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# WRITING CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

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## CONSTITUTION OUTLINE

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**A good constitution is a statement outlining the basic principles agreed to by the members of your organization. It established the structure and purposes of the organization, the methods of selecting members and officers, and the powers and responsibilities of each. Your constitution will be organized in a variation of an outline form; you may find it helpful to divide the outline into articles and sections, but it does not need to follow that format.**

### ARTICLE I: INTRODUCTION

- I. Name of the organization
- II. General purpose/goal of the organization

### ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

- I. Who is eligible to be a member of your organization?
- II. How are the members selected? (i.e.: open to all, application, ballot, etc.)
- III. Qualifications and responsibilities- of the members

### ARTICLE III: EXECUTIVE BOARD/OFFICERS

- I. What are the different positions?
- II. Who is eligible for each position?
- III. Qualifications and responsibilities of each position
- IV. What is that process for selecting the officers? (i.e.: election, application, appointment, etc.)
- V. How are the officers removed from office if necessary?
- VI. How are the vacant positions filled if necessary?

### ARTICLE IV: ADVISOR

- I. Who is it? (not a specific name)
- II. How is the adviser chosen? (i.e.: part of a position for an FPS, selected by members)
- III. Qualifications and responsibilities of the adviser

### ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

- I. How often does the organization meet?
- II. Who presides over the meeting/what happens?
- III. Who must attend?

### ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- I. What is the process for offering an amendment?
  - II. How is the amendment ratified (i.e.:  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority)
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## BY-LAWS OUTLINE

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### SECTION 1: MEMBERSHIP

Provide more details of members' rights and duties. Include information on expulsion and resignation procedures. Give information on honorary membership. List and refer to any national or regional affiliation information regarding membership requirements.

### SECTION 2: FEES

State initiation fees and/or annual dues, if any. Include consequences of delinquency in payment.

### SECTION 3: ELECTIONS

Outline the nomination process, when officer elections shall take place (annually, in the month of \_\_\_), the voting process (simple majority, absentee ballots, secret ballots).

### SECTION 4: MEETINGS

Provide information on the method of running meetings (i.e. "Robert's Rules of Order"). Outline expectancies of attendance at meetings.

### SECTION 5: QUORUM

State the minimum number of people to constitute a quorum. A quorum is the minimum number needed to make a decision on behalf of the organization.

### SECTION 6: AMENDMENT OF THE BY-LAWS.

Generally by-laws may be amended by a majority vote.

Please note that these are simple guidelines. If your organization is affiliated with a national chapter you may want to consult the overarching constitution and by-laws for additional assistance.

Organizations are free to research outside resources for additional tips and ideas.