



**MAKING
MEETINGS
RUN
SMOOTHLY**

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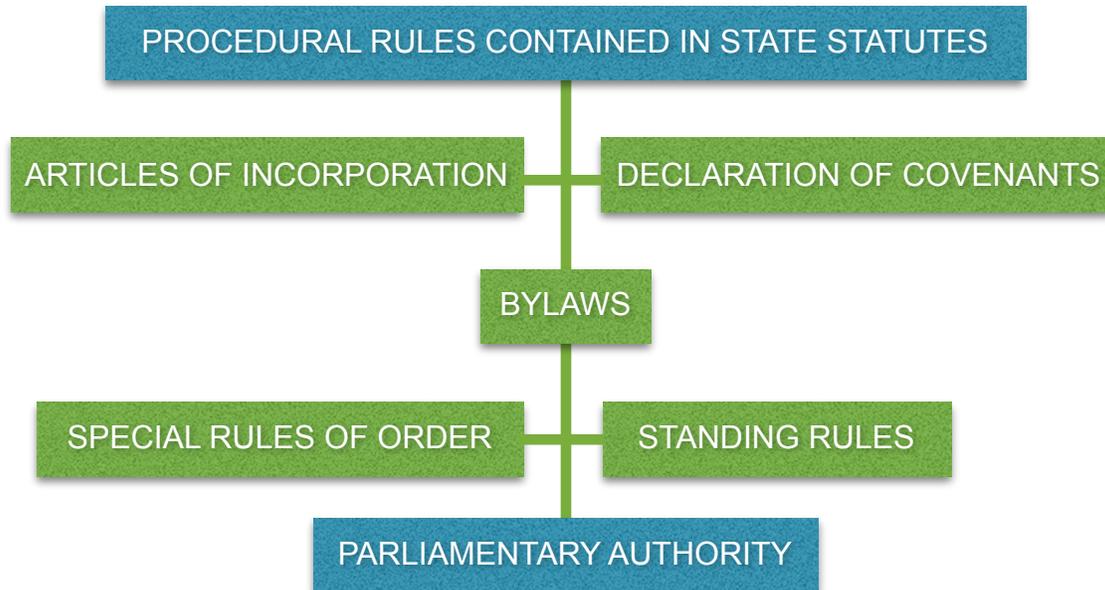
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The Basics of Parliamentary Law

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Governing Documents Diagram



The documents in **GREEN** are created by and can be amended by the Association.

Hierarchy: Documents higher on this diagram outrank documents below them. When a conflict arises between two documents, the conflicting rule in the lower governing document is null and void, and the rule in the higher governing document must be followed.

Special Rules of Order relate to the orderly transaction of business in meetings and to the duties of officers in that connection (e.g., limits on debate). These rules require notice and a two-thirds vote for adoption or amendment.

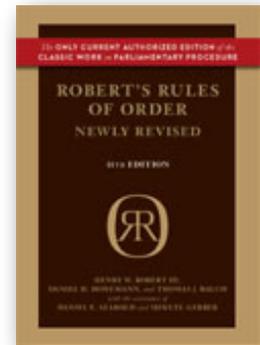
Standing Rules relate to the details of the administration of the association rather than to parliamentary procedure (e.g., the pool shall be closed from December 1 through March 31). These rules can be adopted or changed upon the same conditions as any ordinary act of the association.

Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order

What is Robert's Rules of Order and why do we have to follow it?

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR for short) is an extensive compilation of Rules of Order designed to facilitate the smooth and orderly transaction of business in deliberative assemblies.

RONR becomes binding on an organization when it is adopted as that organization's parliamentary authority. In this way, the organization has decided to follow RONR, and by including such a provision in the bylaws, the organization is bound to do so.



Doesn't RONR bog down meetings with excessive rules?



Often in meetings, members will feel like they're in the middle of the ocean, struggling to stay above the water. Then, when *Robert's Rules* is thrown at them, they're not sure whether it's an anchor that's going to pull them under or a flotation device that's going to keep them afloat.

Let's be clear. The purpose of *Robert's Rules* is to protect the rights of the members and allow for smooth, productive, and orderly meetings. It's a flotation device. Actually, it is the largest and most advanced flotation device available to organizations. It's designed to keep every member out of turbulent waters. It has been continually reworked and revised, since it first came out in 1876. Each new edition incorporates improvements taken from real-life experiences in countless meetings from organizations around the world.

When Henry Robert published the first edition, he was quickly swamped with letters, asking for clarifications. He incorporated these questions into the next edition, and this philosophy of improvement has been continued for over a century. This means the current edition contains the wisdom gained through the trial and error of over 130 years of practice in deliberative assemblies.

Robert's Rules is not a weapon to be wielded at members. It is an invaluable tool designed to generate smooth-running, efficient, fair meetings with the highest level of productivity.

The Hierarchy of Governing Documents

1. **What happens when a rule in the Articles of Incorporation conflicts with a rule in the Bylaws?**

- a. Whichever rule was adopted first governs
- b. Whichever rule was adopted last governs
- c. The rule in the Articles of Incorporation governs
- d. The rule in the Bylaws governs

RONR (11th ed), p. 11, lines 30-32

2. **Should Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws contain the exact same rules?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

RONR (11th ed), p. 570, lines 30-35

Managing Governing Documents:

- Have All Governing Documents On Hand
- Be Sure All Governing Documents Are Current
- Integrate All Amendments
- Searchable Digital Copies Are Easiest To Use

Quorum

3. What is the definition of “quorum”?

RONR (11th ed), p. 21, lines 3-6

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 4. Can you call a meeting to order without a quorum? | Yes | No |
| 5. Can you take minutes of a meeting without a quorum? | Yes | No |
| 6. Without a quorum, can you approve minutes of a previous meeting? | Yes | No |
| 7. Without a quorum, can you receive reports of officers or committees? | Yes | No |
| 8. What four actions can be taken in a meeting without a quorum? | | |

- Fix The Time To Which To Adjourn
- Adjourn
- Recess
- Take Measures To Obtain A Quorum

RONR (11th ed), p. 347, lines 30-32

Quorum And Voting:

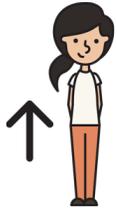
Number of Total Members	1,000
Members at the Meeting	100
Quorum	50
Members Who Voted	10

9. Based on the numbers shown above, how many votes in the affirmative are required to adopt a motion by majority vote?

- a. 501
- b. 51
- c. 26
- d. 6

Patterns of Formality for Members

Patterns of formality for members are designed to help keep the proceedings focused on the business at hand without breaking into multiple simultaneous conversations, and, especially during highly contested issues, these customs prevent heated discussion from getting out of hand. Members observe the following customs, DURING A MEETING:



1. With a few exceptions, Never speak while seated. Always rise and address the chair. This allows everyone to be clear on whose turn it is to speak, and it helps to prevent interruptions. This rule can be modified to fit the assembly; for example, in small assemblies, a custom of raising one's hand to gain recognition and speaking while seated may be perfectly acceptable.



2. Refer to the presiding officer as “Mr. President” or “the chair”; never use his name or the pronoun “you.” This helps to associate him with his position.

Example: Mr. President, I'm unable to hear the chair from way back here.



3. Never speak directly to another member; always speak through the chair.

Example: Mr. President, does the member have an estimate of what this project will cost?



4. Avoid using other members' names, when they can be described in another way.

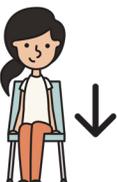
Example: I believe I have a better understanding of the material than the member who just spoke.
[RONR (11th ed.), p. 22-24]



5. Never attack a member's motives in debate, and never use words like “lie,” “liar,” or “fraud” in reference to a member.

Acceptable Example: I believe there is strong evidence that the member is mistaken.

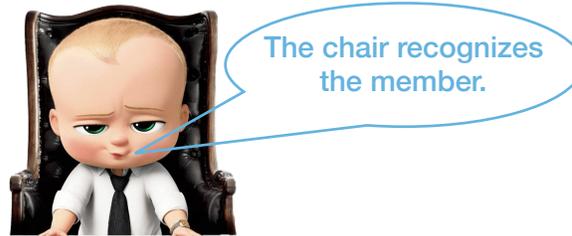
Out of Order Example: The member's last statement was a lie. [RONR (11th ed.), p. 392, ll. 12-25]



6. Always be seated when the chair rises to interrupt. Your rights to debate will still be intact, but you must yield to allow the chair to attend to his duties. [RONR (11th ed.), p. 394, ll. 1-10]

Patterns of Formality for The Chair

- The chair always speaks in the third person.
- The chair never refers to a member as “you.”



10. Is the chair the most powerful person in a deliberative assembly?

- a. Yes
- b. No

RONR (11th ed), p. 2, lines 4-8

11. Can the chair give his views on each motion?*

- a. Yes
- b. No

RONR (11th ed), p. 394, lines 26-29

***This rule is adjusted for committees and small boards [RONR (11th ed.), p. 488, lines 18-20]**

12. What happens if the president and all vice-presidents are absent from a meeting?

- a. The meeting can't be called to order
- b. The secretary presides
- c. The secretary presides, but no business can be transacted
- d. A presiding officer is elected on the spot

RONR (11th ed), p. 453, lines 3-7

Seeking Recognition & Obtaining the Floor

13. What does it mean for a member to be “recognized” and to “have the floor”?

- a. The member’s name is added to a list of members who wish to speak
- b. The member has the exclusive right to be heard at that time
- c. The chair acknowledges the request and will decide when to grant it
- d. The member may share the floor with others in the orderly debate

14. Who has the right to seek recognition and obtain the floor?

- a. Any officer
- b. Anyone whose name appears on the agenda as a speaker
- c. Any member of the body that is meeting
- d. Any member or invited guest

15. Does the chair have the authority to decide which members to recognize?

- a. Yes, the chair controls which members can speak and at which times
- b. No, the chair must recognize any member who seeks the floor while entitled to it

RONR (11th ed), p. 29, lines 17-18

Handling Motions

Three Steps to Bringing a motion before the assembly.

- ▶ A member makes a motion.
- ▶ Another member seconds the motion.
- ▶ The chair states the question on the motion.

Three Steps to Considering a motion.

- ▶ Members debate the motion.
- ▶ The chair puts the question to a vote.
- ▶ The chair announces the result.

16. What happens if it's discovered that an adopted motion never received a second?

- a. The motion is null and void
- b. The motion must be ratified at the next meeting
- c. It was never before the assembly and never adopted
- d. The lack of a second is immaterial

17. If a motion is lost at one meeting, can it be made again at next month's meeting?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18. Whose duty is it to make sure a motion is in the proper form?

- a. The maker of the motion
- b. The maker and seconder
- c. The secretary
- d. The chair

RONR (11th ed), p. 39, line 33 - p. 40, line 2

19. If a motion is made and seconded, can the chair rule the motion out of order?

- a. Yes
- b. No

RONR (11th ed), p. 39, lines 21-25

20. Can the chair decide which motions he will or won't allow?

- a. Yes
- b. No

RONR (11th ed), p. 39, lines 8-11

More Doughnuts, Please



BAD MOTION:

“I’d like to see more doughnuts at the weekend picnics. We’re always running out and everybody’s miserable about it. I can’t enjoy myself if I have to be worried about watching the doughnut box to make sure people aren’t taking four or five at a time. I like to have two or three over the course of the day, but I don’t want to hide them somewhere, just so I can get my fair share. I don’t understand why we can’t have enough for everyone. I mean, at the end of the day, we’re always throwing away piles of corn on the cob and mashed potatoes, but we always run out of doughnuts... I’d like to see us put this to a vote.”

What would be adopted? What was the motion? What goes in the minutes?

GOOD MOTION:

“I move that five dozen doughnuts be provided at each weekend picnic.”

What would be adopted? What was the motion? What goes in the minutes?

- ▶ The motion comes first. Debate comes after the assembly knows the exact motion.
- ▶ The motion has a clear objective.
- ▶ The assembly motion can be amended by increasing or reducing the number of doughnuts.

BETTER MOTION:

“I move that the Food and Beverage Committee be instructed to provide five dozen doughnuts at each weekend picnic.”

1. We know who is responsible for carrying out this decision.
2. It is the duty of the secretary to provide committees with any instructions.

What is the purpose of a meeting?

A meeting is for the TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS. It's not for discussing issues or talking about problems. DEBATE is an essential part of the transaction of business in a deliberative assembly, but idle discussion is a major hindrance to the process.

The Difference Between Debate and Discussion?

What is the difference between Debate and Discussion?

DEBATE is discussion on the merits of a pending question -- that is, whether the proposal under consideration should, or should not, be agreed to.



For discussion to be DEBATE, it must pertain to a matter that is PENDING.

For discussion to be DEBATE, it must pertain to whether or not the proposal should be adopted.

If a motion is debatable, members have a right to debate it. However, members may not take up time in a meeting with discussion of matters that are not pending, and the chair should ensure that debate is confined to the merits of the pending question.

Each member is allowed two speeches of 10 minutes each for each debatable question. The assembly may alter this rule or end debate immediately by a two-thirds vote.

What is good debate?

- ▶ It is focused on the pending motion.
- ▶ It's clear.
- ▶ It has a purpose.
- ▶ It gives information to the other members.
- ▶ It expresses your view.

Don't be shy in debate. Debate is about what you think. It's your time to express your view.

BAD DEBATE:

"I'm a member of another organization that does a lot of raffles, and a lot of people like them, and I also know that they take a lot of time and energy."

Does he support the motion or oppose it? Is his position clear?

HE COULD HAVE MEANT . . .

"I support this motion. I think a raffle is a good idea, because I'm a member of another organization that regularly holds raffles, and all the members have a good time with it. I realize that it takes a lot of time and energy, but I think it's worth the effort. So, I urge members to vote in favor of this motion."

OR HE COULD HAVE MEANT . . .

"I oppose this motion. I don't like the idea of a raffle, because I'm a member of another organization that holds a lot of raffles, and I realize that a lot of people like them, but I see that they take a lot of time and energy, and I think there's a lot more we could be doing with all that effort, including finding better ways to raise money. Therefore, I encourage members to join me in voting against this motion."

- State whether you're for or against the motion.
- Give your reasons for your position.
- Recognize counter points.
- Urge support, if desired.

What can you say in debate?

- ▶ Can you say, “This motion is a horrible idea.” Yes No
 - ▶ Can you say, “This idea will never work.” Yes No
 - ▶ Can you say, “While I have the floor, I’d just like to take the opportunity to thank all of our volunteers for doing such a wonderful job at the voter-registration drive, last week, and I hope all of you will consider volunteering again, in the drive we’re doing next week.” Yes No
 - ▶ Can you say, “Before I talk about this motion, I’d like to say that the last motion was truly a great idea, and I’m glad we were able to adopt it.” Yes No
 - ▶ Can you say, “If this motion is adopted, membership will drop off -- not necessarily this month or next month, but eventually, we will lose members as a direct result of this motion.” Yes No
 - ▶ Can you say, “I feel that the chairman of the fundraising committee only wants to have this raffle because he wants to make a good impression before he runs for office in two months.” Yes No
 - ▶ Can you say, “We all heard our fellow member, Mr. Jones, say that last year’s raffle made money. But he knows that’s not true; it lost money.” Yes No
-
- 21. **Can You Speak Against Your Own Motion?** Yes No
 - 22. **Can You Vote Against Your Own Motion?** Yes No
 - 23. **Can A Member Who Seconded the Motion Speak Against It?** Yes No
 - 24. **Does the Maker of the Motion Have the Right to Speak First?** Yes No

Methods of Voting

Voice Vote

Application: Majority Vote

Benefit: Quickest, simplest form of voting

Process: Chair says, “Those in favor, say aye . . . Those opposed, say no. The ayes (noes) have it, and the motion is adopted (lost).”

Note: The chair must always call for the negative, no matter how large the affirmative.



Rising Vote (or Show of Hands)

Application: Two-thirds Vote; To Verify An Inconclusive Voice Vote

Benefit: Provides more accuracy through a visual demonstration of votes

Process: The chair says, “Those in favor, please rise . . . be seated. Those opposed, please rise . . . be seated. The are (fewer than) two thirds in the affirmative, and the motion is adopted (lost).”

Note: At the time of the vote, any member may demand a Rising Vote, even after a Voice Vote has been taken.



Counted Rising Vote (or Counted Show of Hands)

Application: To Verify An Inconclusive Voice Vote or Rising Vote (or Show of Hands)

Benefit: Provides vote totals

Drawback: Can be very time consuming in large assemblies

Process: The chair says, “Those in favor, please rise and remain standing to be counted . . . be seated. Those opposed, please rise and remain standing to be counted . . . be seated.” Or, the chair would say, “Those in favor, please raise your right hand and keep it up to be counted . . . hands down. Those opposed please raise your right hand and keep it up to be counted . . . hands down.”

Note: The chair may initiate a counted rising vote; without the chair’s initiation, a majority vote is required to order a Counted Rising Vote. A member would say, I move that the vote be counted. If there is a second, the chair would say, “It is moved and seconded that the vote be counted. Those in favor of counting the vote, say aye . . . Those opposed say no.”



Ballot Vote

Application: Whenever a vote is to be secret.

Benefit: Allows members to vote anonymously.

Drawback: Can be time consuming in large assemblies

Process: The chair appoints tellers to distribute, collect, and tabulate the ballots. Members write their votes on slips of paper (blank paper is fine). The head teller reports the totals. The chair repeats the totals and announces the result. The full tellers’ report goes in the minutes.

Note: Majority Vote is required to order a Ballot Vote.



Meaning of Majority Vote

25. What does “Majority” mean?

- a. Fifty-one percent
- b. Half plus one
- c. More than half
- d. Any of the above

Majority = More Than Half

What is “More than Half” of 1,000?	Anything Over 500
Would 507 votes be a Majority of 1,000?	Yes
Would 507 votes adopt the motion?	Yes

51% Does Not Mean Majority

What is 51% of 1,000?	510
Would 507 votes be a 51% of 1,000?	No
Would 507 votes adopt the motion?	No

Half + 1 Does Not Mean Majority

What is “Half + 1” of 17?	9.5
Would 9 votes be “Half + 1” of 17?	No
Would 9 votes adopt the motion?	No

Two-Thirds Vote

For a **Two-Thirds Vote**, the number of votes in the affirmative must be at least twice the number of votes in the negative.

26. How many of the following voting outcomes achieve a two-thirds vote?

- a. 116 In Favor, 81 Opposed
- b. 22 In Favor, 14 Opposed
- c. 8 In Favor, 4 Opposed
- d. 1,200 In Favor, 597 Opposed

Unanimous Consent

- ▶ This is a time-saving mechanism for quickly adopting noncontroversial issues.
- ▶ The chair says, "If there is no objection, the summer picnic shall be held at Jefferson Park. Is there any objection? . . . Since there is no objection, the summer picnic shall be held at Jefferson Park."
- ▶ Any member has the right to object. Objecting only means that the formal process of making a motion, seconding it, debating it, and putting it to a vote must be followed in order to adopt the motion.
- ▶ Unanimous consent can be used for any motion and in place of any vote that is to be taken of the members inside a meeting.

Answer Key:

1. C; 2. B; 3. The number of members who must be present in order that business can be validly transacted; 4. Yes; 5. Yes; 6. No; 7. No; 8. n/a; 9. D; 10. B; 11 B; 12. D; 13. B; 14. C; 15. B; 16. D; 17. A; 18. D; 19. A; 20. B; 21. No; 22. Yes; 23. Yes; 24. Yes; 25. C; 26. C & D

When Can The Chair Vote?

Example 1



27 In Favor - 27 Opposed

Outcome: Motion is Lost



What Would Happen If The Chair Voted In Favor?

28 In Favor - 27 Opposed

NEW Outcome: Motion is Adopted



Chair's Vote Would Affect The Outcome.

The Chair Can Vote.

Example 2



35 In Favor - 10 Opposed

Outcome: Motion is Adopted



What Would Happen If The Chair Voted In Favor?

36 In Favor - 10 Opposed

SAME Outcome: Motion is Adopted



Chair's Vote Would NOT Affect The Outcome.

The Chair Can NOT Vote.

Example 3



34 In Favor - 33 Opposed

Outcome: Motion is Adopted



What Would Happen If The Chair Voted Against The Motion?

34 In Favor - 34 Opposed

NEW Outcome: Motion is Lost



Chair's Vote Would Affect The Outcome.

The Chair Can Vote.

Example 4



105 In Favor - 105 Opposed

Outcome: Motion is Lost



What Would Happen If The Chair Voted Against The Motion?

105 In Favor - 106 Opposed

SAME Outcome: Motion is Lost



Chair's Vote Would NOT Affect The Outcome.

The Chair Can NOT Vote.

Important Parliamentary Terms

Parliamentary procedure has its own specific language, and below are some important terms that must be understood.

Deliberative Assembly - A group of members meeting to decide courses of action to be taken in the name of the entire group.

Quorum - The minimum number of members who must be present at the meetings of a deliberative assembly for business to be validly transacted.

Majority - More than half.

The Chair - Known also as the chairman or president or presiding officer, this is the person who presides over the meeting.

Obtaining the Floor - Being recognized by the chair as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time. "The chair must recognize any member who seeks the floor while entitled to it." - RONR (11th ed.), p. 29, ll. 17-18.

Motion - A formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take certain action, also called a "question."

Debate - Discussion of the merits of a pending motion.

In Order/Out of Order - Refers to whether or not an action is in accordance with the rules.

Amendment - A subsidiary motion used to change the text of a pending motion.

Order of Business - An established sequence in which business shall be taken up in a session.

Majority Vote - More than half of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks and abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting.

Two-thirds Vote - At least two thirds of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks and abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting.

Point of Order - A call for the chair to make a ruling and to enforce the rules.

Secondary Motions

Motion	Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Raise A Question of Privilege	No	No	No	Chair
Call for the Orders of the Day	No	No	No	1 member
Lay on the Table	Yes	No	No	Majority
Previous Question	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit/Extend Debate	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a Certain Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Commit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

Red = can be made without obtaining the floor and can interrupt a member who is speaking.

Green = *under certain conditions* can be made without obtaining the floor and can interrupt a member who is speaking.

Green Highlight = Privileged Motions

Motion	Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Point of Order	No	No*	No	Chair Rules
Appeal	Yes	Yes*	No	Majority*
Suspend the Rules	Yes	No	No	2/3
Object to the Consideration of a Question	No	No	No	2/3 in Neg
Division of a Question	Yes*	No	Yes	Majority*
Consider by Paragraph or Seriatim	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Division of the Assembly	No	No	No	1 Member
Motions relating to Methods of Voting and the Polls	Yes	No	Yes	Majority*
Motions relating to Nominations	Yes	No	Yes	Majority*
Request to be Excused from Duty	No, if made by another	Yes	Yes	Majority
Requests and Inquiries	-	-	-	-

Red = can be made without obtaining the floor and can interrupt a member who is speaking.

Green = *under certain conditions* can be made without obtaining the floor and can interrupt a member who is speaking.