



HMDC MODEL CONGRESS (FALL 2024, Week 3)

What We Will Discuss (Today)

Here is the agenda for today's lesson...

Review of the Homework (ex. Quiz Questions)

Understanding Robert's Rules of Order (Review +More)

Activity: Emergency Meeting (Simulation of Executive Process)

Activity: Court Proceedings (Simulation of Judicial Process)*

**Likely to take place next week!*

Reviewing the Homework (Quiz 2)

The Three Branches of Government (Questions 2, 5, and 10):

It's crucial for us to understand the three branches of government (Legislative, Executive, and Judicial) and their primary functions. This forms the foundation of how the U.S. government operates.

Preamble to the Constitution (Question 1):

While not as critical as the other topics, discussing the Preamble ("We the People") can help us to better understand the foundational principles of the U.S. government and its focus on representing the people.

The First Amendment (Question 3):

The First Amendment rights are fundamental to American democracy. Discussing these freedoms (speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition) helps students understand basic civil liberties.

Understanding the First Amendment

These five freedoms work together to ensure that citizens can express themselves, practice their beliefs, stay informed, gather together, and participate in the political process without government interference. This forms the cornerstone of a free and open society, allowing for the free exchange of ideas and the ability to advocate for change – all crucial elements of a thriving democracy.

Freedom of Religion ensures that every person has the right to practice any religion they choose, or to practice no religion at all, without government interference. For instance, people can freely attend any church, mosque, synagogue, or other place of worship, or choose not to practice any faith.

Freedom of Speech protects the right of individuals to express their opinions and ideas without fear of government censorship. This means that a person can publicly criticize government policies or express controversial opinions without punishment.

Freedom of the Press allows media outlets to publish and distribute information without government control. Newspapers, television stations, and online news sources can report on government activities and express editorial opinions freely, which helps keep the public informed.

Freedom of Assembly gives people the right to gather peacefully in public spaces. This freedom allows individuals to organize and participate in peaceful protests, rallies, or other gatherings to express their views collectively.

Freedom to Petition the Government grants citizens the right to ask the government to change laws or policies. For example, people can collect signatures for a petition to change a local law and submit it to their city council, providing a direct way for citizens to voice concerns to those in power.

Review of Robert's Rules of Order

What are Robert's Rules of Order?

- A set of guidelines for conducting meetings and making group decisions

Why are these rules important?

- Ensures fairness, efficiency, and maintains order during meetings
- Allows all voices to be heard
- Facilitates democratic decision-making (Majority Rule+)

Starting a Meeting (Robert's Rules)

1. Call to Order

- The chairperson announces the start of the meeting

2. Roll Call (if necessary)

- To determine if a *quorum* is present

3. Reading and Approval of Minutes

- Review and approve *minutes* from the previous meeting

Note: Sometimes we hear reports from officers, boards, and committees.

Making the Main Motions (Robert's Rules)

Purpose: To introduce *new business*

How to make a motion:

1. Member rises and addresses the chair (waits to be recognized)
2. Chair recognizes the member
3. Member states the motion: "*I move that...*"
4. Another member seconds the motion
5. Chair restates the motion and opens floor for debate

Making Special Motions (Robert's Rules)

During the meeting there may be circumstances that require 'special' actions to be taken...

- Amend: To modify the main motion
- Commit: To refer the motion to a committee
- Postpone: To delay consideration of the motion
- Limit or Extend Debate: To modify the rules of debate
- Previous Question: To end debate and vote immediately
- Table: To set aside the motion temporarily

Amending a Motion(Robert's Rules)

Amending a motion allows for modifications to the main motion under discussion, improving its wording or substance before the final vote. This crucial tool in Model Congress enables students to refine proposals collaboratively, fostering compromise and ensuring clearer, more effective resolutions. By learning to amend motions, students develop critical thinking and negotiation skills essential in real-world legislative processes.

- **When to Use:** Employ amendments when the main motion needs clarification, expansion, or revision to address concerns or improve its chances of passing
- **Understanding the Process:** After being recognized by the chair, state "I move to amend the motion by [adding/striking out/inserting] [specific change]." Requires a second, is debatable, and needs a majority vote to pass
- **Example:** Original motion: "Allocate \$10,000 for new library books." Amendment: "I move to amend the motion by inserting 'and e-books' after 'library books.'"

Committing a Motion (Robert's Rules)

Committing a motion or 'referring it to committee' refers the matter to a committee for further study or refinement. In Model Congress, this teaches students the value of detailed analysis and collaborative problem-solving. By learning to commit motions, students understand how complex issues often require in-depth examination before a full assembly can make an informed decision, mirroring real legislative processes.

- **When to Use:** Commit a motion when the issue requires more research, expert input, or detailed discussion than is possible in the main assembly
- **Understanding the Process:** After recognition, state "I move to refer the motion to [specific or new committee]." Requires a second, is debatable, and needs a majority vote to pass
- **Example:** "I move to refer the motion on environmental regulations to the Environmental Affairs Committee for further study and recommendations."

Tabling a Motion (Robert's Rules)

Tabling a motion temporarily sets aside the current discussion without voting on its merits. In Model Congress, this procedural move teaches students about strategic timing and prioritization in legislative proceedings. Learning to table motions helps students manage the flow of debate, handle time constraints, and navigate complex situations.

- **When to Use:** Table a motion when more pressing matters arise, when crucial information is pending, or when strategic delay might benefit the motion's eventual success
- **Understanding the Process:** After recognition, state "I move to lay the question on the table." Requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a majority vote to pass
- **Example:** "I move to lay the question of budget allocation on the table until we receive the updated financial report next week."

Making Privileged Motions (Robert's Rules)

Purpose: To deal with potentially urgent matters unrelated to pending business...

Types of Privileged Motions:

1. A Question of Privilege: Address comfort, dignity, or rights of assembly
2. Recess: Take a short break
3. Adjourn: End the meeting

Question of Privilege (Robert's Rules)

A Question of Privilege allows participants to address immediate concerns affecting the comfort, dignity, or rights of the assembly or its members. In Model Congress, this motion teaches students to advocate for the well-being of themselves and their peers, fostering an environment of mutual respect and proper decorum. It empowers students to address issues that might otherwise hinder effective participation, such as inability to hear what is being said or deal with disruptive behavior.

- **When to Use:** Raise when immediate action is needed to ensure the comfort, rights, or ability to participate of assembly members
- **Understanding the Process:** Stand and say "I rise to a question of privilege." The chair will ask you to state your question. No second is required, and it's ruled on by the chair
- **Example:** "I rise to a question of privilege. The noise from the hallway is making it difficult to hear the current speaker. Can we ask for quiet or close the door?"

Motion to Recess (Robert's Rules)

A motion to recess proposes a short break in the proceedings. In Model Congress, this motion helps students understand the importance of pacing in legislative sessions. It allows time for informal discussions, coalition-building, and strategy refinement, mirroring real-world legislative practices. Recesses can lead to more productive sessions by allowing participants to recharge, consult resources, or engage in brief negotiations.

- **When to Use:** Propose a recess when there's a need for a break, informal discussion, or to regroup before important votes
- **Understanding the Process:** After recognition, state "I move to recess for [specify time]." Requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a majority vote to pass
- **Example:** "I move to recess for 15 minutes to allow time for committee chairs to confer on the budget proposal."

Motion to Adjourn (Robert's Rules)

A motion to adjourn ends the current meeting. In Model Congress, this motion teaches students about time management and the cyclical nature of legislative sessions. It helps participants understand when productive work has concluded and how to formally close proceedings. Learning to adjourn properly ensures that all necessary business is completed and that there's a clear demarcation between sessions, allowing for reflection and preparation for future meetings.

- **When to Use:** Propose adjournment when the agenda has been completed, or when it's clear that further productive work cannot be accomplished in the current session
- **Understanding the Process:** After recognition, state "I move to adjourn." Requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a majority vote to pass
- **Example:** "Having completed our agenda and with no further business, I move to adjourn until our next scheduled session on Friday at 2 PM."

Making Incidental Motions (Robert's Rules)

Purpose: Deal with questions of procedure

Here are some examples:

1. Point of Order: Draw attention to a rule violation
2. Appeal: Challenge the chair's ruling
3. Suspend the Rules: Temporarily change meeting procedures
4. Object to Consideration: Prevent discussion of a motion

Making Points/Requests (Robert's Rules)

When making a “point” we raise our hand and wait to be recognized...

Exception: It is permissible to speak a point to get the attention of the chair.

For example, “Point of Order!”

- Point of Information: Request clarification on a matter
- Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: Ask about proper procedures
- Request for Permission to Withdraw a Motion

“Point of Information” (Robert’s Rules)

A Point of Information is a request for factual clarification during a debate or discussion. In Model Congress, this tool is crucial for delegates to make informed decisions by ensuring they have accurate and complete information. Mastering the use of Points of Information allows participants to address knowledge gaps and prevent misunderstandings that could lead to poorly informed votes.

- **When to Use:** Raise a Point of Information when you need clarification on facts, figures, or data relevant to the current debate. This is appropriate when the information is crucial for understanding the full implications of a proposal or when important factual details seem to be missing from the discussion.
- **Understanding the Process:** To raise a Point of Information, a member stands and says "Point of Information." Once recognized, they clearly state their question. The chair or a designated expert provides the requested information without debate.
- **Example:** During budget discussions, a delegate stands and says, "Point of Information. What was the actual expenditure for this program last fiscal year?" The chair or financial officer then provides the specific figure requested.

“Point of Parliamentary Inquiry” (Robert’s)

A Point of Parliamentary Inquiry is a question about proper parliamentary procedure or the rules of the assembly. In Model Congress, this tool is essential for delegates to navigate complex procedural situations and ensure the smooth operation of the session. Effective use of Parliamentary Inquiries demonstrates a delegate's understanding of the rules and can significantly impact the flow of debate and decision-making.

- **When to Use:** Raise a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry when you're unsure about the correct procedure in the current situation. This is particularly useful when you need clarification on how to make a specific motion, what motion would be in order at the current time, or the potential consequences of a procedural action.
- **Understanding the Process:** To make a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, stand and say "Point of Parliamentary Inquiry." Once recognized by the chair, clearly state your procedural question. The chair will provide an explanation or ruling on the matter without debate.
- **Example:** "Point of Parliamentary Inquiry. If this amendment passes, will we still be able to vote on the main motion?"

“Point of Order” (Robert’s Rules)

A Point of Order is used to draw attention to a violation of rules or improper procedure. In Model Congress, this motion teaches students the importance of following established rules and procedures. It helps maintain order and fairness in debates, ensuring that all participants have an equal opportunity to be heard and that the proceedings remain organized and efficient.

- **When to Use:** Raise a Point of Order when you believe a rule has been broken or proper parliamentary procedure is not being followed
- **Understanding the Process:** Stand and say "Point of Order." The chair will ask you to state your point. No second is required, and the chair rules on the point
- **Example:** "Point of Order. The speaker has exceeded the allotted time for debate on this motion."

Object to Consideration (Robert's Rules)

Objecting to Consideration allows members to prevent discussion of a motion that they believe is irrelevant, inappropriate, or too sensitive to be brought before the assembly. In Model Congress, this motion teaches students to critically evaluate the relevance and appropriateness of proposed topics. It helps maintain focus on pertinent issues and avoids wasting time on matters that the majority might deem unworthy of debate.

- **When to Use:** Object to consideration when a motion is introduced that you believe should not even be discussed by the assembly due to its irrelevance, inappropriateness, or potential to cause harm
- **Understanding the Process:** As soon as a motion is introduced, but before debate begins, stand and say "I object to the consideration of the question." No second is required. It is not debatable and requires a two-thirds vote against consideration to sustain the objection
- **Example:** "I object to the consideration of the question. The proposed motion to discuss the cafeteria menu is outside the scope of our Model Congress and would waste valuable time needed for more pressing matters."

Appealing a Decision (Robert's Rules)

An Appeal allows members to challenge a ruling made by the chair. In Model Congress, this motion teaches students about checks and balances within parliamentary procedure. It demonstrates that while the chair has authority, their decisions can be questioned and overturned by the assembly. This process encourages critical thinking and ensures that the will of the majority is respected.

- **When to Use:** Make an Appeal when you strongly disagree with a ruling of the chair and believe the majority of the assembly would support your view
- **Understanding the Process:** Immediately after the chair's ruling, stand and say "I appeal the decision of the chair." Requires a second, is debatable, and needs a majority vote to overturn the chair's decision
- **Example:** "I appeal the decision of the chair. The point of order regarding time limits should have been sustained as our rules clearly state a 5-minute limit per speaker."

Moving the Previous Question (Robert's...)

In Robert's Rules of Order, "Moving the Previous Question" is a formal motion to end debate and proceed immediately to voting. Colloquially known as "Calling the Question," this parliamentary tool prevents excessive debate and ensures efficient decision-making. In Model Congress, it teaches students about balancing thorough discussion with timely action.

- **When to Use:** When debate seems exhausted or repetitive, and the assembly appears ready to vote on the pending question
- **Understanding the Process:** To call the question, a member must first be recognized by the chair. They then say, "I call the question" or "I move to vote immediately." This motion needs a second to be considered. Importantly, no debate is allowed on this motion itself. The chair then calls for a vote on whether to end debate, which requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If the motion passes, all debate stops, and the assembly immediately votes on the main motion being discussed.
- **Example:** During a lengthy debate on a bill, a delegate stands and says, "Madam Chair, I call the question." The chair responds, "The question has been called. We will now vote on whether to end debate and move to an immediate vote on the bill. All those in favor of ending debate, please say 'aye!'"

Voting Procedures (Robert's Rules)

The voting procedure is the formal process by which decisions are made in a deliberative assembly. In Model Congress, understanding and correctly following voting procedures is critical for ensuring fair and democratic decision-making. Proper execution of voting procedures lends legitimacy to the decisions made and teaches participants about the importance of orderly processes in governance.

- **When to Use:** The voting procedure is implemented after debate on a motion has concluded and the chair determines it's time to make a decision. This occurs when all relevant arguments have been heard or when a motion to end debate (previous question) has been passed.
- **Understanding the Process:** The chair clearly restates the motion to be voted on, then calls for affirmative votes, followed by negative votes. After votes are cast, the chair announces the result and whether the motion passed or failed.
- **Example:** "The question is on the adoption of the resolution to increase funding for renewable energy research. Those in favor, say 'aye'... Those opposed, say 'no'... The ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted."

Voting Methods (Robert's Rules)

Voting methods are the various ways in which votes can be cast and counted in a deliberative assembly. In Model Congress, understanding different voting methods is crucial for delegates to appreciate how the choice of method can affect the outcome and transparency of decisions. Familiarity with these methods allows participants to select the most appropriate one for different situations, balancing efficiency with accuracy and fairness.

- **When to Use:** The appropriate voting method is chosen based on the motion's importance, the assembly's size, and the need for precision or privacy. The chair typically decides the method, but members can also move for a specific type of vote if they believe it necessary.
- **Understanding the Process:** The four main voting methods are: Voice Vote (members respond verbally), Rising Vote or Show of Hands (members stand or raise hands), Roll Call Vote (each member's name is called), and Ballot Vote (members write their vote on paper).
- **Example:** For a controversial bill, the chair might say, "We will now conduct a roll call vote on the Immigration bill. After the secretary calls your name. Please respond with 'aye', 'nay', or 'abstain'."

Ending the Meeting (Robert's Rules)

Adjournment: This means to end the meeting.

1. Motion to Adjourn

- "I move to adjourn the meeting"
- Requires a second and majority vote

2. Chair declares the meeting adjourned

3. Set the time for the next meeting (if applicable)

Note: This matter was discussed in detail on a previous slide.

Tips for Effective Meetings

1. Follow the agenda
2. Keep discussions focused on the current motion
3. Address all comments to the chair
4. Be respectful of others' opinions
5. Know when to use the appropriate motions and points
6. Encourage participation from all members
7. Summarize decisions and action items before adjourning

Break Time (~10 min)

During/After the break...

1. Update/Practice your speech for the simulation.
2. Be prepared to discuss the “Meeting Rules”.
3. After the break we will do the City Council Simulation: “Water Contamination Crisis”.