

Florida State Association of PARLIAMENTARIANS



ODE to the THIRTEEN RANKING MOTIONS

To conduct a proper meeting is every president's goal.
That's why the thirteen ranking motions are important to know.
Debatable, amendable, majority or two-thirds—
Those knowing Robert's rules are most likely to be heard.

We're going to go through all of them, each in its proper turn;
Perhaps a little rhyme will make them easier to learn.

The **Main Motion** is the one that all the others build upon,
a lot of time you'll spend, as you can do much more than amend.

Postpone Indefinitely is the motion next in line;
If you want to kill the entire motion, this one will work just fine.

To **Amend** a motion can also be lots of fun;
Everyone knows there can be more than one (amendment that is).

If after much discussion, no one will submit,
The only sensible thing to do is **Refer** or, perhaps, **Commit**.

If too much business, and too many motions, seem to get in the way,
Sometimes the only answer is to **Postpone** to a different day.
However, if all you need is time, to garner a little power—
Your objectives might be better served by postponing to a definite hour.

Frequently people talk too much. Often that's not too great.
May we suggest that you might want to **Limit Debate**.
If business is very important, even though the hour is late,
A motion that would be useful is one to **Extend Debate**.

Call the **Previous Question** is a motion often misused.
It is obvious at times that the maker is confused.
While some are aware it takes a two-thirds vote to call the question or not;
Unless they know Robert's rules, the chair could be put on the spot.

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Some people think to kill a motion you just **Lay it On The Table**.
In reality, we parliamentarians know, that's just a silly fable.
In an emergency situation this motion is a wonderful tool—
But remember to take from the table (it will prove you're nobody's fool).

Now consider the privileged motions, there is a lot they can do.
They can interrupt without debate; they are for our comfort too.

There are times we get off the track, other business may lead us astray.
An alert member should remember to **Call for the Orders of the Day**.

Raise a Question of Privilege is more a device than a motion,
The chair must rule if urgent enough not to cause a commotion.

A break for personal reasons, too hot or too cold? Mike off - can't hear?
All members have rights and privileges. Isn't that reason to cheer?
Whether it is for business or pleasure, once it is voted to **Recess**—
Reconvening at the specified time helps make your meeting a success.

When a meeting is long, very often we yearn
To hear someone say, "I move to **Adjourn**".

If you want to finish tomorrow what you started today,
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn will help you pave the way.

In going through these motions one simple fact stands out.
Each person is important (of that we have no doubt).
Majority, minority, each may have their say,
Parliamentary procedure really is the only way.
We've gone through the thirteen ranking motions and had a little fun,
To be a successful, effective leader, it behooves us all to know each one.

By: Lorraine Fletcher and Patricia McDougale Past Presidents of Plantation Unit of
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