



# 4-H LEADERSHIP & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Developed by **M. Patrick Hamilton**, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

Intermediate



Life Skill  
Leadership

## Parliamentary Procedure

To run successfully, every meeting must have some basic ground rules for its participants. The same holds true for 4-H club meetings. **Parliamentary procedure** provides the rules to conduct a business meeting.

Parliamentary procedure ensures that one topic at a time is discussed in a business meeting. It also allows for both sides of an issue to be heard. When parliamentary procedure is properly used, everyone in a meeting has the right to have his/her opinion heard by the group members. In parliamentary procedure, the majority, or the largest number of people who agree on the issue, usually makes the decision for the group.

Enhancing your parliamentary procedure skills will help you in presiding over meetings and effectively facilitating group interaction. These are important skills to have as you further develop your leadership and personal development skills.

## Rules of the Main Motion

1. Requires recognition by the chair
2. Requires a second
3. Is debatable
4. Is amendable
5. Requires a majority vote
6. May be reconsidered

## Amending a Motion

By now you have had lots of practice at making motions. Now it's time to learn even more about a **main motion**. This section will help you in amending a main motion. **Amending a motion** simply means that you want to change the motion being discussed by the group.

Let's use the sample motion listed below as we talk about amending a motion.

◆ **SAMPLE MOTION** - "I move we send flowers and a card to our teacher who is in the hospital."

While debating a main motion, you may move to amend it in one of three ways. Note the proper wording that is used for each type of amendment.

1. **INSERTING** - To amend a motion in this manner you simply move to amend by inserting words or paragraphs. This tells the group that you think there should be additional words in the main motion. For example you would state, "I move to amend the motion by inserting the words *at a cost of no more than \$20.00* at the end of the motion."
2. **STRIKING OUT** - To amend a motion by striking out indicates that you want some part of the main motion to be deleted. For example, you would state, "I move to amend by striking out the words *and a card.*" This is a message to the group that you do not want to send a card with the flowers to your teacher.
3. **STRIKING OUT AND INSERTING** - This method of amending a motion combines the two previous examples. When using this type of amendment, you are indicating that you want to delete some part of the motion and insert something different. An example using the sample motion above might be "I move to amend by striking out the words *flowers and a card* and inserting the word *balloons.*" Here you are proposing a change to the main motion so that you send balloons instead of flowers and a card.

It really is that simple! Just remember that there can only be one amendment to the main motion being considered at a time.



## Remember This!

1. Only **one main motion at a time** may be considered.
2. The maker of the motion **may vote against** his/her motion, but **may not speak against it** in debate.
3. A motion may **not conflict** with the group's charter, constitution, bylaws, etc.
4. If a motion is **presented by a committee**, no second is required.



## 4-H LEADERSHIP & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Voting Procedures

Voting may be done in any one of four ways:

1. **Voice Vote** - "Those in favor say 'aye'; those opposed say 'nay.'"
2. **Show of Hands** - "Those in favor raise their right hand." Count the vote. "Those opposed raise their right hand." Count the vote.
3. **Standing Vote** - "Those in favor please stand." "Those opposed please stand." Note that a standing vote does not have to be counted. The chair may simply decide which group was larger and announce the result of the vote.
4. **Written** - This would be by secret ballot. Members would vote on a piece of paper and turn it in to the chair. This allows an individual to vote without other members knowing how they voted.

A **tie vote** is when both sides have an equal number of votes. If this happens in your meeting, the motion fails because there is not a majority of members supporting the motion.



### Does the Chairman Vote?

The chairman (president) of a group must generally not show favoritism in a meeting. Therefore, the chairman typically does not vote. However, sometimes the chairman will have the opportunity to cast his/her vote. **A chairman may vote ONLY to make or break a tie.** For example, if a vote is exactly 50-50, the motion fails unless the chairman chooses to vote 'yes' and pass the motion.

If a vote is 50 'yes' to 49 'no,' the motion would pass unless the chairman chooses to vote 'no' and make a tie, thus causing the motion to fail.

Remember, **a chairman is never required to vote unless he/she chooses to do so.**

### Practice! Practice! Practice!



The best way to keep enhancing your parliamentary procedure and leadership skills is to practice! Here are some ideas.

- ◆ Mentor younger 4-H members in your county who are interested in leadership and parliamentary procedure.
- ◆ Help your 4-H leader plan a 4-H officer training workshop.
- ◆ Make a list of careers that use parliamentary procedure skills. Interview at least two people in these fields. Share what you learn with others in your 4-H group.

### Serve Up Some Knowledge

Now that you are on your way to further developing your parliamentary procedure skills, it is time to share them with younger 4-H members! Visit a 4-H meeting of younger 4-H members and conduct a demonstration about parliamentary procedure. Try this fun way of teaching these skills or develop your own lesson plans.

**Let's make "Meeting Trail Mix."**

**Needed:** Large bowl, spoon, ingredients for trail mix (Honey Nut Cheerios®, raisins, peanuts, M&M's®, others as desired), plates, napkins.

**Steps:**

1. Display the ingredients and talk about the importance of parliamentary procedure to the smooth operation of a meeting.
2. Tell your audience that you are going to make trail mix and that they will learn how to correctly make a motion in a meeting.
3. Explain that all of the ingredients will be added to the bowl as motions are made. The 4-H'ers must say "I move that we add..." Ask for a second, discuss and vote on each ingredient. If the 4-H'er says "I make a motion" or "I motion," ask them to restate it correctly!
4. Be sure to have at least one ingredient that the members would NOT want in the trail mix, such as pickles. If someone moves to add this ingredient, the members can practice defeating a motion.
5. As soon as all of the ingredients are added, the members can eat the trail mix as a snack.



*Adapted from Wisconsin 4-H, 2001*

For more ideas contact your 4-H office or visit the 4-H leadership and personal development Web site:  
[www.utextension.utk.edu/4h/projects/leadership.htm](http://www.utextension.utk.edu/4h/projects/leadership.htm)

*Reviewed by Michelle Stumbo, Graduate Assistant, and members of the state 4-H Youth Development staff  
Edited by Lori Jean Mantooth, Extension Assistant and Wanda Russell, Publications Editor*