Quick Overview: Robert's Rules of Order (RRO), the well-known guide to fair procedures, makes the point that an election by a mere plurality may produce an unrepresentative result. It recommends voting methods that can determine a majority winner when electing single-seat offices. An instant runoff voting, called "preferential voting," is the recommended procedure.

On the preferential ballot—for each office to be filled or multiple-choice question to be decided—the voter is asked to indicate the order in which he prefers all the candidates or propositions, placing the numeral 1 beside his first preference, the numeral 2 beside his second preference, and so on for every possible choice. In counting the votes for a given office or question, the ballots are arranged in piles according to the indicated first preferences—one pile for each candidate or proposition. The number of ballots in each pile is then recorded for the tellers' report. These piles remain identified with the names of the same candidates or propositions throughout the counting procedure until there is a majority or all but one are eliminated.

If more than half of the ballots show one candidate or proposition indicated as the first choice, that choice has a majority in the ordinary sense and the candidate is elected or the proposition is decided upon. But if there is no such majority, candidates or propositions are eliminated one by one, beginning with the least popular, until one prevails as the majority.

Preferential Voting Procedures

NOTE: The entire procedure requires "teams" of 2 vote counters (tellers)

Set-up

1. Remove ballots from each of the envelopes.
2. Collect the envelopes.
3. Write a designated number on the back of each envelope's ballots which identifies the ballots by region. (This is done so that in case of a grievance being filed questioning the results, the ballots can be re-counted by region.)
4. All of the ballots will then be collected, divided into generally equally into as many sets as there are teller teams. One set is distributed to each team. As a result, ballots in each set will be from various regions.
5. Complete rounds of counting are conducted for each office one at a time.

6.

NOTE: The "rounds" as described below occur for each separate office in the election

Round 1

1. Separate all of the ballots according to the 1st choice on each ballot.
2. Set aside any ballots improperly filled out *for that office only*. (The same ballot may be valid for other offices.)
3. The result will be a set of ballots for each candidate where he/she was the 1st choice. (See *Scenario 1*)
4. Have your partner confirm the accurate separation of the ballots.
5. Count the number of 1st choice ballots for each candidate.
6. Indicate on the tally sheet the number of 1st choice ballots for each candidate.
7. Have your partner recount to confirm the number of 1st choice ballots for each candidate.
8. The ballot counting director will collect the counts from each teams set of ballots.
9. If the number of a candidate's 1st choice ballot cards is equal to or greater than a majority (50% of the eligible ballots cast + 1), then he/she is the winner.
10. If no candidate has received a majority, then the vote counting process continues in Round 2.

Scenario 1: The ballots for presidential candidates Tom, Dick, Harry, and Jane have been separated into 4 stacks according to each ballot's 1st choice. All ballots where Tom is the 1st choice candidate are in one stack, where Dick is the 1st choice candidate in another, and so on. When the ballots are counted, the following are the results.

Tom	Dick	Harry	Jane
191	175	154	180

There are 720 eligible delegates. When ballots were counted for president, 20 were removed because they were not completed according to instructions, leaving 700 valid votes cast for president. This means that the number of votes needed for a majority is 351 (50% of valid ballots + 1). Although Tom has the most 1st choice ballots, he does not have a majority, so the counting must go to Round 2.

Round 2

1. In Round 2, the ballot cards of the candidate receiving the *fewest* 1st choice votes in Round 1 are divided among the remaining candidates *according to the ballot's next available preferred choice.* (In Round 2, it will always be the 2nd preferred choice on the ballots of the 1st choice candidate that received the fewest votes in Round 1.)
2. The additional votes for the remaining candidates are counted and then added to the original number of 1st choice ballots of each candidate. (See *Scenario 2*)
3. The results are again collected by the ballot counting director.
4. If the number of ballots now in a candidate's stack is equal to or greater than a majority (50% of the eligible ballots cast + 1), then he/she is the winner.
5. If none of the remaining candidates has received a majority, then the vote counting process continues to Round 3.

Scenario 2: Since Harry received the fewest number of votes in Round 1, the 154 ballots in his stack (the ballots where he was 1st choice) are redistributed to whomever is listed on each ballot as 2nd choice. Tom was listed as 2nd choice on 50, Dick on 50, and Jane on. 4 of the 150 ballots were set aside because there was no 2nd choice. The resulting totals for the remaining 3 candidates are below.

Tom	Dick	Harry	Jane
191+50=241	175+50=225	X	180+50=230

Because 4 were set aside, there are now 696 valid ballots. This means that the number of votes needed is 349 (50% of valid ballots + 1). Although Tom is still ahead, no one has a majority yet, so we must proceed to a 3rd round.

Round 3

6. In Round 3, the ballots of the candidate receiving the fewest votes in Round 2 are divided among the remaining candidates *according to the ballot's next available preferred choice*. Be careful: some ballots' 2nd choice may no longer be available, having already been eliminated.
7. The additional votes for the remaining candidates are counted then added to the number of ballots in Round 2. (See *Scenario 3*)
8. If the number of ballots now in the leading candidate's stack is equal to or greater than a majority (50% of the eligible ballots cast + 1), then he/she is the winner.
9. If none of the remaining candidates has received a majority, then the vote counting process continues to another round, but this would only occur if there were more than 4 original candidates.

Scenario 3: Since Dick received the fewest number of votes in Round 2, his 225 votes are redistributed to whomever is listed on each ballot as the next choice, and is still in the running. The 175 indicating Dick as 1st choice will be given to the ballot's 2nd choice, unless the 2nd choice is Harry, in which case that ballot goes to the 3rd choice indicated. The 50 indicating Dick as the 2nd choice will go to the 3rd choice candidate. Of the 225, Tom got 100 and Jane got 120 and 5 were set aside because they did not have a next choice. The resulting totals for the remaining 2 candidates are below.

Tom	Dick	Harry	Jane
241+100=341	X	X	230+120=350

Because 5 more were set aside, there are now 691 valid ballots. This means that the minimum number of votes needed to win is 347 (50% of valid ballots + 1…rounded up). Jane wins with 350.