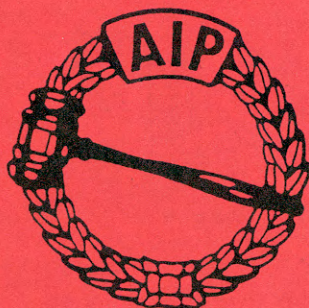


The a-b-c's of  
**PARLIAMENTARY  
PROCEDURE**



**A**merican  
**I**nstitute of  
**P**arliamentarians



# WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

It's a set of rules for conducting business at meetings and public gatherings.



## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE HAS A LONG HISTORY

**IT ORIGINATED**  
in the early English Parliaments.



**IT CAME TO AMERICA**  
with the first European settlers.



**IT BECAME UNIFORM**  
in 1876, when Henry M. Robert published his manual on Parliamentary Law.



Today, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 9th Edition*, is the basic handbook of operation for many clubs, organizations and other groups.



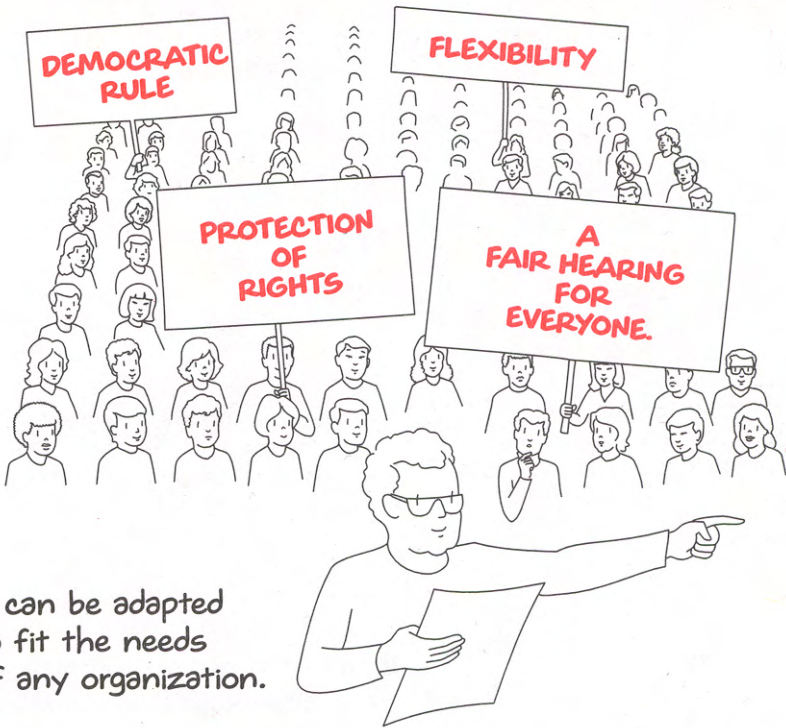
Note: A glossary and index are on page 14.



# WHY IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE IMPORTANT?

Because it allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE MEANS:

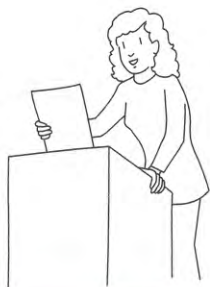


It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.

So, it's important for everyone to know these basic rules!

# A FIXED AGENDA,

or order of business, is generally followed by organizations using parliamentary procedure. Here's a typical example:



## 1. CALL TO ORDER

If a quorum\* is present, the chair (the person conducting the meeting) says, "The meeting will come to order."

## 2. MINUTES

The secretary reads a record of the previous meeting.

## 3. OFFICERS' REPORTS

This is often limited to a report from the treasurer, but others may report at this time.

## 4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

First come reports from standing (permanent) committees, then from special (temporary) committees.

## 5. SPECIAL ORDERS

This is important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.

## 6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

This is business that has come over from the previous meeting.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

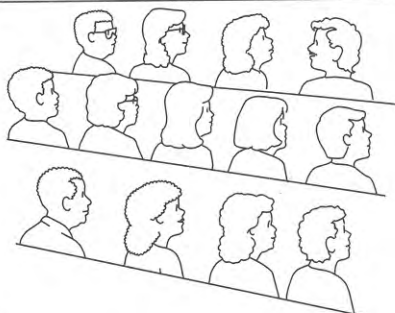
New topics are introduced.

## 8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

These inform the assembly (the people at the meeting) of other subjects and events.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ends by a vote or by general consent (or by chair's decision if time of adjournment was prearranged by vote).



## \*A QUORUM

is the number or percentage 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. Members have a right to:

## PRESENT MOTIONS

(make a proposal)



## SECOND MOTIONS

(express support for discussion of another member's motion)



## DEBATE MOTIONS

(give opinions on the motion)



## VOTE ON MOTIONS

(make a decision).



# THERE ARE 5 GENERAL TYPES OF MOTIONS

## ① MAIN MOTIONS

These introduce subjects for consideration. They cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions.

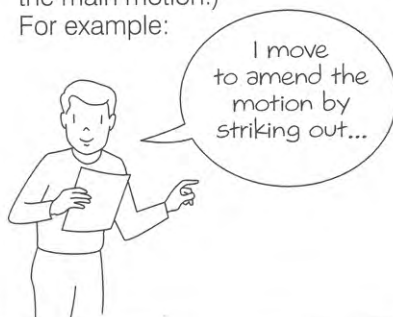
For example:



## ② SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

These change or affect how the main motion is handled. (They are voted on before the main motion.)

For example:



## ③ PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

These concern special or important matters not related to pending business. In general, they are considered before other types of motions.

For example:



## ④ INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

These are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. They must be considered before the other motion. For example:



## ⑤ MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

These enable certain items to be reconsidered. In general, they are brought up when no business is pending.

For example:



# 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:	MAY YOU INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?	DO YOU NEED A SECOND?	IS IT DEBATABLE?	CAN IT BE AMENDED?	WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?	CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourn."	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
CALL AN INTERMISSION	"I move that we recess for..."	NO	YES	NO <sup>1</sup>	YES	MAJORITY	NO
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion."	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO <sup>2</sup>
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	"I move the previous question."	NO	YES	NO	NO	$\frac{2}{3}$	YES <sup>3</sup>
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES <sup>4</sup>
AMEND A MOTION	"I move to amend the motion by..."	NO	YES	YES <sup>5</sup>	YES	MAJORITY	YES
INTRODUCE BUSINESS	"I move that..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES

## THE MOTIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE. BELOW, THERE IS NO ORDER...

PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT	"I rise to a point of order."	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE <sup>6</sup>	NO
VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR	"I appeal from the chair's decision."	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY	YES
SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	$\frac{2}{3}$	NO
AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER	"I object to consideration of this motion."	YES	NO	NO	NO	$\frac{2}{3}$ <sup>7</sup>	YES <sup>8</sup>
VERIFY A VOICE VOTE BY HAVING MEMBERS STAND	"I call for a division," or "Division!"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
REQUEST INFORMATION	"Point of information..."	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
TAKE UP A MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED	"I move to take from the table..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	YES <sup>9</sup>	YES	YES <sup>10</sup>	NO	MAJORITY	NO

- NOTES:**
- <sup>1</sup> Unless moved when no question is pending.
  - <sup>2</sup> Affirmative votes may not be reconsidered.
  - <sup>3</sup> Unless vote on question has begun.
  - <sup>4</sup> Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.
  - <sup>5</sup> Unless the motion to be amended is not debatable.
  - <sup>6</sup> Unless the chair submits to the assembly for decision.
  - <sup>7</sup> A  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote in negative is needed to prevent consideration of the main motion.
  - <sup>8</sup> Only if the main question has not been debated yet.
  - <sup>9</sup> Only if the speaker has the floor but has not actually begun to speak.
  - <sup>10</sup> Unless the motion to be reconsidered is not debatable.

# HOW DO I PRESENT MY MOTION?

Here's what happens when you want a motion considered:



## 1 YOU OBTAIN THE FLOOR

- Wait until the previous speaker is finished.
- Rise and address the chair. Say, "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson" or "Mr. (or Madam) President."
- Give your name. The chair will recognize you by repeating it.



## 2 YOU MAKE YOUR MOTION

- Speak clearly and concisely.
- State your motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we do..." instead of "I move that we do not..."
- Stay on the subject and avoid personal attacks.





### 3 YOU WAIT FOR A SECOND

- Another member will say, "I second the motion."
- Or, the chair will call for a second.
- If there is no second, your motion will not be considered.

Motions made at the direction of a board or committee (of more than one person) do not require a second.



### 4 THE CHAIR STATES YOUR MOTION

- The chair must say, "It is moved and seconded that we..."
- After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
- Your motion is now "assembly property," and you can't change it without consent of the members.



### 5 YOU EXPAND ON YOUR MOTION

- As the person who made the motion, you are allowed to speak first.
- Direct all comments to the chair.
- Keep to the time limit for speaking.
- You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.
- You may speak a third time by a motion to suspend the rules with a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote.



### 6 THE CHAIR PUTS THE QUESTION

- The chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?"
- If there is no more debate, or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, a vote is taken.
- The chair announces the results.



# THE METHOD OF VOTING ON A MOTION

depends on the situation and on the bylaws of your organization. You may vote by:



## VOICE

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.



## SHOW OF HANDS

Members raise their hands to verify a voice vote, or as an alternative to it. This does not require a count. A member may move for an exact count.



## ROLL CALL

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.



## BALLOT

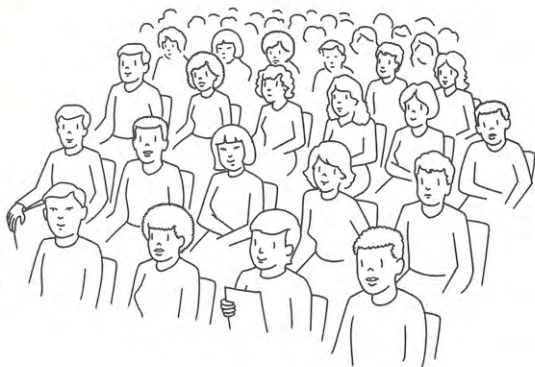
Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This is done when secrecy is desired.



## GENERAL CONSENT

When a motion isn't likely to be opposed, the chair says, "If there is no objection..." Members show consent by their silence.

If someone says, "I object," the matter must be put to a vote.



# MORE ABOUT VOTING



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.

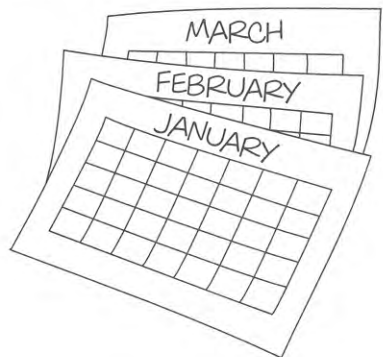
## A MOTION TO LAY ON THE TABLE

This motion is used to lay something aside temporarily to take care of a more urgent matter. It should not be used to prevent debate or to kill a question.

Members can "take from the table" a motion for reconsideration. This must happen by the end of the current or next session (depending on how soon the next session is scheduled).

## A MOTION TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

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



# GLOSSARY AND INDEX



## ADJOURN

To end the meeting

- Ways to adjourn . . . . . 4
- How to move to adjourn . . 8-9

## AGENDA

Business to be considered during a meeting . . . . . 4

## AMEND

To change a motion

- Ways to amend . . . . . 7
- How to move to amend . . . 8-9

## COMMITTEE

A group of members chosen for a certain task . . . . . 4

## DEBATE

Discussion about a motion

- Members' rights . . . . . 5
- When to debate . . . . . 7-9
- Rules on debate . . . . . 11

## GENERAL CONSENT

Adopting a motion without a vote . . . . . 12

## IN ORDER

Relevant to the business at hand . . . . . 7

## MAJORITY

More than half of the members present and voting

- In voting . . . . . 7
- When required . . . . . 8-9

## MOTION

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

- Types of motions . . . . . 6, 13
- Procedures affecting motions . . . . . 6-7
- Typical motions . . . . . 8-9
- How to make a motion . . . . 10-11

## QUORUM

Number or percentage of members that must be present to conduct business legally . . . . . 4

## SECOND

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

- Members' right . . . . . 5
- When required . . . . . 7-9
- How to give a second . . . . 11

## VOTING

Means by which motions are accepted or rejected by the assembly

- Members' right . . . . . 5
- What vote is needed . . . . 7-9
- Method of voting . . . . . 12

So...

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE HELPS GET THINGS DONE

- ✓ **MAKE MOTIONS**  
that are in order.
- ✓ **OBTAIN THE FLOOR**  
properly.
- ✓ **SPEAK**  
clearly and concisely.
- ✓ **OBEDY**  
the rules of debate.

And, most of all,  
be courteous.



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