

Parliamentary Procedure Basics

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Unit 1

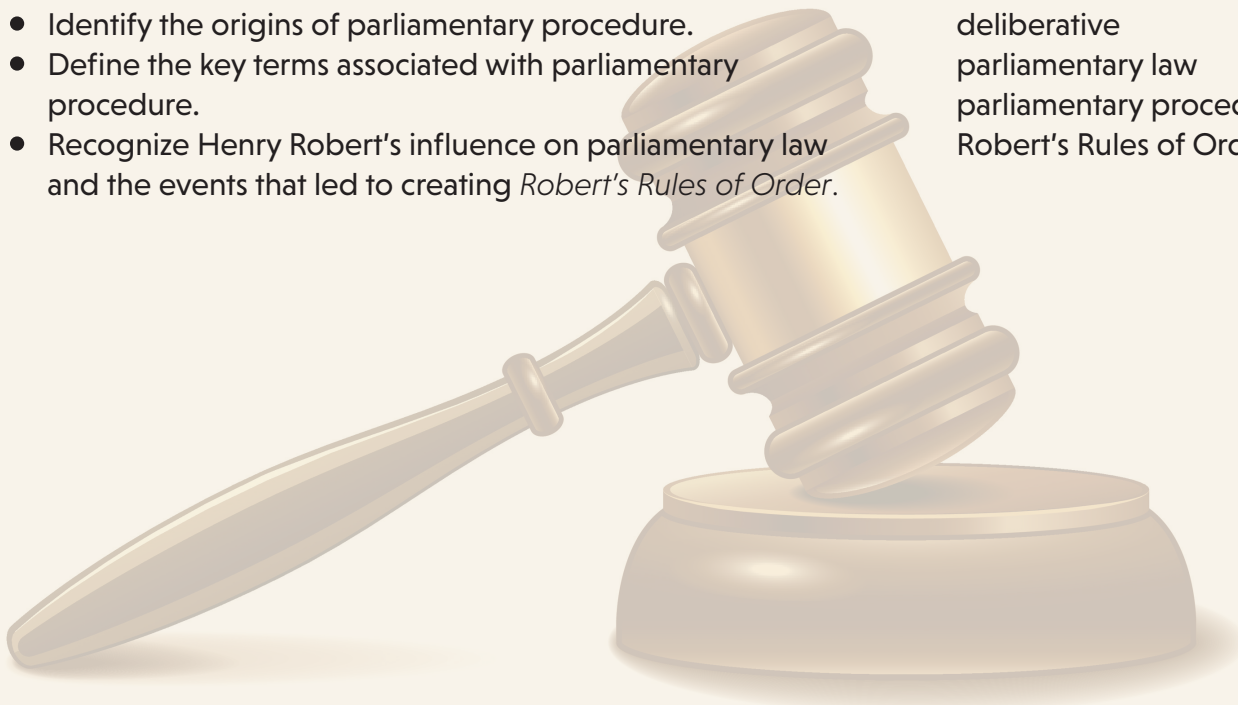
History and Development

OBJECTIVES

- Identify the origins of parliamentary procedure.
- Define the key terms associated with parliamentary procedure.
- Recognize Henry Robert's influence on parliamentary law and the events that led to creating *Robert's Rules of Order*.

KEY TERMS

deliberative
parliamentary law
parliamentary procedure
Robert's Rules of Order



Have you ever been a part of a meeting that was completely dysfunctional? Think back to what it was like. Why was it dysfunctional? How could the meeting have gone better? Meetings can often become unproductive due to lack of organization and preparation. History has shown that an agreed-upon standard procedure for any meeting is necessary to complete business in an effective manner. This publication intends to assist teachers and students in conducting effective meetings according to a standard set of rules. In this unit, we will discuss the events that led to form what is commonly known today as parliamentary procedure.

Origins of Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure refers to the parliamentary law that is followed in any given meeting, assembly or organization. The word *parliament* is commonly associated with English Parliament, and its origin traces back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The original meaning of the word parliament was simply described as important meetings or assemblies where discussion occurs.

However, the first meeting or assembly of groups occurred prior to recorded history. One of the first historical examples of order in a meeting came between 460 and 400 B.C. during the Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens. According to Athenian historian Thucydides, a parliamentary motion known today as *Division of the Assembly* took place when a Spartan leader could not determine which voice vote was shouted louder. The Spartan ordered an assembly to divide into two groups, each representing their stance on whether or not a treaty had been broken. The majority of the assembly stood on the side of the group that believed the treaty had been broken, and Sparta eventually declared war on Athens.

Centuries later, the first Parliament had formed from assemblies called upon to provide counsel to the king. The first official Parliament was established under the rule of King Henry III between 1216-1272.

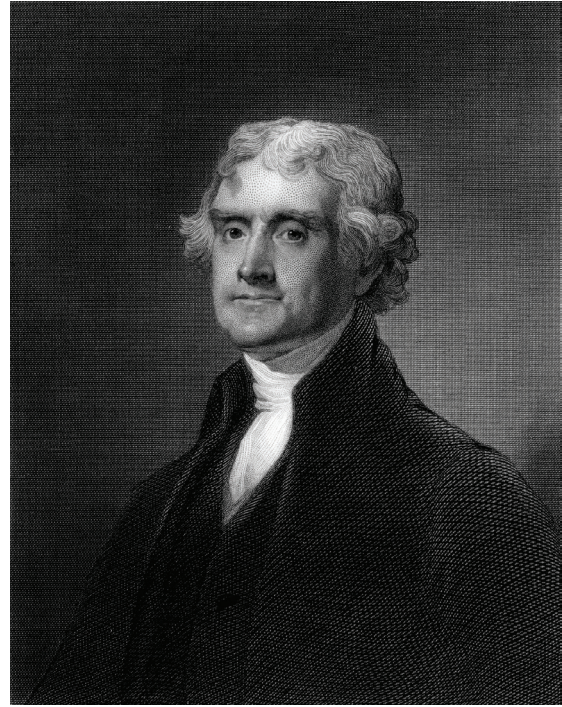


Palace of Westminster, London, UK, home to English Parliament
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Parliamentary Procedure Introduced to America

Thomas Jefferson described the first meetings of parliament as “crude, multiform, and embarrassing. They have been however constantly advancing towards uniformity and accuracy.” The former president was instrumental in the development of parliamentary procedure in our nation’s legislature. English settlers had introduced various forms of parliamentary laws throughout the colonies. When Jefferson served as Vice President from 1797 to 1801, he became aware of the need for a more standard set of parliamentary rules, as he presided over the U.S. Senate. As a result, Jefferson published his *Manual of Parliamentary Practice* in 1801, which was the first publication to outline parliamentary rules to guide the United States legislature.

Although Jefferson’s manual was useful in legislative processes, a growing number of organizations and societies in the United States required an alternative set of rules for guiding any *deliberative assembly*, a term that describes any gathering or meeting in which parliamentary law is applicable.



Thomas Jefferson
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Henry Robert and his Rules of Order

The use of parliamentary procedure in societies and organizations in the United States slowly evolved with a variety of manuals and publications. However, confusion still existed across regions of the country as to what versions of parliamentary procedure was the most effective. It wasn’t until after the Civil War that Henry Martyn Robert, an engineering officer and eventual Brigadier General of the United States Army, created a universal parliamentary procedure manual that could be adopted by any society to guide meetings and assemblies.

Henry Robert’s dedication to the study of parliamentary procedure began by chance in Bedford, Massachusetts in 1863 when he was asked to preside over a meeting without any prior notice. The meeting, which was reported to have lasted fourteen hours, concerned defending the city of Bedford from an attack by the Confederate army. Afterwards, Robert claimed, “I plunged in, trusting to Providence that the assembly would behave itself. But with the plunge went the determination that I would never attend another meeting until I knew something of parliamentary law.” After intense study on the subject, Robert became convinced of the need for a new kind of parliamentary manual

“based on the practices of Congress, and adapted to the use of ordinary societies.” The first edition of **Robert’s Rules of Order** was published in 1876, and was distributed to parliamentarians, educators, legislators, and church leaders throughout the country. Robert’s manual quickly grew in popularity and has been accepted for use by a number of organizations and clubs.

Henry Robert’s family has continued his legacy and contributed to improving and updating his manual to reflect the changes that have occurred in parliamentary procedure. To date, 11 editions of *Robert’s Rules of Order* have been published, and it is the most widely recognized guide on parliamentary procedure.

As parliamentary procedure has evolved to become more efficient and sophisticated, the challenge still remains for the leaders of civic groups, boards, and organizations to stay well informed on basic parliamentary law. A number of youth organizations, including the National FFA Organization, have emphasized the value of parliamentary procedure to its members through curriculum and competitions. In fact, according to the National FFA Constitution, *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* is the adopted authority that governs FFA meetings and conventions. Teaching youth about parliamentary procedure is critical to continue business meetings in an orderly manner.

Summary

The idea of meetings dates before recorded history, but the word parliament traces back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Parliamentary procedure refers to the parliamentary law that is followed in any given meeting, assembly or organization. The origins of parliamentary procedure began in the English Parliament under the rule of King Henry III. *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* is the most widely recognized guide on parliamentary procedure, and is the parliamentary authority for the National FFA Organization.

Review Questions

1. What name is given to the groups in which parliamentary procedure is applicable?
2. Which former President of the United States created a manual for parliamentary procedure while presiding over the U.S. Senate?
3. Who is the original author of Robert’s Rules of Order?
4. To date, how many editions of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised have been published?

Unit 2

Parliamentary Procedure Today

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the importance of knowing parliamentary procedure.
- Outline the 10 common rules for parliamentary procedure.
- Identify how organizations use parliamentary procedure today.

KEY TERMS

bylaws
constitution
rules of order
standing rules



Importance of Parliamentary Procedure

It is likely that at some point in your life, you will be required to participate in a meeting to conduct business. Whether you join a school board, homeowner's association, civic organization, or any other structured group, knowing parliamentary procedure will allow you to competently participate in meetings and gain respect from other members. It is also important to be aware of your rights as a member of a group. You may also avoid sitting through a poorly run meeting that could last much longer than necessary or even become chaotic by following parliamentary procedure.

Your knowledge of parliamentary procedure could lead to greater leadership positions within your organization. Parliamentary procedure has been tested and improved over time to ensure that meetings are conducted in the most appropriate and effective method.



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Knowing basic parliamentary procedure is of immediate value to FFA members, as they may lead or participate in chapter, committee or officer meetings. FFA members can practice their critical thinking skills in debate and public speaking through the proper use of parliamentary procedure in meetings or Career Development Events.

Ten Basic Rules for Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure may look different across various groups, but a basic understanding of the common rules of parliamentary law is necessary for meetings of all size and subject areas. Knowing foundational rules, like the ones listed, will help any assembly member take part in business meetings.

1. Meetings are to focus on one subject at a time.

Main motions, or proposals that bring business before an assembly, can only be made when no other business is pending, and all debate must relate to the immediately pending motion.

2. The majority rules.

A *simple majority* is half of the voting members plus one. Decisions are made based on what most of the voting members choose.

3. The rights of the minority are protected.

All members, including the minority, have equal rights and privileges such as voting and debate.

4. Courtesy is extended to everyone.

Parliamentary procedure fosters harmony within a group. Members cannot shout or talk over each other, particularly during debate. A member must first be recognized by the chair in order to *obtain the floor*. Personal remarks are never tolerated.



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5. A quorum must be present in order to conduct business.

The rules of what constitutes a *quorum* vary across different groups, but a quorum is commonly recognized as the majority of the voting members.

6. The chair must be impartial.

In most cases, the chair or president does not vote or express partisanship. Exceptions exist when the chair's vote can make or break a tie, or when the vote is taken by ballot. It is also the chair's responsibility to see that all members receive fair and equal treatment.

7. Major decisions, such as *Main Motions*, cannot be brought up repeatedly in the same business session after they have been voted on.

However, a member that voted on the prevailing side of the issue may move to reconsider the motion in light of new information, or if they perceive the motion needs further consideration.

8. Everyone has a right to fully and freely discuss motions that are debatable.

Not all motions are debatable, but some commonly used motions that are include Main Motion, Amend, Postpone to a Certain Time, and Refer to Committee.

9. Every member has the right to be informed.

Business meetings can often become complex. It is each member's right to ask questions and receive information about a relevant subject at hand.

10. A two-thirds majority vote is required for motions that limit the rights of members.

Some examples of these limitations may include *Limit or Extend Limits of Debate* or *Previous Question*, which immediately closes debate on a motion. (A number of other motions may require a two-thirds majority as well.)

Using parliamentary procedure may not guarantee that everyone in an assembly is happy with each decision. But, it can assure that each decision is met in the most reasonable method that is considerate to both the majority and minority.

Contemporary Uses

The prevalent use of parliamentary procedure is evidence of its value to meetings of all types. Perhaps its most formal use is found in all levels of government. Examples include:

- City Councils
- County Commissions
- State Legislatures
- United States Congress

Both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives appoint a parliamentarian to advise the presiding officer when needed.

Dealing with government matters requires a strict adherence to the constitution.

In general, a **constitution** is the set of rules that define and govern an organized body. A

constitution may include articles that deal with foundational items such as the organization's name, objectives, membership, officers, and meetings. The constitution may be accompanied by a set of **bylaws**, which should deal with more operational details. The bylaws may include rules dealing with committees, dues, and parliamentary authority. If an organization separates its bylaws from its constitution, the rules of a constitution should take precedence over the bylaws and should be more difficult to amend. The National FFA Organization has adopted its constitution and bylaws as a single document, which is published in the Official FFA Manual.

Organizational rules that are adopted by a majority vote at the time when they are needed are referred to as **standing rules**. These rules do not require prior notice, and can be suspended by a majority vote. These rules cannot conflict with an organization's constitution or bylaws. Standing rules may relate to the start time for meetings, dress code, duties of officers, attendance requirements, and elections.

Rules of order are the specific set of parliamentary procedures an organization adopts for its meetings and officers to follow. Local organizations that establish a parliamentary authority in its bylaws, like *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*, may also choose to adapt to *special rules of order* to be practical for the size and formality of their meetings. A group may adopt special rules of order that allow for an alternative order of business or different rules for governing debate. In the case of groups smaller than a dozen members, it is common to follow less formal procedures to conduct business efficiently. Rules of order may be suspended, but a two-thirds majority vote is required to do so.



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Below are some common examples of local organizations that use parliamentary procedure to guide their meetings.

- School Boards
- Fraternal and Service organizations
 - ◆ Freemasons
 - ◆ Lions Clubs
 - ◆ Kiwanis
 - ◆ Rotary Clubs
- Neighborhood/Homeowner Associations
- Churches
- Charities and Non-Profits

Business corporations may also follow a version of parliamentary procedure for shareholder meetings or any other corporate assemblies. These companies often establish policies and objectives by using a legal document called a corporate charter.

Summary

Having basic knowledge about parliamentary procedure can be a useful tool for any citizen, as many contemporary organizations such as school boards, homeowner's associations, and other professional and social groups use it to guide meetings. Parliamentary procedure can make meetings more efficient as it requires the assembly to focus on one thing at a time, and the majority rules decisions. Standing rules deal with the ruling and policies of an organization and can be adopted or suspended by a majority vote. Rules of order pertain to parliamentary rules in a meeting and can be adopted or suspended with a two-thirds majority vote.

Review Questions

1. Motions that limit the rights of members, like limit/extend limits of debate, typically require what type of vote?
2. What type of vote is required to suspend a standing rule?
3. What situation would give the president or chair the opportunity to vote?
4. What type of vote is required to suspend a rule of order?
5. What is the difference between a constitution and bylaws?
6. When would it be necessary to use a special rule of order?
7. What organizations would typically use a corporate charter?

Unit 3

Meeting Conduct

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a proper agenda for meetings.
- Discuss how the order of business guides a meeting.
- Identify what the gavel represents and how it is used.
- Define quorum and its importance to conducting business.
- Identify appropriate content for minutes of the meeting.

KEY TERMS

agenda
gavel
minutes
order of business
orders of the day
quorum



Preparing an Agenda

For a meeting to run efficiently, early planning must occur. The officers or leaders of an assembly will typically prepare for the meeting by developing an agenda, notifying members, and setting up the meeting room and equipment. An **agenda** is a posted list of items to be discussed in an upcoming meeting. This added work may initially go unnoticed, but a lack of preparation will eventually be obvious to the rest of the assembly.

When members have prior notice of what to expect in a meeting, the transaction of business can take place efficiently and with less controversy. It is customary for an agenda to be prepared and posted before a meeting begins and should include a list of the business items to be considered. The Official FFA Manual states that the executive committee, chapter FFA officers, and advisors are responsible for planning the agenda, and the secretary should prepare and post it so that members may see it in advance of the meeting.

Orders of Business

All meetings should follow a standard schedule of events to keep the meeting focused and avoid getting off topic. *Order of business, agenda, and orders of the day* are terms used to describe the order in which items of business in a meeting are to take place. **Order of business** is the order in which items of business are to be taken up during a meeting. **Orders of the day** are the single items of business that are to be taken up either at a scheduled time or in the normal order of business in a meeting.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised **Typical Order of Business**

- 1) Reading and Approval of Minutes
- 2) Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees
- 3) Reports of Special (Select or Ad Hoc) Committees
- 4) Special Orders
- 5) Unfinished Business and General Orders
- 6) New Business

The National FFA Organization has established its own recommended order of business. The following list from the Official FFA Manual outlines and describes the specific order of business for regular FFA chapter meetings.

- **Opening Ceremony**
 - conducted by chapter officers, including the call to order, roll call and quorum determination
- **Reading and approval of the minutes**
 - prepared and presented by the secretary and approved by the members as read or as amended; reading is omitted if the minutes were sent to members in advance
- **Reports of officers, boards and standing committees**
 - treasurer, and all other officer reports, are presented; standing committee reports are presented in the order they are listed in the bylaws
- **Reports of special (select or ad hoc) committees**
 - present their findings in the order the committees were appointed
- **Special orders**
 - allow the consideration of specially scheduled business at this time
- **Unfinished business and general orders**
 - designed to consider motions that were pending and items on the agenda that were not considered when the previous meeting adjourned, motions that were postponed to the present meeting, and motions that were laid on the table
- **New business**
 - allows members to introduce new items for consideration that are on the meeting agenda and others introduced by chapter members
- **Special features**
 - speakers, panels, guest appearances, award presentations and other non-business items
- **Ceremonies**
 - used only when new members are initiated, degrees are awarded or officers are installed
- **Announcements**
- **Closing Ceremony**
- **Entertainment, recreation and/or refreshments**
 - planned by the recreation committee and should follow the meeting to increase interest in attendance

The Gavel

The ***gavel*** is a small mallet-like tool that is typically made of wood and represents authority in a meeting or proceeding. The chair taps the gavel for various purposes throughout the meeting. The Official FFA Manual outlines the uses of the gavel in FFA meetings.

Tapping the gavel once may indicate:

- All members to be seated
- The passage or failure of a business item
- Adjournment of the meeting

Tapping the gavel twice calls the meeting to order.

Three taps of the gavel direct all members to stand in unison. In FFA meetings, this occurs when members are to speak in unison for the opening ceremonies, or for the official FFA salute in closing ceremonies.

A series of sharp taps are to return a meeting back to order.



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What is a quorum?

Attendance at meetings can always vary. This is especially true of FFA chapter meetings, which are commonly voluntary. It would not be fair or accurate for an unreasonably small group to make decisions for the entire assembly. For important business meetings to take place, organizations may require a *quorum*. *Robert's Rules of Order* defines a ***quorum*** as, "The minimum number of members who must be present at the meetings of a deliberative assembly for business to be validly transacted." Each group can establish a quorum to suit the size and purpose of their meetings, but it is common for a quorum to be the majority of membership. In fact, the two houses of the United States Congress and even the delegation at National FFA Convention require a quorum to be the majority of their members to conduct business.

Recording the Minutes

It is typically the job of the secretary of an organization to post the agenda prior to a meeting and record the minutes of the meeting. The minutes is a record of the action taken at a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised outlines the content that is appropriate to be included in the minutes of the meeting. It is not necessary to record discussion.



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1. Kind of Meeting
2. Name of the assembly
3. Meeting date, time, and location
4. Name of President and Secretary, or name of substitutes if either are absent
5. Indication of reading and approval of minutes, including whether corrections were made
6. All main motions that were taken up
 - a. Must record the wording that was used if the motion was adopted
 - b. Any secondary motions applied to the main motion
 - c. How the motion was disposed of (passed, failed, referred, postponed, etc.)
7. Secondary motions that were adopted
8. In small assemblies, record the complete oral reports given by committees
9. Previous notice of motions to be made at the next meeting
10. All points of order and appeals, and the chair's reasons for ruling
11. The hour when the meeting adjourned

Summary

A quorum is the number of members required at a meeting to conduct business, and is typically the majority of membership unless ruled otherwise. The chair uses a gavel as a symbol of authority to guide meetings. The order of business is an agreed upon order of events to keep a meeting focused on one thing at a time. An agenda provided in advance of an upcoming meeting can notify members of the orders of business to be considered in that meeting.

Review Questions

1. What is a quorum for a membership of the following?
 - a. 30
 - b. 107
 - c. 210
 - d. 61
2. What does the gavel symbolize?
3. What does three taps of the gavel signify in a meeting?
4. Which officer usually prepares the agenda and records the minutes?
5. What is the difference between orders of business and orders of the day?

Unit 4

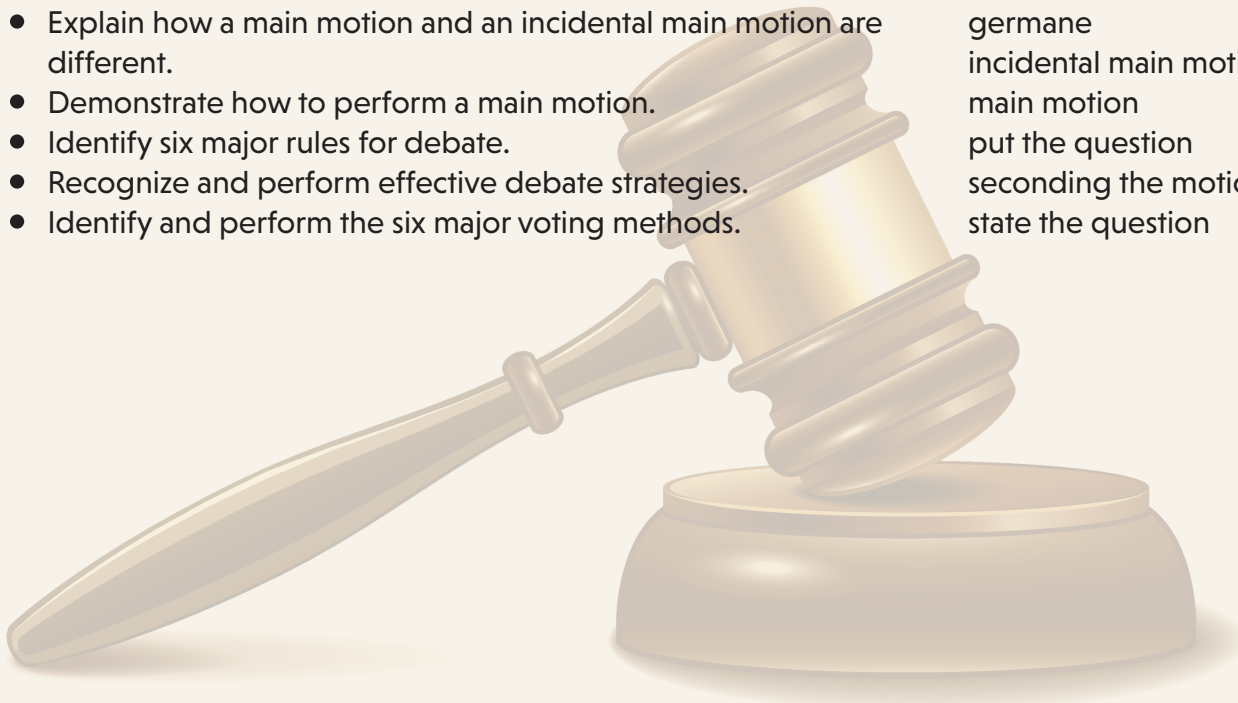
Main Motions

OBJECTIVES

- Explain how a main motion and an incidental main motion are different.
- Demonstrate how to perform a main motion.
- Identify six major rules for debate.
- Recognize and perform effective debate strategies.
- Identify and perform the six major voting methods.

KEY TERMS

germane
incidental main motion
main motion
put the question
seconding the motion
state the question



Main Motions

The primary tool that an assembly can use to propose action is called a *main motion*. A main motion classified as original would typically be made during *new business* in a meeting and cannot be presented while another motion is pending. Any member in good standing that also has the right to vote may propose, or move, a main motion to be considered by the assembly. A main motion is the tool used to propose a new item of business

Key Points

- As the lowest ranking motion, a main motion cannot be made when another motion is pending.
- A main motion cannot be applied to another motion, but secondary motions may be applied to it.
- The member who moves the main motion has the right to debate first on the motion.

Main Motions	
Class	Main
Interrupt?	No (A main motion is out of order when another member has the floor)
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Yes
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Yes
Order of Precedence	#1 (lowest ranking in precedence)
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 100-125

Example

Member: (rising and receiving recognition) "I move to host an end of the year ice cream social for our members." (second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to host an end of the year ice cream social for our members. This is amendable, is debatable and requires a majority vote to pass. Is there any discussion?

The main motion as a proposal is also referred to as an original main motion, which is not to be confused with an *incidental main motion*. Robert refers to incidental main motions as “a main motion that is incidental to or relates to the business of the assembly, or its past or future action.” Like original main motions, incidental main motions can only be made when no business is pending, and they often relate to secondary motions from the subsidiary, privileged, or incidental categories. Some common incidental main motions include:

- *Accept or Adopt a Report* upon a subject referred to a committee
- *Adjourn at, or to, a future time*
- *Appoint the Time and Place for the next meeting*, (if made when no business is pending)
- *Amend the Constitution, By-laws, Standing Rules, or Resolutions* that have already been adopted
- *Ratify or Confirm* action taken
- *Rescind or Repeal* action taken

How to Present a Main Motion Before the Assembly

The following are basic steps to presenting a motion before an assembly.

1. A member obtains the floor.

The member addresses the chair by rising or raising a hand, facing the chair, and stating “Mr./Madam President or Chairman.” Once the chair recognizes the member, he or she may speak.

2. A member makes the motion.

The proper wording for a motion always begins with “I move _____.”

3. A different member *seconds* the motion.

- Main motions, along with several other motions, require a second in order for the motion to be considered. If these motions do not receive a second, they are dropped.
- A member seconds the motion if he or she is in favor of considering that motion. This does not necessarily mean that member is in favor of the motion itself.
- A second can be made without standing or receiving recognition. A member can simply state “second,” immediately following the motion being moved. In larger meetings, it may be preferred that the member be recognized by the chair and state, “I second the motion.”

4. The chair *states the question on the motion*.

Only the chair can bring the motion, or question, before an assembly after it has been moved and seconded. The basic outline for stating the question includes:

- "It has been moved and seconded to (repeats the motion)."
- The chair may choose to provide necessary parliamentary procedure details pertaining to that motion such as, "This main motion is amendable, debatable, and requires a majority vote to pass."
- In the case of a main motion, or any other debatable motion, the chair then opens the floor for discussion.

Rules for Debate

Once a chair has stated the question on a main motion, it is then open for consideration and debate. Understanding the basic rules of debate will allow members to present their opinions and discussion in a fair and organized manner. The following rules can help guide debate in a meeting:

1. All members have the right to debate twice on a particular motion on the same day.
2. The member that moved the motion has the right to debate first.
3. No one should speak twice until every member has had the opportunity to speak once.
4. The general time limit for each individual debate in a normal assembly is ten minutes.
5. The content of the discussion must remain germane, or relevant, to the pending motion, and should be directed towards the chair.
6. The chair must remain neutral and abstain from debate while presiding over a meeting.



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A member may also move to limit or extend limits of debate, which will be discussed in another unit.

Tips for Effective Debate

Effective discussion or debate requires assembly members to clearly convey their position on a debatable motion and back up their statements with complete thoughts and logical reasoning. The National FFA Parliamentary Procedure Handbook (2017-2021) outlines the identifying components of each level of debate quality.

GOOD DEBATE

A good debate would be characterized by a presentation that includes the components of a good debate as well as the quality of delivery in which the debate is delivered.

- States position
- Provides more than one reason supporting their position
- Tells delegation how to vote

AVERAGE DEBATE

An average debate would be characterized by a presentation that includes only one supporting reason or lacks in the quality of delivery.

- States position
- Provides one reason supporting their position
- Tells delegation how to vote

POOR DEBATE

A poor debate would be characterized by a lack of effective delivery, poor grammar, reasoning and substance. Poor debate may also omit one or more components of an effective debate. When competing in FFA parliamentary procedure, it is beneficial for team members to demonstrate their knowledge of FFA and the agriculture industry. Members should also show awareness of their school and community as they discuss ideas and logistical matters associated with the pending motion.

Debate Examples

Example 1: Assume the main motion is, "I move our chapter conduct a recruitment activity at the middle school."

Good Debate

I rise to speak in favor of this motion. As chapter recruitment is one of the five Quality Standards of the *Strengthening Agriculture* division of our Program of Activities, it is essential for increasing our enrollment and encouraging greater participation in FFA activities. We should plan an interactive and engaging assembly that informs middle school students of the great variety of FFA opportunities. Please vote to pass this motion.

Average Debate

I also am in favor of this motion. Our chapter membership declined by 10% this school year, and the current 7th grade class is the largest in the school district. Vote yes.

Poor Debate

We should go and talk to the kids, and tell them about FFA.

Example 2: Assume that the main motion is, "I move our chapter conduct a community garden service-learning project."

Good Debate

I encourage the assembly to vote in favor of this motion. With the approval of our advisor, we can tie this project to our Horticulture curriculum. Our students could apply the concepts from classroom instruction to teach our community how to grow their own produce. Our chapter could apply for a *Living to Serve* grant to support the purchase of necessary tools and materials.

Average Debate

I am in favor of this motion. I think this garden would be a good way to teach agricultural literacy to our community. I urge the assembly to vote yes.

Poor Debate

This will be good and help our community.

Example 3: Assume that the main motion is, "I move that our chapter host a leadership workshop for greenhand members," and you are opposed to the motion.

Good Debate

I do not think this motion will benefit our chapter. Our greenhand members have already had the opportunity to participate in leadership activities such as Made for Excellence conference and Alumni Leadership Camp. We have an extremely busy Program of Activities this month and I think this activity would be poorly attended. Therefore, I ask the assembly to join me in failing this motion.

Average Debate

I am opposed to this motion. There is not enough time to plan an event of this nature with such short notice. Please vote "no."

Poor Debate

This is a bad motion, and I don't think anyone will like it.

Procedure for Voting

After the limits of debate have been exhausted, or debate has finished, the chair *puts the question*, or brings the motion to a vote. Robert states that the order of voting must begin with taking the *affirmative*, or votes in favor, first and then the negative votes.

Depending on the motion, a majority or two-thirds majority vote is required to pass. As stated in a previous unit, a simple majority is considered half the voting members plus one. A two-thirds majority, as its name implies, is two-thirds of the voting members. Motions that may require a two-thirds vote include: amend something previously adopted, objection to the consideration of a question, limit/extend limits of debate, and previous question.

There are several methods of voting that apply to particular motions and actions. The following examples are commonly used in meetings:

Voice

Voice vote is considered the normal method of voting, and applies to simple majority votes. Members may vote in the affirmative by saying "aye" or "yes," and in the negative by saying "nay" or "no."

Rising

A rising vote provides a more accurate, counted vote and is commonly used after a member calls for division of the assembly, or in the case of a two-thirds majority vote.

Show of Hands

A show of hands, rather than rising, may be more suitable in smaller assemblies.



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Ballot

A ballot vote, which involves members writing their vote on a piece of paper, provides secrecy. It is often used in elections and membership admission or expulsion votes.

Roll Call

A roll call vote is used to attain a record of the votes when needed by certain societies.

Unanimous Consent

Unanimous consent is useful for saving time when a motion appears to have no opposition. For routine motions like an adjournment, a chair may simply ask "is there any objection to adjourning the meeting at this time? [pause] Hearing none, I declare this meeting adjourned."

Summary

A main motion is the primary tool for bringing a new action before an assembly. All members have the right to speak on debatable motions, but no member can speak twice before each member has had the opportunity to speak. Following the rules of debate can allow members to share their opinions in a fair and organized manner. Quality debate must be clear, logical, and germane to the pending motion. There are different methods of voting that are most effective for various motions and items of business.

Review Questions

1. How many times may a member debate on a motion on the same day?
2. In a normal assembly, what is the time limit for each debate?
3. What are the four steps for bringing a motion before the assembly?
4. What are the three components of good debate, as outlined by the National FFA Organization?
5. What method of voting is typically required for elections?
6. Describe the difference between *stating the question* and *putting the question*.

Unit 5

Privileged Motions

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the category of privileged motions.
- Recognize the purpose of each privileged motion.
- Identify the characteristics of the five privileged motions.
- Correctly perform the five privileged motions.

KEY TERMS

precedence
privileged motions



Privileged Motions

There are 25 motions outlined in the chart of permissible motions, which includes a summary of the characteristics of each motion and how to perform each. The information in these units should accompany *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, and readers should refer to this book for more detailed information about each motion.

Privileged motions is the category of motions that relate to the privileges of members and are handled immediately. As such, privileged motions rank higher in *precedence* than any other category of motions. **Precedence** refers to the order of motions that gives preference to motions of a higher rank. For example, a motion to *recess* cannot be made while motion to *fix the time to which to adjourn* is pending. However, a motion to *fix the time at which to adjourn* can be made while a motion to *adjourn* is pending, assuming the chair has not officially adjourned the meeting.

The first 13 motions in the chart of permissible motions are ranked by order of precedence, with *fix the time to which to adjourn* taking precedence over all other motions. The main motion is the lowest ranking motion in precedence and cannot be moved while another motion is pending.

Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn

If a meeting needs to be continued at a later date and/or time, an assembly can adopt the motion *Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn* in order to establish an adjourned meeting. The adjourned meeting would continue business at the point in which the previous meeting adjourned or postponed. This could be useful if a meeting was running late and still had unresolved items of business or a quorum was not present.

Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	
Class	Privileged
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 242-246

Key Points

- The name *fix time to which to adjourn* is misleading. This motion does not schedule a time to close the meeting in progress.
- If made when no business is pending, it becomes a main motion and is treated as such.
- The motion is amendable only to the date, hour, or location of the adjourned meeting; amendments applied to this motion are not debatable.

- As the highest ranked motion in precedence, this motion only yields to incidental motions, and motion to *amend or previous question* that may be applied to it.
- The effect of this motion is to establish an *adjourned meeting*—that is, another meeting that will legally be a continuation of the meeting at which the motion is adopted and, together with that meeting, will make up one session.
- Fix the time to which to adjourn is typically followed by a motion to postpone or adjourn.

Example

Member 1: "Madam President, I move that when this meeting adjourns, it adjourn to meet at 6 PM tomorrow."

Chair: "It has properly been moved and seconded to fix the time at which we adjourn to 6 PM tomorrow. This privileged motion is not debatable, but is amendable. Are there any amendments? (pause) Seeing none we shall now proceed to vote. All those in favor say AYE. All opposed NAY. Motion FAILS. When we adjourn, we will meet at our next regularly scheduled meeting.

*If the motion passes, another member may move to postpone any pending motions, or move to adjourn.

Questions

1. What class of motions is the motion fix time to which to adjourn?
2. Fix time to which to adjourn yields to which motions?
3. What type of vote does fix time to which to adjourn require?
4. What motions typically follow the adoption of fix time to which to adjourn?
5. What class of motion is fix time at which to adjourn, when it is made with no question pending?
6. What is an adjourned meeting?

Adjourn

A motion to *adjourn* is a privileged motion to officially close a meeting.

Key Points

- If a time is not set, it is an *unqualified* adjournment and is considered a privileged motion. If *qualified* by specifying a time, the motion is treated as a main motion.
- A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion.
- According to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, a motion to adjourn is given high privilege even to the point of interrupting the pending question and, on adoption, it immediately closes the meeting. This is because a majority should not be forced to continue in session substantially longer than it desires and this is also the reason why this motion is not debatable. It cannot be made while another has the floor.

Adjourn	
Class	Privileged
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 233-242

Example

Member: "I move to adjourn." (second)

Chair: "Is there any objection to adjourning this meeting? (pause) Hearing none, I now declare this meeting adjourned."

OR

Member: "I move to adjourn" (second)

Chair: "It has been moved and seconded that we adjourn this meeting. This is not amendable, not debatable, and requires a majority vote. All those in favor say 'AYE'. All opposed say 'NAY.' Motion passes/fails."

Questions

1. What motion takes precedence over the motion to *adjourn*?
2. Does the motion to *adjourn* require a second?
3. What does it mean for the motion to *adjourn* to be unqualified?
4. Is the motion to *adjourn* in order when another member has the floor?

Recess

A *recess* is a short break in a meeting.

Key Points

- A recess may be taken, for example, to count ballots, to secure information, or to allow for informal consultation.
- A motion to recess that is made when no question is pending is a debatable *main motion*, and is a *privileged motion* while another question is pending.
- After a recess, business is always immediately resumed where it was left off, just as if there had been no recess.
- *Recess* is amendable only to the duration of the recess.

Recess	
Class	Privileged
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 230-233

Example

Member: "I move to recess for 5 minutes." (second)

Chair: "It has been moved and seconded to recess for 5 minutes. This privileged motion is not debatable, but is amendable. Are there any amendments? (pause) Hearing none we will now proceed to vote. All those in favor say AYE. All opposed NAY. Motion (passes/fails). Other alternatives could include "recess until 6:00 PM," or "recess until called to order by the chair."

Questions

1. What class of motions is recess if made when no business is pending?
2. What is the difference between recess and *adjourn*?
3. When is a motion to recess debatable?
4. How is a privileged motion to *recess* amendable?

Raise a Question of Privilege

Raise a Question of Privilege is a motion that allows a member to make an individual request, or a request on behalf of the assembly that deals with the immediate comfort or convenience of the assembly.

Key Points

- There are 2 types of questions of privilege.
 1. Questions of privilege affecting the assembly
 2. Questions of personal privilege
- These questions are directed to the chair, who is to rule on the request immediately, and no vote is taken.
- Questions of privilege may also be treated as a main motion to be voted on when no other question is pending. This form would exclude the method of "raising" a question, and would include moving and seconding instead.

Raise a Question of Privilege	
Class	Privileged
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	No
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Chair Decides. Normally no vote is taken.
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 224-230

Questions affecting the assembly take precedence over personal questions of privilege. *Questions of privilege of the assembly* may relate to the comfort of its members with respect to heating, ventilation, lighting, and noise or other disturbance; to the conduct of its officers and employees, or of visitors; or a motion to go into executive session. *Question of personal privilege*, although rare, may relate to an incorrect record of a member's participation in a meeting contained in minutes approved in his absence, or to charges circulated against a member's character.

Example

Member: I rise to a question of privilege affecting the assembly.

Chair: State your question.

Member: May we dim the room lights so we can see the agenda on the projector screen?

Chair: "Your request is well-taken. Please dim the meeting room lights.

Questions

1. What are the two types of question of privilege?
2. What vote is required for a question of privilege?
3. May a member interrupt to raise a question of privilege?
4. What are acceptable reasons for raising a question of privilege affecting the assembly?

Call for the Orders of the Day

If a member makes a motion that is out of order, or if the chair skips an item of business, a call for the orders of the day is a privileged motion that demands the meeting to conform to the orders of the day, or the scheduled sequence of business.

Key Points

- *Call for the orders of the day* may also demand the assembly to take up a general or special order that was planned for that specific time.
- The *call for the orders of the day* must be made before the incorrect motion is stated by the chair, or it cannot be made until the motion is disposed.

Call for the Orders of the Day	
Class	Privileged
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	No
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	The Chair decides. Normally no vote is taken. Upon a call by a single member, the Orders of the Day must be enforced.
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 219-224

- At the initiative of a member or of the chair, a two-thirds vote can allow the assembly to set aside the orders of the day and continue with the pending motion. This may happen if either a member or the chair perceives that the assembly wishes to continue consideration of the pending question.

Example

Member 1: "Madam President, I move our chapter host a chapter-wide Christmas Party."

Member 2: (interrupting) "Madam President, I call for the orders of the day."

Chair: "The orders of the day have been called for. What is the first order of the day?"

OR

Member 1: "Madam President, I move our chapter host a chapter-wide Christmas Party."

Member 2: (interrupting) "Madam President, I call for the orders of the day."

Chair: "The orders of the day have been called for. Shall we proceed with the orders of the day? All those in favor of proceeding with the orders of the day please rise. Be seated. Those opposed, please rise. Be seated. There was less than 2/3rds in the negative. Therefore we will consider the orders of the day. What is the first order of the day?"

Questions

1. What two cases would make *call for the orders of the day* in order?
2. What vote is required for *call for the orders of the day*?
3. Who may *call for the orders of the day*?
4. At what point should *call for the orders of the day* be moved?

Unit 6

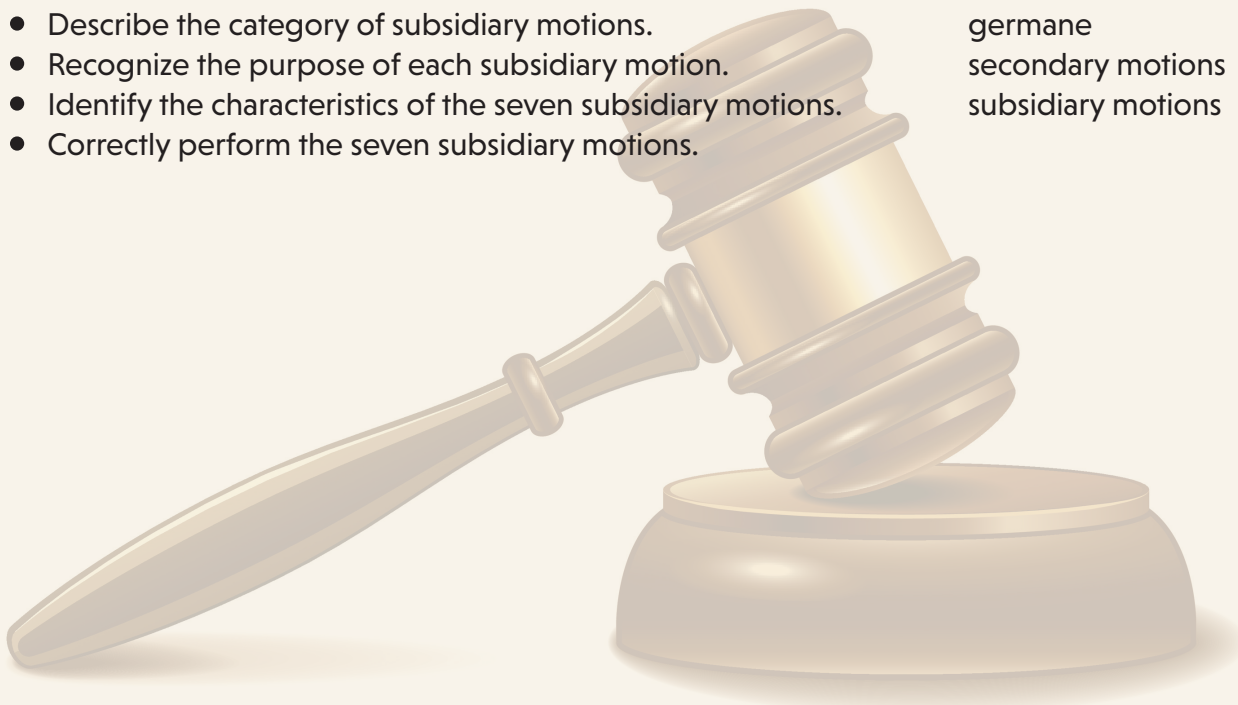
Subsidiary Motions

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the category of subsidiary motions.
- Recognize the purpose of each subsidiary motion.
- Identify the characteristics of the seven subsidiary motions.
- Correctly perform the seven subsidiary motions.

KEY TERMS

germane
secondary motions
subsidiary motions



Subsidiary Motions

Subsidiary motions rank below privileged motions, and above the main motion in order of precedence. The general purpose of subsidiary motions is to help dispose of the main motion by either amending, voting, postponing or killing the motion. This unit will provide more detail about each of the seven subsidiary motions and how to use them in a meeting.

Lay on the Table

Lay on the Table is a motion that allows an assembly to temporarily set aside, or table, a motion for more urgent business.

Key Points

- This motion is commonly misused as a way of postponing or killing a motion, when *object to the consideration of a question*, *postpone indefinitely*, and *postpone definitely* may be more appropriate.
- There is no set time for taking the matter up again, therefore it should not be confused with the motion *postpone to a certain time*.
- To return a tabled motion, an assembly must adopt the motion *Take from the Table*, which will be discussed in unit 8.
- It is possible for a tabled motion to expire. For meetings that are held quarterly (every three months), a tabled motion remains active until the close of the next regular meeting. If an assembly meets less than once every quarter, the motion remains until the end of the session it was tabled.
- Only the negative vote may be reconsidered, as an affirmative vote can be reversed by the motion to *Take from the Table*.

Lay on the Table	
Class	Subsidiary
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Only the negative vote may be reconsidered
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 209-218

Example

Member 1: "Due to our upcoming FFA Awards Banquet, we have more urgent business, therefore I move to lay the question on the table."

Member 2: "Second."

Chair: "It is moved and seconded to lay the pending question on the table. This motion is not amendable, not debatable and requires a majority vote to pass. All those in favor of laying the pending question on the table, say *aye*. Those opposed say *no*. Motion fails. We will not be laying this motion on the table. Is there any discussion?"

Questions

1. For what reason can the motion *lay on the table* be used?
2. How is a *tabled* motion returned to the assembly?
3. Can a motion to *lay on the table* be reconsidered?
4. How long can a motion remain on the table?
5. What motions does *lay on the table* yield to?

Previous Question

When an assembly is discussing a motion and a member wishes to close debate and proceed to vote on the immediately pending motion, or all pending motions, he or she may move previous question. If adopted, debate on the motion stops, and the assembly proceeds to a vote.

Key Points

- The adoption of an order for the Previous Question does not prevent the making of privileged or incidental motions, as applicable.
- The subsidiary motion lay on the table can also be made while previous question is pending, as long as it is moved before the pending motion is voted on. No other lower ranking subsidiary motions are in order while previous question is pending.

Previous Question	
Class	Subsidiary
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	2/3rds Majority
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 197-208

- If made in the unqualified form, previous question will only be applied to the immediately pending motion. However, a member may specify the motions they are ordering previous question for in the qualified form.

Example

Member: "I move previous question on all pending motions." (Second)

Chair: "Previous question has been moved and seconded. Those in favor of ordering previous question on all pending motions please rise. Be seated. Those opposed, please rise. Be seated. There are 2/3rds in the affirmative and the previous question is ordered on all pending motions. The question is now on the adoption of the motion to. . .[stating the full immediately pending question.]"

Questions

1. What type of vote is required for *previous question*?
2. What motion does the unqualified form of *previous question* apply to?
3. Previous question yields to what subsidiary motion?
4. Is moving *previous question* in order when another member has the floor?

Limit or Extend Limits of Debate

Given that the normal limits of debate is ten minutes per speech and twice per motion on the same day, the motion to *limit or extend limits of debate* can be made for appropriate circumstances.

Key Points

- The motion can limit or extend debate by:
 - 1) the number of speeches
 - 2) the length of speeches
 - 3) setting a specific time for debate to close

Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	
Class	Subsidiary
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	2/3rds Majority
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 191-196

- Making motions, asking questions, or a brief suggestion is not considered debate, and a member should not lose a turn to speak on a pending debatable motion.
- Unless specified otherwise, once the limits of debate are exhausted, the chair may typically put the pending question to a vote.
- *Limit or extend limits of debate* is amendable, but not debatable. Therefore, amendments to *limit debate* are also not debatable.

Example

Member: "I move that debate be limited to 2 minutes per speaker." (Second)

Chair: "It is moved and seconded that debate be limited to 2 minutes per speaker. The motion to limit or extend limits of debate is not debatable, but it can be amended." (Pause)
 "Are there any amendments to the motions to limit debate? Seeing none, we will now proceed to vote. All those in favor of limiting debate to 2 minutes per speaker please rise. Be seated. All opposed please rise. Be seated. 2/3^{rds} of the assembly is in favor of the motion. Motion passes. (tap)

Alternatives:

Member: "I move that debate on the pending question be limited to twenty minutes."

Member: "I move that debate close at 4:30 PM."

Questions

1. What are the three ways debate can be limited?
2. What vote is required to *limit or extend limits of debate*?
3. What are the normal limits of debate?
4. *Limit or extend limits of debate* takes precedence over which motions?

Postpone to a Certain Time

If it appears that a pending motion should be delayed to a more appropriate time, a member may move to *postpone to a certain time* (or *postpone definitely*).

Key Points

- A question may be postponed to a specific day, meeting, or hour, or until after a certain event.
- Motions cannot be postponed to a time beyond the next regular meeting.
- This motion should not be confused with the motion *Postpone Indefinitely*, which does not actually postpone a pending question, but kills it.
- Debate on *postpone to a certain time* should not relate merits of the main question other than to assist the assembly in deciding whether the motion should be postponed.
- The motion is amendable to when the pending motion is to be postponed.

Postpone to a Certain Time	
Class	Subsidiary
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Yes
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 179-191

Example

Member: "I move to postpone the motion to the next regularly scheduled meeting." (Second)

Chair: It has been moved and seconded to postpone this motion to our next regularly scheduled meeting. The motion to postpone to a certain time is amendable, is debatable, and requires a majority vote to pass. Is there any discussion on this motion?

Questions

1. What is the difference between *postpone indefinitely* and *postpone definitely (to a certain time)*?
2. How long can a motion be postponed?
3. How can the motion *postpone to a certain time* be amended?
4. Is the motion to *postpone to a certain time* debatable?

Commit or Refer

If an assembly agrees that a pending motion needs further research and possible improvement, it may *commit or refer* the motion to a smaller group of members that make up a committee.

Commit or Refer	
Class	Subsidiary
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Yes
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 168-179

Key Points

- Rather than referring a motion to a small group, an assembly can also commit a motion to a (a) committee of the whole, (b) quasi committee, or (c) consider informally in order to have the freedom of debate like a smaller committee.
 - Considering the motion informally is suited for small meetings
 - Quasi committee is best suited for medium sized committees of 50-100 members
 - Committee of the whole is suited for large assemblies
- The referral should include the following:
 - The size, name, or type of committee (standing or special, committee of #, committee of the whole, appointed by the chair, etc.)
 - Directions for how the committee is to treat the motion. For example, whether the committee will report, or have full power to act on the motion.
 - Debate on the motion to *commit or refer* should be exclusive to the details related to the referral and not relate to the pending main motion.

Example

Member: "I move that the motion be referred to a committee of seven to be appointed by the chair and report back at our regular meeting. (Second)"

Chair: It is moved and seconded to refer the resolution to a committee of seven to be appointed by the chair. This motion is amendable, is debatable and requires a majority vote to pass. Is there any discussion?"

Questions

1. What type of vote does *commit* or *refer* require?
2. *Commit* or *refer* takes precedence over which motions?
3. What are the three alternate ways a motion may be committed other than to a smaller committee?
4. Is the motion *commit* or *refer* in order when another member has the floor?
5. Can *commit* or *refer* be reconsidered?

Amend

If an assembly agrees that a pending motion can be improved, it can adopt to change or amend the motion. The motion to *amend* is one of the most common tools used by an assembly.

Key Points

- If a motion is *amended* it still must be voted and passed in order to go into effect. If the *amendment* fails, the motion it was applied to will remain as it was before the *amendment* was moved.
- An amendment that completely changes the meaning and subject of the original motion it is applied to is out of order. Instead, an amendment must be relevant, or **germane**, to the motion it is attempting to modify. Often an amendment serves to provide more detail, or a correction to the details of a motion.
- An amendment to reverse the effect of the main motion is also not permitted.
- There are 3 basic processes of amendment:
 1. Adding or inserting words or paragraphs
 2. Striking out words or paragraphs
 3. Striking out words and inserting words, or substituting a paragraph
- A primary amendment can be amended, which would result in a secondary amendment. A third level of amendment is not permitted.
- The member who moved to amend has the right to speak first on the amendment.

Amend	
Class	Subsidiary
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Debatable when applied to a debatable motion.
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 130-167

- An amendment is debatable, only when it is applied to a debatable motion. For example, an amendment to *limit or extend limits of debate* is not debatable, as the motion it is applied to is not debatable.
- Rather than "I move to strike, add, or substitute," the correct wording for amend is "I move to amend the motion by striking, adding, or substituting."

Example

Member: I move to amend the main motion by adding the words "at our agricultural education building." (Second)

Chair: It has been properly moved and seconded to amend the main motion by adding the words "at our agricultural education building." This is amendable, is debatable, and requires a majority vote to pass. Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Alternatives:

Member: I move to amend the main motion by striking the word 'officers.'

Member: I move to amend the motion by striking the words '3 PM' and inserting the words '4 PM.'

Questions

1. What are the three basic processes for amending a motion?
2. How many levels of an amendment are acceptable?
3. Is the motion to *amend* debatable?
4. What does *germane* mean?
5. True or False: If an amendment fails, the motion it is applied to also fails.

Postpone Indefinitely

If a main motion, or voting for a motion is perceived as undesirable, an assembly may adopt the motion to *postpone indefinitely* to kill the motion and avoid voting.

Key Points

- Although the name *postpone indefinitely* implies delaying a motion, it actually kills the main motion and that motion cannot be moved again in the same session.
- Takes precedence over no other motion except the main question to which it is applied.
- *Postpone indefinitely* should be made immediately after a main motion is stated by the chair.
- If *postpone indefinitely* is adopted, it may be reconsidered. However, if it is rejected, it cannot continuously be moved to reconsider. Members can still vote to reject the motion it wishes to postpone indefinitely.

Postpone Indefinitely	
Class	Subsidiary
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Yes
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Only the affirmative vote may be reconsidered.
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	126-130

Example

Member : I move that the motion to (...) be postponed indefinitely. (Second)

Chair: It has been moved and seconded that the motion to (...) be postponed indefinitely. This is not amendable, is debatable, and requires a majority vote to pass. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we will now proceed to vote. All those in favor of postponing the motion to (...) please say AYE. All opposed say NAY. Motion (Passes/Fails).

Questions

1. If *postpone indefinitely* is adopted for a main motion, how long must a member wait to make a similar or exact main motion?
2. What motion does *postpone indefinitely* take precedence over?
3. Can *postpone indefinitely* be reconsidered?
4. When should a member move to *postpone indefinitely*?

Unit 7

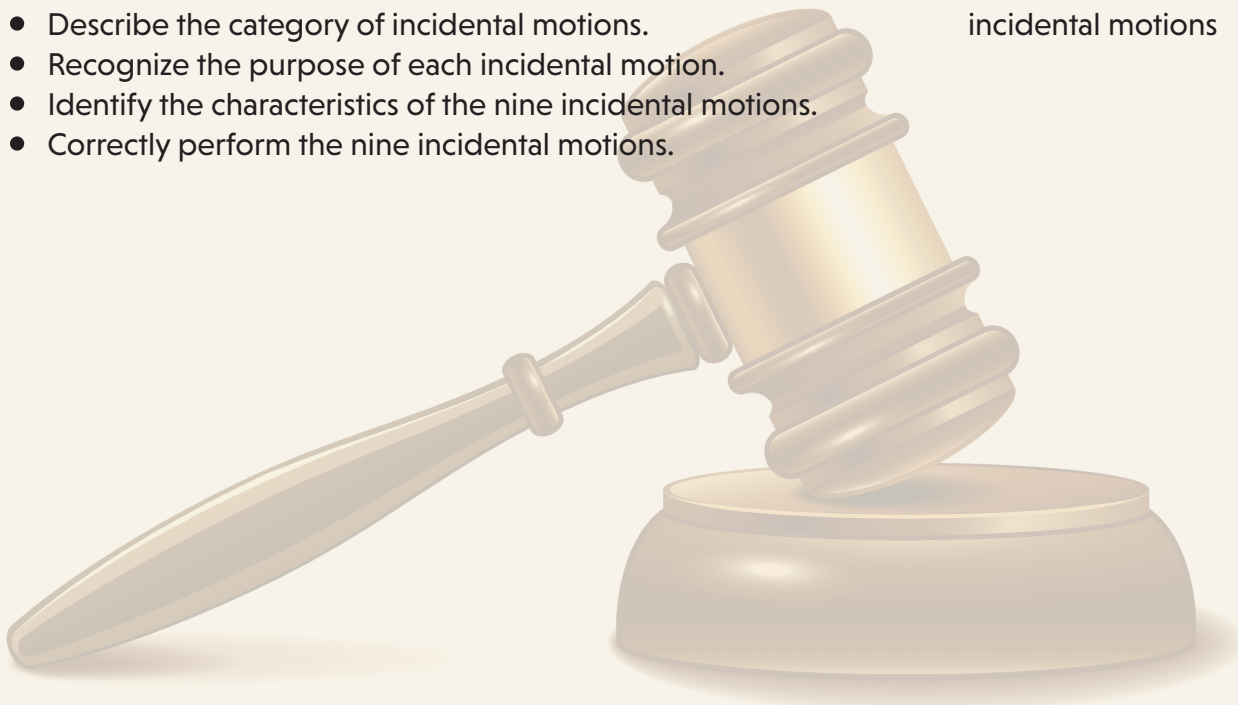
Incidental Motions

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the category of incidental motions.
- Recognize the purpose of each incidental motion.
- Identify the characteristics of the nine incidental motions.
- Correctly perform the nine incidental motions.

KEY TERMS

incidental motions



Incidental Motions

As the name implies, *incidental motions* are the class of motions that occur *incidentally* in relation to other motions or procedures. As such, incidental motions are not ranked in order of precedence. They are typically moved and quickly disposed.

Suspend the Rules

If an assembly would like to violate or break certain rules for convenience or out of necessity, it may adopt the motion to *suspend the rules*.

Key Points

- A two-thirds majority vote is required to suspend *rules of order*, and a simple majority vote is required to suspend *standing rules*.*
- According to Robert, the following rules cannot be suspended, unless a provision in an organization's rules allow it:
 - Rules that are included in the *bylaws* or *constitution*
 - Fundamental rules of parliamentary procedure
 - Procedural rule prescribed by federal, state, or local law
 - Rules protecting absentees
 - Rules affecting the basic rights of individual members

Suspend the Rules	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Rules of Order=2/3rds vote, Standing Rules=Majority
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 260-267

*See unit 2 for more information on *rules of order* and *standing rules*

Example

Member (rising and receiving recognition): Madam President, I move that we suspend the rules and proceed directly to new business. (Second)

Chair: It has been moved and seconded to suspend the rules and proceed directly to new business. This motion requires a two-thirds majority vote to pass, as we are trying to suspend a rule of order. All those in favor of the motion to Suspend the Rules say "AYE." All opposed say "NAY." Motion (Fails/Passes)

Questions

1. Can a member interrupt another member to move *suspend the rules*?
2. What vote is required to suspend a standing rule?
3. What vote is required to suspend a rule of order?
4. Can a rule from an organization's bylaw be suspended?

Withdraw a Motion

If the maker of a motion wishes to withdraw a motion from consideration.

Key Points

- Before the motion to be withdrawn is stated by the chair, it is still the property of the mover. After the chair states the question, it is the property of the assembly.
- If a member wishes to withdraw before the chair states the question, he or she may do so without the consent of the assembly.
- If the member wants to withdraw after the chair states the question, they must request permission from the assembly first through unanimous consent.
- If there is an objection to the withdrawal, either the chair or another member may move to grant permission to withdraw the motion, which would not require a second. If the member who originally requested the withdrawal moves for permission to withdraw, a second is required.
- Other members may also ask the mover to withdraw the motion before it is stated by the chair, but they cannot move to withdraw a motion they did not make.

Withdraw a Motion	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	*refer to Robert (2011) p. 295
Requires second?	No *refer to Robert (2011) p. 295
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	Only the negative vote may be reconsidered.
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 295-298

Example

Withdraw before question is stated:

Member who moved the pending motion: Madam President, I withdraw the motion.

Chair: The motion is withdrawn.

OR

Member who moved the pending motion: Madam President, I wish to modify the motion by striking out "demand" and inserting "urge."

Withdraw after question is stated:

Member: Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw the motion.

Chair: Is there objection to withdrawing the motion? (Pause for response)

Member: I object.

Chair: The question is on the adoption of the motion that we withdraw the main motion to "...". Those in favor of the motion to withdraw say "AYE". Those opposed, say "No." The No's have it, and the motion is not withdrawn.

Questions

1. Who may withdraw a motion?
2. Does the motion to withdraw require a second?
3. When does a motion become the property of the assembly?
4. What must the mover of a motion do in order to withdraw a motion that has been stated by the chair?
5. When is a majority vote required to grant permission to withdraw a motion?

Objection to the Consideration of a Question

If a member of the assembly believes that considering a motion would be harmful or undesirable to an individual or the entire group, he or she may *object to the consideration of a question*.

Key Points

- A member can interrupt to *object to the consideration of a question*, but the objection must come before any consideration has been made in the form of debate or a subsidiary motion.
- An objection requires a two-thirds majority vote, which is put as a question to vote for or against considering the main motion. If two-thirds of the assembly are against considering the main motion, the objection is upheld.

Objection to the Consideration of a Question	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	No
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	2/3rds in the NEGATIVE
Reconsider?	Only the negative vote may be reconsidered.
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 267-271

Example

Member 1: Madam President, I move that all members be required to have a livestock related Supervised Agricultural Experience.

Member 2: Madam President, I object to the consideration of the motion. (resume seat)

Chair: The consideration of the motion is objected to. Shall the motion be considered? Those in favor of considering it, rise. (The other 4 members should rise) Be seated. Those opposed to considering the motion, rise. (Mover rises) Be seated. There are (more/less) than two-thirds opposed and the objection (is sustained/fails.)

Questions

1. What type of vote is required for *object to the consideration of the question*?
2. At what point should an *objection to consideration of the question* be made?
3. Can *object to the consideration of a question* be reconsidered?
4. Why would a member typically *object to the consideration of a question*?

Point of Order

A member may move a *point of order* if he or she notices that a rule has been broken and wishes to point it out to the chair for a proper ruling.

Key Points

- The intention of a *point of order* is to receive a ruling from the chair on a particular break in the rules. However, if a chair is unsure of the ruling, he or she may put it to a vote.
- Any member can move *point of order*, and should do so at the time of the violation.
- A *parliamentary inquiry* is useful for members that are unsure if a rule has been broken, and wish to receive clarity on a motion.
- A member may interrupt for a *point of order*, and a second is not required.
- If a member disagrees with a chair's ruling on a *point of order*, he or she may move to appeal the decision of the chair.
- *Point of order* is not debatable, but a chair may ask a member to explain his/her point.*

Point of Order	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	No
Debatable?	No*
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Chair Decides. Normally no vote is taken.
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 247-255

Example

Scenario: Chair 1 makes an amendment. The chair states the question, and then opens the floor for debate. All members rise. Instead of calling chair 1, the chairman calls on chair 2.

Member 1: Point of Order!

Chairman: State your point of order.

Member 1: I make the point of order that I made the motion to Amend and therefore should have the right to debate first on this motion.

Chairman: Your point is well taken. Member 2 will please take his/her seat, and Member 1 has the floor.

Questions

1. Who can make a *point of order*?
2. Who is to make a ruling on *point of order*?
3. When should a *point of order* be made?
4. What motion can a member make if they are unsure about a ruling?
5. Is *point of order* debatable?
6. Is *point of order* in order when another member has the floor?

Parliamentary Inquiry

It is one of the fundamental rights of members to receive information about parliamentary procedure. *Parliamentary inquiry* is a question directed to the chair relating to parliamentary law or other rules

Key Points

- The parliamentary inquiry must relate to the business at hand.
- A member does not need recognition from the chair to raise a parliamentary inquiry.
- Parliamentary inquiry should not be confused or misused at request for information, which is a question about matters other than parliamentary law.
- Parliamentary inquiry is requesting information, but not a ruling. Therefore, a chair's reply is not subject to an appeal.

Parliamentary Inquiry	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	No
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Chair decides. Normally no vote is taken.
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 293-294

Example

Member: Madam President, I rise to a parliamentary inquiry.

Chair: The member will state the inquiry.

Member: What vote does the pending question require?

Chair: The pending motion requires a majority vote.
(member resumes his/her seat)

OR

Member: Madam President, I rise to a parliamentary inquiry.

Chair: The member will state the inquiry.

Member: Can the motion to amend be reconsidered?

Chair: Yes, the motion to amend may be reconsidered.

Questions

1. What type of vote does *parliamentary inquiry* require?
2. Can a member interrupt to raise a *parliamentary inquiry*?
3. Can a member appeal the chair's answer to a *parliamentary inquiry*?
4. Can a member make an inquiry about subjects other than parliamentary law?

Appeal

If a member disagrees or is unsure of a chair's ruling, he or she may appeal the decision of the chair to call for a vote of the assembly.

Key Points

- Any member may appeal the decision of the chair, even if the chair ruling was not directed to them.
- A member may interrupt to appeal the decision of the chair, but they should appeal immediately after the chair's ruling
- Even though an appeal is in order when another member has the floor, the appeal requires a second.
- No member is allowed to speak more than once on an appeal except the chair.

Appeal	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Yes, if made when a debatable question is pending
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Majority or tie vote sustains the chair
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 255-260

Example

Assume that a member has just been denied a question of privilege, or point of order by the chair.)

Member 1: I appeal the decision of the chair.

Member 2: Second

Chair: The chair denies the question of privilege as it is a distraction to the meeting. Shall the chair's decision be sustained? Those in favor of sustaining the chair's decision, say AYE. Those opposed to sustain this decision, say NO. The AYE's have it, and the chair's decision is sustained.

Questions

1. Who may *appeal* the decision of the chair?
2. What type of vote is required for an *appeal*?
3. When should an appeal be made?
4. How many members are required to make an appeal?
5. How many times can a member debate the motion to *appeal*?

Request for Information

If a member has a question about relevant business being considered, it is his or her fundamental right to *request for information*.

Key Points

- *Requests for information* should not relate to parliamentary law. Instead, a member should raise a *parliamentary inquiry*.
- All questions should first be directed to the chair.
- If a member has a question for another member who is speaking, they should request information through the chair in order to receive approval from the speaker to interrupt.
- A request for information should always be put in the form of a question.
- A response to a *request for information* cannot be appealed, as it does not call for a ruling of the chair.

Request for Information	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	No
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Chair decides. Normally no vote is taken
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 294-295

Example

Member: (rising) Madam President, a point of information, please.

Chair: The member will state the point.

Member: Who is the chair of the public relations committee?

Chair: Ms. Smith is the public relations committee chair.

Alternative examples:

Member: Mr. Chairman, will the member yield for a question?

OR

Member: Madam President, I would like to ask the member a question.

Questions

1. Can a *request for information* relate to parliamentary law?
2. Can a member interrupt to *request for information*?
3. Can a member *request information* from another member?
4. Can a member appeal the chair's response to a *request for information*?

Division of the Assembly

A member may demand a *division of the assembly* if he or she feels like the voice vote did not indicate a clear affirmative or negative vote.

Key Points

- If a *division of the assembly* is called for, it would require a standing vote that is counted.
- From his or her seat, a member may interrupt to call for *division of the assembly*.
- *Division of the assembly* should not be used in unnecessary cases when a voice vote receives a clear majority.
- If a chair is unsure of the result of a voice vote, he or she may call for a rising vote.

Division of the Assembly	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	Yes
Requires second?	No
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	The chair can complete a Division of the Assembly without permission of the assembly and any member can demand it.
Reconsider?	Yes
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 280-282

Example

Chair: All those in favor say "AYE." (pause) All opposed say "NAY." (pause)

Member: Division!

Chair: Division of the Assembly has been called for. All those in favor of the amendment please stand. Be seated. Those opposed please stand. Be seated.

Questions

1. Does *division of the assembly* require a second?
2. Who may call for a *division of the assembly*?
3. What voting method does *division of the assembly* call for?
4. Does a member need recognition from the chair to call for *division of the assembly*?

Division of a Question

If a motion that is being considered by an assembly has several parts that can be considered individually, an assembly can agree to *divide the question*. Each divided part of the motion can then be discussed and voted on separately.

Key Points

- A question should only be divided if its parts can be considered and voted on separately.
- The mover of *division of a question* should be specific as to how the question will be divided
- *Division of the question* may be amended as to how the question should be divided

Division of a Question	
Class	Incidental
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 270-276

Example

Example Main Motion: "I move that our unit donate \$500 to the State FFA Foundation, and \$500 to the State FFA Alumni Association.

Member: (rising and receiving recognition) I move to divide the motion so as to consider separately the question of donating \$500 to the State FFA Foundation, and donating \$500 to the State FFA Alumni Association. (Second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to divide the motion so as to consider separately the question of donating \$500 to the State FFA Foundation, and donating \$500 to the State FFA Alumni Association. The motion to divide a question is not debatable, but can be amended. Are there any amendments to the motion to divide the motion? Seeing none, we will proceed to vote.

The question is on the motion to divide the motion so as to consider separately the question of donating \$500 to the State FFA Foundation, and \$500 to the State FFA Alumni Association. Those in favor of the motion say AYE. Those opposed, say NO. The AYES have it, and the motion is adopted. We will consider separately the question of donating \$500 to the Oklahoma FFA Foundation, and donating \$500 to the State FFA Alumni Association.

Questions

1. Is the motion *division of a question* amendable?
2. Should the motion to "refer to a committee of five and to report back at the next regularly scheduled meeting" be divided?
3. What type of vote does *division of a question* require?
4. Can *division of a question* be reconsidered?

Unit 8

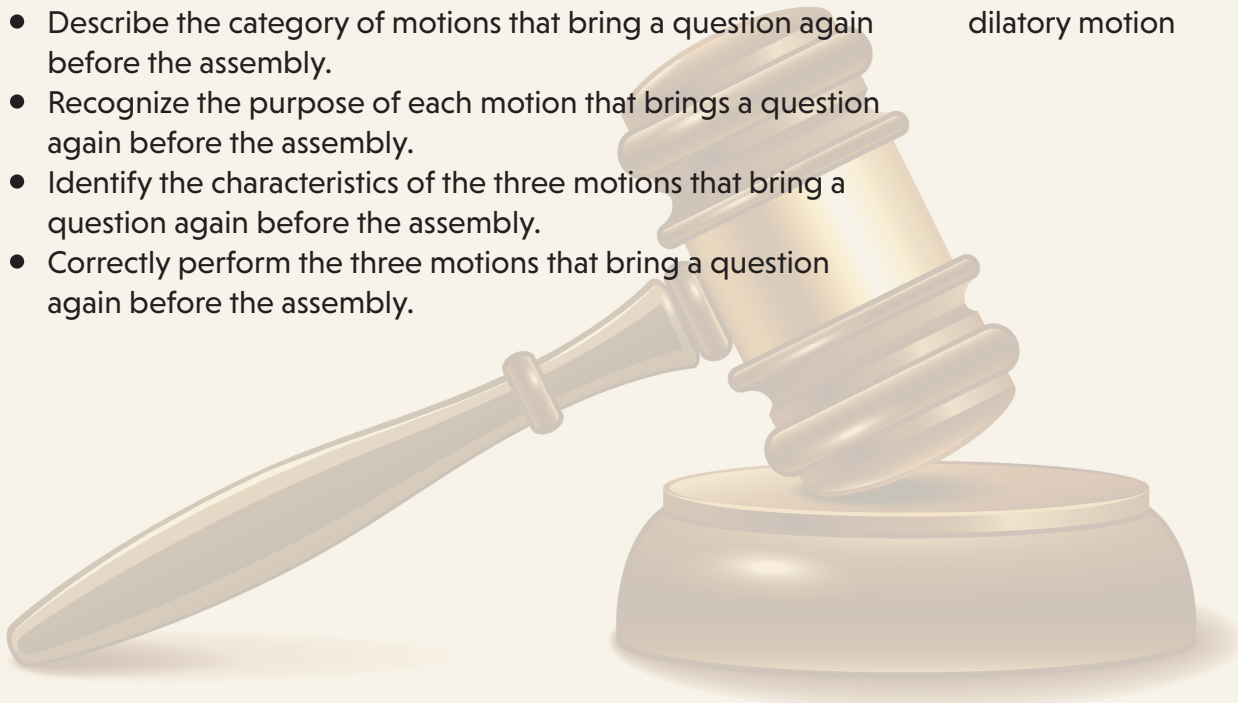
Unclassified Motions

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the category of motions that bring a question again before the assembly.
- Recognize the purpose of each motion that brings a question again before the assembly.
- Identify the characteristics of the three motions that bring a question again before the assembly.
- Correctly perform the three motions that bring a question again before the assembly.

KEY TERMS

dilatory motion



Unclassified Motions

The following *motions that bring a question again before the assembly* allow members to revisit a motion that was either voted on or disposed of in some manner. These motions are also referred to as *unclassified motions*.

Reconsider

In light of new information, issues, or attitudes, an assembly may agree to *reconsider* or bring back a motion that has already been voted on

Key Points

- In order to prevent *dilatory* attempts to move same motion, the motion to *reconsider* can only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side. A ***dilatory motion*** is intended to cause delay.
- In a regular meeting, "*reconsider* can only be made on the same day the as vote to be reconsidered was made." In a meeting lasting for more than one day, *reconsider* can be made as late as the next day after the original vote was taken.
- The motion to *reconsider* can be made when another member has the floor, but not after the member has begun to speak.*
- The motion to reconsider cannot be reconsidered.
- *Reconsider* is debatable when applied to a debatable motion, and debate can relate to the qualities of the motion it is attempting to reconsider.
- If the motion to *reconsider* is passed at a time when the motion to be reconsidered is in order, it can be taken up immediately.
- It necessary at times to make the motion to reconsider when the motion to be reconsidered is not in order. In such cases, a member may *call up the motion to reconsider* at a later time.

Reconsider	
Class	Unclassified
Interrupt?	No*
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Debatable when applied to a debatable motion
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 315-335

Example

Assume that the motion to be reconsidered is in order.

Member (rising) Madam President. (when called upon) "I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to host a teacher appreciation breakfast. I voted for the motion." (Second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded that we reconsider the motion to host a teacher appreciation breakfast. This is not amendable. This is debatable, as it applies to a debatable motion. Is there any debate? Seeing none, we will now proceed to vote. All those in favor of the motion to reconsider say 'AYE.' Those opposed say 'NO.'

Questions

1. Who can make the motion to *reconsider*?
2. Can the motion to *reconsider* be reconsidered?
3. Is the motion to *reconsider* debatable
4. Is *reconsider* in order when another member has the floor?
5. What is a *dilatory motion*?

Rescind

To completely cancel or repeal a motion that was previously adopted.

Key Points

- Can only be made when no other business is pending.
- Rescind is debatable and debate can relate to the motion it is applied to.
- Any member can rescind a motion, regardless of how they voted on the motion they wish to rescind.
- Most rules can be subject the motion to *rescind* including bylaws, but the following actions cannot be rescinded:
 - Any completed action that cannot be undone
 - When the motion to reconsider has already been applied to the motion
 - The reversal of an election, resignation, or expulsion.
- To *rescind a motion* with a simple majority vote, prior notice must be given. Otherwise, a motion to rescind requires a two-thirds vote.

Rescind	
Class	Unclassified
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	Yes
Amendable?	Yes
Vote Required?	Majority vote with notice. 2/3rds without notice or majority of entire membership
Reconsider?	Only the negative vote may be reconsidered
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 305-310

Example

Assume no prior notice was given

Member: Madam President (pause for recognition) "I move to rescind the motion that passed at our last meeting relating to conducting a fall carnival." (Second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to rescind the motion relating to conducting a fall carnival. Is there any debate? Are there any amendments? Seeing none, we shall proceed to vote. All those in favor of the motion to Rescind, please rise. Be seated. Those opposed please rise. Be seated. There are less than two-thirds in the affirmative, and the motion relating to conducting a fall carnival adopted at our last regular meeting is not rescinded. Is there any further new business?

Questions

1. Is the motion to rescind in order when another motion is pending?
2. What members are eligible to move to *rescind* a motion?
3. Are there time limits for rescinding a motion that was previously adopted?
4. What vote is required to rescind a motion?

Take from the Table

To bring a motion that has been laid on the table back to the assembly for consideration.

Key Points

- *Take from the table* is out of order when another motion is pending.
- *Take from the table* should be proposed after whatever urgent business causing the motion to be tabled is disposed of.
- A motion that was *taken from the table* is returned to the assembly in the exact condition it was in when it was tabled, including any motions that had been applied to it.
- If a motion is not *taken from the table* by the end of the session it was tabled or next regular meeting (if the assembly meets quarterly).
- Subsidiary motions cannot be applied to *take from the table*.
- A member cannot interrupt another member who has the floor to move *take from the table*.
- Any debate that occurs before a motion is tabled is still counted if a motion is *taken from the table* on the same day it was laid on the table.
- *Take from the table* is not limited to the person who moved to lay the motion on the table. Any member can make the motion.

Take from the Table	
Class	Unclassified
Interrupt?	No
Requires second?	Yes
Debatable?	No
Amendable?	No
Vote Required?	Majority
Reconsider?	No
RONR (11th ed.) Pages	pp. 300-304

Example

Member: Madam President (pause for recognition) I move to take from the table the motion relating to conducting a summer officer retreat. (SECOND)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to take from the table the motion relating to conducting a summer officer retreat. This is not amendable, not debatable, and requires a majority vote to pass. All those in favor of the motion say AYE. Those opposed say NO.

Questions

1. Can a member interrupt a pending motion to *take from the table*?
2. When should a motion be *taken from the table*?
3. If a main motion with an attached amendment is laid on the table, will both pending motions be returned to the assembly after the motion to *take from the table* is adopted?

Chart of Permissible Motions for the National FFA Parliamentary Career Development Event

Motion	Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required	Reconsider
Privileged Motions					
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Yes
Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Recess	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Raise a Question of Privilege	No	No	No	Chair Grants	No
Call for Orders of the Day	No	No	No	No vote, demand	No
Subsidiary Motions					
Lay on the Table	Yes	No	No	Majority	Neg. only (3)
Previous Question	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	Yes
Postpone to a Certain Time (or Definitely)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Commit or Refer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend	Yes	Yes (1)	Yes	Majority	Yes
Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Affirm. Only
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Incidental Motions					
Appeal	Yes	Yes (1)	No	Majority	Yes
Division of the Assembly	No	No	No	No vote, demand	No
Division of a Question	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Objection to the Consideration of a Question	No	No	No	2/3 Neg.	Neg. Only
Parliamentary Inquiry	No	No	No	Chair answers	No
Point of Order	No	No	No	Normally no vote Chair Rules	No
Request for Information	No	No	No	No vote. Chair responds	No
Suspend the Rules	Yes	No	No	(2)	No
Withdraw a Motion	No (3)	No	No	Majority (3)	Neg. Only
Motions that Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly					
Reconsider (4)	Yes	Yes (1)	No	Majority	No
Rescind (4)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj. with notice, or maj. of membership (3)	Neg. Only
Take from the Table (4)	Yes	No	No	Majority	No

(1) If applied to a debatable motion

(2) Rules of Order - _ vote, standing rules - majority vote

(3) Refer to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th edition) for rule(s)

(4) These motions shall not be used unless listed on the event card as a required motion. See: E. Presentation, rule #2 on Oklahoma Sr. Parliamentary Procedure CDE guidelines.

References

- Robert, H.M. (2011) *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press
- National FFA Organization. (2016). Official FFA manual; 2016-17. Indianapolis, IN: National FFA Organization.
- National FFA Organization. (2016, May). Parliamentary Procedure 2017-2021. *National FFA Career and Leadership Development Events Handbook 2017-2021*. National FFA Organization, Indianapolis, IN
- National FFA Organization. (2016). Program of Activities Resource Guide. National FFA Organization, Indianapolis, IN

Glossary

A

agenda a posted list of items to be discussed in an upcoming meeting

B

bylaws a set of policies that usually accompany a constitution and deal with more operational details of an organization such as committees, dues, and parliamentary authority

C

constitution a formal document that outlines what an organization is, and rules how it is to operate; not easily changed or suspended

D

deliberative assembly the kind of gathering in which parliamentary law is applicable

dilatory motion a motion that is misused, or meant to delay business

G

gavel a small mallet that is used to signal actions for the assembly

germane relevant or related to the same subject; also refers to amendments and their relevance to the motion they are applied to

I

incidental main motion is made when no other business is pending and may involve adoption of a committee or ratifying a motion

incidental motions the class of motions that arise out of regular business in a meeting

M

main motion a motion that proposes or introduces a new item of business

minutes a record of action that occurs in a meeting; typically recorded by the secretary of a group

O

order of business the order in which items of business should be taken up during a meeting

orders of the day the single items of business that are to be taken up either at a scheduled time or in the normal order of business in a meeting

P

parliamentary law originally the name given to the rules and customs for carrying on business in the English Parliament that were developed through a continuing process of decisions and precedents somewhat like the growth of the common law

parliamentary procedure parliamentary law, as it is followed in any given assembly or organization

precedence the order of motions that gives preference to motions of a higher rank

privileged motions the class of motions that relate to the privileges of members and rank higher in precedence than other motions

put the question to bring a motion to a vote before the assembly; the chair puts the question

Q

quorum the minimum number of members required in attendance to conduct business; typically half of the membership

R

Robert's Rules of Order manual created by Henry M. Robert to serve as a universal guide to parliamentary procedure

rules of order any written rules adopted to a specific deliberative assembly that confirm, add to, or deviate from common parliamentary law

S

secondary motions the classes of motions that may be applied to a main motion, or deal with the business of an assembly; includes privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions

seconding the motion an indication of agreement to consider a motion, made by a member other than the mover of the motion

standing rules rules that pertain to the management of an organization rather than the procedure in meetings

state the question the formal presentation of a motion by the chair to be considered by the assembly

subsidiary motions the class of motions that help to dispose of the main motion and other motions