

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE TERMINOLOGY

What it is. What it is not

Terminology	What it is	What it is not
Agenda	A written notation of what will occur in the meeting and in what order.	A random assortment of topics to be covered or not covered depending on the mood of the group.
Quorum	The number of members of a group or organization required to be present to transact business legally; refer to the bylaws.	A funny word that no one ever bothered to look up because if it were so important they would have found another way to say it anyway.
Ex Officio	Voting privileges by virtue of office or official position.	A former military officer.
Amend	To alter, modify, rephrase or add to or subtract from. In basic terms it means to “change your mind.”	Darning your socks.
Refer to a Committee	Pass discussion or a topic for study onto an appropriate committee.	Let Suzy do it.
Indefinite Postponement	Used to postpone the motion. Essentially kills the main motion.	Postponing a picnic until the rain clears up.
Postponed to a Definite Time	Postpone a motion to a definite later time giving members more time to consider a matter.	Postponing a picnic until the rain clears up at 3:00 p.m.
Limit or Stop Debate	A suggestion to stop discussion and debate and vote on the matter. Basically: “Be quiet and vote.”	Putting a gag order on all present.
Recess	A break in the meeting. The break can even extend until the next day. Basically: “Time for a soda break.”	A ten-minute playground break.
Adjourn	To suspend the meeting until a later time. In layman’s terms: “Pack it in for the night.”	The French word for saying goodbye.
Main Motion	The main suggestion or proposal.	A dance move.
Second	A word used to express formal support of a motion so that it may be discussed or put to a vote.	A period of time often requested when running short on time.
Withdraw the Motion	To remove the motion and leave no trace of it in the minutes.	A dance done backwards.
Motion Carried	The suggestion or proposal is passed.	A dance move done while being carried around the dance floor.
Minutes	The official record of the proceedings at a meeting.	The amount of time you stare at your watch waiting for the meeting to end.
Report	A statement describing an event, situation or the like, usually as the result of observation, inquiry, discussion, etc.	A blow-by-blow account of what happened, who did it and who said what to whom.
Unfinished Business	A topic, issue or proposal carried over from the last meeting that the group has not finished with.	Homework from the night before.
New Business	A new topic, issue or proposal.	A coffee shop you decide to open.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

to ...at a glance

Here are some motions you might make, how
make them, and what to expect of the rules.

TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be re-considered?
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourn"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
CALL AN INTERMISSION	"I move that we recess for..."	NO	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.	"I rise to a question of privilege"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO (usually)
SUSPEND FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
NO DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	"I move the previous question"	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO ¹
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING	"I move to refer the matter to committee"	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES ²
AMEND A MOTION	"I move to amend the motion by..."	NO	YES	YES ³	YES	MAJORITY	YES
INTRODUCE BUSINESS	"I move that..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
THE MOTIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE...BELOW THERE IS NO ORDER							
PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT	"I rise to a point of order"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE ⁴	NO
VOTE ON A RULING OF CHAIRMAN	"I appeal the chair's decision"	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY	YES
SUSPEND RULES TEMPORILY	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO
AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER	"I object to consideration of this motion"	YES	NO	NO	NO	2/3 ⁵	-- ⁶
VERIFY A VOICE VOTE	"I call for a division" or "Division!"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE ⁷	NO
REQUEST INFORMATION	"Point of Information"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
RETRACT YOUR MOTION	"I wish to withdraw my motion"	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	-- ⁸
MAKE UP A MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED	"I move to take from the table..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	YES	YES	-- ⁹	NO	MAJORITY	NO

NOTES:

¹Unless vote on question is not yet taken.

²Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.

³Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.

⁴Except in doubtful cases.

⁵A two-thirds (2/3) vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of improper matter.

⁶Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, finally disposed of.

⁷Unless someone objects.

⁸Only if the vote is no.

⁹Only if motion to be considered is debatable.