisan organization whose mission is to increase and improve the knowledge, among young people in particular, of our political and parliamentary institutions and to ensure its dissemination.

It is in this spirit that the Fondation, with the support of its invaluable partners, created in 2006-2007

Parlements au secondaire as a new way of operation for student councils in secondary schools. Since then, 175 schools from all regions of Québec have been enjoying the support of the Fondation. With the conviction that if training is adapted to their learning, elementary students too will acquire knowledge on democracy and parliamentary institutions while actively taking part in their school environment, we now propose that elementary schools experiment with a student council structure inspired by the National Assembly: the Parlements au primaire.

I urge Québec's elementary schools to participate in large numbers in this wonderful societal project whose purpose is to form the young generation in the exercise of democracy, I congratulate the young people who will take part therein and I thank the persons who developed this activity aimed at encouraging participation and education on democracy.

The Vice-President of the Fondation
Jean-Charles-Bonenfant and
Vice-President of the National Assembly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Chagnon' with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jacques Chagnon



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Aspirations of Parlements au primaire

The National Assembly of Québec, through its Educational Programmes Directorate, has created, since 1992, educational activities, such as parliamentary simulations and a quiz game to stimulate the interest of young people in the exercise of democracy. In order to reach students directly in the schools, it has also developed activities within the school environment. The tour of educational establishments by the President of the National Assembly testifies to this desire to reach out to young people within their educational milieu.

Why educate on democracy?

It is for the purpose of increasing knowledge on democracy through education that, in 2006, the Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant proposed to secondary schools a new way of operation for student councils. In the past three years, the Parlements au secondaire have generated much interest in the education sector. To this day, over 175 secondary schools have joined this activity, encouraging thousands of young people each year to participate and become educated on democracy.

Based on the know-how developed at the secondary level, the Fondation is now offering elementary schools throughout Québec the possibility to experience a new way of operating as regards the student council which is inspired by certain aspects of the operation of the National Assembly: the Parlements au primaire.



source : National Assembly of Québec

«Let us understand that democracy grows more perfect, more vital through the personal efforts of us all, and that it requires of each and every one of us both knowledge and good will.»

Jean-Charles Bonenfant, Director of the Library of the National Assembly from 1952 to 1969



source : National Assembly of Québec

«Education is a necessary condition for the existence of democracy; however, the latter alone may ensure true participation of all classes of society in the former.»

Paul Gérin-Lajoie, Minister of Education from 1964 to 1966



source : National Assembly of Québec

«The duty of true democrats is to make sure that the people are increasingly aware, educated, informed with regard to their own interests.»

René Lévesque, Premier from 1976 to 1985



source : Christian Chevalier

«As President, I will also maintain the efforts made in order to bring the elected officials closer to the population and the citizens closer to our institution.

It is essential to continue to increase knowledge of the National Assembly and of the role of parliamentarians, and to better communicate with the population.»

Yvon Vallières, President of the National Assembly 2009

A.1 Participation in democracy

The Parlements au primaire are a way of operation of the student council that encourages the participation of students in the decisions that concern them in their school. Their involvement thus contributes to the development of a heightened sense of belonging to their school environment. This is carried out, of course, with the approval of the administration and of the staff members.

What is democracy?

Democracy originated in Greece, approximately 2600 years ago. The word democracy comes from the word *dēmos* (people) and *kratos* (power). Hence, it means power to the people or, in other words, the government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Democracy is a political system (a society's organizational mode) in which the people have and exercise power (direct democracy) or in which the citizens elect representatives to exercise their power (representative democracy). In Québec, we give the name «Member» to these representatives who sit at the National Assembly.

Here, in Québec, we live in a democracy. We have the right to elect our representatives and the freedom to express our opinions. Unfortunately, this is not the case everywhere on the planet. Barely one half of the Earth's population lives in a democracy⁴.



⁴ UNITED NATIONS. Human Development Report 2002 : Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World, New York, Published for the United Nations Development Programme, 2002, p. 2.

A.2 Education on democracy


The Parlements au primaire allow young people to learn about and put into practice democratic values such as freedom of speech, the respect of others' opinions, the art of compromise, solidarity, justice, tolerance, equity, equality, representation, the right to vote and access to information.

By the same token, students may learn about the National Assembly.




What is the National Assembly?


The National Assembly is composed of 125 Members.







**LES PARLEMENTAIRES
DE LA 39^e LÉGISLATURE**
À LA SUITE DES ÉLECTIONS GÉNÉRALES DU 8 DÉCEMBRE 2008





Place aux citoyens









2008





* Députés ayant démissionné avant le 31 mars 2009



The Members are women and men who are elected by the citizens to:

- represent them;;
- pass laws that are necessary for the proper conduct of society;
- and control the actions of the Government.

Each Member has an office in his riding and another at the Parliament Building in Québec City.

Citizens are persons who have the right to vote. One must be at least 18 years of age to take part in elections, to elect the Members.

Elections are held, in general, every 4 or 5 years in each of the 125 electoral divisions of Québec.

An electoral division is a geographical region that encompasses a community of persons.



source : Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune

A bit of history

12,000 years ago

Arrival of the first aboriginals in what will later become Québec.

1534

Jacques Cartier claims, in the name of the King of France, what will later become Québec. This territory is named New France.

1759-1760

Conquest of New France by England.



Vue de la prise de Québec, le 13 septembre 1759, Laurie and Whittle, 1797-11-01
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales, Direction du Centre d'archives de Québec
Collection initiale, P600,S5,PLC39

1792

Opening of the first session of the first Parliament of Lower Canada. This legislative assembly stems from the adoption, by the Parliament of England, of an Act, The Constitutional Act, 1791.

The Members were elected by a portion of the population (the right to vote was not generalized as it is today). At that time, Members had little power, as the governor and the councillors, all of whom were unelected, could change their decisions.



source : National Assembly of Québec

1837-1838

The Patriot Rebellion which is explained, among other reasons, by the lack of power of the population's elected officials.

1840

The Union Act reuniting Upper and Lower Canada into a single province, the Province of Canada, with a Legislative Assembly.

1848

As from 1848, Ministers were required to have the confidence of the Members sitting in the Legislative Assembly to carry out their duties. Ministers were generally Members. This is what was known as ministerial responsibility.

1867

The British North America Act, a statute passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, created four provinces (Québec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) having a Legislative Assembly and a Legislative Council (equivalent to a Senate). There was also a Parliament of Canada, with different Members, located in Ottawa, Ontario.

1940

Québec women obtain the right to vote. They had the right to vote in the elections for the Parliament of Canada since 1918. In 1961, Marie-Claire Kirkland became the first woman Member. She is seen here in the company of Louise Harel, who became the first woman President of the National Assembly of Québec in 2002.

1968

In Québec, the Legislative Council was abolished (composed of unelected officials), and the Legislative Assembly became the National Assembly of Québec.



source : National Assembly of Québec



Jacques Cartier, F. D'Avignon, Circa 1880
Library and National Archives
Direction du Centre d'archives de Québec
Collection initiale, P600,S5,PLC39



source : Christian Chevalier



«The Fathers of Confederation», [ca 1864].
Archives of Québec City;
collection of flat pictures; photograph
of a painting by Robert Harris; N000339.



source : Claude Lachance collection

Important issues

Major questions concerning Quebecers of all ages have been and are debated at the National Assembly.

For example:

- 1943 An Act respecting compulsory school attendance**
- 1963 Nationalization of electricity**
- 1954 Personal income tax**
- 1964 An Act to establish the Ministère de l'Éducation**
- 1966 Student Loans and Scholarships Act**
- 1971 Health Insurance Act**
- 1975 Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms**
- 1977 Charter of the French Language**
- 1978 Creation of Kino-Québec**
- 1978 An Act to preserve agricultural land**
- 1980 An Act respecting labour standards**
- 1985 Recognition of aboriginal nations**
- 1988 Education Act**
- 1990 Creation of Recyc-Québec**
- 1991 New Civil Code**
- 1997 Implementation of the early childhood centres**
- 2001 An Act respecting parental leave**
- 2006 An Act to establish the Generations Fund**
- 2007 An Act to amend the Highway Safety Code**



source : Hydro-Québec



source : Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec

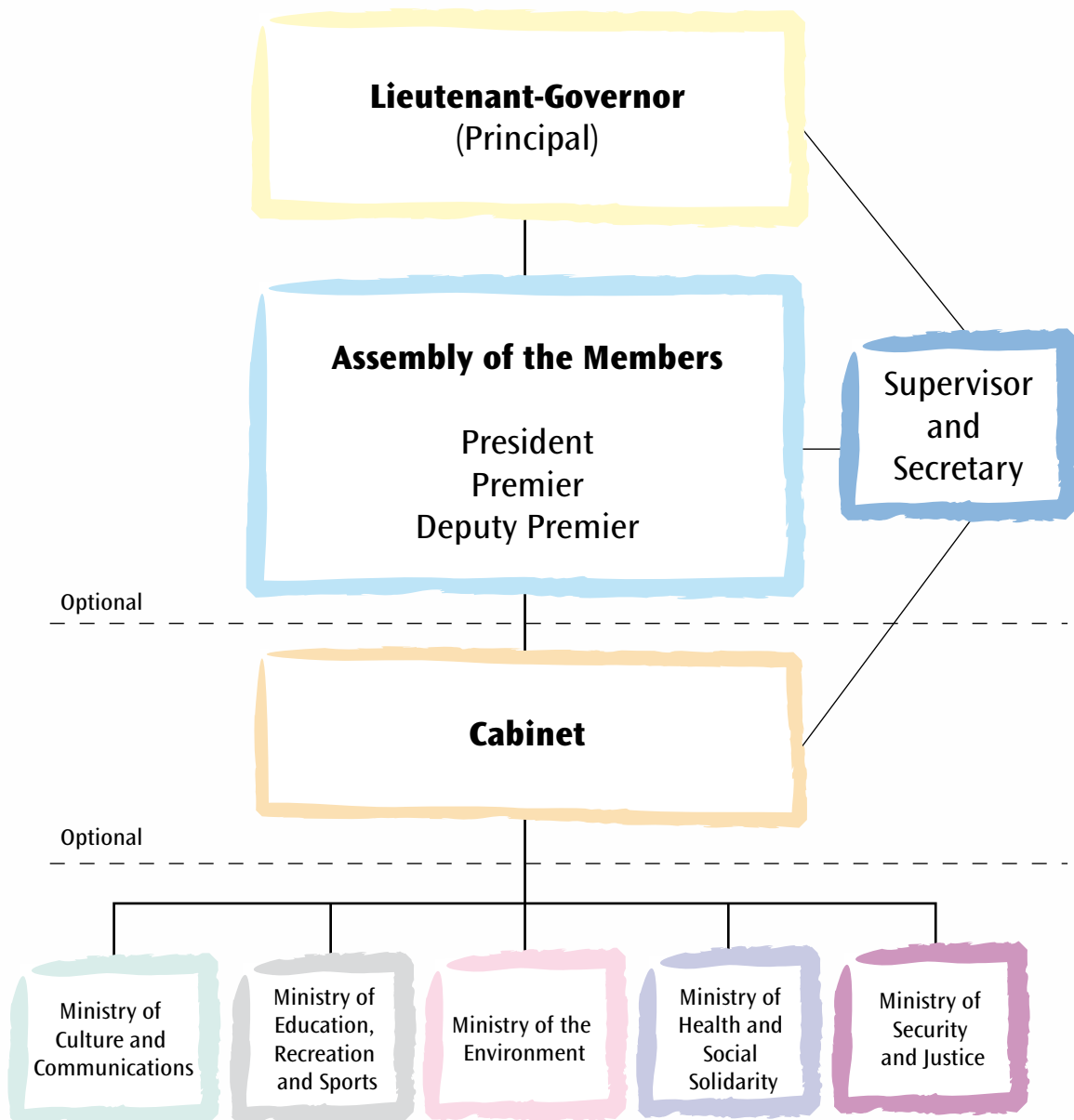


source : Caroline Hamel

Bases of Parlements au primaire

B.1 Roles

To follow the example of the Parliament of Québec, composed of the Lieutenant-Governor and the Members forming the National Assembly, a Parlement au primaire is made up of a Lieutenant-Governor (the school principal) and the Members (the student council). Of course, this model is flexible. Schools therefore may adjust it.



The Lieutenant-Governor



The Lieutenant-Governor is the school principal:

- He swears-in the Members of the Parlement au primaire.
- He assents to (approves) bills passed by the Assembly of the Members of the Parlement au primaire.

Of course, for a bill passed by the Parlement au primaire to take effect, the school principal must signify his assent to it.

It should be understood that within the context of a Parlement au primaire, the Lieutenant-Governor (the school principal), owing to financial, regulatory or other constraints, may refuse a request made by the Members.

The supervisor

Whether the principal, a teacher, a spiritual-life and community-involvement counsellor, a technician, or any other person designated by the administration, the supervisor of the Parlement au primaire plays a crucial role within the school:

- he coordinates the Parlement au primaire at the school;
- he advises the president, the premier, the deputy premier and the other Members regarding their functions and accompanies them in their efforts to bring their projects to fruition;
- he provides dynamic guidance while encouraging participants in their autonomy;
- he helps Members to put into practice democratic values such as freedom of speech, the respect of others' opinions, the art of compromise, solidarity, justice, tolerance, fairness, equality, representation, the right to vote and access to information while enabling them to acquire knowledge about the National Assembly.



The President

The President of the Parlement au primaire may be the principal, the supervisor or a Member.

- He prepares and directs the debates at the sittings of the Assembly of the Members of the Parlement au primaire on the basis of information appearing in the Order Paper (agenda). The items to be discussed during the sitting are placed on the Order Paper.
- He ensures that the Members conduct their debates in accordance with democratic values.

The Member

The Member is the main actor in the Parlement au primaire. He is elected by the students in his class.

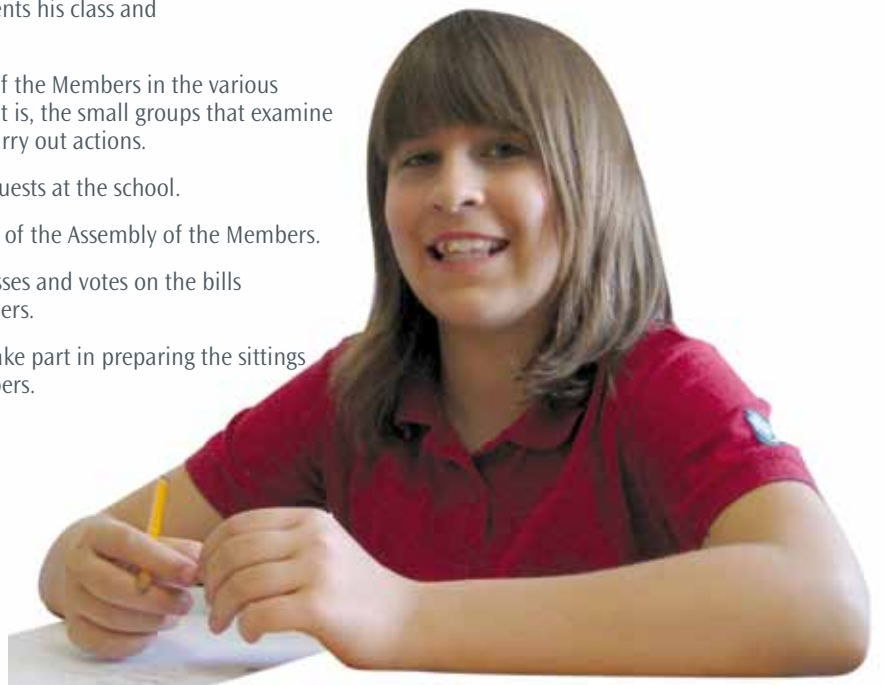
- He represents the students from his class in the Parlement au primaire.
- He consults the students of his class to find out their needs regarding school life.
- He takes part in the sittings of the Assembly of the Members.
- He proposes, prepares, discusses and votes on the bills for the school.



The Premier

The Member from the 6th grade class is the Premier. He represents the Members and all students at the school.

- He has the same responsibilities as the Members.
- Like the Members, he represents his class and all students of his school.
- He represents the Assembly of the Members in the various committees or ministries, that is, the small groups that examine the various issues and that carry out actions.
- He takes part in welcoming guests at the school.
- He participates in the sittings of the Assembly of the Members.
- He proposes, prepares, discusses and votes on the bills for the school, like the Members.
- With the President, he may take part in preparing the sittings of the Assembly of the Members.



The Deputy Premier

The Member from the 5th grade class is the Deputy Premier. He assists the Premier in his work and replaces him should he be absent.

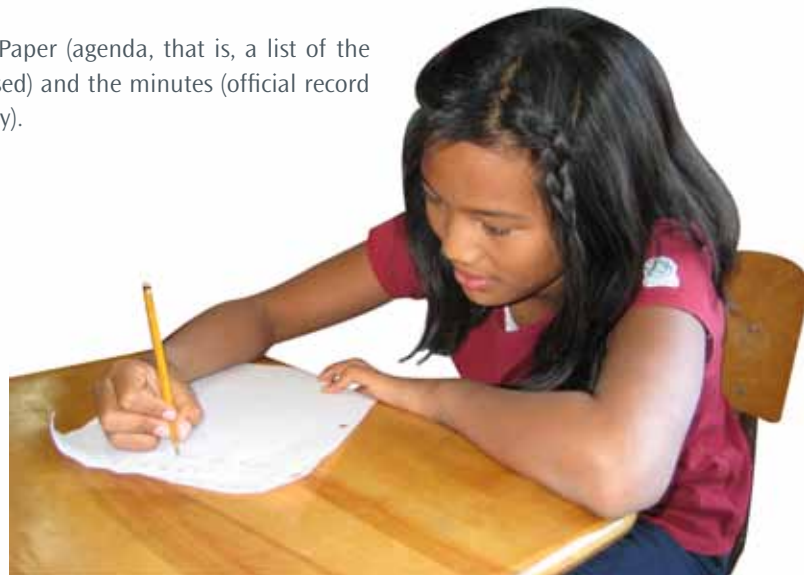
- He has the same responsibilities as the Members.
- Like the Members, he represents his class and all students of his school.
- He represents the Assembly of the Members in the various committees and ministries, that is, the small groups that examine the various issues and that carry out actions.
- He takes part in welcoming guests at the school.
- He participates in the sittings of the Assembly of the Members.
- He proposes, prepares, discusses and votes on the bills for the school, like the Members.
- With the President, he may take part in preparing the sittings of the Assembly of the Members.



The Secretary General

The Secretary General is a student at the school or a member of the school staff chosen by the supervisor of the Parlement au primaire.

He takes part in drafting the Order Paper (agenda, that is, a list of the items of business that will be discussed) and the minutes (official record of the previous sitting of the Assembly).



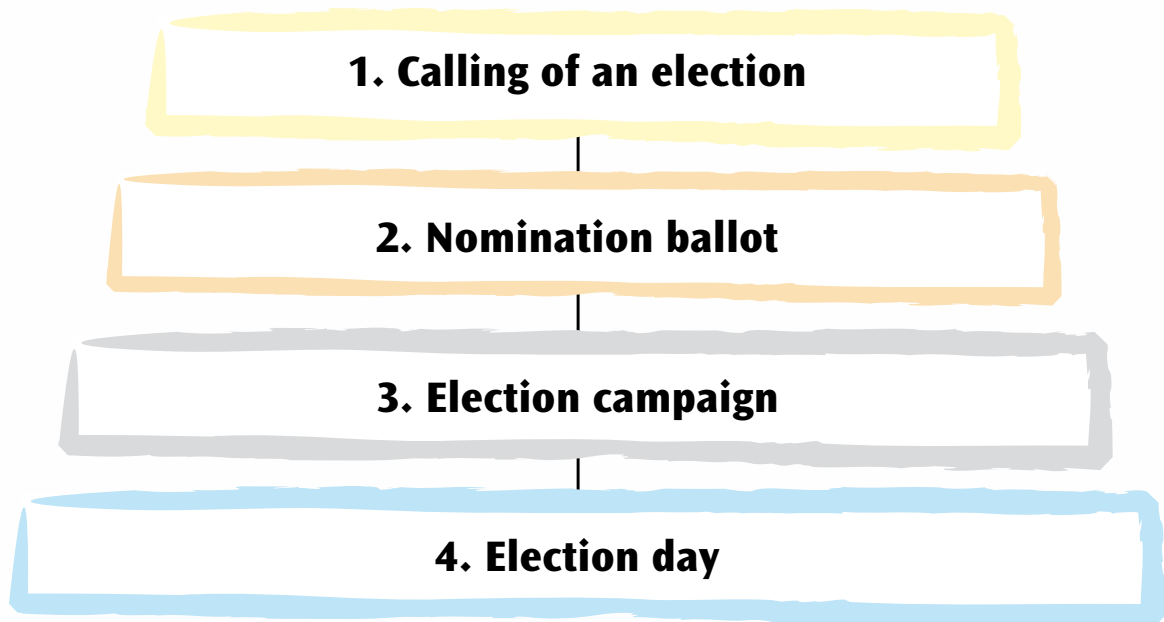
B.2 Elections

In accordance with democratic values, each student who will take part in the Parlement au primaire must be elected. The method of election may vary. This guide proposes one method of conducting an election that is quite simple. Each school selects the method it prefers, one that most easily adapts to its needs.

How to organize an election

The school principal (who assumes the role of electoral officer during the election period) or a person he designates sets a date, in September or October, at which time all of the students will elect their Member. He also establishes the election calendar.

Stages of an election calendar (duties to carry out)



3. Election campaign

Once the date to receive candidacies has expired, the candidates try to convince the students to support them, to vote for them in the election. Hence, they conduct an election campaign by making posters, by delivering speeches, by discussing issues that concern them, etc. If a candidate has no opponent, he will be elected by acclamation.

4. Election day

On election day, at the same time throughout all of the classrooms, the students vote for their candidate of choice. Just before the voting begins, the teacher invites the candidates of the class to deliver a short speech. Then, he distributes a ballot paper to each student. The students write the name of their favourite candidate on a piece of paper, fold their ballot paper and give it to their teacher. Once again, if a candidate has no opponent, he will be elected by acclamation: ballot papers therefore need not be distributed.

The teacher counts the ballot papers and announces the name of the winner: it is the candidate having obtained the most votes.



B.3 Swearing-in

The Members having been elected in each class, they must now get together to discuss the various items of business during the sittings of the Parlement au primaire. But before the opening sitting, they may solemnly swear that they will perform their duties to the best of their ability: it is their oath of office. They will thus be asked to take an oath of office and the bracelet of the Parlements au primaire will be given to them. The administration of the oath of office is a good way to make them understand the importance of their role.

Proposal for the administration of the oath of office to the Members of a Parlement au primaire

The lieutenant-governor (principal) :

« I will administer the oath of office to the Members of the Parlement au primaire of our school. »

« I would ask the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Members and the Secretary General to rise to be sworn-in. »

« Please raise your right hand and repeat after me: »

« I solemnly swear »

The Members :

« I solemnly swear »

The lieutenant-governor (principal) :

« that I will perform my duties as a Member of the Parliament of my school »

The Members :

« that I will perform my duties as a Member of the Parliament of my school »

The lieutenant-governor (principal) :

« honestly and justly »

The Members :

« honestly and justly »

The lieutenant-governor (principal) :

« while upholding the values imparted by my school »

The Members :

« while upholding the values imparted by my school »

The lieutenant-governor (principal) :

« Congratulations, you are officially Members of the school Parliament. I will now give you your Parlements au primaire bracelets. »

B.4 Sittings

A meeting of the National Assembly is called a sitting. It is during the sittings of the Parlement au primaire that the Members prepare, propose and discuss bills for their schools that appear on the Order Paper (agenda). They then vote for or against these bills. The sittings may be held, as determined by the school, during the lunch hour, after classes or during a class period.



Decorum in a parliament

A sitting is an important activity. While feeling comfortable in expressing themselves during a sitting, the Members of the school parliament must take this into consideration. The manner in which they conduct themselves must reflect the importance of their parliament.

Example of the rules that Members must obey during the sittings:

Respect the planned schedules.

Use correct language and act properly.

Handle materials with care.

Remain seated in the assigned place and remain silent unless given permission to speak by the President.


Respect democratic values such as freedom of speech, the respect of others' opinions, the art of compromise, solidarity, justice, tolerance, equity, equality, representation, the right to vote and access to information.

How is a sitting prepared?

As seen previously, schools may have a Cabinet if they so desire. Chosen from among the Members of the school parliament, it is made up of the Supervisor, the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and its main task is to prepare the sittings of the Assembly of the Members. Hence, it is during the Cabinet meetings that the Order Paper (agenda or hours of the sitting) and the minutes (report or summary of the sitting) are drafted. In the case of a Parlement au primaire that does not have a Cabinet, it is the Supervisor and the Secretary General, in the presence of the Premier, who will prepare the Order Paper and the minutes.

What should be placed on the Order Paper (agenda)?

In a Parlement au primaire, it is clear that the school principal or other staff members may place items of business on the Order Paper (agenda) that they wish to see discussed by the Members of the parliament. However, the choice of subjects should be left up to the Members so that they may discuss the issues that interest them or the students at the school.



The Order Paper (agenda) is not required, but it can be useful. Indeed, the Order Paper may help the Members to respect the time allotted for the sitting of the parliament and keep discussions from going in every direction. This agenda makes work more efficient.

Example of Order Paper (agenda)

ORDER PAPER – FIRST SITTING

Parlement au primaire of the School for Democracy

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 – 11:30 o'clock a.m.

1. Greetings from the President and reading of the Order Paper and the minutes

2. Bills
 - Bill 1: An Act to establish a student newspaper committee
 - Organization of the Winter Festival
 - Layout of the schoolyard

3. Period for Exchanges

4. Information and adjournment of proceedings

It is also very useful to write a summary of the business under discussion during a sitting, to write the minutes of the proceedings. This report will allow readers to verify what was done between meetings, to see the progress of bills under consideration and to leave a record of the actions carried out by the parliament. It will make the parliament more efficient. As the proverb so aptly puts it: « Spoken words fly away, written words remain. »

Example of minutes

MINUTES – SECOND SITTING

Parlement au primaire of the School for Democracy

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

The Assembly was called to order at 11:30 o'clock a.m.

1. Greetings from the President and reading of the Order Paper (agenda) and the minutes (record of proceedings)

2. Bills

- Bill 1: An Act to establish a student newspaper committee

The Premier, Ms. Marie-Laurence Barrette, introduced a bill to establish a student newspaper committee.

Various Members then spoke on the bill. Generally, it was agreed that it is a good idea to provide information to the students.

The debate being concluded, a vote was taken on the bill by the Premier, Ms. Marie-Laurence Barrette, to establish a student paper committee.

The bill was passed by a majority of the Members. (YEAS – 4, NAYS – 2, ABSTENTIONS – 1)

- Organization of the Winter Festival

It was decided that the Members of the 1st and 3rd grades will be responsible for making the decorations and installing them with their classmates on Thursday, February 11, in the afternoon, under the supervision of their teachers.

The Members of the 4th and 6th grades will meet tomorrow with the music and gym teachers to organize a musical variety show that will include a physical activity session. This show will take place on Friday, February 12.

The Members also agreed to organize a winter clothing drive with all of the students of the school. The clothing will be sent to an organization that helps disadvantaged persons. This item of business will be discussed in detail at the next sitting.

- Layout of the schoolyard

Following the suggestion made by Member Karim Davidson, it was agreed that a survey would be passed around in each classroom to gather ideas on how to improve the schoolyard.

3. Period for Exchanges

Member Justine Boily informed the Assembly that her friends had notified her of a problem concerning the sinks in the boys' bathroom. The school principal will take the necessary measures to fix the problem.

Member Max Nguyen would like the school to buy new hockey sticks.

The Premier, Ms. Marie-Laurence Barrette, spoke about her visit to the Parliament Building of Québec.

4. Information and adjournment of proceedings

At 12:30 o'clock p.m., the President adjourned the proceedings of the Parlement au primaire until Wednesday, February 10, 2010, at 11:30 o'clock a.m.

The President,
Marc Montplaisir

B.5 Information

The parliament has begun operating, for the Members are meeting and making plans. But that is not all, since it is necessary to keep the students and the school staff informed. It is an essential base of the Parlement au primaire.

As we know, information is a key element of democracy and the media play a primary role. For a democracy to be healthy, citizens must be well informed.

With the Parlement au primaire, it is equally critical that information circulate among «the citizens» of the school, that is, the students as well as the staff and the Members who represent them.

The parliament must translate into action in the eyes of all students at the school. Therefore, so that the students make known their requests and that the Members keep them informed of their plans, a series of measures may be envisaged:

- provide for a moment before or after the sitting so that the Member may meet with his classmates;
- set up a suggestion box;
- issue the parliament an e-mail address;
- post a newsletter;
- put up information on the school bulletin boards, etc.



Complementary activities of Parlements au primaire

The present section of The ABC's of Parlements au primaire comprises various Complementary Activities that could be added to the Bases of our student council. Again, there are no obligations. Each school is free to experiment with additional elements to its Parlement au primaire if it wishes to do so.

C.1 Ministers and ministries

In addition to the Premier and the Deputy Premier, schools that so desire may form one or several ministries. The ministers are chosen by the supervisor and/or the Premier from among the elected Members. Other methods of appointment may be considered.



Based on certain ministries that exist in Québec, a school could therefore have Members who are:

- Minister of Culture and Communications;
- Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports;
- Minister of the Environment;
- Minister of Health and Social Solidarity;
- Minister of Security and Justice.

Other names of ministries are possible. Why not have a Minister of Holidays, a Minister of the Schoolyard or a Minister of Respect? However, what must be considered regarding this point is that a ministry is not created simply for the sake of creating a ministry. It must meet a school need. It should always be clear that the structure must enable concrete actions to be taken without increasing its burden.



Therefore, in its Parlement au primaire, there could be a:

Ministry of Culture and Communications, which is responsible for :
the school newspaper, morning messages, a school radio, the Web site, hallway decorations, the Méritas gala, an improvisation league, a music show, an aboriginals day, a pairing with another school, a computer room, an intercultural week, etc.

Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports, which organizes :
a field day, educational outings, pedagogical activities on democracy, a science fair, a career day, a campaign on ethical consumption, the selection of certain books to buy for the library, a start-up company, a book fair, activities for Teacher Appreciation Week, etc.



Ministry of the Environment, which prepares :
an Environment Week, a waste-free day, a recycling campaign (paper, batteries, refundable containers...), a contest in which students make toys out of recycled materials, a schoolyard clean-up activity, etc.

Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, which organizes :
a handwashing awareness campaign, a healthy cuisine class, a food and toys drive, sending out good wishes cards to seniors, etc.



Ministry of Security and Justice, which oversees :
a team of crossing guards, a first-aid course, a bike safety campaign, a consultation on life rules, the establishment of a peers mediation group, etc.

C.2 Bills

Sometimes, when Members of the parliament have important proposals to make, it may be necessary to put their ideas down in writing. These ideas on paper could become a bill. Indeed, using a simplified procedure, schools that wish to do so may adopt bills, just like the National Assembly does.

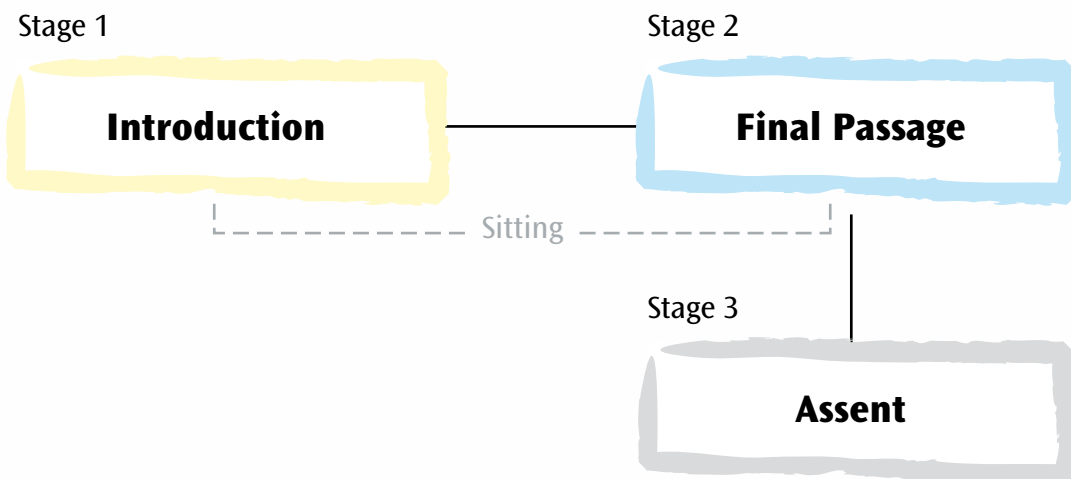


A bill is a text introduced by a Member that contains rules, intentions or proposals. A Member proposes a bill in answer to a problem or to the needs of the students at the school. Let us not forget, that the Members of the parliament represent all students of the school. After having drafted his bill, the Member will introduce it to the other Members of his parliament, who will discuss it, amend it (modify it) and vote on it.

The bill is adopted by the Assembly of the Members when the Members in favour of the bill outnumber those who are not in favour, when there is a majority of Members who vote in favour thereof. Then, the bill must be assented to (approved) by the lieutenant-governor (the school principal).

Following that, if the school principal agrees, the bill becomes law and is implemented in the school. The Member's idea thus becomes a reality.

Stages of a bill in a Parlement au primaire



Stages of a bill at the National Assembly

In a Parlement au primaire, the stages of a bill must be simple. But it should be mentioned that at the National Assembly of Québec, after having been drafted, a bill must pass through six stages in the legislative process before becoming a law and coming into effect. These stages are as follows:

- Introduction;
- Passage in principle;
- Committee stage;
- Report stage;
- Final passage;
- Assent.

Further information on the manner in which bills are passed at the National Assembly is available on the Web site:
<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fra/Assemblee/cheminement.html>



source : Christian Chevalier



source : Clément Allard

Rules for drafting a bill

Bills must be short; hence the importance of clearly delineating their subject matter. The drafting of a bill must take into account sentence structure, the tense, mood, and voice (passive or active) of verbs, and the choice of vocabulary.

The following are a few basic rules that will help the Members of the Parlement au primaire to draft their bills.

- Write short sentences: subject, verb and complement.

Short sentences make the text easier to understand.

- Use the indicative present.

The indicative present gives the text a timeless character (invariable in time).

- Use the active voice.

The active voice is the normal way of writing. However, the passive voice cannot always be excluded from a bill; sometimes it is indispensable. It is essential that the students who draft a bill always ask themselves who is performing the action contemplated in each sentence they write.

- Insofar as is possible, make affirmative or positive statements.

This approach allows the reader to understand clearly the intention of the legislator.

- Use the masculine and the singular.

In the drafting of bills the use of the masculine (“he,” “his”) has nothing to do with gender; its use to designate a person referred to in a bill is intended only to simplify the text. It therefore applies to all persons concerned regardless of gender. With regard to the use of the singular, the principles of interpretation provide that the singular includes the plural.

- Always use the same expressions.

To avoid confusion, the drafting of a bill requires that the same expressions always be used and that synonyms be avoided.

The form of a bill

A bill contains :

- The title page.

On this page, indicate the number of the bill, its title and the name of its author with his title.

- The explanatory notes.

The explanatory notes are a summary of the bill. Even if that is not the case as regards bills discussed in the National Assembly, the grounds for introducing such a bill could be presented in addition to the explanatory notes.

- The text of the bill.

The following is an example of a bill :

PARLEMENT AU PRIMAIRE

School for Democracy

2009-2010

BILL 1

An Act to establish a student newspaper committee

Introduced by :
Ms. Marie-Laurence Barrette
Premier

on January 20, 2010

Signature of the Lieutenant-Governor

Assented to on January 27, 2010

PEUPLEVILLE

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The purpose of this bill is to establish a student newspaper committee. The mission of the newspaper committee is to produce a newspaper that examines matters of concern to the students at the school, allows the students at the school to express themselves on subjects of their choice, and provides information on the school's services and activities.

The bill also sets forth the responsibilities of the newspaper committee and those of the school administration.

Bill 1

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A STUDENT NEWSPAPER COMMITTEE

THE PARLEMENT AU PRIMAIRE ENACTS AS FOLLOWS :

CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the present act is to establish a student newspaper committee at the School for Democracy.
2. The student newspaper committee shall be made up of students at the school selected for their general knowledge and their interest in journalism.
3. The student newspaper committee shall comprise members from each level at the school.

CHAPTER 2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER COMMITTEE

4. The student newspaper committee shall produce not fewer than four editions of the student newspaper during each school year.
5. The student newspaper committee shall ensure that the newspaper examines matters of concern to the students at the school as well as the services and activities offered by the school.

It includes the following sections:

- Culture and Communications;
 - Education, Recreation and Sports;
 - Environment;
 - Health and Social Solidarity;
 - Security and Justice.
6. The student newspaper committee shall reserve one section of the student newspaper for students who wish to express themselves on subjects of concern to them.

CHAPTER 3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

7. The school principal shall designate a member of the personnel to coordinate the student newspaper committee.
8. The school administration shall place at the disposal of the student newspaper committee one computer and one printer.

CHAPTER 4 FINAL PROVISIONS

9. The school administration and its Premier shall be responsible for the application of the present act.
10. The present act shall come into force on the day on which it is assented to.

C.3 Activities to go one step further

By establishing a Parlement au primaire in your school, you might like to further your students' knowledge on the National Assembly of Québec. The following are a few suggestions for activities.

The Game Sheet of the Parlements au primaire

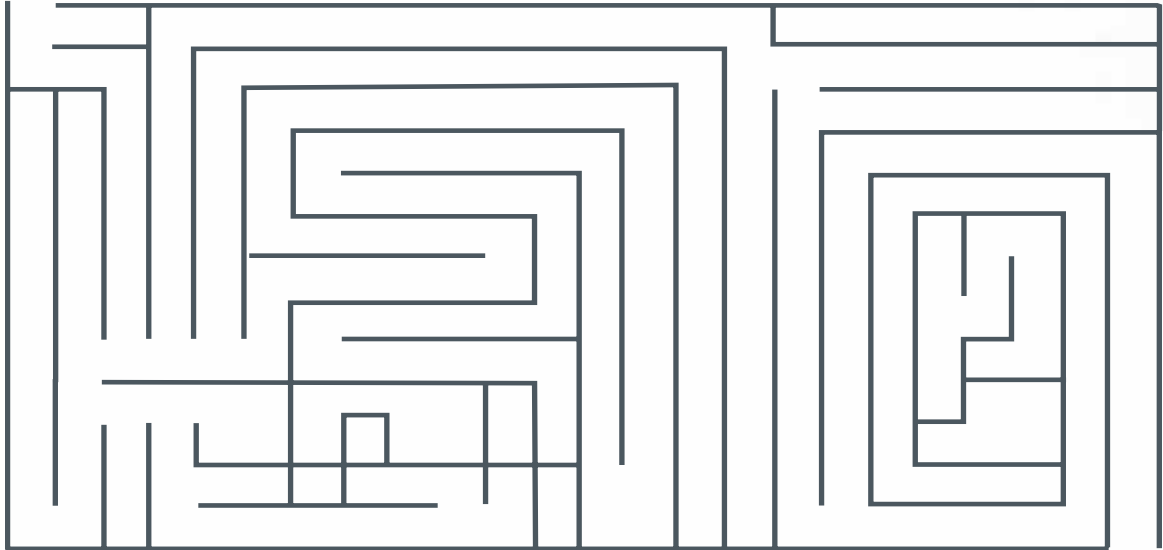
► Spot the difference

Find the 6 differences between both of these images of a sitting of Members in 1793.



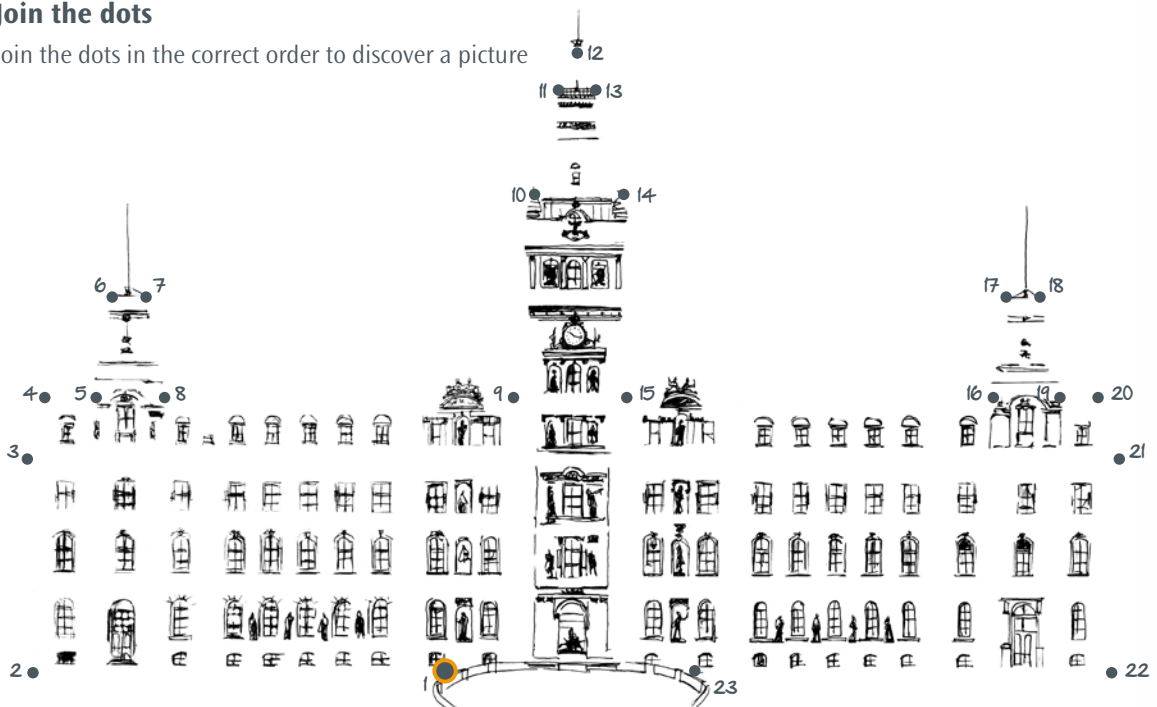
► Labyrinth

Trace the way from the birth of democracy in Greece 2600 years ago to modern-day Québec



► Join the dots

Join the dots in the correct order to discover a picture



► Word search puzzle

In the puzzle grid, find the **words in boldface** and discover the hidden 9-letter word.

L	D	M	W	S	S	V	N	E	C	B	P	V
M	I	I	O	L	T	O	O	O	I	R	O	T
E	L	E	L	D	I	U	M	T	E	T	C	O
L	T	I	U	T	E	P	D	M	E	E	B	A
E	B	I	C	T	R	E	I	E	P	C	A	C
C	R	E	R	O	E	E	R	S	N	R	L	C
T	L	A	M	W	R	N	E	F	T	T	L	E
E	H	I	Y	T	I	R	A	D	I	L	O	S
D	S	E	C	S	E	T	U	N	I	M	T	S
E	R	I	G	H	T	G	N	I	T	T	I	S
I	N	F	O	R	M	A	T	I	O	N	E	Y



source : Daniel Lessard

Roles in a Parlement au primaire

Like the Parliament of Québec, made up of the **lieutenant**-governor and the Members forming the National Assembly, a Parlement au primaire is made up of a lieutenant-governor (the school principal) and of **the** Members (the **student** council).

To become a Member, you must:

- fill out a nomination **ballot** on which you will **write** your name and your motivations.
- convince your classmates to support you, to **vote** for you in the **election**.
- be **elected** by your classmates to represent them.

Among the Members, some occupy special functions, carry out work that is a **bit** different in the Parlement au primaire. For example, the **Premier** represents the Assembly of the Members in the various committees or ministries, that is, small groups that examine various issues and initiate actions.

The Secretary General is **one** of the students of the school or a staff member who takes part in the drafting of the Order Paper (agenda, in other words a list of the items of business that **will** be discussed, such as **bills**), and the **minutes**, a descriptive summary of the Assembly **sitting**.

Democratic values

The Parlements au primaire allow young people to learn about and put into practice democratic values such as **freedom** of speech, the **respect** of others' opinions, the **art** of **compromise**, **solidarity**, justice, tolerance, fairness, equality, representation, the **right** to **vote** and **access** to **information**.

Answer : _____

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