

Group Planning Exercise (GPE)

Group Planning Exercise (GPE) is held on third day of your stay in the SSB. It is the second group test after group discussion. It is an indoor task in which, a model is placed on ground, containing a set of problems. The candidates are required to solve the problems one by one by using the given resources. Sometimes it is also called Military Planning Exercise.

Firstly, the candidate is required to write down his own solution for which he/she has allotted 10 minutes and then discuss within his group and come to a common group solution. So, unlike the group discussion where no conclusion was to be reached, in this exercise the candidates have to reach a definite conclusion that is mutually agreed group solution.



Objectives of Group Planning Exercise

In group planning exercise, there is a series of tough situations where the candidate is putting himself and his team in various situations i.e. extracting work from his team by allocating them based on priority of the problem.

Various qualities judged by GTO are as follows :

1. Observation and analytical skill
2. Organising ability
3. Team spirit and cooperation
4. Self-confidence
5. Decision-making
6. Power of expression
7. Responsibility and social adaptability
8. Determination and courage

Procedure for Group Planning Exercise

1. The candidates will sit in a semi-circle in the sequence of their chest numbers.
2. The GTO will narrate the model and rules.
3. After narration of the problem, GTO will ask the group for any doubt.
4. GTO will also tell about the time and direction from which candidates are going. The directions are also marked on the map.
5. Each candidate will be provided 5 minutes for self-reading of the written story; the candidate is required to read it quickly and place the story card by side.
6. The candidate is given 10 minutes time to write down their own individual solution for the said problem under reference.
7. The candidates will be given 20 minutes time to discuss about the set of problems and arrive at a group solution i.e. proper solution to win over all situations.
8. Group solution will be narrated by one candidate from the group before the GTO.

Strategy for Group Planning Exercise

- **First and foremost, see the map and scale up the distance.** For calculating the distance you can use your hand. e.g. if the scale says 10 cm = 1km and my hand (the distance from the tip of the hand to the start of the wrist) is approximately 20 cm, so my hand is equal to 2 km on the map. This technique will give you a clear vision of the distance in the map, which will also give you a better knowledge of the time required.
- The second important thing is to **locate your position** using the direction mentioned in the map. If you get the opportunity to narrate the plan, use direction, distance, time required and the right time to narrate the story.

- Always remember, when a GTO narrates a story, listen to it very carefully and **count the number of problems**. It will help you to remember the number of problems and set the priority accordingly.
- **Prioritise your solution**; help the person who needs it utmost. e.g. let's suppose if you are alone and going to bring water from a village where you see a girl has fallen in the well. Then what would you do? You first help the girl using the rope and the bucket from the well. Do not run for help because the case might be that the girl would drown in the meantime. Now when you have rescued her, it will show your awareness and spontaneity.
- **Use the resources efficiently**; it will increase your chance to stand out in your group.
- Use the resources which are certain: like using a cart instead of asking a lift. In this way, you can do your task till the time you will get the lift.
- If you are trapped, you can also use a knife, match-box and fire for signaling.
- **Never engage yourself in a fight** with the 'terrorists' till the time you don't have any other options. Try to maintain a safe distance and keep an eye on them. If they try to escape, use fire to stop them. In case of goons and thieves, you can engage yourself, but try and make sure your people don't get hurt.
- If you require more manpower, use villagers or co-passengers.
- **Divide the group according to requirement** and send more people where the situation is more vulnerable.
- If a car is collided with the truck on a highway, firstly clear the highway otherwise more accident will happen. Remove the remains of the vehicles to clear the site. If that is not possible, use placards or red cloth for signaling the traffic.

Note While initiating the military planning, try to focus on all the task or situations given to you and suggest some basic solutions for these situations.

Steps to be Performed

The following steps should be performed for better performance in Group Planning Exercise :

- STEP 1** Candidates need to be very attentive because if you miss any place or misinterpret anything on map, it will hamper your performance. So be attentive, listen to every minute detail meticulously and keep them in mind.
- STEP 2** In next step, GTO is going to read the narrative to you. He will provide you written story of the problem. In this test, you need to co-relate the problem to the map. While listening pay attention to hidden resources, given resources, time constraints and total number of problems.
- So, at the end of this step you must be able to know :
- How many problems are there?
 - What are the resources given and hidden?

- What are time constraints of each problem?
- What are other constraints like no communication tools, your vehicle broke down, headlights are not working and so on?

STEP**3**

In the third step, GTO will give you 5 minutes for self-reading of the problem. If you were attentive in Step 2, then in this step you can utilise the time in your planning.

Your next step should be the following :

- Decide priorities of problems and have always a reason for giving the particular priority to a particular problem. Always keep loss and time factor in mind while doing this.
- As a problem can be solved in more than one ways, start thinking for available solutions to each problem and decide which one to follow. You should have a reason for whatever solutions you follow.
- Most important thing is that whenever you have a choice between possibility and certainty, go for certainty. e.g. you are on a road with an injured person, you have two options—one to take lift and another to take help from a petrol pump or garage at a short distance. Then it is certain that you will get vehicle at garage or pump, but you may or may not get lift. So, always select an option which is accessible to you and which ensures you the solution.
- After you get a solution to each problem, you have a clear idea about how many persons are needed in each problem. So, now you can decide in how many sub-groups you will divide your team.
- Do not divide the group before you find the solution; you can get wrong in middle. So, do it at last.

STEP**4**

In this step, GTO will ask you write your individual solution on a paper for which you will get 10 minutes. This copy will be evaluated, so take this seriously. For writing always follow a particular way so that you don't miss anything. You can write as follows

- Write what resources you have in hand quickly and always mention hidden resources as it shows you are practical and can think other options too.
- Now write, I will divide my group in sub-groups.
- Now for attending each problem priority-wise, write down solution attending these points for each.
- Who, what, when, where, how, time distance and action.
- Always mention distance according to scale given to you. You can go to the model or map and measure it with your hand so, that you can get a rough idea of distance and time needed to travel that distance using the particular mode of transport.

STEP 5 After you finish this, reassemble your group mates and move where you were going prior to the problems. The fifth and last stage is of Group Discussion. It also tests your decision-making ability and how you persuade others to your decision. Presence of mind and listening are most important things for this.



The following points are important for this step :

- If you think you have made a good plan then discuss reasons behind your particular choice.
- In your discussion, you should have a reason for choice of every action.
- If you have strong reasons, then your group members will agree automatically.
- If you feel your point is not correct, then there is no harm in accepting the correct approach of others.
- If your group nominates you to give final plan, then do not hesitate and give it confidently.
- This is a fact that group will nominate you automatically if you were good and active throughout the discussion.
- Other things are same as in group discussion.

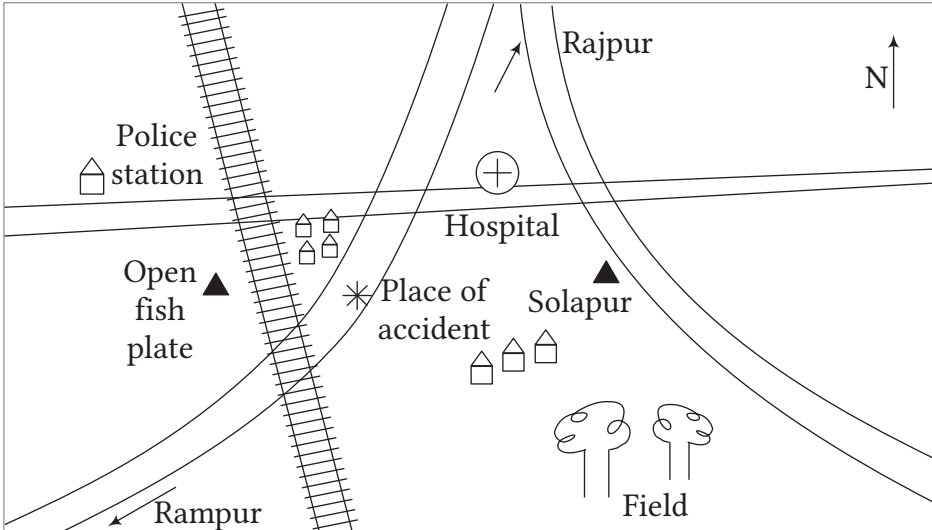
Example 1

You are a group of 8 students coming from Rampur and going to Rajpur to attend your college annual function, which will start at 4 pm. Governor of the state will be the chief guest of the annual function. On your way to Rajpur, around 2 pm, your bus has an accident at Kharwar which is 10 km away from Rajpur and two persons became badly injured and they urgently need medical attention. Your bus is badly damaged and in no condition to move forward. When you are planning what to do, suddenly some villagers come to you and told, that some terrorist are planning to attack on the convoy of governor near Solapur which is 5 km from Kharwar. Suddenly from another direction a villager come and told you that fishplate of nearby rail line is open, which is 1 km away from Kharwar.

Some additional information is available as follows :

1. Nearest police chowki is 5 km away from Kharwar.
2. Nearest hospital is 4 km from Kharwar.
3. Nearby village has a jeep and an motorcycle which is 1 km from Kharwar.

(As bold young men what action will you take?)



Solution

First we have to identify the number of problems.

1. To give first aid to the injured persons and help them to reach hospital.
2. Inform to police about the attack on Governor.
3. To connect the fishplate of rail line.
4. Arrange a transport to reach Rajpur on time.

We will handle these situations in the following manner :

- (i) Two of us will give first aid to the injured.
- (ii) Three of us will go to village and borrow the jeep and motorcycle.
- (iii) Two of us will go with the jeep and take injured person to hospital.
- (iv) One of us will go to the police station by motorcycle and inform the police about the terrorist attack. It will take about 30 minutes.
- (v) Rest of us go to nearby rail line and connect the fish plate. It will take about an hour.
- (vi) By the time jeep return after admitting injured into the hospital, rest of the group also return at Kharwar.
- (vii) From the same jeep each of us will reach Rajpur, which is 10 km away, it will take almost 30 minutes.

Example 2

You are in a group of 10 students enjoying picnic at Ramnagar resort in Ramnagar forest. On the last day of your stay, some people of nearby village come to you and asked for help because a group of dacoit had attacked their village which is 2 km from your resort.

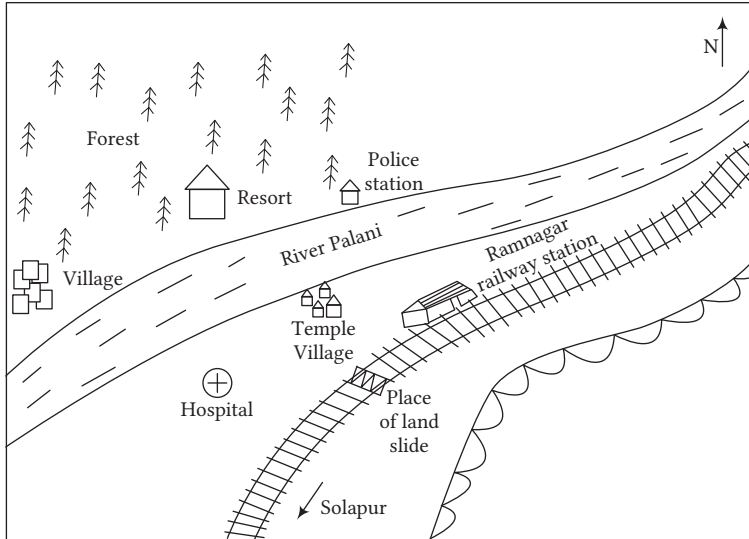
Suddenly a student of your group fell from the balcony of the resort and got badly injured. The chowkidar of the resort told you that nearby hospital is 5 km away and road leading to hospital is blocked because bridge over river Palani is broken. River Palani flows through the forest which is 2 km from resort.

While, you are planning what to do, a local person come to you and informs you that due to land slide, rocks have fallen on the railway track and a train is likely to start from Sholapur railway station at 12 pm causing a likely threat which may result into a train accident and you also have to board the train at 2 pm from Ramnagar railway station.

Some additional information is available as follows :

- 1. Two boats are available near river Palani.
- 2. Weapons are available in the village.
- 3. Resort has a motorcycle.
- 4. Across the river, there is a village which has a jeep.

As brave young men what will you do?



Solution

There are four problems :

1. To give first aid to injured person and help them to reach hospital.
2. To inform police about the attack of dacoits on the village.
3. Go to village for immediate help of villagers.
4. Clear the railway track.

We will handle these situations in the following manner :

- (i) We are a group of 10 students. So, two of us give first aid to injured.
- (ii) Two of us go with injured person to take him hospital through the river.
- (iii) Three of us go for clear the rail track.
- (iv) One person with motorcycle will go to police station to inform them about dacoit's attack.
- (v) Rest of us will go with villagers to help them to tackle with dacoit.
- (vi) All of us after completing their task will meet at temple village. From there, we will take jeep and reach railway station to board train.