Name: _____ Date: _____

A Motion on the Floor

Circle group

Picture a club with thirty members. They want to plan a fundraiser. One person wants a car wash. Another wants a bake sale. A third talks about last week's field trip. Without a plan, the meeting is just noise. So groups use rules of order. These are steps that help everyone be heard and still get work done.

A man named Henry Robert wrote the best known guide. He was an army officer. He wrote it in the 1870s after a church meeting fell apart. Clubs, school boards, and city councils still use his book.

First, a member makes a motion. A motion is a plan for the group to act on. Then another member must second it. That means two people want it discussed. Then the chair, who leads the meeting, tells the whole group the motion. Members talk about it one at a time. Then they vote. The majority wins.

Each step has a reason. A second stops the group from wasting time on an idea only one person likes. One motion at a time keeps the talk on track. The vote lets the majority decide. The debate lets the minority be heard first.

The steps can feel slow. But they are a fair way to disagree without a fight.

Questions

1. What is a motion?

_____

_____

2. What must happen before a motion can be discussed?

_____

_____

3. Who wrote the best known guide to rules of order?

_____

_____

4. Why does a group need a second for every motion?

_____

_____

5. How do the rules help people who disagree with the majority?

_____

_____

6. What does the chair do once a motion is seconded?

_____

_____

Words to know

motion: a formal proposal that a group takes some action
second: to agree that a proposal should be discussed
chair: the person who leads a meeting
majority: more than half of the people who vote
minority: the smaller group that does not agree with the majority

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

A Motion on the Floor

Triangle group

Picture a student club of thirty members trying to plan a fundraiser. One person wants a car wash, another suggests a bake sale, and a third starts talking about last week's field trip. Without a system, the meeting would dissolve into noise. Groups have long solved this problem with rules of order, a set of steps that helps everyone be heard while still getting things done.

The most famous guide was written by an army officer named Henry Robert, who published it in the 1870s after watching a church meeting fall apart. His book is still used by clubs, school boards, and city councils.

The process begins when a member makes a motion, which is simply a proposal for the group to act. A different member must second the motion, meaning that at least two people want it discussed. Only then does the chair, the person leading the meeting, state the motion to the whole group. Members debate it one at a time, each waiting to be recognized, and then they vote. A majority decides the result.

Each step has a purpose. Requiring a second prevents the group from wasting time on an idea only one person likes. Debating one motion at a time keeps the discussion focused. Voting gives the majority the power to decide, while the debate protects the right of the minority to be heard before the decision is made.

These steps may feel slow at first, but they are a fair way for a group to disagree without a fight. Learning them is a skill that many adults use in their communities.

Questions

1. What is a motion?

_____

_____

2. What must happen after a motion is made before it can be discussed?

_____

_____

3. Who wrote the famous guide to rules of order?

_____

_____

4. Why does a group require a second for each motion?

_____

_____

5. How do the rules protect people who disagree with the majority?

_____

_____

6. What does the chair do after a motion is seconded?

_____

_____

Words to know

motion: a formal proposal that a group takes some action
second: to agree that a proposal should be discussed
chair: the person who leads a meeting
majority: more than half of the people who vote
minority: the smaller group that does not agree with the majority

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

A Motion on the Floor

Square group

Imagine a student club of thirty members attempting to organize a fundraiser. One member advocates a car wash, another proposes a bake sale, and a third begins reminiscing about last week's field trip. Lacking a system, the meeting would quickly dissolve into confusion. Over the centuries, groups have resolved this predicament by adopting rules of order, a set of procedures that allows everyone to be heard while still permitting the group to accomplish its work.

The most celebrated guide was composed by an army officer named Henry Robert, who published it in the 1870s after witnessing a church meeting collapse into disorder. His book remains in use among clubs, school boards, and city councils to this day.

The procedure begins when a member makes a motion, which is simply a proposal for the group to act upon. A different member must then second the motion, which signifies that at least two people wish to have it considered. Only at that point does the chair, the person presiding over the meeting, state the motion to the entire group. Members debate it one at a time, each waiting to be formally recognized, and afterward they vote. A majority determines the outcome.

Every step serves a particular purpose. Requiring a second prevents the group from squandering time on an idea that only one person favors. Debating a single motion at a time keeps the discussion focused. Voting grants the majority the authority to decide, whereas the debate safeguards the right of the minority to be heard before the decision is finalized.

These steps may seem slow at first, yet they offer a fair way for a group to disagree without quarreling, and learning them is a skill that many adults rely on throughout their communities.

Questions

1. What is a motion?

_____

_____

2. What must occur after a motion is made before it can be debated?

_____

_____

3. Who composed the celebrated guide to rules of order?

_____

_____

4. Why does a group require a second for each motion?

_____

_____

5. In what way do the rules safeguard people who disagree with the majority?

_____

_____

6. What does the chair do after a motion has been seconded?

_____

_____

Words to know

motion: a formal proposal that a group takes some action
second: to agree that a proposal should be discussed
chair: the person who leads a meeting
majority: more than half of the people who vote
minority: the smaller group that does not agree with the majority

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: A Motion on the Floor

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: A Motion on the Floor

Easier · 212 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.7

1. A plan or proposal for the group to act on.
2. Another member must second it.
3. Henry Robert, an army officer, in the 1870s.
4. So it does not waste time on an idea that only one person wants.
5. Everyone gets to talk and be heard before the vote.
6. Tells the whole group the motion so it can be discussed.

Triangle: A Motion on the Floor

This passage · 266 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.2

1. A proposal for the group to take action.
2. Another member must second it.
3. Henry Robert, an army officer, in the 1870s.
4. To avoid wasting time on an idea that only one person wants.
5. Everyone gets to debate and be heard before the vote is taken.
6. States the motion to the whole group so it can be debated.

Square: A Motion on the Floor

Harder · 292 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 10.5

1. A proposal for the group to take action.
2. Another member must second it.
3. Henry Robert, an army officer, who published it in the 1870s.
4. To keep the group from squandering time on an idea that only one person favors.
5. Everyone may debate and be heard before the vote is finalized.
6. States the motion to the entire group so that it can be debated.