



The A-B-C's of PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

WHAT is PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

It's a **SET OF RULES** for conduct at meetings.
It allows **EVERYONE** to be heard and to make decisions without confusion!

Parliamentary procedure has a LONG HISTORY.

IT ORIGINATED

in the early English Parliaments (discussions of public affairs).

IT CAME TO AMERICA

with the first settlers.

IT BECAME UNIFORM

in 1876, when Henry M. Robert published his manual on Parliamentary Law.

TODAY ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED

is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups.

WHY is PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE IMPORTANT?

Because it's a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE MEANS:

- **DEMOCRATIC RULE**
- **FLEXIBILITY**
- **PROTECTION OF RIGHTS**
- **A FAIR HEARING FOR EVERYONE.**

It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.

So it's important for everyone to know these **BASIC RULES!**

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed AGENDA.
Here's a typical example:

I. CALL TO ORDER

The chair says, "The meeting will please come

VI. SPECIAL ORDERS

Important business previously designated for

GLOSSARY and INDEX

ADJOURN

To end the meeting.

[Ways to adjourn](#)

[How to move to adjourn](#)

AGENDA

[Business to be considered during a meeting.](#)

AMEND

To change a motion.

[Ways to amend](#)

[How to move to amend](#)

COMMITTEE

[A group of members chosen for a certain task.](#)

DEBATE

Discussion about a motion.

[Members' right](#)

[When to debate](#)

[Rules on debate](#)

GENERAL CONSENT

[Accepting a motion without a vote.](#)

IN ORDER

[Relevant to the business at hand.](#)

MAJORITY

More than one half of the members.

[In voting](#)

[When required](#)

MOTION

A proposal that the assembly take a stand or take action on some issue.

[Types of motions](#)

[Procedures affecting motions](#)

[Typical motions](#)

[How to make a motion](#)

QUORUM

[Number of members that must be present to conduct business legally.](#)

to order."	consideration at this meeting.
II. QUORUM*	VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
The chair notes if a quorum is present.	Business left over from previous meetings.
III. MINUTES	VIII. NEW BUSINESS
The secretary reads a record of the last meeting.	Introduction of new topics.
IV. OFFICERS' REPORTS	IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS
Often limited to a report from treasurer, but others may report at this time.	Informing the assembly of other subjects and events.
V. COMMITTEE REPORTS	X. ADJOURNMENT
First come reports from standing (permanent) committees, then from special (temporary) committees.	The meeting ends by a vote, or by general consent (or by chair's decision if time of adjournment was pre-arranged by vote).

***QUORUM...**The number of members that must be present for business to be conducted legally. The actual number is usually stated in the bylaws.

HOW DO MEMBERS GET THEIR SAY?

THEY MAKE MOTIONS!

A motion is a proposal that the assembly **TAKE A STAND** or **TAKE ACTION** on some issue.

PRESENTS MOTIONS (make a proposal)	SECOND MOTIONS (express support for discussion of another's motion)
DEBATE MOTIONS (give opinions on the motion)	VOTE ON MOTIONS (make a decision)

There are **4 GENERAL TYPES OF MOTIONS**

1 MAIN MOTIONS introduce subjects to the assembly for its consideration. They cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions. For example: "I move that we purchase..."	2 SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS change or affect how the main motion is handled. (They are voted on before the main motion.) For example: "I move the question before the assembly be amended by striking out..."
3 PRIVILEGED MOTIONS are most urgent. They concern special or important matters not related to pending business. For example: "I move we adjourn"	4 INCIDENTAL MOTIONS are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. They must be considered before the other motion. For example: "I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of..."

SOME QUESTIONS RELATING TO MOTIONS:

IS IT IN ORDER?

Your motion must relate to the business at hand, and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous or against the bylaws.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED

Manual of procedure for nonlegislative assemblies.

SECOND

A verbal signal from a member that he or she wishes to consider a motion just made.

Members' right
When required
How to give a second

VOTING

Means by which motions are accepted or rejected by the assembly.

Members' right
What vote is needed
Method of voting

MAY I INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?

Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted to make them. The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been attended to.

DO I NEED A SECOND?

Usually, yes. A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question which interests only one person.

IS IT DEBATABLE?

Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on most motions. However some subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.

CAN IT BE AMENDED?

Some motions can be altered by striking out, inserting, or both at once. Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.

WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?

Most require only a majority vote, but motions concerning the rights of the assembly or its members need a 2/3 vote to be adopted.

CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?

Some motions can be debated again and revoted to give members a chance to change their minds. The motion to reconsider must come from the winning side.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE at a glance.

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

TO DO THIS:	YOU SAY THIS:					
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourn"					
CALL AN INTERVENTION	"I move that we recess for..."					
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.	"I rise to a question of privilege"					
TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion"					
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	"I move the previous question"					
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."					
GIVE CLOSER STUDY TO SOMETHING	"I move to refer the matter to committee"					
AMEND A MOTION	"I move to amend the motion by..."					
INTRODUCE BUSINESS	"I move that..."					
	may you interrupt speaker?	need a second?	debatable?	can it be amended?	what vote is needed?	can it be reconsidered?
ADJOURN MEETING	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
CALL AN INTERVENTION	NO	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	YES
POSTPONE DISCUSSION						

FOR A CERTAIN TIME	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
GIVE CLOSER STUDY TO SOMETHING	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
AMEND A MOTION	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
INTRODUCE BUSINESS	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES

HOW do I present my motion?

Here's what to do when it's your turn to speak:

<p>1 OBTAIN THE FLOOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wait until the last speaker is finished. b. Rise and address the chair. Say, "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson" or "Mr. (or Madam) President." c. Give your name. The chair will recognize you by repeating it. 	<p>2 MAKE YOUR MOTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Speak clearly and concisely. b. State your motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we . . ." instead of "I move that we do not . . ." c. Avoid personalities and stay on the subject.
<p>3 WAIT FOR A SECOND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Another member will say, "I second the motion." b. Or the chair will call for a second. c. If there is no second, your motion will not be considered. 	<p>4 CHAIR STATES YOUR MOTION</p> <p>The chair must say, "It is moved and seconded that we . . ."</p> <p>After this happens, debate or voting can occur.</p> <p>Your motion is now "assembly property" and you can't change it without consent of the members.</p>
<p>5 EXPAND ON YOUR MOTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mover is allowed to speak first. b. Direct all comments to the chair. c. Keep to the time limit for speaking. d. You may speak again after all other speakers are finished. e. You may speak a third time by a motion to suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote. 	<p>6 PUTTING THE QUESTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?" b. If there is no more discussion, or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, a vote is taken. c. The chair announces the results.

The method of **VOTING ON A MOTION** depends on the situation and on the laws of your organization.

<p>BY VOICE</p> <p>The chair asks those in favor to say "aye" and those opposed to say "no." (For majority votes only.) A member may move for an exact count.</p>	<p>BY SHOW OF HANDS</p> <p>Members raise their hands as sight verification of or as an alternative to a voice vote. It does not require a count. A member may move for an exact count.</p>
<p>BY ROLL CALL</p> <p>If a record of each person's vote is needed, each member answers "yes," "no" or "present" (indicating the choice not to vote) as his or her name is called.</p>	<p>BY BALLOT</p> <p>Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This is done when secrecy is desired.</p>

BY GENERAL CONSENT

When a motion isn't likely to be opposed, the chair says, "If there is no objection . . ." Members show agreement by their silence. If someone says, "I object," the matter must be put to a vote.

More about VOTING

Are we ready for the question?

A question (motion) is **PENDING** when it has been stated by the chair but not yet voted on. The last motion stated by the chair is the first pending. The **MAIN MOTION** is always the last voted on.

A MOTION TO TABLE

(lay on the table)

This motion is used to lay something aside temporarily to take care of a more urgent matter. There is always the option to "take from the table" any motion for reconsideration by the assembly.

A MOTION TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

This is parliamentary strategy - it allows members to dispose of a motion without making a decision for or against. It is useful in case of a badly chosen main motion for which either a "yes" or "no" vote would have undesirable consequences.

Soo --

**PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE
HELPS GET THINGS DONE!**

BUT -- it only works if you use it right !

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