INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AN ACTIVITY BOOK ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, STATE SYMBOLS, AND OUR GOVERNMENT
NORTH CAROLINA STATE GOVERNMENT

There are three branches of government established by the North Carolina Constitution: the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, and the Judicial Branch.

**Legislative Branch**

The Legislative Branch makes laws for North Carolina. It is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which together are known as the General Assembly. The Legislature meets biennially, and all Members are elected for two-year terms.

**Executive Branch**

The Executive Branch of government enforces laws made by the legislature. The head of this branch is the Governor, who is elected every four years. Along with the Governor, the Executive Branch also includes the Lieutenant Governor, the Council of State, and many State agencies.

**Judicial Branch**

The Judicial Branch interprets what our laws mean and makes decisions about the laws and those who break them. The courts of the Judicial Branch are split into three divisions: the Appellate Court Division, the Superior Court Division and the District Court Division.
THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Before Raleigh became the capital city, the North Carolina General Assembly, which consisted of one house, moved from town to town. They would meet in courthouses, local schools, and residences, or any structure big enough to hold the legislators.

The General Assembly first met in Raleigh in 1794 at a simple two-story brick building that was the first Capitol. Between 1820 and 1824, the State House was enlarged by State Architect William Nichols. A third floor and eastern and western wings were added to the building, and a domed rotunda was constructed at its center to house Antonio Canova's statue of President George Washington, acquired by the state in 1821. Sadly, when the State House burned in 1831, the statue was damaged beyond repair. A new Capitol building was finished in 1840 and it is the building you see on the Capitol grounds when you visit Raleigh. All three branches of government met in this building until our state continued to grow and each branch needed more space. This building was used by the General Assembly until the present Legislative Building was completed in 1963.

Today, the General Assembly of North Carolina is made up of two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate. All Members of the General Assembly are elected by the voters from their respective districts. The primary duties of the Members are to create new laws, change existing laws that affect the people of our state, and create a budget.

The General Assembly meets in regular session beginning in January of each odd-numbered year, and adjourns to reconvene the following even-numbered year for a shorter session. The Governor may call an extra session when it is deemed necessary or the General Assembly may convene for an extra session when signed requests are received by three-fifths of the Members of both the House and the Senate.

1782 State House 1820 Capitol 1840 - Present Capitol
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The House of Representatives consists of 120 Members who serve a term of two years. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives is the Speaker of the House. The Speaker is elected by the Members from their membership for a two-year term. The Speaker’s duties include maintaining order in the House and appointing Members to the House Standing Committees. The Members also elect a Speaker Pro Tempore from their membership, who carries out the duties of the Speaker in an absence. The Principal Clerk, who is responsible for the administrative duties of the House, is elected by the Members every two years. The Reading Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms are appointed by the Speaker.

THE SENATE

The North Carolina Senate is composed of 50 Members who serve a term of two years. The Lieutenant Governor is the presiding officer of the Senate and is elected in a statewide election every four years. The main duty of the Lieutenant Governor is to maintain order in the Senate. Committee appointments in the Senate are made by the President Pro Tempore, who is elected by the Members of the Senate from their membership. If the Lieutenant Governor is absent, the President Pro Tempore carries out the duties of the presiding officer. The Members of the Senate also elect a Principal Clerk, Reading Clerk, and Sergeant-at-Arms.
MATCHING

Fill in the blank on the left with its correct answer on the right by placing the correct letter in the blank.

1. The House of Representatives has _____ members. A. Lieutenant Governor

2. The Senate has _____ members. B. Esse Quam Videri

3. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives is called the __________. C. 2

4. The President of the Senate is the __________. D. Law

5. Another name for the State Legislature is the __________. E. Principal Clerk

6. The person in charge of administrative duties in the House and Senate is the __________. F. 1963

7. When a bill is passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor, it becomes a __________. G. 50

8. North Carolina’s motto is __________. H. Speaker

9. The General Assembly first met in its current location in ____. I. 120

10. Members of the House and Senate are elected for _____ years. J. General Assembly
PREAMBLE
TO THE
NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION

We, the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the preservation of the American Union and the existence of our civil, political and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those blessings to us and our posterity, do, for the more certain security thereof and for the better government of this State, ordain and establish this Constitution.
PREAMBLE
TO THE
NORTH CAROLINA
CONSTITUTION

We, the people of the State of ______
__________, grateful to Almighty God, the
Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the
___________ of the American Union and
the existence of our_______, _______ and
_________ _________, and acknowledging
our dependence upon Him for the
___________ of those blessings to us and
our _____________, do, for the more certain
security thereof and for the ______
___________ of this State, ordain and
establish this _____________.

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT WORD.
STATE SYMBOLS AND OTHER OFFICIAL ADOPTIONS
(In order of adoption)
The NC General Assembly adopted its first state symbol in 1885 recognizing the official State Flag. Since that time, the Legislature has adopted more symbols. Some symbols are emblems or well-known representations of the state’s history and culture that have been important to support the people or the economy of our state.

State Seal: Great Seal of the State of North Carolina
State Motto: Esse Quam Videri (To be rather than to seem)
State Song: The Old North State
State Flower: Dogwood
State Bird: Cardinal
State Colors: Red and Blue
State Toast: "A Toast" to North Carolina
State Tree: Pine
State Shell: Scotch Bonnet
State Mammal: Gray Squirrel
State Saltwater Fish: Channel Bass
State Insect: Honeybee
State Precious Stone: Emerald
State Reptile: Eastern Box Turtle
State Rock: Granite
State Beverage: Milk
State Historical Boat: Shad Boat
State Dog: Plott Hound
State Military Academy: Oak Ridge Military Academy
State Tartan: Carolina Tartan
State Watermelon Festivals: Hertford Watermelon Festival and Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival
State Vegetable: Sweet Potato
State Fruit: Scuppernong Grape
State Red Berry: Strawberry
State Blue Berry: Blueberry
State International Festival: Folkmoot USA
State Wildflower: Carolina Lily
State Aviation Hall of Fame and Museum: Asheboro Municipal Airport
State Museum of Aviation: Wilmington International Airport
State Carnivorous Plant: Venus Flytrap
State Birthplace of Traditional Pottery: Seagrove area
State Folk Dance: Clogging
State Popular Dance: Shagging
State Christmas Tree: Fraser Fir
State Freshwater Trout: Southern Appalachian Brook Trout
State Collard Festival: Ayden Collard Festival
State Food Festival: Lexington Barbecue Festival
State Community Theater: Thalian Association in Wilmington
State Potato Festival: Albemarle Potato Festival
State Horse: Colonial Spanish Mustang
The Honor and Remember Flag: To honor and recognize members of the Armed Forces of the United States who have died in the line of duty
State Shad Festival: Grifton Shad Festival
State Herring Festival: Jamesville Herring Festival
State Mineral: Gold
State Sport: Stock car racing
State Shrimp Festival: Sneads Ferry Shrimp Festival
State Butterfly: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
State Fall Livermush Festival: Shelby Livermush Festival
State Spring Livermush Festival: Marion Livermush Festival
State Mullet Festival: Swansboro Mullet Festival
State Fossil: Fossilized megalodon shark teeth
State Frog: Pine Barrens Tree Frog
State Salamander: Marbled Salamander
State Marsupial: Virginia Opossum
State Folk Art: Whirligigs created by Vollis Simpson
State Art Medium: Clay
State Peanut Festival: Dublin Peanut Festival
State Blue Monday Shad Fry: East Arcadia Blue Monday Shad Fry
State Veterans Day Parade: Warsaw Veterans Day Parade
State Fly Fishing Museum: Fly Fishing Museum of the Southern Appalachians in Bryson City
State Outdoor Festival: The North Carolina Outdoor Festival (Montgomery County)
State Woolly Worm Festival: Woolly Worm Festival in Banner Elk
WORD SEARCH
Find the hidden North Carolina symbols listed below.

| G A R I J M E U P L O T T H O U N D |
| J R E A S T E R N B O X T U R T L E |
| S C A K L X T G C Y K L I G A O V E |
| W A C Y U M I L K K E M E R A L D S |
| E R I D S L N O M Y U S I A P F W S |
| E D C O E Q R T O V S B L N I S C E |
| T I H I E F U N P A U O C I R C V Q |
| P N D A I E G I B L Z H I T G O P U |
| O A P E S P N L R L S Y G E H T X A |
| T L D X N I E H I R J I M K H C O M |
| A D C B R N Q R J S E T D Z U H Y V |
| T E G E N E S T Z K A L R E N B D I |
| O D E A S T U R F L O G V H I O M D |
| F W H F Z J T Q J G M I B R L N N E |
| V C U E D O G W O O D N O A Z N X R |
| G H Y C A R O L I N A L I L Y Y E E I |
| H O N E Y B E E A B Z P K Q O T Y A |

North Carolina Symbols

- **Beverage:** MILK
- **Bird:** CARDINAL
- **Dog:** PLOTT HOUND
- **Salt water fish:** CHANNEL BASS
- **Flower:** DOGWOOD
- **Insect:** HONEYBEE
- **Mammal:** GRAY SQUIRREL
- **Mineral:** GOLD
- **Motto:** ESSE QUAM VIDERI
- **Reptile:** EASTERN BOX TURTLE
- **Rock:** GRANITE
- **Shell:** SCOTCH BONNETT
- **Stone:** EMERALD
- **Tree:** PINE
- **Vegetable:** SWEET POTATO
- **Wildflower:** CAROLINA LILY
There are 100 counties in North Carolina. Which county do you live in? Can you find it on the Map?
When the government of the State of North Carolina was organized, the Constitution adopted in 1776 provided for a state seal that should be called the "Great Seal of the State of North Carolina." In 1972, the Seal was made one-sided. Other changes were made in 1835, 1893, and 1971. In 1983, the date April 12, 1776, was added at the bottom to commemorate the Halifax Resolves, a document which gave North Carolina's delegates to the Continental Congress the authority to vote for independence. The date May 20, 1775, is thought to be the date of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. This document made a statement in favor of independence from England for the colonies. The State Motto, "Esse Quam Videri," which is Latin for "To be rather than to seem," appears at the bottom of the Seal.

Color the Seal using the guide below:
1) Yellow  2) Light blue  3) Dark blue  4) Green  5) Red  6) Brown
COLOR YOUR NORTH CAROLINA FLAG

The panel on the left is blue. The top strip on the right is red and the bottom is white.

A yellow N and C with a white star in the center are on the blue side panel.

The ribbons are yellow above and below the letters with the dates May 20th, 1775 (Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence) and April 12th, 1776 (Halifax Resolves).

The flag was adopted in 1885.
ANSWER KEY

MATCHING

1. I    6. E
2. G    7. D
3. H    8. B
5. J    10. C

WORD SEARCH

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

FILL IN THE BLANK

PREAMBLE TO THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION
We, the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the preservation of the American Union and the existence of our civil, political and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those blessings to us and our posterity, do, for the more certain security thereof and for the better government of this State, ordain and establish this Constitution.
This publication was compiled by:

Office of the Principal Clerk
North Carolina House of Representatives
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-1096
(919) 733-7760
http://www.ncleg.gov

1,000 copies of this publication were printed at a cost of $.38 per copy.