

Group Discussion (Rules & Regulations)

- ❖ Learn to listen attentively. Note down the views of others carefully as this will let you prepare complementary points or counter arguments.
- ❖ Put forth your views politely. Even if you disagree, do so courteously.
- ❖ Get thorough with the fundamentals of your subject and familiarize yourself with the current happenings.
- ❖ Be assertive without sounding arrogant.
- ❖ Interrupt others only when appropriate and only when you have something meaningful to contribute.
- ❖ Don't digress from the given topic and bring in irrelevant content.
- ❖ Don't mumble to yourself. Be loud enough to be clearly heard by others.
- ❖ Have proper body language. Don't lose yourself in the heat of the argument and lose objectivity. Remember it is not a debate but a discussion.
- ❖ Don't drag personal affairs or call anyone by personal / nicknames if some of the participants are already known to you.
- ❖ Quote sufficient examples and statistics to establish your view.
- ❖ Be conscious of the stipulated time and remind the others to round off the discussion at the proper time.

Example:

Q.: “Multinational Companies – Boon or Bane?”

Ans.:

JUDGE:

Good morning. You can choose any topic you like or take a slip from that box. You are given one minute to think to start with the discussion. The observers will not interfere in your discussion. If no conclusion is reached, we may ask each of you to speak for a minute on the topic at the end of the discussion. The topic on the slip is "Multinationals: Bane or Boon". I suggest you should start the discussion.

Mr A:

This is a good topic. I am against multinationals. We have Coke and Pepsi. Do we need them? We can manufacture our own soft drinks. Multinationals destroy the local industry and sell non essential products.

Mr B:

I agree with you. What is the fun of having Coke and Pepsi? We have our own Campa Cola.

Mr C:

I think water is good enough.

Mr D:

We are not here to discuss soft drinks. The topic given to us is a much larger one. First, let us define multinational companies. They are merely large companies which operate in a number of countries. There could be some Indian multinationals also. So there is nothing wrong with them. The point is whether they have a good or bad impact on the host countries. We have to discuss their business practices and find out whether they are desirable or not.

Mr E:

That is a very good introduction to the topic. Multinational companies do serve an important function that they bring new products and technologies in countries which do not have them. And it is not just Coke and Pepsi. They set up power plants and build roads and bridges, which really help in the development of host countries.

Mr F:

But are they all that good? We have seen that they destroy local industry. In India they just took over existing companies. They came in areas of low technology. Moreover, we have to see why they come at all. They come for earning profits and often remit more money abroad than they bring in.

Mr A:

I agree with you. I am against multinationals. We can produce everything ourselves. We should be swadeshi in our approach. Why do we need multinational companies?

Mr E:

We may not need multinational companies but then it also means that our companies should not do business abroad. Can we live in an isolated world? The fact is that we are moving towards becoming a global village. The world is interconnected. Then we have also seen that foreign companies bring in business practices that we are impressed with. Look at foreign banks. They are so efficient

and friendly that the nationalized banks look pathetic in comparison. I think we can learn a lot from multinationals if we keep our eyes and mind open.

Mr B:

Take a look at McDonald's. They are providing quality meals at affordable prices. One does not have to wait at their restaurants.

Mr C:

How do you account for the fact that they take out more than they put in and thus lead to impoverishing the country?

Mr D:

The fact is that every poor country needs foreign investment. Poor countries often lack resources of their own. That is why they have to invite foreign companies in. There is nothing wrong in this because then products like cars, air conditioners and so on can be made in poor countries. Often multinationals source products from different countries which helps boost their export earnings.

Mr E:

We have been talking about Coke and Pepsi. It is well known that Pepsi is in the foods business also and has helped farmers in Punjab by setting up modern farms to grow potatoes and tomatoes. Modern practices have helped the people in that area.

Mr A:

I still feel that multinationals are harmful for the country.

Mr D:

Well, there could be negative things associated with such companies. They may not be very good in their practices. But can we do without them? I think the best way is to invite them but also impose some controls so that they follow the laws of the country and do not indulge in unfair practices.

Mr E:

I think laws are applicable to everyone. Very often officials in poor countries take bribes. The fault lies not with the company which gives a bribe but the person who actually demands one. Why blame the companies for our own ills?

Mr A:

What about the money they take out?

Mr D:

We have had a good discussion and I think it is time to sum up. Multinationals may have good points and some bad ones too, but competition is never harmful for anyone. We cannot live in a protected economy any longer. We have been

protected for many years and the results are there for everyone to see. Rather than be close about multinationals, let us invite them in selected areas so that we get foreign investment in areas which we are lacking. Laws can be strictly enforced that companies operate within limits and do not start meddling in political affairs.

Analysis:

Though Mr A started the discussion, he could not make any good points. Later, he could not give any points about why multinationals are bad. It is also a bad strategy to say at the outset whether you are for or against the topic. Remember, it is not a debate but a discussion. The first step should always be to introduce the topic without taking sides. See the way in which the discussion is proceeding and give arguments for or against. The observer is not interested in your beliefs but in what you are saying. The participation of Mr B and C is below average. A candidate must make 3-4 interventions. Their arguments are also not well thought out and add nothing to the argument. It is important to say relevant things which make an impact rather than speak for the sake of speaking. The arguments of Mr D and E are better. They seem to be aware of the role of multinational companies. Mr E's approach is better as he intervenes a number of times. He has also taken initiative in the beginning and brought order to the group. If selection has to be made from the above six candidates, the obvious choice would be Mr E and thereafter, Mr D.