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# Robert'S Rules Of Order (Quick Study: Business)

**World of Quick Reference Guide**  
**ROBERT'S RULES**  
of ORDER *QuickStudy*

**Introduction**

- Published in 1876, Robert's Rules of Order was originally written by U.S. Army Signal Corps Colonel Henry Robert.
- Robert wanted to write a manual for parliamentary procedure after presiding over a church meeting for which he felt he was woefully unprepared.
- In his work, Robert discovered that people from different regions of the country have different ideas of parliamentary procedure, resulting in organizations focused more on the procedure and less on the substance of their work.
- As a result of his Rules of Order, people could belong to many organizations without needing to learn new procedural rules at every new organization.

Robert's Rules of Order are based on those used in the U.S. House of Representatives (Congress's House), but adapted for smaller organizations and meetings.

**NOTE:** "Parliamentary law" is not actual law in the sense that it is not codified or used in a court proceeding; instead, "parliamentary law" and Robert's Rules of Order should be seen less as binding on an assembly and more as a set of strong guidelines an assembly can mold to its own needs.

Robert intended his Rules of Order to be adopted by organizations, assemblies, and clubs to use as their parliamentary, or procedural, authority, following the procedures for adopting bylaws that, these Rules of Order become binding upon the organization to establish its procedural rules of order.

**Preliminaries**

**Kinds of Assemblies**

**Deliberative assemblies** convene meetings; they are groups of people who come together with a common agenda; the meeting; the different types of deliberative assemblies are:

- Mass meetings:** Open and unorganized meetings with a purpose defined by the meeting's sponsor (e.g., political or social rallies).
- Conventions:** Meetings of delegates chosen to enact or debate decisions affecting a large group of people (e.g., the meetings by political parties to choose their candidates for the U.S. presidency).
- Legislative bodies:** Legislative bodies chosen by a group of people for a fixed period of time (e.g., Congress).
- Boards:** Administrative or managerial bodies with an assigned, specific function (e.g., a Board of Trustees of a university).
- Committees:** Bodies that are usually very small and subordinate to an assembly or board (e.g., a congressional committee).

**Mass Meetings**

A special kind of meeting that is publicized and open to the public is a **mass meeting**; it usually takes on a "town hall meeting" format, to prepare for a mass meeting, the sponsors must:

- Choose who they prefer as a chairperson.
- Choose who calls the meeting to order and nominates the chairperson.
- Choose who should be nominated for secretary and by whom.
- Decide the rules that will be proposed for the meeting.
- Choose who makes the initial speech opening the meeting and explaining its purpose.

To conduct business, the assembly at the meeting should adopt **resolutions**; these resolutions may be drafted before the meeting, or the assembly may appoint a committee to draft the resolutions at the meeting.

**Conventions**

A **convention** is an assembly of delegates, or representatives of the assembly or constituency, sitting as a single body and acting in the name of the larger group; an assembly may call a convention any time the bylaws authorize the assembly to call one; the bylaws that govern a convention should outline:

- The authorization for a periodic convention.
- The powers and duties for the convention and the delegates.
- The quorum for the convention.
- The voting members.
- Qualifications for the delegates and election and their election.
- Anything the convention needs for its organization and operation.

A **resession** is a meeting the delegates hold before the actual convention when they decide how they will deal with certain procedural matters of the convention.

Planning a convention requires a lot of preparation that usually starts months in advance; the established society should create committees for the convention to help organize the convention; usually the organization needs:

- A **credentials committee**, which performs the following duties:
  - Identifies information for attending the convention.
  - Identifies information for being a delegate.
  - Examines all applications to verify the eligibility of the members who wish to be delegates.
  - Compiles the list of eligible members.
  - Arranges for registration to take place at the convention, usually starting one or two days before the convention starts.
  - Handles registration.
  - Prepares the convention's final report.
  - Continues until the convention ends.
- A **committee on standing rules**, which drafts rules for the convention, including:
  - Parliamentary rules.
  - Rules for conducting business at the convention.
  - Any other non-parliamentary rules that the committee feels should be added.
- A **program committee**, which plans the schedule of meetings, proceedings, and convention events.
- A **convention arrangements committee**, which makes the arrangements for the site of the convention and any local arrangements for the members.
- A **resolutions committee**, which screens all the main motions that are about to come to a vote of the convention.

**Legislative Bodies**

A **legislative body** is a constitutionally established public body of representatives chosen by an electorate for a fixed term of office, charged with making laws; each legislative body is specific to its own laws, procedural rules, and decisions; therefore, Robert's Rules of Order does not delve into the parliamentary procedure of legislative bodies.

**Boards & Officers**

A **board** is the administrative and judicial body of the assembly with the power to act on behalf of the organization; usually the members of the board are elected or appointed.

**Officers** are leaders of an assembly and are usually elected; there are three main officers that are essential to an organized group, especially a large group:

- President or chairperson**, although if the president is sitting as the chairperson for the meeting, he/she is referred to as the chairperson.
- Vice president**, who serves as the president or chairperson, if needed.
- Secretary**, who keeps the minutes (or notes) of each meeting and is the records keeper for the assembly.

The president or chairperson has many important duties in running the meetings and the assembly; they include:

- Opening a meeting on time and calling it to order.
- Announcing the order of business and keeping to the stated order.
- Recognizing members to speak on the floor.
- Keeping tabs on voting procedures and announcing the legitimate results of each vote.
- Referring to lower division motions and ensuring that all members act with decorum.
- Handling business in the most efficient way possible.
- Deciding questions of order and responding to members' questions about parliamentary procedure.
- Authenticating his/her signatures.
- Properly adjourning the meeting.



## Synopsis

Everything you need to know about parliamentary procedure in terms of organizing and running different types of meetings can be found in this comprehensive 3-panel guide. All of the guidelines featured in the original Robert's Rules of Order publication are from key definitions to step-by-step meeting procedures are described in up-to-date detail through BarCharts' handy color-coded format.

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## Customer Reviews

When my county organized a new county affiliate of a political party, we used another county's bylaws as a template for our own and the other county's bylaws mentioned using Robert's Rules of Order in the meetings. Even though at this point our meetings are very very small, so any sort of formal Parliamentary Procedure is pretty unnecessary, we liked the idea so when they grow and the need to keep things orderly rises we'll have the procedure in place already. But we realized that none of us had actively used most of the Robert's Rules stuff in years (if ever). We were going to need a refresher. I bought this little laminated cheat pamphlet and so did almost all of the other officers after I showed it to them. It's proven so far to be perfect for our purposes. I'm sure it's not nearly in-depth enough if you're really into Parliamentary Procedure or if you've got a group that's real sticklers for the formality. I wouldn't try to conduct a session of US Congress or the UN or something with just this little pamphlet to guide me. It's not a substitute for the real full Rules of Order classic. But it works beautifully for us. I was elected Secretary and wanted to keep the

minutes of the meetings in a more standard formal way than just the note taking that was natural to me. This guide pointed out what should be included in the minutes, when they should be presented, etc. I feel a lot more confident when I post the minutes online that they look more professional now. They look sophisticated and stately enough that I'd be proud to have anyone read them. We love it for things like how to format the meetings in the standard Robert's Rules of Order style and how to conduct the process of introducing and voting on issues.

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