



ROBERT RULES OF ORDER
ARTICLE II: GENERAL CLASSIFICATIONS OF MOTIONS
(ALL-IN-ONE)

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ARTICLE II
GENERAL CLASSIFICATIONS OF MOTIONS

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ROBERT RULES OF ORDER

PART: I

ARTICLE: II

TITLE: General Classifications of Motions

ITEMS: 11 through 15



ITEM 11 | MAIN OR PRINCIPAL MOTIONS

A Main or Principal Motion is a motion made to bring before the assembly, for its consideration, any particular subject. It takes precedence of nothing -- that is, it cannot be made when any other question is before the assembly; and it yields to all Privileged, Incidental, and Subsidiary Motions -- that is, any of these motions can be made while a main motion is pending. Main motions are debatable, and subject to amendment, and can have any subsidiary [12] motions applied to them. When a main motion is laid on the table, or postponed to a certain time, it carries with it all pending subsidiary motions. If a main motion is referred to a committee it carries with it only the pending amendments. As a general rule, they require for their adoption only a majority vote -- that is, a majority of the votes cast; but amendments to constitutions, by-laws, and rules of order already adopted, all of which are main motions, require a two-thirds vote for their adoption, unless the by-laws, etc., specify a different vote for their amendment; and the motion to rescind action previously taken requires a two-thirds vote, or a vote of a majority of the entire membership, unless previous notice of the motion has been given.

Main motions may be subdivided into Original Main Motions and Incidental Main Motions. Original Main Motions are those which bring before the assembly some new subject, generally in the form of a resolution, upon which action by the assembly is desired. Incidental Main Motions are those main motions that are incidental to, or relate to, the business of the assembly, or its past or future action, as, a committee's report on a resolution referred to it. A motion to accept or adopt the report of a standing committee upon a subject not referred to it is an original main motion, but a motion to adopt a report on a subject referred to a committee is an incidental main motion. The introduction of an original main motion can be prevented by sustaining by a two-thirds vote an objection to its consideration [23], made just after the main motion is stated and before it is discussed. An objection to its consideration cannot be applied to an incidental main motion, but a two-thirds vote can immediately suppress it by ordering the previous question [29]. This is the only difference between the two classes of main motions. The following list contains some of the most common



Incidental Main Motions.

Accept or Adopt a Report upon a subject referred to a committee	54
Adjourn at, or to, a future time	17
Adjourn, if qualified in any way, or to adjourn when the effect is to dissolve the assembly with no provision for its reconvening	17
Appoint the Time and Place for the next meeting, if introduced when no business is pending	16
Amend the Constitution, By-laws, Standing Rules, or Resolutions, etc., already adopted	68
Ratify or Confirm action taken	39
Rescind or Repeal action taken	37



All of these motions are essentially main motions, and are treated as such, though they may appear otherwise.

Though a question of privilege is of high rank so far as interrupting a pending question is concerned, yet when the question has interrupted business and is pending, it is treated as a main motion so far as having incidental and subsidiary motions applied to it. So an order of the day, even though a special order, after it has been taken up is treated in the same way, as is also a question that has been reconsidered.

No motion is in order that conflicts with the constitution, by-laws, or standing rules or resolutions of the assembly, and if such a motion is adopted it is null and void. Before introducing such a motion it is necessary to amend the constitution or by-laws, or amend or rescind the conflicting standing rule or resolution. So, too, a motion is not in order that conflicts with a resolution previously adopted by the assembly at the same session, or that has been introduced and has not been finally disposed of. If it is not too late the proper course is to reconsider [36] the vote on the motion previously adopted, and then amend it so as to express the desired idea. If it cannot be reconsidered, then by a two-thirds vote the old resolution may be rescinded when the new one can be introduced, or by giving notice it may be rescinded by a majority vote at the next meeting. In ordinary societies, where the quorum is a small percentage of the membership, and the meetings are as frequent as quarterly, no resolution that conflicts with one adopted at a previous session should be entertained until the old one has been rescinded, which requires a two-thirds vote unless proper notice has been given. [See 37.]



ITEM 12 | SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

Subsidiary Motions are such as are applied to other motions for the purpose of most appropriately disposing of them. By means of them the original motion may be modified, or action postponed, or it may be referred to a committee to investigate and report, etc. They may be applied to any main motion, and when made they supersede the main motion and must be decided before the main motion can be acted upon. None of them, except the motion to amend and those that close or limit or extend the limits of debate, can be applied to a subsidiary, incidental (except an appeal in certain cases), or privileged motion. Subsidiary motions, except to lay on the table, the previous question, and postpone indefinitely, may be amended. The motions affecting the limits of debate may be applied to any debatable question regardless of its privilege, and require a two-thirds vote for their adoption. All those of lower rank than those affecting the limits of debate are debatable, the rest are not. The motion to amend anything that has already been adopted, as by-laws or minutes, is not a subsidiary motion but is a main motion and can be laid on the table or have applied to it any other subsidiary motion without affecting the by-laws or minutes, because the latter are not pending.

In the following list the subsidiary motions are arranged in the order of their precedence, the first one having the highest rank. When one of them is the immediately pending question every motion above it is in order, and every one below it is out of order. They are as follows:

Subsidiary Motions.

Lay on the Table	28
The Previous Question	29
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	30
Postpone Definitely, or to a Certain Time	31
Commit or Refer, or Recommit	32
Amend	33
Postpone Indefinitely	34



ITEM 13 | INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

Incidental Motions are such as arise out of another question which is pending, and therefore take precedence of and must be decided before the question out of which they rise; or, they are incidental to a question that has just been pending and should be decided before any other business is taken up. They yield to privileged motions, and generally to the motion to lay on the table. They are undebatable, except an appeal under certain circumstances as shown in 21. They cannot be amended except where they relate to the division of a question, or to the method of considering a question, or to methods of voting, or to the time when nominations or the polls shall be closed. No subsidiary motion, except to amend, can be applied to any of them except a debatable appeal. Whenever it is stated that all incidental motions take precedence of a certain motion, the incidental motions referred to are only those that are legitimately incidental at the time they are made. Thus, incidental motions take precedence of subsidiary motions, but the incidental motion to object to the consideration of a question cannot be made while a subsidiary motion is pending, as the objection is only legitimate against an original main motion just after it is stated, before it has been debated or there has been any subsidiary motion stated. The following list comprises most of those that may arise:

Incidental Motions.

Questions of Order and Appeal	21
Suspension of the Rules	22
Objection to the Consideration of a Question	23
Division of a Question, and Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim	24
Division of the Assembly, and Motions relating to Methods of Voting, or to Closing or to Reopening the Polls	25
Motions relating to Methods of Making, or to Closing or to Reopening Nominations	26
Requests growing out of Business Pending or that has just been pending; as, a Parliamentary Inquiry, a Request for Information, for Leave to Withdraw a Motion, to Read Papers, to be Excused from a Duty, or for any other Privilege	27



ITEM 14 | PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

Privileged Motions are such as, while not relating to the pending question, are of so great importance as to require them to take precedence of all other questions, and, on account of this high privilege, they are undebatable. They cannot have any subsidiary motion applied to them, except the motions to fix the time to which to adjourn, and to take a recess, which may be amended. But after the assembly has actually taken up the orders of the day or a question of privilege, debate and amendment are permitted and the subsidiary motions may be applied the same as on any main motion. These motions are as follows, being arranged in order of precedence:

Privileged Motions.

Fix the Time to which to Adjourn (if made while another question is pending)	16
Adjourn (if unqualified and if it has not the effect to dissolve the assembly)	17
Take a Recess (if made when another question is pending)	18
Raise a Question of Privilege	19
Call for Orders of the Day	20



ITEM 15 | SOME MAIN AND UNCLASSIFIED MOTIONS

Two main motions (to rescind and to ratify) and several motions which cannot conveniently be classified as either Main, Subsidiary, Incidental, or Privileged, and which are in common use, are hereafter explained and their privileges and effects given. They are as follows:

Take from the Table	35
Reconsider	36
Rescind	37
Renewal of a Motion	38
Ratify	39
Dilatory, Absurd, or Frivolous Motions	40
Call of the House	41

APPENDIX



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