



Introduction to Robert Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order is a widely recognized and used manual of parliamentary procedure, designed to facilitate efficient, fair, and orderly conduct of meetings. It was written by Major Henry Martyn Robert and first published in 1876. The rules provide a framework for making decisions in groups, ensuring that meetings are conducted with respect for all participants and that decisions are reached through a systematic process. Here's an overview of some key aspects of Robert's Rules of Order:

1. Meeting Basics:

- **Call to Order:** The chairperson starts the meeting by calling it to order.
- **Roll Call:** Members may be called upon to confirm their attendance.
- **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting are reviewed and approved.

2. Hierarchy of Motions:

- **Main Motions:** Proposals that introduce new business.
- **Subsidiary Motions:** Amendments or actions related to the main motion.
- **Privileged Motions:** Important issues that are urgent or unrelated to pending business.
- **Incidental Motions:** Questions of procedure that arise during the meeting.

3. Making a Motion:

- A member expresses a desire to make a motion.
- Another member seconds the motion to indicate support.
- The chair states the motion, and members may then debate the motion.

4. Debate:

- Members have the opportunity to express their opinions on the motion.
- Debate is generally limited to a set time for each speaker.

5. Voting:

- The chair calls for a vote after debate.
- Members vote either verbally or by show of hands.



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- A majority vote is typically required for a motion to pass.

6. Amendments:

- Members can propose amendments to a motion during debate.
- Amendments must be seconded and are subject to their own debate and vote.

7. Point of Order:

- Members can raise a point of order if they believe the rules are not being followed.

8. Appeal:

- If a ruling by the chair is disputed, members can appeal to the assembly for a vote.

9. Adjournment:

- The meeting concludes with a motion to adjourn.

10. Special Rules:

- Organizations may adopt their own specific rules, in addition to the basic principles of Robert's Rules.

It's important to note that while Robert's Rules of Order provide a comprehensive framework, organizations can modify and adapt these rules based on their specific needs and bylaws. The goal is to ensure democratic decision-making, fairness, and the effective functioning of meetings. Members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the rules to actively participate in the decision-making process within their organization.

Introducing Robert's Rules of Order to new participants can be done in a way that is clear, concise, and welcoming. Here's a suggested approach:

1. **Welcome and Purpose:** Begin by welcoming everyone and expressing the importance of efficient and orderly meetings. Explain that Robert's Rules of Order is a widely accepted set of parliamentary procedures designed to facilitate fair and effective decision-making.
2. **Brief Overview:** Provide a brief overview of Robert's Rules, emphasizing that it is a tool to ensure that meetings run smoothly, everyone has an opportunity to speak, and decisions are made in a structured manner.
3. **Key Principles:** Highlight key principles, such as the right of members to participate, the importance of a majority vote, and the concept of a motion as a formal proposal.



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4. **Common Terminology:** Introduce common terminology used in Robert's Rules, such as "motion," "second," "debate," and "vote." Explain that understanding these terms will contribute to effective communication during meetings.
5. **Hierarchy of Motions:** Explain the hierarchy of motions, starting with main motions and branching into subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions. Emphasize that this hierarchy helps prioritize different types of motions during discussions.
6. **Role of the Chair:** Clarify the role of the chair in maintaining order, recognizing speakers, and putting motions to a vote. Highlight the impartial nature of the chair in ensuring fairness.
7. **Practice Session:** Consider conducting a practice session with simple motions to allow participants to familiarize themselves with the process. This hands-on approach can enhance comprehension.
8. **Q&A Session:** Encourage questions and provide answers to any queries participants may have. This ensures that everyone feels comfortable and informed about the basics of Robert's Rules.
9. **Reference Material:** Provide participants with reference materials, such as a simplified guide or a cheat sheet, to help reinforce their understanding of Robert's Rules outside of the meeting.
10. **Reassurance:** Reassure participants that it's okay not to remember every detail initially, and that the group will collectively learn and become more comfortable with the procedures over time.

By taking a gradual and interactive approach, you can help new participants feel more confident and engaged in utilizing Robert's Rules of Order during meetings.