

Robert's Rules of Order:

What You Should Know



Who was Robert?

The first edition of Robert's Rule of Order appeared in **1876**. The author, Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923), was Brigadier General in the U.S. Army whose original motivation for the title came in 1863 after being asked to preside over a church meeting in San Francisco.

Guiding Principles

- Everyone has the right to participate in discussion if they wish before anyone may speak a second time.
- Everyone has the right to know what is going on at all times. Only urgent matters may interrupt a speaker.
- Only one thing (motion) can be discussed at a time.

Some Key Terms

- **Motion** – A formal proposal made to bring a subject before a group for its consideration and action. Begins with “I move that...”
- **Second** – A statement by a member who agrees that the motion made by another member be considered. Stated as “Second,” or “I second the motion.”
- **Amendment** – Before the vote is taken on a motion, it may be amended by:
 - Striking out words
 - Inserting or adding words
 - Striking out words and inserting others in their place
 - Substituting one (1) paragraph or resolution for another
- **Quorum** - the minimum number of members who must be present in order for a specific group to conduct business.
 - * Unless specified in the bylaws, the quorum is a majority of the members.
 - * Votes on business matters may not be taken unless a quorum is present.
- **Presiding officer/Chair** – The individual who facilitates the meeting, usually the President.

Sample Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes (last meeting)
3. Chairperson's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Principal's/Committee Reports
6. Unfinished (Old Business)
7. New Business
8. Announcements (including date and time of next meeting)
9. Adjournment

Quick Reference

	Must be seconded	Open for discussion	Can be amended	Vote count required to pass	May be reconsidered or rescinded
Main Motion	*	*	*	Majority	*
Amend Motion	*	*		Majority	*
Kill a motion	*			Majority	*
Limit Debate	*		*	2/3	*
Close discussion	*			2/3	*
Recess	*		*	Majority	
Adjourn End of meeting	*			Majority	
Refer to committee	*	*	*	Majority	*
Postpone to a later date/time	*	*	*	Majority	*
Table	*			Majority	
Postpone Indefinitely	*	*	*	Majority	*