A Quick Look at *Robert’s Rules of Order Revised*

I. TRANSACTING BUSINESS AT A MEETING

A. Obtaining the Floor
   1. Before a Senator can make a motion or speak in debate, he or she must obtain the floor; that is, the Speaker must recognize the member.

B. Introducing Business (Making Motions)
   1. Business may be introduced by an individual Senator or by a committee.
   2. Business is always introduced in the form of a motion.

C. Seconding a Motion:
   1. After a motion has been made, another Senator, without rising and obtaining the floor, may second the motion.
   2. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before Senate and not that he or she necessarily favors the motion.
   3. A motion made by a committee requires no second, since its introduction into Senate has been approved by a majority of the committee.
   4. The purpose of a second is to prevent time from being consumed by Senate having to dispose of a motion that only one Senator wants to see introduced.

D. Debate
   1. Every Senator of the assembly has the right to speak on every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon; this right cannot be interfered with except by a motion to limit debate.
   2. All discussion must be confined to the immediately pending question and to whether or not it should be adopted.
   3. While debate is in progress, amendments or other secondary motions can be introduced and disposed of accordingly.
   4. Student Government meetings have no special rules relating to the length of speeches, a member can speak no longer than 10 minutes unless he or she obtains the consent of the Speaker.
   5. No Senator may speak twice on the same motion at the same meeting as long as any other Senator who has not spoken on the motion desires to do so.
   6. Unless the rules are suspended, a Senator who has spoken twice on a particular question on the same day has exhausted his or her right to debate that question for that meeting.
   7. During debate, no Senator can attack or question the motives of another Senator.
   8. The Senator of a motion, although allowed to vote against it, is not allowed to speak against it.
9. A Senator may yield the floor when asking a question to another Senator, Exec member, or informed party who might help answer the question.

E. Voting
1. Unless special rules apply, a majority decides. A majority is more than half of the votes cast by Senators entitled to vote, excluding abstentions.
2. Unless otherwise provided for, voting is by voice vote.
3. The Speaker of the Senator can vote with the other Senators when the vote is by ballot. In other cases, the Speaker can (but is not obliged to) vote whenever his or her vote will affect the result; i.e., he or she can vote either to break or to create a tie.
4. Any Senator may request a division of the assembly if there is uncertainty as to the true result of the vote.

F. Adjournment:
1. A motion to adjourn may be made by any Senator. It may be made during the consideration of other business, although it may not interrupt a Senator who is currently debating.
2. A motion to adjourn is not in order when Senate is engaged in voting or verifying a vote.
3. If the motion to adjourn is voted down, it may be made again only after the disposition of some business.
4. The motion to adjourn is out of order when Senate is arranging for the time and place of the next meeting.

II. TYPES OF MOTIONS--DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES
A. Privileged Motions: Motions which do not relate to the pending question but have to do with matters of such urgency or importance that, without debate, they are allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else.
   1. Adjourn: Terminates the meeting. “I move that we adjourn.”
   2. Recess: Permits a short intermission in a meeting. “I move that we recess for 10 minutes” or “. . . until 2:00” or “. . . until called to order by the Speaker.”
   3. Raise a question (point) of clarification: Permits a request or main motion relating to the rights and privileges of the Senate or any of its Senators to be brought up for immediate consideration because of its urgency. “I raise to a raise a point of clarification affecting the assembly.”
   4. Call for the orders of the day: Requires that the adopted agenda or order of business be followed. “Mr. Speaker, I call for the orders of the day.”

B. Subsidiary Motions: Motions which assist the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion. They have the effect of hastening action upon, delaying action upon, or modifying the main motion.
   1. Lay on the table: Lays a pending question or resolution aside temporarily when something more urgent is debated upon. “I
move to lay the question on the table” or “I move that the motion be tabled.”

2. Previous question (Call to question): Ends debate and orders an immediate vote. “I move the previous question” or “I move we vote immediately on the motion.”

3. Limit or extend debate: Modifies debate by limiting or extending the number or length of speeches. “I move that debate be limited to one speech of two minutes for each Senator“ or “I move that the Senator’s time be extended three minutes.”

4. Postpone to a certain time (Table): Defers consideration to a definite day, meeting, or hour, or until after some particular event. “I move that the question be postponed until the next meeting” or “I move to postpone the motion until after the presentation by our guest speaker.”

5. Postpone indefinitely: Disposes of a question without bringing it to a direct vote. “I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely.”

C. **Main Motion:** A motion which brings business before the Senate and which can be made only while no other motion is pending. “I move to call this resolution to question.”

D. **Motions that Bring a Question Again Before the Senate:** Motions which bring up a previously considered question.

1. Motion to Reconsider: Allows a question previously disposed of to come again before the assembly as if it had not previously been considered.

2. The Motion to Reconsider can be made only by a member who voted on the **prevailing** side and only on the **same day** the original vote was taken. The motion is debatable only if the motion to be reconsidered is itself debatable. “I move to reconsider the vote on the motion relating to the resolution.”

3. Discharge a committee: Takes a matter out of a committee's hands and places it again before the assembly as a whole. “I move that the committee considering the resolution on higher wages be discharged to the Senate floor.”

4. Rescind a motion previously adopted: Voids a motion previously passed. “I move to rescind the motion passed at the last meeting relating to Bill Number BF07-014.”

5. Take from the table (Withdraw): Allows the assembly to resume consideration of a motion previously laid on the table. “I move to take from the table the motion relating to higher education.”
# Table of Common Motions

Abridged from *Robert’s Rules of Order Revised*

Columns:

1 - Debatable  
2 – Amendable (friendly amendments)  
3 - Subsidiary Motions can be Applied  
4 - Can be Reconsidered  
5 - Requires 2/3 vote  
6 - Requires only a Majority Vote  
7 - Must be Seconded  
8 - Out of Order when Another has Floor

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<td>Withdraw a Motion (only sponsor has this right)</td>
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N is for No, as in no this doesn’t apply. Y is for yes, as in yes go for it!!!