Northern Ireland Assembly

Who Are Your MLAs?

Areas of Learning:
The World Around Us – Geography
Mathematics and Numeracy
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Learning Intentions

We are learning to:
- identify features of the local area using maps;
- gather, display and interpret data; and
- understand how we and our MLAs can help in the community.

Statutory Requirements

Following the online and class activities will contribute to the following statutory requirements:

The World Around Us – Geography

Teachers should enable the children to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

Strand Three: Place
- how place influences the nature of life; and
- features of and variations in places, including physical, human, climatic, vegetation and animal life.

Mathematics and Numeracy

Teachers should enable the children to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

Handling Data
- design and use a data collection sheet; interpret the results; enter information in a database or spreadsheet and interrogate and interpret the results;
- collect, classify, record and present data drawn from a range of meaningful situations, using graphs, tables, diagrams and ICT software; and
- explain their work orally and/or through writing and draw conclusions.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Teachers should enable the children to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

Strand Two: Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

- Playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment.

Theme 9*: Learning to Live as Members of the Community

- know about the importance of democratic decision-making and involvement and the institutions that support it at a local level; and
- know about the range of jobs and work carried out by different people.

*Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Progression Grid (Key Stage 2) can be downloaded from the KS1&2 section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk

---

Who Are Your MLAs?

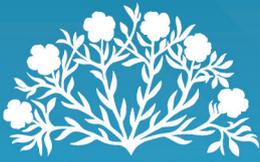## Constituency Map

Antrim East	Belfast East	Belfast West	Foyle	Newry Armagh	Strangford
Antrim North	Belfast North	East Londonderry	Lagan Valley	North Down	Upper Bann
Antrim South	Belfast South	Fermanagh South Tyrone	MidUlster	South Down	West Tyrone

Cross-Curricular Skills & Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities

Following the online and class activities will provide the opportunity to develop the following skills and capabilities:

Managing Information	Using maps to identify features of their local area and gatherinformation about their constituency online, the children should have the opportunity to: • select the most appropriate methods for a task; and • use a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information.
Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making	By finding out who local MLAs are and deciding on a range of questions to ask, the children should have the opportunity to: • sequence, order, classify and make comparisons; and • use different types of questions.
Using ICT	By using online resources to gather information about their constituency and interpret it using appropriate software packages, the children should have the opportunity to: • access, select, interpret and research information from safe and reliable sources; and • create, develop, present and publish ideas and information responsibly using a range of digital media and manipulate a range of assets to produce multimedia products.

Overview

The Who Are Your MLAs? Constituency Map shows the 18 constituencies for the Northern Ireland Assembly elections. Photographs of the 5 MLAs representing an area can be displayed by clicking on that constituency.

The Starter Activity introduces the children to maps of their area. They use the maps to explore and discuss different aspects of their community.

In the Follow-Up Activities, the children add a sketch of their constituency to the data they have gathered during the Online Activity. They explore the job of an MLA and how they can get more involved in issues affecting their community.

Starter Activity

Introduce the children to maps of their area using the Northern Ireland Ordnance Survey Interactive Maps available through LearningNI (LNI) or Google Maps. Ask the children to discuss what they can see on the maps, for example countryside and natural features such as rivers, or communities with manmade landmarks such as schools or hospitals. Compare how features in the aerial photographs are symbolised on the maps.

Give each child a printed map of the local area. Ask them to find and mark:
• community places, for example the school, churches and public facilities;
• local landmarks and any other features distinct to the local landscape;
• urban areas; and
• rural areas.

Discuss the features of the local area the children have been able to pinpoint on the map:
• What symbols are used to mark places of interest?
• What features are unique to their community?
• Is the local area mainly urban, rural or a mixture of both?

Use the children's examples to highlight how the local landscape differs from elsewhere. Based on their feedback on population distribution, do the children think the people in their area are more concerned about urban or rural issues? For example, are they more likely to want to contact their MLA for help with an agriculture or urban development issue? Perhaps it is a mixture of both?

New Words and Phrases

Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) – There are 90 politicians elected from all over Northern Ireland to become Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Their job is to work for us and make laws and decisions that will mean Northern Ireland is a better place to live.

Online Activity

Display the Constituency Map from the **Primary > Who Are Your MLAs?** section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website on the whiteboard.

To use the activity:

• roll over the name of a constituency to view its location on the map;
• click on a constituency to view photographs of the MLAs representing that area; and
• click on the 'I' button to review information and instructions.

Ask the children to think of different types of maps they know about or may have used, for example a treasure map, a map in a computer game or a map of a theme park such as Disneyland. Perhaps they have seen a tube station map for the underground in London, a map of bus routes on a bus shelter, or a map showing the layout of a shopping centre?

Maps can used to display different types of information. In this case, the map shows:

• the 18 areas Northern Ireland is divided into for the Northern Ireland Assembly elections;
• photographs and of the 5 MLAs representing each area or constituency.

New Words and Phrases

Constituency – At election time, Northern Ireland is divided up into 18 areas called constituencies. Each constituency elects six MLAs. If you multiply 18 × 5, you get 90. This is the total number of MLAs.

Explain to the children they are going to use the interactive map to find and record:
• the name given to their constituency;
• the names of the 5 MLAs representing their constituency; and
• the name of the party each MLA represents.

Ask the children to plan how they are going to record this information. For example, they could put MLA Name and MLA Party as column headings and create a table using ICT software. The constituency name should be included in the title for the table. They could display the information collected as a graph showing the breakdown of the political parties in their constituency. The graph should include axes labels, a title and be created using ICT through a suitable graphing package.

When the children have decided on the methods they will use, they should collect and represent the data from the Constituency Map. Ask them to finish by finding the contact details for their chosen MLA on the main Northern Ireland Assembly website: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/

If children live near constituency borders or are not sure which constituency they live in, the post code tool on the WIMPs website will help them to find their constituency: http://wimps.tv/
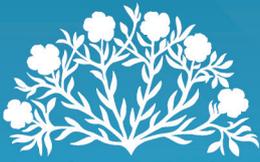
Related Activity

The **Primary** section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website contains other multimedia resources which may be related to this activity:

Who Decides What?
Find out more about the decisions the Northern Ireland Assembly has responsibility for in the local community today.

How a Law is Made
Join Charlie Bot and Zoe Bot to learn about the different steps MLAs are involved with in the law making process at Northern Ireland Assembly.

Inside Parliament Buildings
Tour Parliament Buildings to discover what happens in the three main areas of business.

Follow-Up Activities

Ask the children to share the information they gathered during the Online Activity. They should explain how they collected and presented the data. Invite them to draw some conclusions from their work, for example the largest or smallest party in their constituency.

Activity 1
Recap on the information the children discovered through the maps of the local area in the Starter Activity. Now ask them to sketch a map of their constituency using the Constituency Map in the **Primary** section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website to guide them.

Their map should be added to the data they have already collected about their constituency. Remind the children how landmarks were symbolised on the maps they looked at earlier. Ask them to design three icons to place on the map of their constituency to symbolise their area, for example:
• famous landmarks, such as the Harland and Wolff cranes in Belfast;
• products the area is famous for, such as Belleek pottery; and
• achievements in sport or other disciplines.

They should also mark in the names of towns and villages they know. If they have suitable photos, they could resize them with photo editing software and place them on/around the map, to mimic the Photos option in Google Maps.

Related Learning Resource

The Map Challenge on page 15 of the Thematic Unit: Being and Belonging could extend Activity 1. Using the grid, the children design their map and questions to test their partner's knowledge of co-ordinates.

Being and Belonging can be downloaded from the Year 5 Thematic Units in the **KS1&2** section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Who Are Your MLAs?: 6
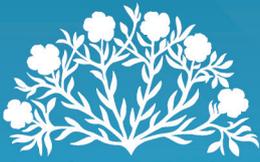
Activity 2

Now the children know the names of the 5 MLAs representing their constituency, they may like to invite a local MLA to visit and talk to them about the work they do. They can use the contact details they researched on the main Northern Ireland Assembly website at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ to get in touch with their MLA, or organise a live chat through the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website.

The class should prepare for the visit by:
• finding out about the issues an MLA is responsible for in the local community; and
• thinking of questions to ask the MLA about what their job involves.

The children can use the Who Decides What? activity from the **Primary** section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website to help explore the issues an MLA is responsible for in the local community. Do any of these issues concern the children in their community? If the children ask a question about that issue, the visiting MLA may be able to suggest how they can help.

After completing Who Decides What? discuss the questions the children would like to ask their MLA. Their questions should aim to find out more about the job of an MLA and how they help in the community. Strategies such as the Ideas Funnel* can help the children to prioritise their questions. When they have considered and prioritised their ideas, the class should work together to draw up a final list of questions to ask the visiting MLA.

Questions might include:
• What is the role of an MLA at the Northern Ireland Assembly?
• What kind of laws have they made?
• What is the canteen like at Parliament Buildings?
• Do they like their job?
• What has been the most/least fun thing they have had to do?
• What is the role of an MLA in the community?
• How do you get to become an MLA?

The children should also think of questions regarding any issues they are concerned about in their community, for example animal cruelty or traffic calming measures. They should discuss these with their MLA, using the opportunity to consider:
• What can the MLA do to help?
• What can the children do to help as members of the community?

To debrief on the visit, invite the visiting MLA to set the children a follow-up challenge. The children could:
• create a web page, poster or online news article to highlight an issue they have discussed;
• organise a campaign, petition or write a letter to voice their views on that matter; or
• give their views to an Assembly Committee doing an inquiry into a topic that interests them, for example school councils.

*Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1&2 booklet can be downloaded from the **KS1&2** section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk