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Parliamentary Motions in India

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Parliamentary Motions in India

Parliament does more than pass laws. It also checks the government, and motions are its main tools for that job. A motion can force a debate, demand an answer, or even bring down a government.

No-confidenceleave needs at least 50 members standing. The debate comes within 10 days.

Adjournmentit puts aside normal work to discuss one urgent matter. The Speaker must agree.

Cut motions Policy Cut is Re 1. Economy Cut is a set sum. Token Cut is Rs 100.

Removing the Speaker14 days' notice, and a majority of all the then members.

Trust votes28 no-confidence and 11 confidence motions, up to August 2023.

Only one fall Morarji Desai resigned in 1979 before the vote.

Understand the words

1 What is a parliamentary motion?

A **motion** is a formal proposal made by a member in the House. It asks the House to do something, order something, or give its view on a matter.

Think of a class meeting. A student says, "I propose a trip on Friday." That is a motion, and the class then decides.

Why does Parliament need motions?

Motions let Parliament debate, censure, investigate and control the government. They are the main tools for holding ministers to account between elections.

A general rule in the Lok Sabha makes this plain. A matter of general public interest is discussed only on a motion. That motion needs the **Speaker's consent** (Rule 184).

How must a motion be written?

Notice of a motion goes in writing to the Secretary-General (Rule 185). The motion must also pass a few tests (Rule 186):

- **One issue:** it must raise substantially one definite issue.
- **Fresh matter:** it must deal with a matter of recent occurrence.

Where can motions be moved?

The no-confidence motion can be moved only in the **Lok Sabha**.

Sources: sansad.in

2 How does a no-confidence motion bring down a government?

It tests whether the government still has a majority in the Lok Sabha. If a majority backs the motion, the government resigns.

Where does the power come from?

It comes from **Article 75(3)**. This says the Council of Ministers is **collectively responsible** to the House of the People. “Collectively” means the ministers stand or fall together.

The House of the People is the Lok Sabha. So only the Lok Sabha can remove a ministry this way.

What are the steps? (Rule 198)

The rules call it a “motion expressing want of confidence in the Council of Ministers”. The steps are short and strict.

1. **Notice:** the member gives written notice to the Secretary-General by 10.00 hours that day.
2. **Late notice:** a notice after 10.00 hours counts as received at 10.00 hours on the next sitting day.
3. **Leave:** the member asks for leave when the Speaker calls.
4. **Standing count:** the Speaker reads the motion out. Members who support it rise in their places.
5. **Fifty members:** leave is granted if not less than fifty members rise.
6. **Date:** the Speaker fixes a day within ten days.
7. **Vote:** at the end, the Speaker puts every question needed to decide the motion.

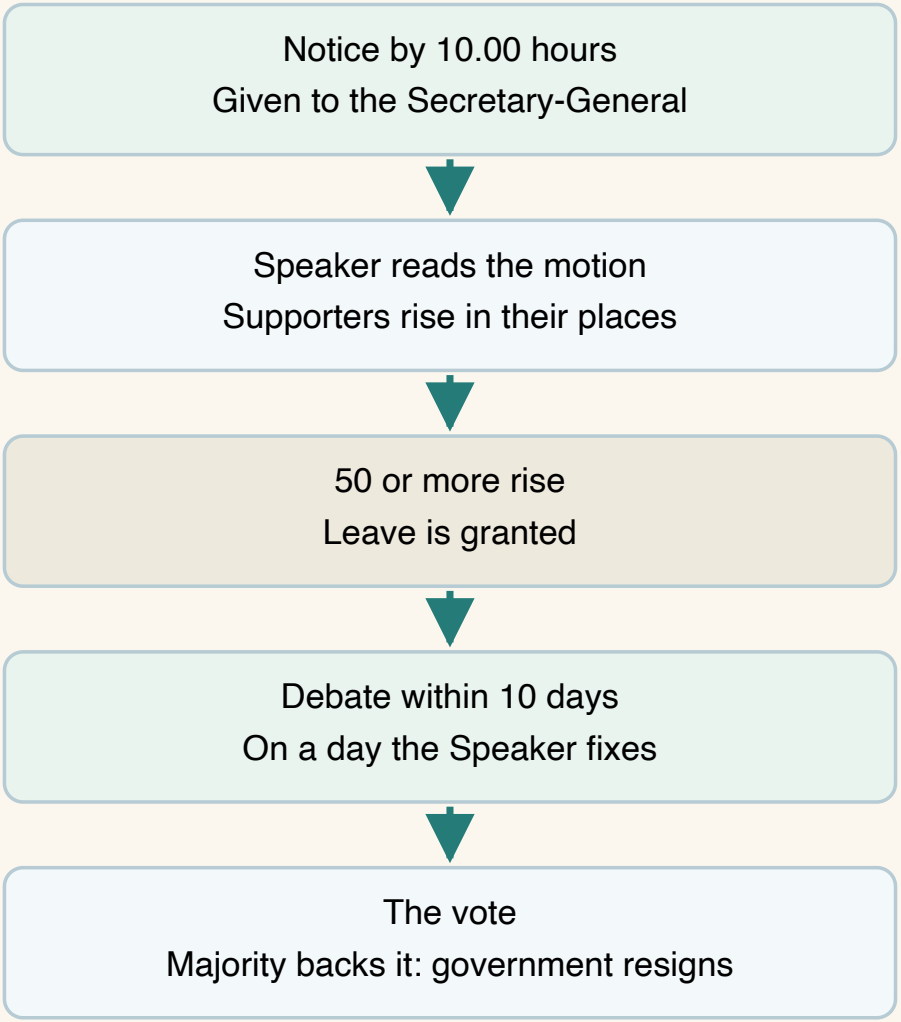


Illustration: The Rule 198 steps from card 2, in order.

Is the fifty-member support a list of signatures?

No. It is a common mistake. The support is shown by members **standing in the House**. It is not a count of names on paper.

The limit was lower at first. In 1952 the rules asked for only 30 members. Today the limit is 50.

What happens if the motion passes?

The government resigns. The same is true if the House rejects a **confidence motion**. A confidence motion is the reverse case. Here the government itself asks the House to show it still has support.

Some books say a passed motion “dissolves” the Council of Ministers. That is loose wording. The government resigns because it has lost the House.

Why is it called the strongest weapon?

It is often called the most powerful weapon for holding the government to account. But there is a catch. While one party or coalition holds a majority, the power to dismiss the government is more fiction than fact.

> **Quick check 1.** Leave for a no-confidence motion is granted when at least 50 members rise in their places. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in; sansad.in

Sources: prsindia.org

Sources: prsindia.org

Sources: ncert.nic.in

3 How is a censure motion different from a no-confidence motion?

The difference is the target. A **no-confidence motion** is against the whole Council of Ministers. A **censure motion** is aimed at a specific policy or minister.

What do the textbooks say about each?

Exam books describe the two like this:

- **No-confidence:** against the whole ministry. It need not state reasons. If it passes, the government resigns.
- **Censure:** against one policy or minister. It must state reasons. It does not necessarily force resignation.
- **House:** both are moved only in the Lok Sabha, not the Rajya Sabha.

Is censure written into the rules?

Not in the same way. The Lok Sabha rulebook has a full chapter on the no-confidence motion. It has no rule on a censure motion. So treat the censure points above as textbook practice, not as rule text.

A simple way to remember it: no-confidence asks “Should this government go?” Censure asks “Was this act wrong?”

> **Quick check 2.** The Lok Sabha rulebook has a separate rule that sets out the censure motion. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: sansad.in

Daily tools of control

4 How does an adjournment motion stop normal business?

It lets the House set aside its planned work to discuss one urgent matter. The motion is a way to start that debate, not to send members home.

What can it be used for?

It discusses a **definite matter of urgent public importance**. It needs the **Speaker's consent** (Rule 56). The rules add more limits (Rule 58):

- **One at a time:** only one such motion can be made at a sitting.
- **One matter:** only one matter can be discussed on it.
- **Recent and national:** the matter must be recent and involve the responsibility of the Government of India.
- **Not privilege:** it cannot raise a question of privilege.
- **Not in court:** it cannot cover a matter that a court is deciding.

How is notice given?

Notice goes to the Secretary-General by 10.00 hours on the day it is to be moved (Rule 57).

What if members object?

Then the House counts heads. At least fifty members must rise for leave to be granted (Rule 60).

Does the House actually adjourn?

Not at once. Some books say the House is “adjourned to take up the urgent matter”. In fact, the words “that the House do now adjourn” are only the vehicle for the debate.

- **Start time:** the motion is taken up at 16.00 hours, or earlier if the Speaker directs (Rule 61).
- **End time:** the Speaker may put the question at 18.30 hours (Rule 62).
- **Shortest debate:** the question may also be put after at least two hours and thirty minutes of debate.

It is a serious check on the government. That is why the rules guard it so closely.

Does the Rajya Sabha have one?

The Rajya Sabha rulebook has no chapter titled adjournment motion. The Lok Sabha rulebook does. Exams often test this gap.

> **Quick check 3.** Two adjournment motions can be made at the same sitting of the Lok Sabha. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: sansad.in; cms.rajyasabha.nic.in

5 What are Question Hour, Zero Hour and Calling Attention?

They are daily tools to make ministers answer. Question Hour is set by the rules. Zero Hour is a practice. Calling Attention is a short, rule-based alert.

What is Question Hour?

Question Hour is the first hour of every sitting. It is kept for questions, unless the Speaker directs otherwise (Rule 32). Members ask ministers questions. **Starred questions** get oral answers in the House.

Members must give at least fifteen clear days' notice of a question (Rule 33). Question Hour is perhaps the most effective way of keeping watch on the government.

What is Zero Hour?

Zero Hour is an informal time after Question Hour. Members raise matters they think important. Ministers are not bound to reply.

So remember the pair. Question Hour is a formal tool. Zero Hour is an informal one.

What is Calling Attention?

It is a quick alert to a minister (Rule 197). With the Speaker's permission, a member draws a minister's attention to a matter of urgent public importance.

- **Reply:** the minister may make a brief statement or ask for time.
- **No debate:** there is no debate on that statement. Members may only ask questions to make things clear.
- **Limit:** a member cannot give more than two such notices for one sitting.
- **Rajya Sabha:** it has its own calling attention rule, Rule 180.

Sources: sansad.in

Sources: ncert.nic.in

Sources: cms.rajyasabha.nic.in

Money, rules and removal

6 How do cut motions control government spending?

They let the Lok Sabha reduce or reject a spending request. These requests are called **demands for grants**. A cut motion proposes to cut one of them.

What does the Constitution say?

Article 113 sets the rules for spending estimates.

- **Lok Sabha only:** demands for grants go to the House of the People only (Article 113(2)).
- **Three choices:** that House can assent, refuse to assent, or assent with a reduction of the amount.
- **Charged spending:** spending charged on the Consolidated Fund is not put to a vote. Both Houses may still discuss it (Article 113(1)).
- **President first:** no demand for a grant can be made without the President's recommendation (Article 113(3)).

What are the three cut motions? (Rule 209)

Cut motion	What it asks	Why it is used
Disapproval of Policy Cut	Reduce the demand to Re 1	To show disapproval of the policy behind it
Economy Cut	Reduce the demand by a specified amount	To debate how money can be saved

Cut motion	What it asks	Why it is used
Token Cut	Reduce the demand by Rs 100	To air one specific grievance

The Token Cut is often mixed up with the Re 1 cut. Many books get this wrong. The **Re 1 cut is the Policy Cut**. The **Token Cut is Rs 100**.

A Token Cut grievance must be within the Government of India's responsibility.

Policy Cut: reduce to Re 1
Disapproves of the policy

Economy Cut: a set amount
Debates how to save money

Token Cut: reduce by Rs 100
Airs one specific grievance

Illustration: The three Rule 209 cut motions from card 6.

What limits apply? (Rule 210)

A cut motion must relate to **one demand only**. It must also be confined to one specific matter.

Why do cut motions matter?

They are the Lok Sabha's money tool over the budget. A passed cut motion is a strong signal of disapproval. It shows the House does not back the spending plan.

> **Quick check 4.** A Token Cut asks that a demand for grant be reduced to Re 1. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in; sansad.in

7 What other motions and rules should you know?

Three more tools come up often: the privilege motion, the resolution and the rules on handling a motion.

What is a privilege motion?

It is raised when a member or minister is said to have broken a **parliamentary privilege**. A privilege is a special right that the House and its members need to work freely.

- **Consent:** a member may raise a question of privilege with the Speaker's consent (Rule 222).
- **Notice:** notice goes to the Secretary-General by 10.00 hours on the day it is raised (Rule 223).

What is a resolution?

It is a formal statement of the House's opinion. Some resolutions are only for discussion. Some books add that a resolution can have binding effect. The rules do not say so, so treat that idea with care.

Can a motion be dropped or kept alive?

Yes, within limits.

- **Withdrawal:** a member may withdraw a motion only with the leave of the House (Rule 339).
- **Prorogation:** a pending motion does not lapse just because the House is prorogued (Rule 336). To prorogue means to end a session without dissolving the House.

Each motion serves a different purpose. Together they give members many routes to hold ministers to account, beyond the daily Question Hour.

Sources: sansad.in

8 Can the same motion be moved twice in one session?

Not if it raises the same question. **Rule 338** says a motion cannot raise a question **substantially identical** to one the House has already decided in the same session.

Changing a few words does not make a question new. The test is whether the House has already decided it.

Some books say a motion “cannot be repeated once it has been moved and rejected”. That is close, but not exact. The rule is about questions the House has **decided**. It covers a passed decision too, not only a rejected one.

Why have this rule?

It stops members from blocking the House by moving the same question again and again. It keeps the House’s time focused. So parties time their big motions with care.

Quick check 5. Rule 338 bars a motion that raises a question the House has already decided in that session. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: sansad.in

9 How are the Speaker, Vice-President and President removed?

Each has a different route, written into the Constitution. News reports often call these “no-confidence motions”. In law they are removal resolutions, not trust votes on the ministry.

How is the Speaker removed?

Article 94(c) lets the Lok Sabha remove the Speaker by a resolution.

- **Majority:** it must pass by a majority of all the then members of the House.
- **Notice:** at least fourteen days’ notice of the intention to move it is needed.
- **Listing:** the leave motion goes on the list of business only after fourteen days from the notice (Rule 200).
- **Charges:** the resolution must be specific about its charges (Rule 200A).

How is the Vice-President removed?

Article 67(b) sets this route. The Rajya Sabha passes a resolution by a majority of all its then members. The Lok Sabha must then agree. Fourteen days’ notice is needed here too.

How is the President removed?

By **impeachment** under **Article 61**. Impeachment is a formal charge that can remove a President.

- **Either House:** either House can bring the charge.
- **Notice:** fourteen days' written notice, signed by one-fourth of the House's members.
- **Majority:** a two-thirds majority of the House's total membership.

Speaker: Article 94(c)
Lok Sabha; majority of all then members

Vice-President: Article 67(b)
Rajya Sabha passes; Lok Sabha agrees

President: Article 61
Either House; two-thirds of total members

All three routes
Need fourteen days of notice

Illustration: The three removal routes from card 9.

Quick check 6. A resolution to remove the Lok Sabha Speaker needs at least fourteen days' notice. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in; sansad.in

10 What does history tell us about no-confidence motions?

Many have been moved, but only one brought a government down. Even that one ended before the vote.

When did the first one come?

Neither the first nor the second Lok Sabha saw a single no-confidence motion. The first came in **1963**. **Acharya J B Kripalani** moved it against **Nehru's** government.

Which years saw the most?

From 1964 to 1975, the Lok Sabha debated 15 such motions. Three were against Shastri. Twelve were against Indira Gandhi.

Did any motion bring down a government?

Only one. In **1979**, **Y B Chavan** moved the first motion that led to a government falling. **Morarji Desai** resigned before it was put to the vote.

So no government has fallen on a lost no-confidence vote. Up to 2018, every Prime Minister facing such a motion defeated it.

What about the recent ones?

- **2003:** the motion against Vajpayee was the one before 2018.
- **2018:** that motion was the 27th in India's parliamentary history.
- **26 July 2023:** a new motion was moved. It was the first of the 17th Lok Sabha.

- **Debate delay:** it was debated 13 days after it was moved, though the rules say within 10 days.
- **10 August 2023:** the Lok Sabha defeated it in the evening.

Are trust votes becoming rarer?

Yes. Up to August 2023, there were 28 no-confidence motions and 11 confidence motions. The number of such motions has fallen over the years. The 1990s saw more confidence motions, when coalition governments had to prove their majority.

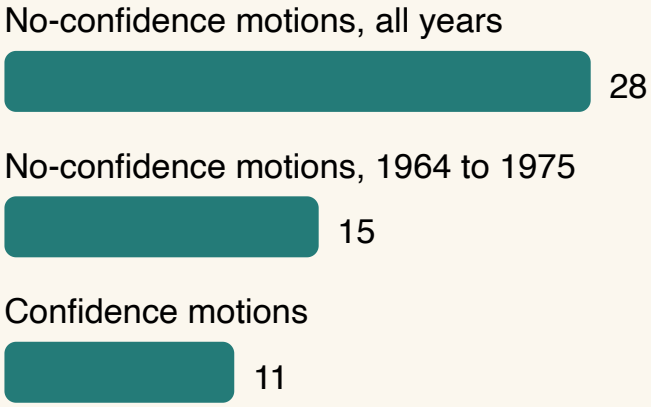


Illustration: Counts from card 10. Bars are drawn to scale.

Sources: prsindia.org

Sources: newsonair.gov.in

Current affairs

11 Which removal motions made news from 2024 to 2026?

Removal notices against top office-holders have come up again and again. Here they are, newest first.

Justice Yashwant Varma, 2025 to 2026

- **The finding:** in August 2026, Outlook reported that the inquiry committee found the charges proved.
- **What next:** a removal motion, needing a special majority in both Houses, is likely in the Winter Session, government sources say.
- **The notice:** in July 2025, 152 MPs signed a notice in the Lok Sabha to remove the judge. The notice had support from both sides.
- **Rajya Sabha:** a separate notice by 63 opposition members there was not admitted.
- **Route:** the Judges (Inquiry) Act process then began in the Lok Sabha.

CEC Gyanesh Kumar, April 2026

The Rajya Sabha Chairman and the Lok Sabha Speaker both refused to admit notices to remove Chief Election Commissioner **Gyanesh Kumar**. It was called a first, because the notices went to both Houses together.

Speaker Om Birla, March 2026

- **10 March 2026:** the Lok Sabha took up a resolution to remove Speaker **Om Birla**. At least 50 MPs supported it by standing.
- **11 March 2026:** the Lok Sabha rejected it by voice vote.

- **Chair: Jagdambika Pal** presided over the House for the vote.

Reports called it a “no-confidence motion”. In law it was an Article 94(c) resolution, not a trust vote.

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, December 2024

- **10 December 2024:** opposition members gave notice to remove Vice-President **Jagdeep Dhankhar**.
- **Support:** at least 60 opposition members signed it.
- **19 December 2024:** Deputy Chairman **Harivansh** dismissed it, calling it severely flawed.

Sources: outlookindia.com; tribuneindia.com; newsonair.gov.in; onmanorama.com

Sources: pib.gov.in; onmanorama.com; newsonair.gov.in

Sources: cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in

Motions in the exam hall Exam practice

12 How can you tell the motions apart in an exam?

Match each motion to its target, its House and its support rule. Examiners test exactly these points.

Motion	House	Support or notice	Effect
No-confidence	Lok Sabha only	50 members rise; debate within 10 days	Government resigns if a majority backs it

Motion	House	Support or notice	Effect
Censure (textbook)	Lok Sabha only	Reasons must be stated	No forced resignation
Adjournment	Lok Sabha rule	Speaker's consent; 50 rise if objected	Debate on one urgent matter
Cut motion	Lok Sabha only	One demand only	Reduces a demand; 3 types
Calling Attention	Both Houses	Speaker's or Chairman's permission	Minister's statement, no debate
Speaker removal	Lok Sabha	14 days' notice	Majority of all then members

What traps should you watch for?

1. **Token Cut.** It is Rs 100, not Re 1. Re 1 is the Policy Cut.
2. **Fifty members.** They rise in the House. They do not sign a list.
3. **Desai, 1979.** He resigned before the vote. No government has lost the vote itself.
4. **Speaker removal.** It is not a no-confidence motion in law.
5. **Zero Hour.** It is a practice, not a rule.

Sources: sansad.in; prsindia.org; cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in

13 How has UPSC tested motions?

Here are two past UPSC questions, newest first.

Asked before

PYQ 1 · UPSC CSP 2022, Q15

Which of the following is/are the exclusive power(s) of Lok Sabha?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3
(d) 3 only

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The answer is (b), 2 only. A no-confidence motion is Lok Sabha-exclusive. Under Article 61, either House can bring the charge to impeach the President.

Asked before

PYQ 2 · UPSC CSP 2017, Q50

The Parliament of India exercises control over the functions of the Council of Ministers through

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

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The answer is (d), all three. An adjournment motion, Question Hour and supplementary questions all make ministers answer to the House.

Sources: mcqquestion.com; cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in

Review your 6 understanding checks

Review the feedback after each answer. The understanding-check score lasts for this page session.

Reset the checks when you want another attempt. This score is separate from the practice score below.

Questions to think through

Why can only the Lok Sabha remove a government?

Article 75(3) makes the ministers answerable to the House of the People. The Rajya Sabha is not part of that link. So a trust vote only counts in the Lok Sabha.

Why do members stand, rather than sign, to back a no-confidence motion?

The rule asks members to rise in their places. Everyone can see the support at once. The Speaker grants leave if at least fifty rise.

Why is the Token Cut only Rs 100?

The small sum is a signal, not a real saving. It lets a member air one grievance during the budget debate.

Why did the 2026 Speaker vote not test the government?

It was a resolution under Article 94(c). It asked whether the Speaker should stay. It did not ask whether the ministry had the House's support.

Sources: cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in; sansad.in

Practice MCQs

1. A no-confidence motion can be moved only in which House of Parliament?

A. Joint sitting

B. Lok Sabha

C. Rajya Sabha

D. Either House

See answer ↓

2. When is leave granted to move a no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha?

A. When the President recommends it

B. When at least 50 members rise in their places

C. When 50 members sign the notice

D. When the Rajya Sabha agrees

See answer ↓

3. Under the Lok Sabha rules, a Token Cut moves that a demand for grant be reduced by how much?

A. A specified amount

B. Re 1

C. Rs 100

D. Half the demand

See answer ↓

4. How much notice is needed before a resolution to remove the Lok Sabha Speaker can be moved?

A. Seven days

B. Thirty days

C. Ten days

D. Fourteen days

See answer ↓

5. Who moved the first no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha, in 1963?

A. Sonia Gandhi

B. Y B Chavan

C. N C Chatterjee

D. Acharya J B Kripalani

See answer ↓

6. What is the key difference between a no-confidence motion and a censure motion?

A. Both target only the Prime Minister

B. No-confidence targets the whole ministry; censure targets a specific policy or minister

C. Censure targets the whole ministry; no-confidence targets a policy

D. Both require the Rajya Sabha's approval

See answer ↓

7. Which motion is used to interrupt the ordinary business of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance?

A. Privilege motion

B. Calling attention motion

C. Adjournment motion

D. Cut motion

See answer ↓

8. The first hour of a sitting of Parliament, when members ask questions of ministers, is called:

A. Privilege Hour

B. Starred Hour

C. Question Hour

D. Zero Hour

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.** The correct answer is **Lok Sabha**. Article 75(3) makes the Council of Ministers collectively responsible to the House of the People. So only the Lok Sabha can pass a no-confidence motion. ↑ Q1
2. **B.** The correct answer is **when at least 50 members rise in their places**. Under Rule 198, support is shown by standing, not by signatures. The Speaker then fixes a date within ten days. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** The correct answer is **Rs 100**. A Token Cut airs one specific grievance (Rule 209). The Re 1 cut is the Policy Cut, and the Economy Cut is a specified amount. ↑ Q3
4. **D.** The correct answer is **fourteen days**. Article 94(c) also needs a majority of all the then members of the House. Ten days is the limit for taking up a no-confidence motion. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** The correct answer is **Acharya J B Kripalani**. He moved it against Nehru's government. Y B Chavan moved the 1979 motion, before which Morarji Desai resigned. ↑ Q5
6. **B.** The correct answer is **no-confidence targets the whole ministry; censure targets a specific policy or minister**. If a majority backs a no-confidence motion, the government resigns. The censure points come from textbooks; the Lok Sabha rulebook has no censure rule. ↑ Q6
7. **C.** The correct answer is **adjournment motion**. It discusses a definite matter of urgent public importance, with the Speaker's consent (Rule 56). Only one such motion can be made at a sitting. ↑ Q7
8. **C.** The correct answer is **Question Hour**. Rule 32 keeps the first hour of every sitting for questions. Zero Hour is an informal practice that has no rule of its own. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** Rule 198 counts members who stand in the House. The Speaker then fixes a date within ten days. ↑ 1
2. **False.** The rulebook has a chapter on the no-confidence motion, but no rule on a censure motion. ↑ 2

3. **False.** Rule 58 allows only one adjournment motion at a sitting, on only one matter. ↑ 3
4. **False.** The Re 1 cut is the Policy Cut. A Token Cut reduces the demand by Rs 100. ↑ 4
5. **True.** A motion cannot raise a question substantially identical to one decided in the same session. ↑ 5
6. **True.** Article 94(c) needs fourteen days' notice and a majority of all the then members. ↑ 6

Previous year answers

1. **(b) 2 only** No-confidence motions are genuinely Lok Sabha-exclusive. Ratifying an Emergency proclamation needs both Houses, and impeachment can start in either House — neither is Lok Sabha-exclusive.
2. **(d) 1, 2 and 3** All three are genuine tools Parliament uses to hold the Council of Ministers accountable: an Adjournment Motion is a formal censure device, while Question Hour and supplementary questions let MPs probe and follow up on ministerial answers.

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