

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE - and ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

(Just the Basics)

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## WHY? WHY? WHY?

- Parliamentary Procedure is a common, tested way to conduct meetings
- Using Parliamentary Procedure keeps meetings on track
- It gives everyone an opportunity to participate and to be heard
- Used properly, it can avoid confusion



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## Basic Principles

- Chairperson runs the meeting consistent with the Bylaws
- Membership makes one decision at a time
- Members must be recognized by the chairperson before they can speak
- Decisions are made by majority vote
- Members have the opportunity to discuss or debate items before voting

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**How does it work?**

- Move on down the agenda one matter at a time
- Informational items do not require a motion, the Chair merely recognizes the member presenting the information
- Action Items will require a motion, a second, debate or discussion if a member wishes to debate the motion, and a vote
- People speak IN TURN, as recognized by the Chair

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**Getting to Speak**

- When a member has something to say they ask for recognition by the chair.
- This may be done by raising a hand or by standing and addressing the chair
- After the Chair recognizes the member, the member may speak

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**WHEN SPEAKING**

- Comments should be addressed to the Chair
- Speak on the topic at hand
- Courtesy demands that members do not ask for recognition from the chair while someone else is still speaking
- People who have not yet spoken have priority over those who have wish to speak for a second time
- If time limits are in place, members can only speak for the set amount of time on any one topic

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**Motions**

- Once the member has been recognized by the Chair he or she may make a motion – “I move that . . .”
- In order to move on the motion needs to be “seconded” by another member.
- Seconding a motion does not necessarily mean that the person seconding the motion agrees with the motion – it just means that person believes the motion is worthy of discussion.
- The motion is then debated or voted upon

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**Ways to vote**

- Chair can ask for objections and if there are none, the chair can declare that the motion carries. (Informal and usually only used for non-controversial motions).
- Voice vote (members say “aye” or “nay” and if it is unclear which is the majority any member may move for an exact count)
- Roll call vote (each member says “aye” or “nay” individually)
- By ballot (when secrecy is necessary)

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**MOST COMMON MOTIONS**

- Main Motion
- Motion to Amend (friendly vs. formal amendments)
- Motion to limit debate (requires a 2/3 majority and is not debatable)
- Motion to the previous question (requires a 2/3 majority and is not debatable)

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**Other**

- Motion to recess



- Point of Order
- Point of information
  - Question for the person who made the motion
  - "Parliamentary Inquiry" to ask the Chair what is going on or where the group is in the process

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**REVIEW**

- MOTION
- SECOND
- DISCUSSION/DEBATE
- VOTE

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**Resources:**

- Susan Leahy on YouTube
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYwKX\\_P8YkU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYwKX_P8YkU)
- Other examples on YouTube
- [http://ww2.anokacounty.us/v4\\_board/video-previous.aspx](http://ww2.anokacounty.us/v4_board/video-previous.aspx) (Anoka County Board Meetings)
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Handouts with basic summaries of RRO
- Bryan Frantz, Anoka Co. Attorney's Office  
763-323-5751 or [bryan.frantz@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:bryan.frantz@co.anoka.mn.us)

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# Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order

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www.robertsrules.org

## What Is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings, that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

## Why is Parliamentary Procedure Important?

Because it's a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, Robert's Rules of Order newly revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups. So it's important that everyone know these basic rules!

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business. Below is a typical example:

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call of members present.
3. Reading of minutes of last meeting.
4. Officers reports.
5. Committee reports.
6. Special orders --- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
7. Unfinished business.
8. New business.
9. Announcements.
10. Adjournment.

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Individual members can:

1. Call to order.
2. Second motions.
3. Debate motions.
4. Vote on motions.

## There are four Basic Types of Motions:

1. **Main Motions:** The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.
2. **Subsidiary Motions:** Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.
3. **Privileged Motions:** Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.
4. **Incidental Motions:** Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

## How are Motions Presented?

1. **Obtaining the floor**
  - a. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
  - b. Rise and address the Chairman by saying, "Mr. Chairman, or Mr. President."
  - c. Wait until the Chairman recognizes you.
2. **Make Your Motion**
  - a. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
  - b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not ...".
  - c. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. **Wait for Someone to Second Your Motion**
4. **Another member will second your motion or the Chairman will call for a second.**

*continued...*

5. If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
6. The Chairman States Your Motion
  - a. The Chairman will say, "it has been moved and seconded that we ..." Thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
  - b. The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
  - c. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairman it becomes "assembly property", and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.
7. Expanding on Your Motion
  - a. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
  - b. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
  - c. All comments and debate must be directed to the chairman.
  - d. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
  - e. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chairman.
8. Putting the Question to the Membership
  - a. The Chairman asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?"
  - b. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
  - c. On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

#### Voting on a Motion:

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the by-laws of policy of your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations, they are:

1. By Voice -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for a exact count.
2. By Roll Call -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
3. By General Consent -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
4. By Division -- This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
5. By Ballot -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper, this method is used when secrecy is desired.

There are two other motions that are commonly used that relate to voting.

1. Motion to Table -- This motion is often used in the attempt to "kill" a motion. The option is always present, however, to "take from the table", for reconsideration by the membership.
2. Motion to Postpone Indefinitely -- This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

**Parliamentary Procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings, but, it will only work if you use it properly.**

1. Allow motions that are in order.
  2. Have members obtain the floor properly.
  3. Speak clearly and concisely.
  4. Obey the rules of debate.
- Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS.*

## Robert's Rules of Order

### Basic Principles

- ✦ Parliamentary procedure exists to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony.
- ✦ All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
  - The majority has the right to decide.
  - The minority has rights, which must be protected.
- ✦ A quorum must be present for the group to act.
- ✦ Full and free discussion of every motion considered is a basic right.
- ✦ Only one question at a time can be considered at any given time.
- ✦ Members have the right to know at all times what the immediately pending question is, and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
- ✦ No member can speak until recognized by the chair.
- ✦ No one can speak a second time on the same question as long as another wants to speak a first time.
- ✦ The chair should be strictly impartial.



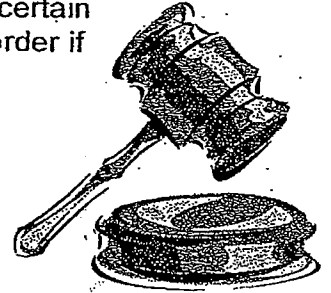
Attachment 3 –  
**Parliamentary Procedure “Lingo”**

**Motion**

A proposal or resolution by a member that the assembly take a certain action or express a certain view. A motion is considered out of order if it conflicts with the constitution or by-laws of the group.

**Main Motion**

A motion to introduce a principal subject. Only one main motion may be considered at a time and must be disposed of before another main motion may be considered.



**Motion to Lay on the Table (or Tabling)**

A motion to lay aside a pending question for an indefinite amount of time.

**Motion to Take from the Table**

A motion enabling the assembly to resume consideration of a previously tabled item

**Point of Order**

To object to a proceeding as being in conflict with the rules of procedure. The chair must recognize the point.

**Previous Questions**

A motion to end debate, which requires the assembly to vote on the issue at hand. The motion must be suspended, requires a 2/3 vote, and is not debatable.

**Friendly Amendment**

A small change to an original motion. Those who made and seconded the original motion must agree to the amendment.

**Motion to Adjourn**

A motion made at the conclusion of a business meeting or at the final business session.

**Majority Vote**

More than half of the votes, or 50%+1

**Quorum**

The number of members required in the by-laws to hold a legal meeting.

Attachment 4 –  
**Handling a Motion**

**Three steps by which a motion is brought before the group**

1. A member makes a motion.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. The chair states the question on the motion.

**Three Steps in the Consideration of a Motion**

1. The members debate the motion (unless no member claims the floor for that purpose).
2. The chair puts the question to a vote.
  - A. The chair restates the question.
  - B. The chair takes the vote:

"All in favor of the motion, say aye."

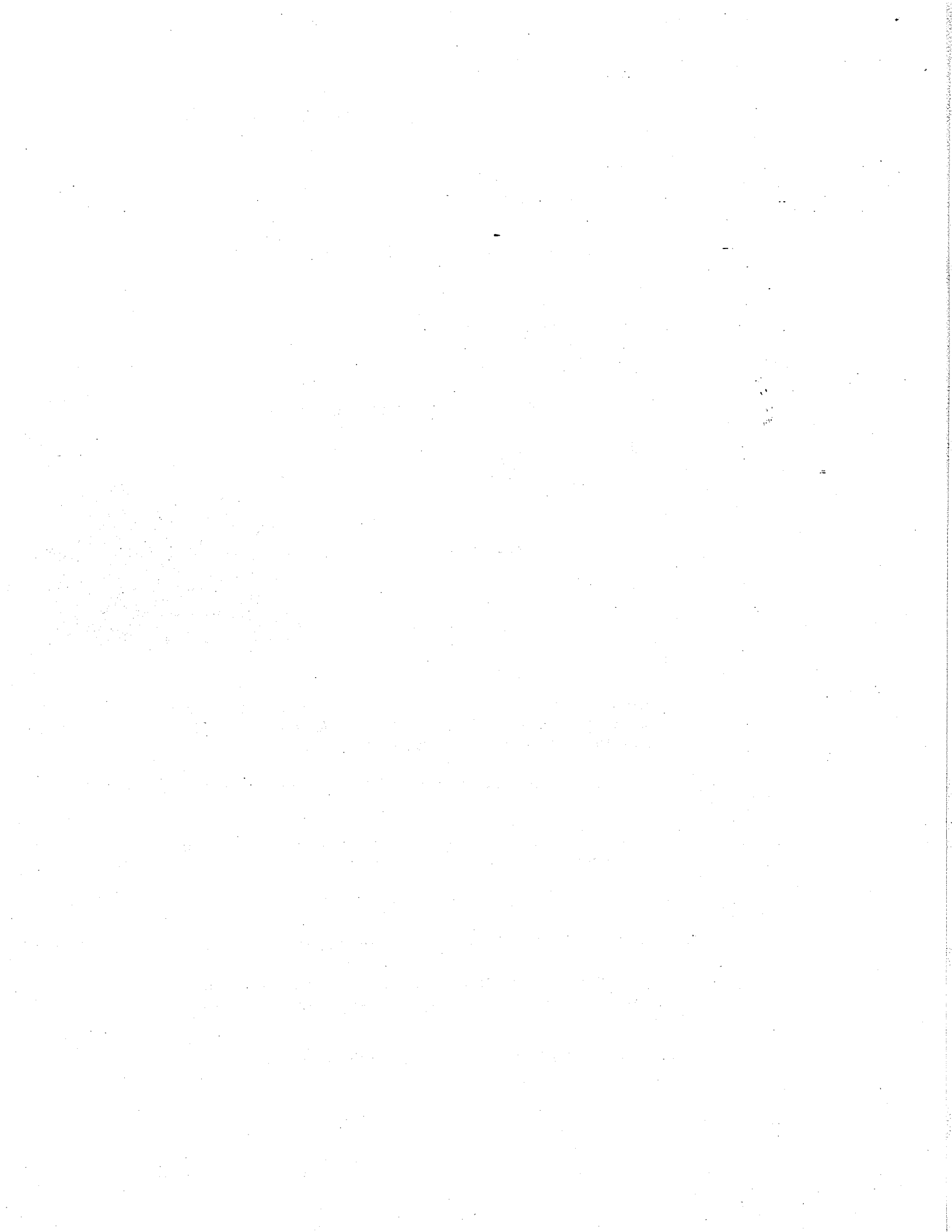
"Those opposed, say no."



*A vote passes with a simple majority (except in cases of Suspending the rules, previous question, limit or extended debate & amend a previously adopted motion), which requires a 2/3 vote.*

3. The chair announces the result of a vote. A complete announcement should include:
  - A. Report on the voting itself, stating which side prevailed (and giving the count if a count prevailed).
  - B. Declaration that the motion is adopted or lost.
  - C. Statement indicating the effect of the vote or ordering its execution.
  - D. Where applicable, announcement of the next item of business or stating the question of the next motion that consequently comes up for a vote.

*Adapted from Roberts Rules of Order, 10<sup>th</sup> edition*



***Running Meetings with Robert's Rules of Order***  
*A guide for chapter meetings and convention sessions*

- A. General Procedures
- B. Situations
- C. Terms
- D. Common Motions
- E. Voting
- F. Robert's Rules Example

## General Procedures

*A meeting wouldn't be a meeting without some general rules of procedure and decorum. Robert's Rules, of course, have many of these. We have tried to whittle them down to what we think would be most useful for most chapter meetings and the national convention. Although the rules may seem at times to be trivial or nitpicky or downright weird, they are essentially just a way of ensuring fairness and common courtesy to all members of the meeting.*

### *Getting to Speak*

When you have something to say, you have to be *recognized by the chair*. According to Robert's Rules, this is done by standing up and *addressing the chair*. Now this may a bit too formal for many occasions and, admittedly, a few people shouting "Mr. President" every few minutes gets really annoying. So many chapters (and traditionally the national convention) have been a bit less formal and fallen back on simply **raising hands to get recognized**. **If the chair then calls on you, you may speak.**

As a common courtesy (and according to the Rules), you should **never seek recognition while someone else is talking**. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to get a point across while a dozen people have their hand in the air and are trying so hard to get the chair's attention that they are not paying attention to anything being said. Be polite and wait until they are finished. There are a few instances when it is acceptable to interrupt someone or speak without gaining recognition by the chair, such as when making a point of order or a point of information, but these are pretty rare.

**Members who have not yet spoken about the topic at hand always have priority over those who have.** According to the Rules, **each member can only speak twice on any given topic** (note: the standing rules of the national convention actually allow each person to speak only once). Additionally, the chair is obliged to try and alternate recognizing those who are for and against the motion being discussed. For example, if someone just spoke against a motion the chair would say something like "Is there anyone who wishes to speak in favor of the motion?" and then recognize someone.

### *Speaking*

After you've been recognized, you may then speak. It's best to start by addressing the chair with their title, but again this may be a bit formal for chapter meetings. **Always address your comments to the chair, even if they involve another member.** This keeps debate from becoming personal. **When referring to other members, use their title and not their name** (i.e., "Brother Smith", or "The delegate from Andronicus.") Using someone's first name implies a level of friendship that may not be appropriate when some of the members present may not know each other very well.

**When speaking, you may speak only on the merits of the topic immediately at hand.** Anything off the topic is *out of order*, and you can be made to stop talking if someone points it out.

You may speak only a certain amount of time on any given topic. Robert's Rules allows for 10 minutes, the standing rules of convention allow for 2 minutes. Your chapter should have standing rules regarding both how long and how many times members get to talk on any one topic, unless you want to use Robert's standards.

## Situations

*This is a quick guide listing common situations you may find yourself in and how to deal with them.*

- **I want to change the wording of the motion we are discussing.**
  - Move to *amend* the motion and state your change specifically.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is debatable.
    - Requires a simple majority to pass.
  
- **I want to end the discussion and have the vote.**
  - Move to the *previous question*. Remember, when you are voting on the previous question you are voting only on whether or not to end discussion on the motion, not on the motion itself.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a 2/3 majority to pass.
  
- **I think discussion should continue, but I don't want it to go on all day.**
  - Move to *limit debate*, and state specifically how you want to limit it.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a 2/3 majority to pass.
  
- **I want the chair to enforce rules about time limits and the number of times people are allowed to speak.**
  - Make a *point of order* and then point out the rules being violated. The chair is then obliged to enforce the rules.
    - Can be made at any time, even when someone is speaking.
  
- **The chair has been enforcing rules about time limits and the number of times people are allowed to speak, but I really think we need to discuss this more.**
  - Move to *extend debate* and state specifically how you want to extend it.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a 2/3 majority to pass.

- **This motion needs more attention/investigation/discussion than we can give it today.**
  - Move to *refer* the motion to committee, then give the specifics of the committee and when and how you want them to report on the matter.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is debatable.
    - Requires a simple majority to pass.
  
- **I need a bathroom break.**
  - Move to *recess* and state for how long or give a time you want to reconvene.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a simple majority to pass.
  
- **I have no idea what is going on.**
  - Make a *parliamentary inquiry*, and ask the chair to explain what is going on.
    - Can be made at any time, as long as no one is speaking.
  
- **I want to motion to do something, but I'm not sure how to do it or if it is in order right now.**
  - Make a *parliamentary inquiry* and explain what you want to do to the chair, who should then tell you the proper manner in which to do it.
    - Can be made at any time, as long as no one is speaking.
    - After the chair explains, you do not have the right to immediately make the motion. You must wait until the chair recognizes you in the normal fashion.
  
- **I have a question for the person who is speaking.**
  - Don't interrupt, it's not nice. Technically, Robert's Rules allows for you make a *point of information* and interrupt a speaker by saying, "Will the speaker yield to a question?" The speaker can then choose to let you ask the question or not. But since both the question and the answer will count towards to speaker's time limit, it is very impolite to use this in situations with extremely strict time limits (like at the national convention). In this case, it is best to wait until the speaker is done and then address the chair with your point of inquiry, who then has the right to decide whether or not to allow it.

- **I have a question for the maker of the motion or someone who has already spoken.**
  - Make a *point of information*, and ask the chair if they will allow a question to so-and-so. If the chair allows it, direct your question through the chair to the person. Never address the person directly.
    - Can be made at any time, as long as no one is speaking.
    - The chair has the right to decide whether or not to allow the question.
  
- **I made a motion and now I think it's dumb.**
  - Ask *permission to withdraw* the motion.
    - Can be made at any time, though it is polite to wait until someone is done speaking.
    - The chair asks if there are any objections to the motion being withdrawn.
      - If no one objects, the motion is immediately withdrawn.
      - If there is an objection, the request to withdraw becomes a motion which must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a simple majority to pass.

## Terms

### *Amend*

To change the wording of a motion.

### *Assembly*

The people or delegates in a meeting.

### *Chair, The*

The presiding officer of a meeting, whether it is the president or a committee head, etc., always referred to by their title (Madam or Mr. President, Madam or Mr. Chair, etc). The chair essentially runs the meeting by recognizing who gets to speak when.

### *Motion*

The motion is the basic tool for getting things done, from proposing a new rule to changing the wording of something being considered to requesting a bathroom break. To make a motion, you simply use the phrase "I move that..." and state what you want.

**Main Motions** are any generally any sort of proposals that need to be discussed and voted upon, such as adopting a new rule, raising dues, amending the constitution or by-laws, etc.

**Secondary Motions** occur during discussion of main motions, and are generally about amending the main motion.

**Privileged Motions** can be made at any time. The most common is to motion for a recess, i.e. a bathroom break.

### *Second*

Before a motion can be discussed, it must be seconded. This just means that someone other than the person who made the motion also thinks it should be discussed, which they indicate by saying "Second!" after a motion is made. Seconding a motion doesn't necessarily mean you support it—it just means that you think it should be discussed by the assembly. If someone makes a motion and no one seconds it, it dies and cannot be discussed.

### *Order*

The proper manner for doing things, as established by the rules. Certain things can happen only at certain times, otherwise they are *out of order* and are invalidated.

## Common Motions

### *Motion to the Previous Question, or "Call to Question"*

The motion to the previous question is actually a motion to stop debate and proceed to a vote. **The call to question does not automatically force a vote on the main motion unless it is passed.** It's a bit confusing, but it is best to envision it that when someone moves to the previous question they are moving to stop discussion. Since this would effectively cut off anyone who still has something to say, a motion to the previous question requires a 2/3 majority to pass. This means 2/3 of the members have to agree to stop discussion. If the motion to previous question does not pass, discussion remains open. If it passes, discussion is stopped, the chair restates the main motion, and the assembly proceeds immediately to vote on it. A motion to previous question is required to stop debate even on amendments or amendments to amendments. However, the chair may opt to skip directly to a vote at any point when it appears no one has any more discussion on a particular topic. You must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion to motion to the previous question.

### *Motion to Amend*

The motion to amend is used to change the wording of a motion. Common methods of amending motions are by striking out words, substituting words, or adding words. You can also strike, substitute, or add entire phrases or paragraphs to a motion should the need arise. In order to make a motion to amend, you must first be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion. If your motion to amend is seconded, the assembly proceeds immediately to debate it. During this period, members may only talk about the merits of the amendment, and not of the main motion itself. Debate on a motion to amend is ended when a motion to the *previous question* has been successfully passed. The chair then restates the motion to amend, and the assembly proceeds directly to a vote on the amendment. A motion to amend must be passed by a simple majority.

### *Motion to Limit or Extend Debate*

A motion to *limit* debate can be used to set up time limits for speakers, set a time limit for discussion for the topic, limit the number of times people are allowed to speak, or otherwise reduce the amount of time allowed for discussion from the default rules. A motion to *extend* debate can be used to increase time limits, the number of times people can speak, or otherwise increase the allowable discussion time from the default rules. In order to make a motion to limit or extend debate, you must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion. You must then state specifically how you wish to limit or extend debate. If someone seconds, then the assembly immediately proceeds to a vote. A motion to limit or extend debate must have a 2/3 majority to pass.

### *Motion to Refer to Committee*

This is pretty self-explanatory. This takes the topic you are discussing and dumps it in the hands of a committee to further discuss or resolve. You must be very specific when making this motion, stating exactly which committee you are referring it to, to what extent they should resolve the issue, and when they should report on their findings. Examples: "I move that the social committee select two of these locations for us to vote on at the next meeting," or "I move that this be referred to a new committee consisting of one person from each

major, which will give a report and recommendation two weeks from now.” You must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion to make a motion to refer to a committee and it must be seconded. It is then debatable until someone successfully motions to previous question.

### ***Motion to Recess***

The motion to recess is used to ask for a short break. When motioning to recess, you should specify for how long you want to recess, such as “I motion for a ten minute recess,” or “I motion to recess until 3:00 PM.” In order to make this motion, you must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion. The motion to recess is immediately put to a vote if someone seconds it, and it requires a simple majority to pass.

### ***Point of Order***

This is used to point out when something is against the rules, which can be anything from someone talking too long to a vote being done improperly. If something is out of order, all you have to do is get the chair’s attention by saying “Point of Order”, and then describe how the rules are being broken. Then the chair has to enforce the rule you pointed out.

### ***Point of Information***

There are two basic types of this. The first is when you want to ask a question of the maker of a motion or someone who has already spoken. To do this, just wait until no one else is speaking and then get the chair’s attention by saying “Point of Information” and then ask for permission to ask a question. The chair can then decide whether or not to allow you to ask the question. The second type of point of information is the *parliamentary inquiry*. You can make one of these when you are unsure of how to properly do something, or are confused as to what is going on and want some clarification. Again, when no one is speaking, you can get the chair’s attention by saying “Point of Information,” say you have a *parliamentary inquiry*, and then ask the chair your question. When you make a parliamentary inquiry, the chair does *not* have the right to decide whether or not to allow you to ask the question—he has to answer it.

### ***Permission to Withdraw a Motion***

You can do this if you’ve changed your mind about a motion you’ve made, and want to unmake it. Unfortunately, you can’t do this whenever you want. You can only do it after you’ve been called on by the chair, as if you were wanting to speak on the motion. When the chair calls on you, you may ask for permission to withdraw your motion. The chair will then ask if there are any objections—if there aren’t, then you get to withdraw the motion. But if someone doesn’t want you to withdraw it, then your request to withdraw becomes an actual motion that has to be seconded and voted on.

## Voting

*This section describes the different types of votes and some general rules about voting.*

### Voice Vote

The most common type of voting, this is when the chair says “**Those in favor of the motion, say aye.**” All members in support of the motion call out “aye”. Next, the chair says “Those opposed, say no” after which opponents call out “no”. If there is a clear majority, the chair announces the result. If there is not a clear majority, a member may call for the vote to be retaken by calling out “**division!**”

### Hand Vote

A hand vote works the same as a voice vote, where the chair first calls for those in favor to raise their hands. Without counting, they then call for those opposed to raise their hands. If a majority is seen, the chair will announce the result. Again, a member may call “**division**” if they believe there was not a clear majority. In addition, a member may **ask that the vote be counted**. The chair then retakes the vote in the same way but counts the votes for and against the motion.

### Counted Vote

This is simply the counted version of the hand vote. Some groups may choose to skip the uncounted hand vote since it really does little more than the voice vote.

### Roll Call Vote

It is not uncommon to see the roll call vote happen at convention, but it typically does not happen during chapter meetings. If you still want to know what it is, read on. A roll call vote is literally what you think it would be. The chair reads the names of each voting member, and after hearing their name, the member calls out yes (or aye) or no. You can see why this may be a bit intense for chapter meetings, where votes may be more personal than convention voting, where one person’s vote represents a group of people.

### Secret Ballot

This is the one type of vote where each member’s vote choice is not known to everyone else. This is used for elections, but may also be used for regular motions, especially more sensitive topics. This is also the most paper-traceable vote and the final destination if division is repeatedly called for. A ballot vote may be called for when the original motion is initially about to be voted upon.

## *Additional notes on voting*

- A member may change their vote at **any point during the voting process** before the final result is recorded. This means, if a voice vote is made but division is called and voting moves to a counted hand vote, any member may change their vote.
- “Unanimous consent” instead of voting: This allows a simple decision to be made by the group without the formality of motioning and voting. An example of when this is useful may be that a speaker has reached the time limit on a topic but the membership still wants to hear them finish. The chair may ask “**Is there any objection** to the member’s time being extended by two minutes?” After pausing, if no member calls out “**I object**” the chair may say “**I hear no objection**, so the member’s time is extended by two minutes.”
- Any member whose right to vote has not been taken away by disciplinary matters has the right to vote, whether or not they have paid their dues. However, a group’s constitution and by-laws may take away a member’s right to vote if they are delinquent in their dues. Remember, any time Robert’s Rules may conflict with an organization’s Constitution and By-Laws, the group must follow the C&BL.
- A **majority vote** is defined as *more than half of the votes cast*, excluding abstentions, at a regular meeting with a quorum present. This vote is typically used for elections or adopting a motion.
- A **two-thirds vote** is defined as *at least two-thirds of the votes cast*, excluding abstentions, at a regular meeting with a quorum present. This vote is most commonly used for suspension of the rules, or to close, limit, or extend debate.
- The final kind of voting you may experience is the **mail vote**. This is used when a vote of the entire membership is needed when convention is not in session, most commonly to vote to **admit a new or reactivated chapter**. Each active chapter and alumni association in good standing is mailed a ballot by certified mail, and they have 30 days in which to respond. It is important for each member organization to promptly reply because a majority of possible votes must be received in the affirmative in order for the motion to pass.

## Robert's Rules Example

*This document will walk you through a situation at a meeting in which Robert's Rules is used to make, amend, and vote on a motion. This example should be read after understand definitions of basic Robert's Rules terms.*

1) **Motion:** I move that all meetings be limited to one hour. Emily is narcoleptic and cannot be of use longer than an hour

a) **Point of information:** All meetings or just chapter meetings? [*Note: the point of information may be called out at any time, without gaining the floor.*]

**Response:** The motion says says all.

*Chair calls on next person*

i) **Friendly amendment:** I would like to make a friendly amendment to reword the motion to read "I move that all *chapter* meetings be limited to one hour."

This is an opportunity for the chair to ask for **unanimous consent** rather than having a vote.

Chair asks if there are any objections. If there are no objections the chair can declare the amendment accepted.

However, somebody objects.

(1) Now it is open to debate.

Discussion ensues.

(a) A member calls to **move to previous question** – instantly calls for a vote on the amendment.

Chair states the question: "I move that the motion be changed to read, 'I move that all *chapter* meetings be limited to one hour.'"

A voice vote is taken.

The motion passes unanimously.

*We now move back to the original motion, with the new wording.*

b) Someone decides to question why we have chapter meetings.

Someone says (interrupting them) "**point of order**, his statement does not apply to the question at hand." This ends the debate on why we have chapter meetings, since it is an entirely different topic for discussion.

c) Motion is made to to **lay it on the table**, and it must be seconded. This would put off the discussion until a future meeting. It is not debatable, so a vote is taken immediately.

Did not pass

d) Motion is made to **move to committee** to discuss Emily's medical history.

A discussion ensues on whether it needs to be sent to committee?

i) Call to question.

Chair states, A motion has been made to move to committee.

Vote

Does not pass

e) Back to original motion. This would be a good point for the chair to clarify that motion at hand is "I move that all chapter meetings be limited to one hour."

Discussion

Move to previous question, ends discussion

f) Vote on motion

Passes... (see **Voting** section)

