

ELAC  
English Language Learner Services  
**Training for ELAC Members**  
**Parliamentary Procedure**

**The Four Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure**

- Justice and courtesy to all.
- One thing at a time.
- The rule of the majority.
- The right of the minority.

**Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order**

**What Is Parliamentary Procedure?**

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

**Why is Parliamentary Procedure Important?**

- It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.
- Today, Robert's Rules of Order newly revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups.

**What is the Order of Business?**

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business called an “agenda.” Below is the agenda format:

1. Opening/Roll Call
2. Approval of minutes
3. Reports (DELAC, SSC, etc.)
4. Old business
5. New business
6. Announcements
7. Public comments
8. Adjournment

**How do members get their say?**

They make motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership takes action or takes a stand on an issue. Individual members can:

1. Present motions (Make a proposal) “I move that...”
2. Second motions. (Express support for discussion of another members motion) “I second the motion.”
3. Debate motions. (Give opinions on the motion) “I think...”
4. Vote on motions. (Make a decision) “All those in favor...”

## **How Motions are Presented:**

- 1. Obtaining the floor**
  - a. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
  - b. Address the Chairman by saying, "Mr. Chairman, or Mr. President."
  - c. Wait until the Chairman recognizes you.
- 2. Make Your Motion**
  - a. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
  - b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we..."
  - c. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
- 3. Wait for a Second to Your Motion**
  - a. Another member will second your motion or the Chairman will call for a second.
  - b. If there is no second, your motion will not be considered.
- 4. The Chairman States Your Motion**
  - a. The Chairman will say, "It has been moved and seconded that we..."
  - b. The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
  - c. Once the chairman presents your motion to the membership it becomes "assembly property", and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.

## **Voting on a Motion:**

The method of voting on any motion depends on the by-laws of your school. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations, they are:

1. By Voice -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "Aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for an exact count.
2. By Roll Call -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
3. By General Consent -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "If there is no objection..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
4. By Division -- This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
5. By Ballot -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper, this method is used when secrecy is desired.

*\* The chairman does not vote, unless there is a tie or vote is taken by secret ballot.*

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

1. Allow motions that are in order.
2. Have members obtain the floor properly.
3. Speak clearly and concisely.
4. Obey the rules of debate.
5. Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS.*