

President of the Assembly

The President of the Assembly for the Day (chosen by lot) will preside over one day's session of the Assembly. (In fact, an Assembly President served for a full year; how much "time" elapses between Assembly Sessions in the game is unclear. It may be ten days, six months, or perhaps even a year.)

Each President has considerable latitude to "preside" over the session as he sees fit, although he is expected to exhibit basic standards of fairness. In fact, any Athenian official who abused his office or showed poor judgment could be censured, at the end of his term, by a vote of the Assembly. Commonly presidents established time limits for speeches, and instructed someone to watch the *klepsydra*—water clock—to enforce these rule. Presidents in the game may choose to follow analogous procedures.

But Athenians are not accustomed to overly-rigorous rules. They are not Spartans, and they may become restless if a President runs the discussions like a military drill. Athenians believe in a free flow of ideas, and Presidents may find it more in keeping with Athenian practices to allow brief questions and some free discussion. Presidents are also allowed to take an active and even partisan part in the session over which they preside.

Duties

The President has several duties.

Setting and Announcing the Agenda

There are six Assembly Presidents for the game. According to the New Rules, the agenda for most of the sessions is prescribed, below. The fourth game session, in the New Rules, is reserved as Trial Day. If the GM has allowed one or more archons to initiate a trial, that (Fourth) Assembly session will be cancelled; instead of going to the Pnyx, Athenian citizens will report to serve as jurors in one of nine courthouses. In the event of a Trial of Socrates, it is possible that the Trial will extend into what **would** have been Assembly Session 5.

If no trials are held—GM will announce this in advance—the President 4 will hold an Assembly session according to the (two) agenda topics of his choice. It is also possible that the GM will allow shorter trials at any time. These would necessarily entail interruptions of the Assembly sessions.

Presidents 3, 5, and 6 **will** have the freedom to choose a second, additional topic. This must be announced at the end of the class session prior to those presidents' tenure.

Game Session 1	President 1	Reconciliation Agreement	NO OTHER AGENDA ITEM ALLOWED.
Game Session 2	President 2	Government Agency	NO OTHER AGENDA ITEM ALLOWED.
Game Session 3	President 3	Social Welfare	PRESIDENT 3 MAY CHOOSE SECOND AGENDA ITEM.
Game Session 4	TRIAL DAY	This session is reserved for a trial. If no archon requests a trial, President 4 will hold an Assembly session: open topics	
Game Session 5	President 5	Electorate	PRESIDENT 5 MAY CHOOSE SECOND AGENDA ITEM.
Game Session 6	President 6	Remilitarization/Restoration of Athenian Empire	PRESIDENT 6 MAY CHOOSE SECOND AGENDA ITEM.

Ensuring Clarity of Legislation

Any citizen within the Pnyx may propose a law, decree, or public action. These can be what might nowadays be regarded as "constitutional" in character—such as the definition of citizenship and procedures for selecting officials; or the decisions of the Assembly may relate to specific policies—building a new wall to Piraeus; sending negotiators to Thebes or Persia; imposing new taxes; declaring war or dispatching tribute missions; or the Assembly may even enact of a seemingly private character: an edict executing Citizen Y or Metic Z; a decree

censuring Citizen X for harmful speech; a law requiring all citizens to wear shoes in the Pnyx. In short, the Assembly represents the will of the Athenian citizens—at least those in attendance at the Pnyx – and its powers are broad and practically unlimited.

The President has the following duties, in addition to presiding over debates. The first concerns clarification of legislation. Speakers who want the Assembly to “do” something (pass a law, make a decision, etc.) should say that they wish to propose a law or decree. These should all be simple, direct and concise, if only because all laws, decrees, edicts, etc., must be chiseled into stone tablets. To that end, the President should ask those who propose laws or edicts to write their proposed “law” on the blackboard, simply and with few (or no) modifying clauses; and Presidents should ensure that all proposed laws bear the name of the person(s) proposing the law: The President may request, for example, that no law exceed fifteen to twenty words in length. Example: “All government positions should be selected by lot.”– SIGNED, ADEIMANTUS; or, “Athens should impose a tax on all property holders and build 50 triremes.”– SIGNED, GLAUCON. Complex laws, Athenians believed, could not be understood or implemented. Athenians saw no reason, moreover, to bind their officials with fancy legalistic hair-splitting: the “officials” were randomly chosen citizens like themselves who could be expected to understand the meaning and purpose of the laws. If Athenian citizens were unhappy with the way a law was executed, they could express their displeasure within a fortnight’s time—at the next meeting of the Pnyx. [Note: The GM may disallow laws that are excessively complex or are contradictory.]

Supervising Votes

When the President feels that the agenda issue has received a full and fair hearing, he must call for a vote and supervise the counting of the vote. In an Assembly of 6,000 citizens, this is no easy matter. (To that end, be sure to multiple all “leader” votes by the number of attached “follower votes”– usually 500.) The President will then announce the vote, which will be ratified by the GM.

Inscribing the Law in Stone

If a law is passed during a President’s tenure, that law must be inscribed in stone in a public place. At the very least, it should be posted on the class website, or written down on a slip of paper and submitted to the GM. Remember: all laws, edicts, etc., should bear the name or names of the person(s) proposing them: this helped establish accountability when laws failed to achieve the goal proposed by the legislator.

Overturning Laws

The current will of the Assembly is supreme. It may pass a law at one session and overturn it at the next. Whether a player has achieved his or her victory objectives depends on the laws that are in force at the end of the final game session, as determined by the GM.

Last session

The Gamemaster may allow President 6 to introduce additional agenda items.