

Parliamentary Procedure 101

Points and Motions

Points and Motions are used to call attention to something or to change the direction of the committee. Only one point or motion of equal precedence may be entertained at a time, and points or motions of higher precedence should be indicated by raising a placard after the moderating officer has entertained a point or motion of lower precedence. Points should be raised vocally by saying, "Point." Additional motions may be committee-specific and will be described at the start of the Conference by those particular special committees.

Point of Personal Privilege – Whenever a delegate experiences personal discomfort which impairs his/her ability to participate in the proceedings, he or she may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege to request that the discomfort be corrected. While a Point of Personal Privilege may interrupt a speaker, delegates should use this power with the utmost discretion. *Example: It smells really bad and you want to open a window.*

Point of Order – This point may be raised at any time and pertains to the conduct of delegates. It should be raised only when a delegate is out of order or when a delegate cannot hear a speaker (sometimes referred to as a "Point of Personal Privilege"). It may also be used when a vote total has been announced that a delegate feels is close enough to request a recount. Recounts are only in order, however, on placard votes and at the discretion of the Chair. *Example: A delegate begins talking about a topic other than the one you are currently debating.*

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry – When the floor is open, a delegate may rise to a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry to ask the Moderator a question regarding the rules of procedure. A Point of Parliamentary Inquiry may never interrupt a speaker. Delegates with substantive questions should not rise to this Point, but should rather approach the committee staff during caucus. *Example: You want to know how many people you need to sign your working paper to have it brought to the committee.*

Motion to Comment – This motion is only in order if a speaker does not yield after concluding a speech. The moderating officer may entertain up to two motions to comment, which allow for 30 second speeches pertaining to the speech just given. There are no motions to comment during a moderated caucus.

Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus – This motion temporarily suspends the session for a specified amount of time. It requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority vote. A delegate moving for an unmoderated caucus should be prepared to give a suggested time as well as a reason for having one.

Motion for a Moderated Caucus – This motion brings the body into a moderated caucus debate on the issue on the floor for a specified amount of time. The moderating officer recognizes speakers for a specified amount of time, whose speeches must be yielded to the Chair upon completion. This motion requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority vote. This motion may not be made once debate has been closed. A delegate moving for a moderated caucus should be prepared to give a suggested time and speaking time, as well as a reason for having one. There are no motions to comment or yields during a moderated caucus.

Motion to Change the Order of the Agenda – This motion changes the order of the topics to be considered. The topic on the floor would be left aside until the new topic was resolved, tabled, or the order was changed again. The work of the body on the first topic would be left as-is until the topic was reopened. This motion requires a second, is debatable (two speeches in favor and two against), and needs a simple majority vote. This motion may not be made once debate has been closed.

Motion to Table a Topic – This motion tables a topic until reopened with a Motion to Reconsider or the second topic is resolved. This motion requires a second, is debatable (two speeches in favor and two against), and needs a simple majority vote. This motion may not be made once debate has been closed.

Motion to Table a Resolution - This motion tables a resolution until it is reopened with a Motion to Reconsider. This motion requires a second, is debatable (two speeches in favor and two against), and needs a simple majority vote. This motion may not be made once debate has been closed.

Motion to Close Debate – This motion closes debate on a specified resolution and brings that resolution to a vote. This motion requires a second, is debatable (two against), and needs a simple majority vote. Once closed, the following motions are in order:

- **Motion for a Decision of Competence** – This motion requests the body first vote on whether or not it is competent to deal with the issues addressed in the resolution. This motion requires a second, is debatable (two speeches in favor and two against), and requires a simple majority. A “yes” vote on a motion for a decision of competence indicates that the body is not competent to deal with the issues addressed in the resolution. If the motion passes, the resolution is effectively tabled until a Motion to Reconsider passes.
- **Motion to Divide the Question** – This motion may be made to request that specified operative clauses be divided out of a resolution and voted upon individually. If an operative clause fails to receive a majority vote, it is left out of the resolution when the resolution is voted upon as a whole. This motion requires a second, is debatable (two speeches in favor and two against), and needs a simple majority vote. If the motion passes, the body then votes on the operative clauses it has divided out.
- **Motion for Adoption by Consensus** – This motion requests that the body adopt the resolution by consensus, meaning that no delegation objects to the resolution. A delegation may abstain, but should a delegation object, the motion is out of order.
- **Motion for a Roll-Call Vote** – This motion requests that the Dais conduct a roll-call vote on the resolution. This motion requires four seconds to be accepted.

Motion to Appeal a Decision of the Chair – This motion appeal a decision of the Chair to the body. This motion requires the consent of the Chair. If accepted by the Chair, the Chair and the Delegates shall each be given one minute to present their argument to the body. This motion needs a simple majority vote.

Motion to Introduce an Amendment – This motion brings an amendment that has been submitted to the Dais with the appropriate number of signatories to the floor for general debate and vote is closed on the resolution. No second is required.

Motion to Introduce a Resolution – This motion bring a resolution to the floor for general debate. It requires a second, is not debatable, and needs a simple majority.

Motion to Reconsider – This motion reconsiders a previous decision of the body. It requires a second, is debatable (two speeches in favor and two against), and needs a two-thirds majority vote.

Motion to Suspend – This motion suspends the body between sessions. The Moderator may rule such motions out of order; these decisions will not be subject to appeal. When in order, such will not be debatable but will immediately be put to vote and will require a majority to pass. This motion requires a second.

Motion to Adjourn – Whenever the floor is open, a delegate may move for the adjournment of the meeting to suspend all Committee functions for the duration of the Conference. The Moderator may rule such motions out of order; these decisions will not be subject to appeal. When in order, such will not be debatable but will immediately be put to vote and will require a majority to pass. This motion requires a second.

There are also things called **yields**. During regular debate, after you make a speech, you are allowed to yield your time. There are three different types of yields.

Yield to the Chair - This yield gives your remaining time back to the chair and your speech is over.

Yield to Another Country - This yield gives your remaining time to another country. That country may now make a speech for the duration of your time. You select the country you would like to yield to.

Yield to Questions - This yield allows your remaining time to be used to answer questions about your speech. All questions must be germane to your speech. The dais will call on countries that wish to ask a question. The time it takes a country to ask their question is not counted towards your time.

Glossary

See this site for a comprehensive glossary of Model UN terms:

<http://www.unausa.org/munglossary>

The site is also a great resource for all kinds of things MUN related and will greatly help you prepare for a conference.

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Flow of Debate

Role Call

The Chairperson will announce each country's name. After delegates hear their country, they should answer "present."



Setting the Agenda

When Model UN committees have more than one topic they can discuss, the body must set the agenda to begin working on one of these issues first. At this time, a delegate typically makes a motion, stating "The country of [country name] moves to place [topic area A] first on the agenda." Some conferences will simply take a vote on this measure, but others will request delegates to speak in favor of and against the motion. The list of these speakers is called a "provisional speakers list." Once all delegates on this list have addressed the committee, a vote is taken. Setting the agenda usually requires a simple majority vote.



Debate

Formal Debate

Formal debate revolves around the speakers list. The Chair begins by asking all delegates who would like to speak to raise their placards. The Chair then chooses delegates to be placed on the speakers list. A country can only be on the speakers list once, but delegates may add their country again after they have addressed the committee.

1a. When the session begins, speeches focus on stating **country positions** and offering recommendations for action.

2a. After blocs have met, speeches focus on **describing bloc positions to the entire body**

3a. Delegates now **make statements describing their ideas to the committee.**

4a. Delegates try to **garner more support** through formal speeches and invite others to offer their ideas.

5a. Delegates make statements **supporting or disagreeing with specific draft resolutions.**

6a. Delegates declare any **amendments** they have created.

Informal Debate

Informal debate is divided into moderated and unmoderated caucuses. During moderated caucuses, the Chair calls on delegates one-by-one so that each can address the committee in short speeches. During unmoderated caucuses, the committee breaks for a temporary recess so that delegates can meet with each other and discuss ideas.



1b. After several countries state their positions, the committee breaks for caucuses (often in blocs for now) to **develop regional or group positions.**



2b. Writing begins as countries work together to **compose draft resolutions.**



3b. Countries and groups meet to **gather support for specific ideas.**



4b. Delegates **finalize draft resolutions.**



5b. Draft-resolution sponsors **build greater support** for their resolution and look to incorporate others' ideas through friendly amendments.



Close of Debate

Once the speakers list is exhausted, the committee automatically moves to voting. Also, once a delegate feels that his or her country's position is clear to others and that there are enough draft resolutions on the floor, he or she may make a motion to proceed into voting procedure by moving for the closure of debate.



Voting Procedures

Once a motion to close debate has been approved, the committee moves into voting procedure. Amendments are voted on first, then resolutions. Once all of the resolutions are voted on, the committee moves to the next topic on the agenda.