Parliamentary Procedure

Quick Start

The Purpose

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules to help groups make fair, orderly, and efficient decisions.

-It ensures everyone gets a voice.
-It prevents chaos and confusion.
-It keeps the focus on the business at hand (in this case, debating).

Get Recognized to Speak

You can't just start talking—you need recognition.

-Stand, raise your hand or plaque to seek recognition.
-The presiding officer (Chair) decides who may speak.
-Always address your remarks to the Chair, not directly to another

What to Say When Recognized

Once you are given the floor, there are standard phrases to use:

Start with: "Thank you, Madam/Mister Chair."
Then choose what you want to do:

-State your position: "I rise to speak in favor/against the bill."
-Motion for action: "I move that…"
-To ask a question to person in the well: "Will the member yield to a question?"
-For more than one: "Will the member yield to a series of questions?"

The Chair may then ask the speaker if they will yield. If the speaker agrees, you may proceed with your question(s).

How Voting Works

When debate is finished, the group votes.

-The Chair restates the motion clearly before voting.
-Voting can be by voice ("aye"/"no"), show of hands, or roll call.
-A simple majority (more than half) usually decides, unless special rules apply.