

IFAS Leadership Development: The Most Important Jobs—The Group Leader and the Group Member¹

Muthusami Kumaran²

Introduction

This article is part of a series [IFAS Leadership Development](#), with eleven modules developed for use by Florida Cooperative Extension agents. They are designed for training agents and officers. Information and activities provided in this series will help Extension leaders in facilitating leadership development for their agents and officers. Handouts for audience use are labeled in the leadership development modules. These may be duplicated for use during training sessions. Each lesson is designed for a workshop approximately two hours long. Various parts of the modules can be shortened or expanded according to the needs of participants and availability of time.

Recommendations for Leader Training

Prepare to teach this lesson by reading and familiarizing yourself with the objectives, materials, handouts and ACTIVITIES/exercises.

- Begin preparation several days in advance in order to secure whatever additional resources you need to make the lesson a "local" learning experience.
- Plan a learning environment with care so that the surroundings contribute to the achievement of the objectives.
- Begin on time, and end on time. Schedule a break at about halfway through the lesson.
- With each lesson after the first one, ask participants what they did as a result of the previous lesson. Record these!
- Introduce each lesson with an overview of how it fits into the overall major leadership development program.
- End each lesson with a summary and restatement of objectives. Explain what the participants are expected to do with the lesson after they leave.
- Heighten anticipation for the next lesson by sharing a brief description of it, but be cautious not to give too much away.

Objectives

1. To introduce participants to the roles of the group leader and group members.
2. To show how each role contributes to making the group effective.

Lesson Outline

Introduction and Overview of Objectives (10 minutes)

- Group Lecture and Exercise
- *The Leader's Job*

Group Lecture and Discussion (60 minutes)

- *Plan for the Year Ahead* (10 minutes)
- *Keep Your Organization Before the Public* (5 minutes)
- *Hints for Handling Speakers* (5 minutes)
- *Parliamentary Procedure* (40 minutes)

Group Exercise (10 minutes)

- *The Leader's Responsibility*
- *The Leader's Own Evaluation*

Group Discussion and Exercise (20 minutes)

- *The Group Member's Job*

Summary and Evaluation (15 minutes)

Total time: 2 hours

Lesson Plan—The Most Important Jobs: The Group Leader and the Group Member

Step 1—10 minutes

Use *The Leader's Job* as an introductory lecture. You may want to modify the jobs listed to represent the degree of formality of the group.

Read objectives of lesson and write them on chalkboard.

Step 2—60 minutes

List leadership skills needed by organizational presidents/chairpersons.

- planning
- handling speakers
- publicity
- parliamentary

A topical outline is included for each of these. Select the two that are most important to the group and provide a lecture accompanied by handout.

Note: Planning and parliamentary procedure may require a good deal of time and discussion. Parliamentary Procedure can be given as a handout and study guide.

Leadership skills essential for all groups are included in:

- *Plan for the Year Ahead*
- *Hints for Handling Speakers*
- *Keep Your Organization Before the Public*
- *Parliamentary Procedure for Common Use*

Step 3—10 minutes

Use *The Leader's Responsibility* as background material for brief lecture.

Hand out *Leader's Own Evaluation* as individual assessment.

Step 4—20 minutes

Emphasize that group members are as important as group leaders and each should aspire to be the leader of the group.

Use *The Member's Job* as a background for a brief lecture.

Form small groups and ask each group to make their own list of what group members should be expected to do.

Hand out *Test Yourself* to participants. Ask them to evaluate themselves.

Hand out *Evaluate the Meeting*. Emphasize that group leaders and members have an obligation to evaluate group meetings.

Step 5—15 minutes

Review main points of lesson.

Restate objectives and tell how they were covered.

Pass out evaluation, collect it and then adjourn.

The Leader's Job

The group leader has a major role in the overall effectiveness of the group. The group leader may have a

title such as president or chairperson if it is a formal organization. Below are specific things that are generally the leader's responsibility.

Know the Group

The leader's first job is to understand his or her group. Here are some things you should know:

- number of people and what each can do
- resources that the group can use
- main purposes or objectives of the group
- how the people operate in the group

Does each individual know clearly what his or her role or job is? Who does what and why? What is being done to help each person perform as he or she should?

Get the Committee Working

Committees and boards serve as task forces doing specific tasks for the organization. Committees, properly used, become the leader's right arm. They also reduce the amount of routine in the business meeting of the organization. The leader is usually an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee. Here are some things which help committees at work:

- a friendly climate receptive to ideas
- a clear definition of the job to be done
- an orderly agenda or approach to the job
- allocating responsibilities according to individual capabilities
- adequate resources (information, skills)

Prepare for the Meeting

Study your audience. Find out everything about those who attend:

- Why do they come to the meeting?
- What are their needs, values, and desires?
- What do they know about the topic? Are they aware of it? Interested?

Decide on the purpose of the meeting.

- Is it to inform, entertain or get action from the group?
- What should the audience do as a result of the meeting?

Compare the objectives with the audience's ability.

- Are the objectives attainable?

Collect resources for the meeting.

- Select speakers.
- Arrange for aids or resource materials (blackboards, projector, video recorder, etc.).
- Arrange for housing and other facilities.

Plan the agenda for the meeting.

Usually, the leader takes major responsibility for preparing the agenda. This is done in consultation with the officers, executive committee or planning committee. Major considerations in preparing an agenda are:

- The items that should be included in the meeting.
- The order in which items are taken up.
- The time to be allotted to each item.
- Items that are for information only.
- Items for discussion.
- Publicize the meeting.

Make a last-day check on arrangements.

- Alert someone to open the building and prepare it for the meeting.
- Be sure that all special equipment is provided for and is in good order.
- Remind platform participants.

Preside at the meeting.

- The president presides at all meetings. If he or she must be absent, the vice president must be notified to preside for the president. Remember that the job of presiding officer is to present a show and not to put one on. A chairperson is host to the group, and his or her main concern should be to see that all the guests have a chance to be heard. Here are a few pointers:
- Allow time for social preliminaries before the meeting so that individuals get acquainted with each other and get their visiting done before the meeting begins.
- Call the meeting to order on time.
- Relax tension and overseriousness by being casual.
- Proceed to the business of the meeting. Make preliminary announcements and welcome guests. Have the secretary call the roll if one is kept. Have the previous minutes read and approved or amended. Call for committee reports, then unfinished business. New business should then be approached.
- Introduce the feature of the program.
- Thank those who contributed to the program.
- Announce upcoming events.
- Adjourn on time.

Much of the success of a meeting depends upon the president's alertness. Informality encourages discussion and is a goal to strive for. Encourage the right attitude. Here are three guiding considerations:

- Aim at keeping the meeting team-minded.
- Consider one proposition at a time.
- Majority ruling protects the rights of the minority.

Adapted from *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide* by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

Plan for the Year Ahead

Soon after assuming duties you will want to plan programs for the year ahead. This can often be delegated to a planning committee, but the leader is responsible for seeing that planning gets done. Here are some steps:

Assess the present situation:

- Who are the members?
- What needs or problems have the members?
- How effective have past programs been? What was the nature of the best programs? Of the poorest programs?
- What resources are available to the group? What can individual members do? What outside people can be drawn upon? What facilities are there to work with?
- Explore what the group wants to have, or do:
- Do they want more members?
- Do they want to be entertained?
- Do they want to correct some civic problems?
- Do they want to improve farming?
- Do they want to improve homes?

Discuss alternative ways that goals can be met:

- Outside speakers.
- Discussions by group members.
- Committees.
- Projects—which ones.
- Entertainment, skits, dances, refreshments, etc.
- Trips.

Decide which alternatives will do the job best.

Set priorities on goals:

- What do we do next meeting?
- What six months later, etc.?

Implement plans with necessary action.

Hints for Handling Speakers

Here is a list of things to keep in mind when you have speakers for your meetings. These things are important but often overlooked. Tell club events that make news:

- Select a speaker for a specific purpose.
- Share information with the audience ahead of the meeting: who speaker is, purpose of the speech, and audience's part in the program.
- Inform the speaker ahead of time on why he or she is to speak, the size and interests of the audience, amount of time allotted, other speakers and their

topics, time for questions and physical facilities available.

- Be clear about arrangements for his or her convenience.
- Prepare the audience for the speech when introducing the speaker, but do not give too much information away.
- Show your appreciation for the speaker coming by thanking him or her sincerely after the speech. Report publicity accurately following the program. Write the speaker a thank you note.

When introducing the speaker, try to create a desire to hear the person you are introducing. This requires the speaker's name and background information, qualifications concerning this topic and why the topic is important for the group.

One idea for an introduction might be:

"We are fortunate to have with us an outstanding Family and Community Educator today. She won the Dairy Days contest last year and has told her success story to many groups. With the present prices of milk and butter, we are very fortunate to have her speak on 'Making Your Family Fit and Healthy with Dairy Products.' Please welcome Mrs. Watson."

Be enthusiastic about having him or her as a speaker. Lead the applause and remain standing until the speaker has taken his or her place.

Keep Your Organization Before the Public

Many people in your community know little or nothing about your organization. Tell the great story behind the organization and its members. Here are a few hints.

The people helping your organization want to be in the news for the following reasons:

- to feel socially accepted
- to feel important
- to be appreciated
- to be of service

Your actions constitute news, so make arrangements to publicize the events. Here is what to tell:

- Who—the person, organization, etc.
- What—the meeting, prize list, conference, etc.
- When—time, yesterday, tomorrow, next week, 8 p.m., etc.
- Where—place, Grange, school, etc.
- Why—cause, officers elected, carnival planned, etc.
- How—circumstances, how meeting came about, etc.

Tell club events that make news:

- election of officers
- agenda for the coming year
- membership drives, money-raising drives
- speakers
- projects
- demonstrations, plays, etc.
- committee doings
- conferences attended
- annual dinners

Adapted from *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide* by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

Parliamentary Procedure for Common Use

Parliamentary procedure is inevitable for at least two reasons:

1. As a member of one or more organizations, at least a minimum knowledge of parliamentary procedure is needed.
2. Members tend to complicate parliamentary procedure beyond reason for the majority of meetings attended.

What are the uses for parliamentary procedure? Generally, parliamentary procedure is a tool used to accomplish the goals and objectives of a group in an efficient, fair, and harmonious manner. To be more specific, parliamentary procedure provides a flexible plan for transacting the three steps of business at hand. These steps are:

- the "birth" of an idea,
- the "growth" of the idea,
- the "disposition" of the idea.

The "birth" period is generally represented by introducing a main motion. To introduce a main motion, a member says, "Mr. Chairman, I move..."; never "Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a motion or I so move." The main motion is placed on the floor when no other undisposed of motions are pending. The main motion always requires a second before the debate is allowed. The debate period corresponds to the "growth" period. The vote is the "disposition."

Many times in small or informal groups, strict parliamentary procedure is not needed for agreement among members nor is it desired. Never use parliamentary procedure for its sake, or in other words, do not become a slave to the rules. A rule of thumb you can use is: as the size of the group increases, the formality of parliamentary procedure increases. This rule works well if there is little disagreement in the group or for routine matters. However, if the group has a lot of dissension, the

chairperson should alter the situation as needed regardless of size.

Another point to consider is how much the group knows about parliamentary procedure. A large group with little knowledge of parliamentary procedure would probably get more accomplished using an informal approach. A small group well versed in parliamentary procedure would probably do better to use formal procedure.

In other words, never insist on technical terms when the group does not have the training to understand them. These groups might need help in rephrasing awkward motions, seeing that members receive their just treatment, shutting off the "one person" show.

It might be wise to have a complete parliamentary reference available for special times, but usually only an average of common knowledge will be needed. See Table 1 for the more commonly used motions together with reasons for using them. The arrangement of these more common motions are as they might occur in descending order in a regular meeting.

Suggested Meeting Procedures

The following statements are suggestions and are commonly used with slight variations in most meetings. Some tips are added to illustrate specific points.

Chairperson: The meeting will now come to order. The secretary will call the roll. (Secretary generally calls the roll silently and simply reports the number of members and guests present.)

Chairperson: Thank you. The secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting. (Secretary reads minutes.)

Chairperson: Thank you. Are there any corrections to the minutes? (Common courtesy normally forbids calling out "Mr. Chairman." Instead, one receives recognition from the chair by raising his hand or standing.) If corrected, then...

Chairperson: If there are no objections, the minutes will be corrected as follows. (Secretary makes proper corrections.)

Chairperson: Any other corrections? Upon hearing none, the minutes stand approved as corrected. (When there are no corrections, the chairman simply states, "The minutes stand approved as read.")

Chairperson: We will now have the officers' reports. The president's report will be first. (This report is normally general; that is, type of program, time and place for next meeting, special guests, or events forthcoming.)

Chairperson: Any questions? If none, the report stands as read.

Chairperson: We will now have the vice president's report. (Handled as president's report if vice president has one.)

Chairperson: Next, the treasurer's report. (This report is normally given from meeting to meeting with a grand summary at the end of the fiscal year, usually when officers are elected.)

Chairperson: Thank you. Any questions concerning the treasurer's report? If not, the report will be received as read. (Note: The treasurer's report differs from other officers' reports in that it is only received from meeting to meeting and never approved until it has been audited, which is normally at the end of the fiscal year.)

Chairperson: Next, the secretary's report. (This is not in reference to the minutes, but rather of correspondence, approved bills, and possibly of special happenings not recorded in regular minutes.) Secretary reports.

Chairperson: Thank you. Any questions concerning the secretary's report? If not, it will stand approved as read. (Members may approve or reject bills and take action on correspondence, or these and other matters may be taken up under new business. If long discussion seems to be involved, then the action may best be postponed until new business.)

Chairperson: Now we will have the committee reports. We will have the report(s) of standing committee(s) first. (Normally, standing committees are elected for a period of a year. Many of these committees, such as program, advisory, and flower show, continue from year to year.) Committee chairman reports.

Group members are interested in what, why, how, and when the committee did or will do the job it was assigned. After the job is done, members may also be interested in recommendations the committee may have for change or improvement. They are not interested in personal accomplishments, orating or acting ability, or why the committee failed in spite of excellent leadership.

Chairperson: Thank you. Any questions about this report? If none, we will accept the report as given. (Other standing committee reports are disposed of in like manner.)

Chairperson: We have no more standing committee reports, so let us proceed with the special committee reports. Do we have any special committee reports at this time? (Special committee reports often require immediate action, as these committees are normally of short duration.) Special committee reports.

Chairperson: Thank you. Any questions concerning the report? If not, what are your thoughts concerning the report? (Many times the committee chairman moves to take necessary action, but this is not essential. Any member may offer a motion. If a motion is made, then a second is needed. Anyone may second the motion except the maker of the motion or the main chairman. Example: Motion made and seconded to buy a new coffeemaker.)

Chairperson: It has been moved and seconded that the committee follow through with its report and buy a new coffeemaker. Any discussion? (Member is recognized and amends the motion to read a new drip coffeemaker. It was properly seconded.)

Chairperson: The main motion has been amended to read: Buy a new drip coffeemaker. Any discussion? (Following the discussion, the chairman may sense that the group is ready to vote, and say, "Are you ready to vote on the amendment?") Amendment voted and passed.

Chairperson: We will now vote on the amended motion. Any discussion? If none, are you ready to vote? (If no discussion, proceed to vote.) Amended motion passed. (Note: A motion may be amended, and the amendment to the motion may be amended, but no further amendments may be added. If more amendments are needed, the motion was so badly phrased at first that the chairman should have helped rephrase it at the beginning. It may be better to start with a new motion. The old one can be withdrawn.)

Chairperson: Any other committee reports? If not, we are ready to proceed to unfinished business. (This refers to any pending business stated in the secretary's minutes.) Secretary is asked to state any pending business, and group takes appropriate action.

Chairperson: Any other unfinished business? If not, let us proceed to postponed business. (This refers to tabled motions, postponed motions, and committee referrals.) Secretary or committee members state any postponed business. This is disposed of the same way as old business.

Chairperson: If there is no other postponed business, we are ready for new business. (New business is disposed of as old business.) Normally, the program is presented at this time.

The program is presented.

Chairperson: The business for this meeting has been completed. A motion for adjournment is now in order. Motion made and seconded.

Chairperson: It has been moved and seconded that this meeting be adjourned. All those in favor of adjourning please say "aye"; opposed, "no." Never say "All those

opposed say 'aye'." Opposed voting must be negative. The motion is carried, and this meeting stands adjourned.

What are some ways to carry out the foregoing agenda? Remember that only one main motion may be on the floor at any one time, but higher-ranking motions may take priority. These higher-ranking motions are taken care of before returning to the main motion. This means that several motions may be on the floor at any one time provided they were made in ascending (proper) order, but that the most recent motion must be disposed of first. One other point before listing the various types of motions is to suggest how motions may be changed. A motion may be amended, or changed, by (1) inserting, (2) striking out, or (3) striking out and inserting words in the original motion.

Kinds of Motions

Table 2 contains the five kinds of motions in ascending order, starting with the main motion on the bottom and progressing up through the privileged motions.

1. A main motion introduces an action to the assembly for its consideration. It is always debatable and amendable, and it ranks lowest in priority.
2. A subsidiary motion is applied to other motions, normally a main motion, to alter, postpone, or temporarily dispose of said motions. Subsidiary motions may be called the middle motions as they rank in priority between the main and privileged motions.
3. An incidental motion is used when conducting business. Such a motion must be disposed of before action can be taken on the motion out of which the incidental motion arose. Incidental motions have no order of precedence within themselves. This is one aspect peculiar to these motions that makes them different from all other motions. However, each incidental motion must be disposed of before another incidental motion can be made. Incidental motions include closing nominations, rising a point of order, or selecting a method of voting.
4. A renewal motion lets the assembly bring back to the floor a previous motion for reconsideration. Examples: to take from the table; to reconsider.
5. A privileged motion refers to the action of the assembly as to a whole. These motions out-rank all other motions; however, fix time to adjourn, and to take a recess are privileged only when other motions are pending. Examples: take a recess, raise question of privilege, call for orders of the day, and adjournment.

Remember, any motion which is made while no other business is on the floor is a main motion. Subsidiary motions may be applied to it in order of their precedence. The higher priority motions, such as privileged, renewal, incidental, and subsidiary, must always be disposed of in order of priority before voting on the main motion.

Adapted from *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide* by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

The Leader's Responsibility

The leader must remember that any action he or she takes is subject to appeal by the assembly. However, the leader does have the following authority.

A leader should:

- decide the order to recognize speakers.
- refuse to recognize speakers who do not have the best interests of the assembly in their statements.
- keep speakers within the rules of the assembly.
- enforce the code of good behavior and common courtesy.

A leader can:

- appoint committees.
- decide points of order.
- vote to make or break a tie.

A leader should not:

- influence a vote but remain neutral.
- make the meeting a "one-person" show.
- infringe upon any member's rights as defined in the constitution and bylaws.
- lose his or her temper.
- try to show off parliamentary knowledge or orating ability.

See *The Leader's Own Evaluation* in Table 3 to test your leadership skills.

Agenda or Order of Business

Your organization may follow a regular opening ceremony. However, most organizations follow the general agenda suggested here. Similar agendas may be found in books, pamphlets, bulletins, and organizational guides.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Roll call (may be omitted if desired).
3. Minutes of previous meeting.
4. Officers' reports.
 - President
 - Vice president (may not have regular report)
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary (corresponding secretary will give report here)
- Standing committee reports.
- These reports may be combined into committee reports. If combined, reports should be asked for in this order. Special committee reports.

- Unfinished business. Many chairmen often combine these into old business. Your knowledge of your group can aid you in making the decision as to which term(s) to use for your organization's agenda.
- Postponed business.
- New business.
- Adjournments.

Adapted from *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide* by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

The Member's Job

Know Your Group

The member's first job is to know something about his or her organization. Who are the people? Why do they have an organization? What does the group do?

Who Are the People?

- Who makes up your group? What about them? Are they the elite? The common folk? The workmen? Farmers? Housewives? High school or elementary school youth?
- How stable is the group? How much turnover in membership occurs? How are new members admitted?
- Are there cliques whose members have different purposes from those of the main group?

Why Have a Group?

- What is the purpose of the group? To better farming? To improve schools? To make better homemakers? To provide playgrounds for youth?
- Is the group's purpose important to you? What does the group mean to other members? Is it important to them? In what ways is it important?

What Does the Group Do?

- What are the activities and programs of the group? Its programs over the years reflect the depth of meaning and achievement that its members have.
- What are the customary working procedures of this group? A mature group has a background of experience built over past activity.
- What's the relationship of this group to its parent organization? Is it a part of a larger movement?
- In what way does this organization cooperate with other groups in the community?

Understanding How Your Group Works

Many groups operate as though leadership is the sole responsibility of one person who has to exercise it alone. Evidence, however, proves that a group is usually stronger if many members perform leadership jobs. At times, one member may initiate ideas, another may clarify, another may compromise, another may summarize, and so on. In a mature group no single person feels entirely responsible

for the direction of the discussion or the success of the program. Thus, in a given action every member may be a "leader" at some point by performing in a leadership role.

Does this objective mean that everybody becomes a prima donna? No! This type of leadership demands responsibility of every member, but there is still a need for some person or persons to coordinate the total program.

Here are a few group-building functions necessary to maintain and build the organization:

- Facilitating—helping so everyone can be heard.
- Listening—accepting ideas of others.
- Encouraging—being friendly, praising others, accepting contributions of others.
- Harmonizing—finding a common ground for agreement.
- Relieving tension—reducing negative feelings or diverting attention from unpleasant to pleasant matters.
- Setting standards—expressing standards of performance, or codes of conduct.

Here are some task functions necessary if the organization is to reach its goals:

- Initiating ideas.
- Giving information.
- Expressing opinion.
- Seeking information—asking questions or clarifying ideas.
- Elaborating—building on a previous comment or act; giving examples.
- Steering—helping to keep the group on the main item of concern.
- Coordinating, testing, summarizing.

There are times when some members respond negatively. Some negative roles commonly noticed are: blocking or delaying action, aggressively attacking other members, seeking recognition by excessive talking, grabbing unwarranted authority, and/or acting indifferently. A productive member recognizes such negative behavior and tries to counteract it.

Participate in Meetings

A good meeting has its beginnings long before the group assembles, and it carries its influence long afterwards. Are you a part of the "before and after" as well as the actual assembly? The productive member prepares for the meeting, participates in the meeting, and follows through on subsequent business.

Prepare Before the Meeting

Learn what the meeting will include.

- Is it to give knowledge or understanding?

- Is it to entertain?
- Is it to get action on a project or problem?
- Or, is it a combination of these purposes?

Understand something about the subject.

- Prepare to take some part in the meeting.
- Note the time and place.
- Attend to any pre-meeting tasks expected of you.

Participate at the Meeting

- Listen, pay attention and try to understand the topic.
- Consider objectively the ideas and contributions of others.
- Ask for information on points that are not clear.
- Encourage others—make it easy for them to participate.
- Express your own ideas on the problem, business, or motion.
- Vote when motions are before the group.
- Help the chairperson, if necessary, to keep the group working on the problem.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be on time.

After the Meeting, Follow Through

Every group is made up of many interrelated actions. Therefore, each member must do his or her own special job and communicate with other members so that group effort may be an integrated whole. Following through is necessary for success.

- Check up—consider what was good about the meeting and why.
- Discuss the meeting with other members.
- Pass suggestions on to officers.
- Publicize—tell others about it.
- Support actions decided upon at the meeting.
- Carry out responsibilities assigned to you.

Serve on Committees

Part of the member's job is to serve the organization as a committee person, board member, member of a task force, or project leader. These assignments should not be taken lightly. Here are a few guidelines to help you do a better job:

- Accept committee membership if you feel the job is important, if you have time, and if you are capable of contributing.
- Attend committee meetings.
- Understand your assignment and contribute to the meetings.
- Help other committee members to contribute.
- Try to understand all viewpoints.
- Help make committee decisions.
- Support decisions made.
- Work on any committee jobs you are expected to do.

See Table 4 to test yourself on a few things a good organization member does and Table 5 to evaluate what was good about the meeting.

Adapted from *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide* by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.

Acknowledgement

Original article written by Elizabeth B. Bolton, professor emeritus, UF/IFAS Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences.

References

- Heasley, D. K. 1970. *4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide*. Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.
- Hall, B. n.d. *Pocket Guide to Parliamentary Procedure*. University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Research & Extension.
<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/publications/pdf/MP475.pdf>

Table 1. Common Parliamentary Procedure. It might be wise to have a complete parliamentary reference available for special times, but usually only an average or common knowledge will be needed. The following chart shows the more commonly used motions together with reasons for using them. The arrangement of these more common motions are as they might occur in descending order in a regular meeting.

Why Use the Motion	Kind of Motion	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required
Main Motion					
1. To introduce a new item of business.	Main motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Subsidiary Motions					
2. To modify or change motion under discussion.	Amend the motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
3. To place the item of business in the hands of a committee.	Refer to a committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
4. To delay action on the item of business.	Postpone to a set time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
5. To close debate immediately.	Limit or close debate	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
6. To temporarily set aside an item of business.	Lay on table	Yes	No	No	Majority
Privileged Motions					
7. To obtain immediate action in an emergency.	Raise question of privilege	No	No	No	None
8. To take an intermission or interrupt a meeting.	Recess	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
9. To end a meeting.	Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adapted from <i>Pocket Guide to Parliamentary Procedure</i> by Bobby Hall, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Research and Extension, n.d.					

Table 2. Parliamentary Procedure. The following chart contains these five kinds of motions in ascending order, starting with the main motion on the bottom and progressing up through the privileged motions.

Motion	Second Required	Vote Required	Amendable	Debatable	Interrupt Speaker
5. Privileged					
Fix time at which to adjourn	Yes	Majority	Yes	No	No
Adjourn	Yes	Majority	No	No	No
Take a recess	Yes	Majority	Yes	No	No
Raise question of privilege	No	Chair decides	No	No	Yes
Call for orders of the day	No	Chair decides	No	No	Yes
4. Renewal					
Take from the table	Yes	Majority	No	No	No
Reconsider	Yes	Majority	No	Yes	Yes
Rescind, repeal	Yes	Two-thirds	Yes	Yes	No

Motion	Second Required	Vote Required	Amendable	Debatable	Interrupt Speaker
3. Incidental					
Appeal	Yes	Majority	No	Yes	Yes
Division of Assembly	No	Chair	No	No	No
Division of Question	No	Majority	Yes	No	No
Withdraw a motion	No	Majority	No	No	No
Point of order	No	Chair	No	No	Yes
Suspend rules	Yes	Two-thirds	No	No	No
Object to consideration	No	Two-thirds	No	No	Yes
Parliamentary inquiry	No	Chair	No	No	Yes
2. Subsidiary					
Lay on the table	Yes	Majority	No	No	No
Previous question (end debate)	Yes	Two-thirds	No	No	No
Limit or extend debate	Yes	Two-thirds	Yes	No	No
Postpone to set time	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No
Refer or commit to committee	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No
Amend the amendment	Yes	Majority	No	Yes	No
Amend the motion	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No
Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Majority	No	Yes	No
1. Main Motion	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No

Adapted from *Pocket Guide to Parliamentary Procedure* by Bobby Hall, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Research and Extension, n.d.

Table 3. The Leader's Own Evaluation. Certain qualities in a leader promote a well-organized meeting. Here are a few for you to test yourself with. Score 3 points for each "always," 2 for "sometimes," and 1 for "never." A good discussion leader will score 20 to 30 points.

Do I get all possible information to the members before the meeting?						
		Always		Sometimes		Never
Have I checked arrangements for the meeting, such as heat, lighting, seating, etc.?						
		Always		Sometimes		Never
Do I have an agenda worked out, estimating the time likely to be required for each segment?						
		Always		Sometimes		Never
Am I tolerant of members with whom I disagree?						
		Always		Sometimes		Never
Do I use questions during the discussion to encourage participation?						
		Always		Sometimes		Never
Can I handle an argument without getting personally involved?						
		Always		Sometimes		Never
Do I try to get the less vocal members to participate?						
		Always		Sometimes		Never

Am I aware of the importance of adequate information for a discussion?							
		Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I come to meetings prepared for a clear introduction of the subject aimed at clarifying goals and promoting informality?							
		Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I listen to detect when members are in agreement on an issue or when they are getting off the subject?							
		Always		Sometimes		Never	
Adapted from <i>4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide</i> by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.							

Table 4. Test Yourself. Here are a few things a good organization member does. Score yourself 3 points for each “nearly always,” 2 for each “sometimes,” and 1 for each “never.” A good member will score 20 to 30 points.

Do I know and believe in the purposes of my organization?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I share responsibilities with my group?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I attend meetings?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I prepare for meetings by learning what they are about?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
When at meetings, do I help others to participate?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I express my ideas at meetings?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I support decisions made, even though they may not be those I have expressed?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I pass suggestions on to officers?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I promote the organization by telling others about it?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do I serve on committees or projects when asked to serve?							
		Nearly Always		Sometimes		Never	
				My Score			

Table 5. Evaluate the Meeting. After the meeting—Evaluate! What was good about the meeting? What was poor? How could it have been improved? Here are a few questions you might ask yourself after the meeting. Someone in the audience might help you answer these:

GOALS: Were the goals clear to the audience?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Were they what the audience wanted?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	

Did anyone in the audience help set them up?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
THE TOPIC: Was it timely and important?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Was it what the audience wanted?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
THE MESSAGE: Did it get attention?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Were goals reached?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Was there provision for audience participation?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Did the audience know what was expected of them?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Was there adequate discussion?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
ARRANGEMENTS: Were there adequate activities for early comers?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Were distractions eliminated?							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Were physical facilities satisfactory? (Light, heat, ventilation, acoustics)							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
Were visual aids effective? (Slides, charts, flannelboard, etc.)							
		Good		Fair		Poor	
What can be done to improve future meetings?							
Adapted from <i>4-H Leadership Project: Adult Leader Guide</i> by Daryl K. Heasley, 1970, Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, Extension Service.							

¹ This document is FCS9062, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension. First publication date September 1986. Revised January 2009, January 2012, June 2015, and July 2025. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.

² Muthusami Kumaran, Ph.D., associate professor, nonprofit management and community organizations, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office. U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Andra Johnson, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.