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# Jurassic Parliament™

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## Running Great Meetings

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## LOCHRIE'S SIX PRINCIPLES OF A MEETING

The fundamental essence of a meeting is the equal opportunity of members to initiate ideas, oppose ideas, and to do so without coercion. Six principles underlie the rules of any meeting. These are:

1. The majority must be allowed to rule.
2. The minority have rights that must be respected.
3. Members have a right to information to help make decisions.
4. Courtesy and respect for others are required.
5. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
6. Members have a right to an efficient meeting.

James Lochrie, *Meeting Procedures*, p. 1  
used with permission

## MACFARLANE'S INFORMAL SIX PRINCIPLES OF A MEETING

While these principles seem universally acceptable, it is not so easy to carry them out in practice. Sometimes one principle interferes with another. The following "informal" principles help balance the formal requirements listed above.

**1. The role of the presider is paradoxical.**

Both the *most* important person in room and the *least* important person in room.

**2. The presider must be strict on process—a benevolent dictator.**

During the meeting, wear your "policeman's hat." This is the way to be fair to all.

**3. The presider is not responsible for the decision the group makes.**

The presider is responsible for expressing his position clearly and ensuring a fair process.

**4. *Either* the presider does not debate and vote, *or* he debates last and votes last, in order to remain as impartial as possible.**

**5. Don't try to do it all yourself.**

Everyone must "own" the meeting—beware the "free rider" syndrome.

**6. The presider must balance the emotional and procedural aspects of every meeting.**

## MOTIONS

### The main motion



*Tyrannosaurus rex*  
Main motion

- An idea to do something. Distills the general ether into a specific proposal.
- Most new ideas will be considered on the basis of an “original main motion.”
- In assemblies, there **must** be a motion made before debate can begin.
- In small boards, ask for a motion as soon as the discussion is ready.

### Characteristics of the original main motion

- Should be in writing, unless very short. (Useful to write out text for assembly on whiteboard, flip chart, or LCD display; American Institute of Parliamentarians sells 3-part motion forms.)
- Should be stated in the grammatical positive. May not include the word “not.”
- Should be concise and unambiguous; should state, to the extent possible, “what, who, when, where, how.”
- Must comply with bylaws and the law of the land.
- Is in order when no other business is pending.
- Has the “default setting” for motions.
  - a) needs a second
  - b) can be debated
  - c) can be amended
  - d) takes more than 50% to pass

## Amendment

You “amend” something because you’ve come up with a better idea.



### ***Dimetrodon*** **Amendment**

- Must be germane (relevant)
- May strike out words.
- May insert words.
- May strike out and insert words.
- May substitute.
- Has the default setting.

## Motion to refer to committee



### ***Ankylosaurus*** **Refer to committee**

- Requires a second.
- Should name the committee to which motion is referred and state the time by which the committee should report back.
- May be debated as to appropriateness, instructions to committee.
- May be amended within limits.
- Has the default setting.
- Key question: referred with power? Or not?

## Call for the previous question



***Triceratops***  
**Call for the previous question**

- All this means is that one person thinks we should stop talking and vote.
- Ask if there is a second, and if there is, then immediately take the vote on whether to stop talking and vote.
- Because limiting discussion is also limiting members' rights, this takes two-thirds to pass.
- If it passes, the group immediately votes on whatever issue is pending.

## The “flying” motions

### *Point of order*



***Pteranodon***  
**Point of order**

A suggestion that something is being done incorrectly.

Chair rules.

No second, no debate, no amendment, no vote.

### *Point of information*



***Pterodactyl***  
**Point of information**

A simple request for information.

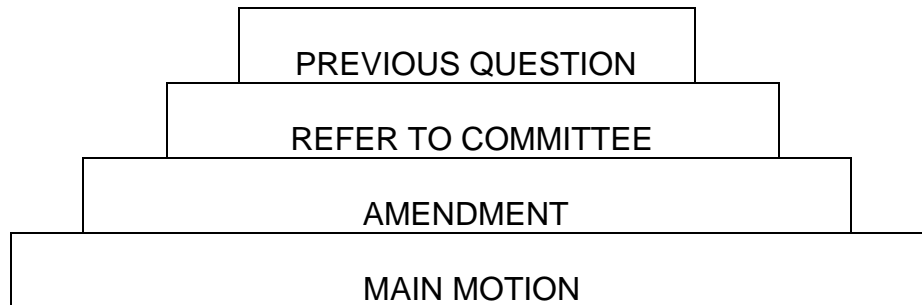
Response: “state your question”

Chair replies, or refers member to someone who knows the answer.

No second, no debate, no amendment, no vote.

Not the default setting.

*What is the “precedence of motions”?*



## EIGHT STEPS TO HANDLE A MOTION

How does the action start?

1. Member makes the motion & gives it in writing to the presider
2. Another member calls out “second”
3. Chair states the motion: only then can debate and amendment begin.
4. Debate and amendment of motion

Sequence of motions – one thing at a time. Highly linear!

How does the action finish?

5. Chair states the motion
6. Members vote
7. Chair states the result and its consequences
8. Chair states next item of business

## DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

### THREE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALL DISCUSSIONS

1. Courtesy at all times
2. Discussion of others’ motives is always out of order
3. Essential rule—most ignored in all of Robert’s:
  - “*No one may speak twice until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken first.*”
  - Also called: “*Speak once and wait.*”
  - Use the round robin.
  - If people ignore this rule, use a “talking stick”.