

Student's Manual

Session 10 – Group Discussion I

Duration - 2 hrs.

Date – 27 Jan to 29 Jan 2025, Mon to Tue

Timing – 11am to 1pm & 2pm to 4pm

Instruction for the Students:

- Students are supposed to follow the instruction of the Facilitator and participate in Group Activities followed by Q&A round.

Components are:

- a) What is GD & What are different forms/versions of a GD conducted by different recruiters across industry
- b) Types of Topics in a Group Discussion
- c) Activity - Start not but initiate (how to start a GD?) & Process of Group Discussion & Evaluation Criteria in a GD
- d) How to agree and disagree in a GD? Diverse roles to be played and performed in a standard Group Discussion.

What is GD?

GD is more of an Elimination Process than a SELECTION Process, Hence, perform. A GD is a group discussion where the candidates are given a topic to discuss on and they are supposed to discuss both the positive and the negative aspects of the given topic. It is different from a Debate in the sense that nobody is here to exclusively speak for or against a topic. It is just all the negative and the positive aspects of a topic are being discussed with everyone respecting others' views. Finding out the degree of consensus and a fruitful outcome on a topic at the end of the GD is the primary objective.

- The Group discussion tests how you function as a part of a team.
- It's not an argument, but a discussion
- There is no winner here
- It's not necessary to take a side always
- Speak, & allow others to speak
- Start not, but Initiate
- Contribution to the GD is important
- Address the whole group, not the individual
- Until instructed by the moderator

What are different forms / versions of a GD conducted by different recruiters across industry?

- Standard Group Discussion
- Round table discussion (one after another) (In case when others do not speak)
- Group Case studies (Consulting companies conduct case studies)
- Case Presentation (Consulting companies conduct case presentation during interviews)
- JAM in Group (Just A Minute)
- Opinion Transfer round (Eg: Tiger analytics company does like this)

Types of Topics in a Group Discussion

There are generally three types of Group Discussion.

- i. **Topic Based** - Based on specific topics, could be Factual, Controversial, or Abstract topics. Normally used during recruitment process in organizations
- ii. **Case studies** - Tries to simulate a real-life situation with an objective to get you to think about the situation from various angles. Information about the situation is given and participants are asked as a group to resolve the situation. There are no incorrect answers / perfect solutions. These types of GDs are normally used by Management Institutes. Major B-schools usually have case-based discussion rather than topic-based discussion in their selection procedures.
- iii. **Group tasks** - These are an extension of case studies where specific objectives are to be achieved as a group.

Topic Based Group Discussion

Factual – These topics are about practical matters, which people in general have heard or are aware of. Typically, these are socio-economic topics which may have been in the news lately, or could be unbound by time. It gives a candidate a chance to prove that he is aware of his environment.

E.g. NEP 2020 – A revolution, Tourism in India, Indian 2030, He works, she works, he comes home, she comes, and she cooks

Controversial – Generally argumentative in nature and are meant to generate controversy. Noise level is usually high, there may be tempers flying. Objective is to see how much maturity the candidate displays by keeping his temper in check, by rationally and logically arguing his point of view without getting personal and emotional.

E.g. Reservations should be removed, Women make better managers, Politics & ethics cannot coexist?

Abstract – These are about intangible things. Usually not given often for discussion, but their possibility cannot be ruled out. Objective is to test your lateral thinking and creativity.

E.g. Alphabet starts with A and ends with Z, Twinkle Twinkle little star, The number 10, Life after Death,

Activity - Start not but initiate (how to start a GD?)

- Step 1. Wish or greet the group
- Step 2. Introduce yourself (However not necessary)
- Step 3. Introduce the topic given by the moderator
- Step 4. Propose a set of agenda or show a direction (Not necessary others will listen to you, however, you must sound convincing)
- Step 5. Share your opinion /views
- Step 6. Invite other members to contribute

Process of Group Discussion

- 8-10 students are taken as a group, though in some cases, up to 16 people may be included in a group. The GD generally lasts for 10-15 minutes.
- For a topic-based GD, 2-3 minutes of thinking time may be given; though the group is often told to start right away. For case studies, however, about 10 to 15 minutes is given.
- Evaluation is done by Moderators and GD experts. Experts observe all details, even if the GD is chaotic.

- Candidates may be seated in a circle or in a rectangular arrangement, with/out a table. Seating arrangements may be prefixed.

Discussion may be stopped at the set time / even earlier. Conclusion and summary may be asked for if not made during the stipulated time period given.

Evaluation Criteria in a GD

Content - Combination of knowledge, relevance & ability to create logical arguments on the basis of that knowledge.

Communication Skills – It includes Inter personal skills and assertive communication. Besides listening, evaluators observe your ability to express ideas clearly & concisely, build on others' points, sum up the discussion made by the entire group.

Body Language – The seating posture, gesture, eye contact, and facial expression is observed here.

Group Dynamics - The evaluators observe participants' willingness to listen & discuss various points, ability to appreciate good points made by others, ability to disagree politely & summarize.

Leadership - Evaluators evaluate on basis of who initiates the discussion, allows others to express their views & channels discussion to a probable decision.

How to agree and disagree in a GD?

These are some phrases which can be used to agree and disagree in a GD. The gist is to be polite to group members.

Example: -

Agree	Disagree
I agree with you	I Partially agree with you
I completely agree with you my friend	I like to clarify your statement
I appreciate your points/views/ thoughts	I slightly differ with you
I go with your statement	However, I would like to add something to this point
Well said/explained	I slightly differ with your opinion/point
You are right, indeed	Your point is understood; however, I have a different opinion
Yes indeed/seems positive	Not offending you, I would like to add something to your point
Absolutely correct	Respecting your opinion but my point is different all together
That's quite obvious/ certainly	I have an important point to make

DIVERSE ROLES TO BE PLAYED AND PERFORMED IN A STANDARD GROUP DISCUSSION

I. Survival Roles – Information, Suggestion, Explanation, Opinion

II. Impact roles

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| - Setting up an agenda/ showing a direction | - Stop repeating |
| - Inviting a silent listener to speak | - Gatekeeping/ Time check |
| - Bringing Order to Chaos | - Summarizing |
| - Stop deviating | - Conclusion |

Setting up the agenda

Before the discussion moves to the members of a GD one after another, you must ensure the agenda of the topic is set, so that discussion is well directed and remain focused.

E.g. Hello friends, I am Prateek, we have a social yet factual topic to discuss. And the topic is “The biggest problem India facing today is..”. Before coming to a conclusion, let’s first find out what are major problems India facing today at the moment, then we would discuss one by one to conclude, which is the biggest problem India is facing today.

Breaking the silence:

Encouraging a quiet person to speak, will add lots of weightages. But it should not be overdone.

E.g. “We will also give a fair chance to our friend.....”

“May I please know your opinion on this?”

Bring order to Chaos:

It’s a group Discussion, so no quarrels and being emotional. You can always try to bring back the ideal condition if at all discussion is going chaotic.

E.g. “Friends, let us not break the momentum of the discussion by getting emotional & aggressive. Let’s discuss the topic and come to a conclusion.

Bringing back the topic:

The complete discussion should be totally relevant to the topic. You can always bring back the participants if somebody is deviating from the topic. You are always rewarded for that.

E.g. “We are actually deviating from the subject to be discussed, so please let us get back to the subject and discuss.”

Stop Digging:

Better avoid repeating the same point by re phrasing it. If somebody is doing it, you can always stop them gently without hurting them.

E.g.: “Thank you very much, but this point has already been raised, so please come up with some other point.

Gatekeeper:

Group Discussion is always time bound. So it’s always good to keep track of the time.

E.g: Dear group we’ve reached the time limit, So I would like to summarize.

Summarize:

Summarizing the GD will earn you an extra point.

E.g. : “I would like to sum up all the points / let’s summarize the GD”

xiii) Conclusion:

Conclude the GD with a diplomatic and fare opinion of the participants. If the points made are well summarized, giving conclusion won’t be a difficult task.

E.g: “From summarization we conclude that...”