

## HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)

Activity: City Council Meeting (Simulation)

### City Council Meeting with Chamber of Commerce (Activity)

In this activity, we will simulate a city council meeting (a formal gathering where elected officials discuss and make decisions about local issues) to address two important topics: allowing pets in restaurants and tackling the recent water contamination crisis. You will assume roles as city council members or representatives from the Chamber of Commerce (an organization that represents local business interests) to debate these issues, propose solutions through bills (written proposals for new laws), and vote on the best course of action for our community.

#### Topics of Discussion (Choose Your Topic)

1. Pets in Restaurants: Should our city allow pet owners to bring their animals into dining establishments?
2. Water Contamination Crisis: How can we address the recent water quality issues and prevent future incidents?

#### Roles and Responsibilities (Choose Your Role)

1. Mayor: The newly elected mayor will preside over (lead and manage) the meeting, ensuring everyone has a chance to speak and keeping the discussion organized. The mayor only votes in case of a tie.
2. City Council Members: As a council member, you will listen to arguments, ask questions, and vote on proposed bills. Consider the community's health, business interests, and public safety when making decisions.
3. Chamber of Commerce Representatives: You represent local businesses that may be impacted by these decisions. Prepare arguments for or against the proposed changes based on how they would affect your business and the local economy.

#### How to Prepare

1. Understand the Topics:
  - Research the pros and cons of allowing pets in restaurants. Consider health regulations, customer preferences, and potential impacts on businesses.
  - Learn about the recent water contamination crisis. What caused it? How has it affected the community? What solutions have other cities used in similar situations?
2. Write a Bill: A bill (a proposed law or change to existing laws) should include:
  - Title: A brief name for your proposed law.
  - Purpose: Explain what change you want to make and why.
  - Main Provisions: List the specific rules or changes your bill would implement.
  - Implementation: Describe how these changes will be put into action.
  - Funding: Explain any costs involved and how they will be covered.
  - Effective Date: Specify when the new rule would start.

Example (Sample Bill):

Title: "An Act to Allow Pets in Outdoor Restaurant Areas"

Purpose: To permit pet owners to bring their animals to outdoor dining areas in our city.

Main Provisions:

1. Pets will be allowed in designated outdoor areas of restaurants.
2. Restaurants must provide water bowls for pets.
3. Pet owners are responsible for their animal's behavior.

Implementation: The Health Department will create guidelines for restaurants.

Funding: No additional funding required.

Effective Date: This law will take effect on January 1, 2025.

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### How to Prepare (*Continued...*)

3. Prepare for the Meeting:
  - Write a short speech (1-2 minutes) explaining your position on one or both topics.
  - Practice your speech and be ready to answer questions.
  - Prepare questions to ask others about their positions.
  - Review the meeting rules (see below) so you know how to participate properly.

### Meeting Procedures

We will follow a simplified version of Robert's Rules of Order (a widely used guide for conducting meetings and making group decisions efficiently and fairly):

Detailed Meeting Procedures (as follows):

1. Call to Order: The mayor starts the meeting by saying, "This city council meeting will now come to order. Today we will be discussing two important issues: allowing pets in restaurants and addressing our recent water contamination crisis."
2. Introduction of Bills:
  - For Pets in Restaurants: A council member might say, "I move to introduce the following bill: 'The Pet-Friendly Dining Act' which would allow pets in outdoor seating areas of restaurants."
  - For Water Contamination: Another might say, "I move to introduce the 'Clean Water Safety Bill' to implement new monitoring systems at our water treatment facilities."
3. Debate: The mayor manages the discussion by recognizing speakers in turn, saying, "The chair recognizes Councilmember [Name]." Each recognized speaker may present arguments for or against the bills, or ask questions.
4. Making Motions:
  - To propose an action, say, "I move that..." For example, "I move that we vote on the Pet-Friendly Dining Act."
  - For the water issue, one might say, "I move that we allocate emergency funds to address the contamination crisis."
5. Seconding Motions: Another member must "second" a motion for it to be considered. They simply say, "I second the motion." This applies to both the pet dining and water contamination bills.
6. Making Amendments: To change a proposed bill, a member can say, "I move to amend the bill by [adding/removing/changing] the following..." For example:
  - "I move to amend the Pet-Friendly Dining Act to require restaurants to provide water bowls for pets."
  - "I move to amend the Clean Water Safety Bill to include quarterly public reports on water quality."
7. Voting:
  - The mayor calls for votes on each motion or amendment, saying, "All in favor of [specific motion] say 'Aye'," then "All opposed say 'Nay'."
  - For a roll call vote on major bills, the mayor might say, "We will now vote on the Pet-Friendly Dining Act. When your name is called, please respond with 'Aye' for yes or 'Nay' for no."
8. Announcing Results: The mayor announces the result of each vote:
  - "The motion to allow pets in outdoor dining areas passes/fails with [number] votes in favor and [number] opposed."
  - "The amendment to the Clean Water Safety Bill passes/fails."

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### **Meeting Procedures (*Continued...*)**

9. Adjournment: To end the meeting, a member says, "I move to adjourn the meeting," another seconds, and all vote. The mayor then declares, "This meeting is adjourned. Thank you all for your participation in addressing these important issues for our community."

Remember, during the meeting, you can always raise your hand and say "Point of Information" if you have a question about the procedure or need clarification on something that's been said.

### **Tips for Success**

- Address the mayor as "Mr./Madam Mayor" or "Your Honor."
- Speak clearly and respectfully, focusing on ideas rather than personal attacks.
- Listen carefully and take notes on main points.
- Be prepared to explain how your ideas benefit the whole community.
- Remember that the goal is finding the best solution for everyone, so be open to compromise.