



## Brief Handout from Cuesta Parliamentary Services

### Debate Protocol (Similar to a trial in front of a judge.)

1. Only one person speaks at a time.
2. A speaker must be recognized before speaking.
3. All comments are made through the chair.
4. Comments are confined to the current issue.
5. Discussion should alternate between Pro and Con.
6. Members have no right to complain; only have a right to make motions.
7. Members who have already spoken must allow other members to speak.
8. Abstain is not an ordinary option.
9. No reading of lengthy papers.
10. No cross conversations; no interruptions.
11. No speaking against one's own motion.
12. No verbal attacks of other members.
13. If proper decorum cannot be maintained – call a recess.
14. Enforce the debate time limits (bylaws or the parliamentary authority).
15. Decisions are null and void in the absence of a quorum or proper posting.
16. The vote required to adopt a motion should be very clear – majority or 2/3.
17. All decisions are binding on all members regardless of how a member voted.
18. All rules must be respected and obeyed – who can move, debate, vote.

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## Six Steps to Handling a Motion

A motion is a formal proposal by a member during a meeting that the assembly take certain action. The basic form of the motion is the Main Motion.

### A Main Motion is brought before an assembly:

1. **Motion is moved:** While no motion is pending, a member “rises” and seeks recognition. Once she is recognized she has the exclusive right to be heard at that time. Member makes the motion, *“I move we buy 3 computers.”*
2. **Motion is seconded:** Someone without needing to be recognized, seconds the motion. The seconder is not claiming to agree with motion. The seconder is stating that the motion should be discussed and voted by the organization.
3. **Motion is stated:** The chair states the question, *“It is moved and seconded to buy 3 computers.”* As the chair turns to the maker of the motion, she states, *“Are you ready for the question?”* The motion no longer belongs to the mover; it belongs to the assembly.

### A Main Motion is considered by the assembly:

4. **Motion is debated:** Debate can be closed only by a 2/3 vote by the assembly.
5. **Motion is put:** The chair says, *“The motion is to buy 3 computers. All in favor of the motion indicate by saying, ‘Aye’.*  
*All opposed to the motion indicate by saying, ‘No’.”*  
A voice vote is the regular method when a majority vote is required for adoption.  
A rising vote is the normal method when a 2/3 vote is required for adoption.  
A ‘show of hands’ is for small assemblies or after an inconclusive voice vote.
6. **Vote is announced:** The chair makes the following 4 statements.
  - *“The ‘ayes’ have it. Or, the ‘Noes’ have it.”*
  - *“The motion is adopted. Or, the motion is lost.”*
  - The chair states the effect of the vote or orders its execution.
  - *“The next item of business is ...”*



## Dos and Don'ts of Minute Taking

### Make sure you ...

1. DO use the agenda as a guide;
2. DO record the kind of meeting, date, time, and location;
3. DO record the presiding officer's and the minute taker's complete name;
4. DO record the presence of a quorum if announced by the presiding officer;
5. **DO write the full name of the maker of every motion;**
6. **DO include the totals from the treasurer's report for previous balance, receipts, disbursements, and current balance;**
7. DO record the full names of officers and committee chairs who presented a report;
8. DO file complete signed reports of all written reports attached to the minutes as exhibits;
9. **DO enter motions and amendments in the exact wording as stated by the presiding officer and as finally adopted;**
10. **DO show the exact action taken on every motion (e.g., adopted, defeated, postponed, referred, laid on the table, etc.);**
11. **DO record all balloted or ordered counted votes, for and against;**
12. **DO record all Notices, Points of Order, Appeals (including the reason for the chair's ruling and the outcome of the appeal);**
13. DO include the category of business;
14. DO list the names of members elected or appointed to special committees, the name of each committee, and its purpose;
15. DO include important announcements pertaining to the whole society.

### Make sure to ...

1. **NOT forget to check past minutes for agenda items;**
2. **NOT include the names of the seconders;**
3. **NOT include every detail from a report;**
4. **NOT include any content of debate unless ordered by the assembly to do so;**
5. **NOT include any motion withdrawn before the presiding officer stated it;**
6. **NOT include personal opinions or descriptive phrases;**
7. NOT include words of praise or criticism from anyone;
8. NOT forget to include the time of adjournment;
9. NOT close with "Humbly" or "Respectfully submitted,";
10. NOT forget to date and sign the minutes with your title, adding whether the minutes were later adopted with or without corrections.



## Purpose and Form for Each Motion (Beware of Order of Precedence)

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>The Motion and its Form</b>
Propose some action	<b><u>Main Motion</u></b> I move to donate \$50 to preserve the habitat of the Clay Pigeon.
Improve a proposal	<b><u>Amend</u></b> I move to amend the motion by striking \$50 and inserting \$75.
Change the amount of time for discussion	<b><u>Limit or Extend Debate</u></b> I move to limit debate to 1 minute per speaker.
Stop discussion and vote now	<b><u>Close Debate</u></b> I call the previous question.
Delay a decision	<b><u>Refer</u></b> I move to refer the motion to the bylaws committee <b><u>Postpone to a Certain Time</u></b> I move to postpone the motion until after the break. <b><u>Recess</u></b> I move to recess for 5 minutes.
Kill a motion	<b><u>Postpone Indefinitely</u></b> I move to postpone the motion indefinitely.
Deal with an emergency	<b><u>Lay on the Table</u></b> I move to lay the motion on the table. <b><u>Suspend the Rules (Not Suspend the Orders of the Day)</u></b> I move to suspend the rules that prohibit us from taking up the new business now.
Obtain information	<b><u>Parliamentary Inquiry</u></b> Mr. Chair, if we adopt this motion can we rescind it tomorrow? <b><u>Request for Information</u></b> Mr. Chair, can the treasurer tell us if we have enough money for this motion?
Challenge the ruling of the chair	<b><u>Point of Order</u></b> Point of Order. We cannot vote on this motion. There is already another motion on the floor. <b><u>Appeal</u></b> I appeal from the decision of the chair.
Assure the accuracy of the voice vote	<b><u>Division</u></b> Division. Division.
Close the meeting	<b><u>Adjourn</u></b> I move to adjourn.



## Ranking of Selected Motions

	Interrupt	Second	Debate	Amend	Vote
<b>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</b>					
13. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn		S		A	M
12. Adjourn		S			M
11. Take a Recess		S		A	M
10. Raise a Question of Privilege	I				C
9. Call for the Orders of the Day	I				C**
<b>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</b>					
8. Lay on the Table		S			M
7. Previous Question		S			2/3
6. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate		S		A	2/3
5. Postpone to a Certain Time		S	D	A	M**
4. Commit (Refer)		S	D	A	M
3. Amend		S	D**	A	M
2. Postpone Indefinitely		S	D		M
1. MAIN MOTION		S	D	A	M
<b>INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (No Ranking)</b>					
Appeal	I	S	D		M
Division of Assembly	I				**
Point of Order	I				C**
Request for Information	I				C
Suspend the Rules (that prohibit)		S			2/3
<b>BRING AGAIN BEFORE ASSEMBLY</b>					
Rescind/Amend Something Prev Adopted		S	D**	A	**
Reconsider the Vote		S	D		M
Discharge a Committee		S	D**	A	**
Take from the Table		S			M

\*\* See Robert's Rules  
**C** Chair Decides  
**I** Can Interrupt

**S** Requires a Second  
**A, D** May be Amended, Debated  
**M or 2/3** Vote Required to Adopt