

Session Summary 3: Group Discussion Techniques:

In one of our recent PESE lab sessions, we learned important techniques to tackle **personal interviews and topic-based questions** during an interview or group discussion. Sir introduced us to two main strategies — one for **normal topics, called PHILTER, and the other for abstract topics, using a technique called POBEANS.**

Starting with **normal topics, like say COVID outbreak, we were taught to apply the PHILTER method** — where each letter stands for a domain to help structure our response:

S for Social/Security
P for Political
H for Historical/History
I for International
L for Legal
T for Technology
E for Economy
R for Religion

We discussed how we can take any general topic and speak about both its **positive and negative aspects** using this structure. For example, in the case of COVID — we can speak about how it affected social behavior, government policies, legal changes, economic collapse or recovery, and even religious gatherings. Sir explained that when we cover all these dimensions, it shows depth and a well-rounded perspective. He also added a visual analogy — saying one hand is always above another — meaning, try to show how one aspect outweighs others in your conclusion.

Then came the trickier part — **abstract topics. Sir gave me an example: "Harshita, let's talk about the word DOT."** I started by saying that it's a circular shape and a sentence ends with it. Sir appreciated it but helped me expand further using the **POBEANS framework**:

P – Physical (like an actual dot)
O – Object (could relate to fashion or branding)
B – Behaviour (dot as a symbol of stopping or pausing)
E – Events (dot marking important moments)
A – Action (like explosion starting from a dot)
N – Nature (black holes or atoms)
S – Society (dot representing things like gender, caste, or identity)

This method helped us turn even the most random abstract topics into meaningful discussions.