

Rules Governing Debate

The term debate applies to the discussion on the merits of a pending question.

[Note that less formal rules apply to boards and committees. Also, smaller groups may relax the formality of these rules.]

1. A member may not speak until recognized by the chairman.
2. When no special rule relating to the length of speeches is adopted by the group, a member can speak no longer than ten minutes unless the consent of the group is obtained.
3. Rights in debate are not transferable. A member cannot yield an unexpired portion of his/her time to another member (the chairman controls who speaks) or reserve any portion of time for later.
4. No member may be allowed to speak more than twice to the same question on the same day.
5. Proper decorum in debate must be observed:
 - A. Remarks must be germane to the question before the group.
 - B. Speakers should speak loudly and clearly.
 - C. Speakers should refrain from attacking another member's motives.
 - D. Remarks should be addressed through the chairman.
 - E. Speakers should stand when speaking.
 - F. Thomas Jefferson's advice is still good: "No one is to disturb another in his speech by hissing, coughing, spitting, speaking or whispering to another, etc."
 - G. If any member objects, a speaker has no right to read from or to have the secretary read from any paper or book as part of his/her speech, without permission of the assembly.

FREQUENT THINGS YOU WANT TO DO

Objective

Appropriate motion

Present an idea for consideration or action	Main motion or Resolution Consider subject informally
Improve a pending motion	Amend Division of the question
Regulate or cut-off debate	Limit or extend debate Previous question (vote immediately)
Delay a decision	Refer to committee Postpone definitely Postpone indefinitely (kills motion)
Suppress a proposal	Object to consideration Postpone indefinitely Withdraw a motion
Meet an emergency	Question of privilege Suspend rules Lay on the table
Gain information on a pending motion	Parliamentary inquiry Request for information Question of privilege Request to ask member a question
Question the decision of the chair	Point of order Appeal from decision of chair
Enforce rights and privileges	Division of assembly Division of question Parliamentary inquiry Point of order Appeal from decision of chair
Consider a question again	Resume consideration Reconsider Rescind
Change an action already taken	Reconsider Rescind Amend motion previously adopted
Terminate a meeting	Adjourn Recess

TABLE OF RULES RELATING TO MOTIONS					
John A. Cagle, 1993 -- Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised					
MOTION (by order of precedence)	Interrupt	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	No	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Majority
Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	Chair
Personal Privilege					
Parliamentary Inquiry					
Point of information					
Orders of the Day	No	No	No	No	Chair
Lay on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority (2/3)
Previous Question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a certain time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	No	Yes	If motion is	Yes	Majority
Postpone Indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
MAIN MOTION	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
RECONSIDER	Yes	Yes	If motion is	No	Majority
RESCIND	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 (majority)
AMEND MOTION PREVIOUS ADOPTED	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 (majority)
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS -- NO ORDER OF PRECEDENCE					
Appeal from decision of chair	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	No	Majority
Suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Object to consideration	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 against con.
Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	Chair
Withdraw a motion	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Division of question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Division of assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None