



# 4-H LEADERSHIP & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

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Advanced

## Parliamentary Procedure

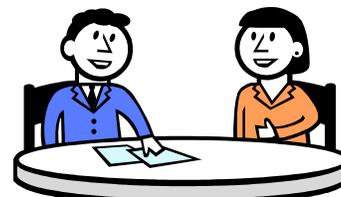
To run successfully, every meeting must have some basic ground rules for its participants. The same holds true for 4-H club meetings.

**Parliamentary procedure** ensures that one topic at a time is discussed in a business meeting. It also allows for both sides of an issue to be heard. When parliamentary procedure is properly used, everyone in a meeting has the right to have his/her opinion heard by the group members. In parliamentary procedure the majority, or the largest number of people who agree on the issue, usually makes the decision for the group.

Enhancing your knowledge of parliamentary procedure will assist you in presiding over meetings and effectively facilitating group interaction. These are important skills to have as you further develop your leadership and personal development skills.



Life Skill  
Leadership



**Parliamentary procedure** is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly. Always remember to:

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



## Types of Motions

Four types of motions are recognized by Robert's Rules of Order.

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

## Meeting Minutes

The record of an assembly's proceedings is usually called the **minutes**. The minutes should reflect motions that are made by the members of the assembly during a meeting. Debates are not reported in the minutes. The duty of the secretary is mainly to record what is completed by the assembly, not what is said by the members. The minutes should show:

- Kind of meeting: "regular" or "special"
- Name of the organization or assembly
- Date/time of meeting and place, if it is not always the same
- The presence of the regular chairman and secretary or (in their absence) the names of their substitutes
- Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved (or approved as corrected) and the date of the previous meeting
- All main motions (except those that were withdrawn) and motions that bring a main question again before the assembly
- Secondary motions not lost or withdrawn, where needed for clarity of the minutes
- Previous notice of motions
- Points of order and appeals, and reasons the chair gives for the ruling
- Time of adjournment



Review the minutes from a business meeting, either from your 4-H club or from another community organization.



Are the minutes complete? What needs to be included?

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## Create Your Own Parliamentary Procedure Sourcebook

You can create a simple, user-friendly reference for use in 4-H meetings. This activity will provide you with useful knowledge about motions and their precedence, while enforcing the fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure.



**Materials Needed:** Steno notebook (6" x 9", with spiral wire top), scissors, pen

### Instructions:

- Count 24 pages. On the bottom line of page 24 write the words "MAIN MOTION."
- Turn to page 23. On the second to last line from the bottom of the page write the words "POSTPONE INDEFINITELY." Cut off the bottom line of page 23.
- Turn to page 22. On the third to last line from the bottom of the page write the word "AMEND." Cut off the bottom two lines of page 22.
- You will begin to see a the start of a ladder: The full page, with the words "MAIN MOTION," is preceded by a page one line shorter, with the words "POSTPONE INDEFINITELY," and that page is preceded by a page that is one line shorter, with the word "AMEND."
- Continue cutting each page one line shorter than the one behind it. Label the last line of each page with name of a motion. Follow the order outlined on the Precedence of Motions chart (*at right*).
- When you are finished, you will have 24 pages, each one line shorter than the page behind, which creates a ladder list of all the motions in order of precedence.
- Now it is time to add to each page the key information about the motions. Use *Robert's Rules of Order* to add the following to each page: purpose of the motion, category of the motion, whether a member can interrupt the speech of another to make the motion, whether the motion requires a second, whether it may be amended, whether it may be debated and what vote or decision is required to enact it.
- For example, the MAIN MOTION page may begin about five lines from the bottom and look like this:

<b>Purpose:</b> <i>To refer to a committee</i>	
<b>Category:</b> <i>Main</i>	<b>Interrupt:</b> <i>No</i>
<b>Second:</b> <i>Yes</i>	<b>Amend:</b> <i>No</i>
<b>Debate:</b> <i>Yes</i>	<b>Vote:</b> <i>Majority</i>
<b>Main Motion</b>	

Source: Copeland, J., *A parliamentary sourcebook for student congress delegates.*

## Precedence of Motions

Below is a list of common motions in order of importance from least to most important.

- ◆ Fix time for reassembling
- ◆ Adjourn
- ◆ Recess
- ◆ Rise to a question of privilege
- ◆ Call for the orders of the day
- ◆ Appeal the decision of the chair
- ◆ Rise to a point of parliamentary procedure
- ◆ Division of the chamber
- ◆ Object to the consideration of a question
- ◆ Divide a main motion
- ◆ Leave to modify or withdraw a motion
- ◆ Suspend the rules
- ◆ Rescind
- ◆ Reconsider
- ◆ Take from the table
- ◆ Lay on the table
- ◆ Previous question
- ◆ Limit or extend debate
- ◆ Postpone to a certain time
- ◆ Refer to a committee
- ◆ Amend an amendment
- ◆ Amend
- ◆ Postpone indefinitely
- ◆ Main motion



## For More Information

Contact your county 4-H office or visit the 4-H leadership and personal development Web page:

[www.utextension.utk.edu/4h/projects/leadership.htm](http://www.utextension.utk.edu/4h/projects/leadership.htm)



**Assist with 4-H officer training to help younger 4-H leaders learn parliamentary procedure.**

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