

# Communication Skills

## Unit 2

# Effective Presentation strategies, Interviews, and Group Communication

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# Effective Presentation strategies

# Introduction to Effective Presentation

- **Definition:** A presentation involves sharing information, ideas, or research with an audience using spoken words and visual elements like slides or charts. It's an essential skill in academic and professional settings, especially in fields like IT and computer science.
- **Purpose:** Presentations can have different goals. They can be used to:
  - ▶ Inform: Share knowledge or educate your audience.
  - ▶ Persuade: Convince the audience to agree with a viewpoint or take action.
  - ▶ Entertain: Engage and keep the audience interested, often seen in tech demos or product presentations.
- **Key Components:**
  - ▶ Clear message: Your presentation should have a well-defined objective or takeaway.
  - ▶ Engaging delivery: It's not just about what you say, but how you say it. A lively, confident delivery is essential.
  - ▶ Supporting visual aids: Use slides, images, or videos to reinforce your points.

# Planning a Presentation

- 1. Know Your Audience:** Tailor your presentation to the level of understanding and interest of your listeners. For example, if your audience is tech-savvy, you can use more technical terms, but for non-technical listeners, simplify complex ideas.
- 2. Research Your Topic:** Dive deep into the subject matter. Use credible sources like textbooks, academic papers, and trusted websites to gather data. Ensure you're familiar with all aspects of your topic.
- 3. Set Objectives:** Clearly define what you want to achieve by the end of your presentation. Ask yourself: What do I want my audience to know, feel, or do after listening to me?

4. **Time Management:** Break your presentation into manageable sections and allocate time for each. Ensure you stick to the time limits. If it's a 10-minute presentation, avoid squeezing in too much information.
4. **Practice:** Practice makes perfect! Run through your presentation multiple times. Practicing helps you refine your content and delivery while also helping with memory retention and confidence.

# Outlining and Structuring the Presentation

## Introduction:

- Start with a greeting, like “Good morning, everyone!”
- Introduce yourself and briefly explain what your presentation will cover.
- Provide a “roadmap” or outline of the key points you’ll discuss, giving the audience a preview of what to expect.
- Hook the audience’s attention early—perhaps with a surprising fact, a question, or a relevant quote.

## Main Content (Body):

- Divide your main content into sections (typically 2-3 key points or arguments).
- Each section should be organized logically, starting with an introduction to the point, followed by supporting facts, examples, or data.
- Transitions between sections are important to maintain flow. Use linking phrases like “This brings us to our next point” or “Building on that idea...”

## Conclusion:

- Summarize the key ideas you've covered. Reiterate the core message to ensure it's understood.
- End with a strong closing statement, which can be a call to action, a powerful takeaway, or a reflection on the information shared.
- Don't forget to thank the audience and open the floor to questions, if appropriate.

# Nuances of Delivery

- ▶ **Voice Modulation:** Vary your tone, volume, and pitch. Avoid speaking in a monotone, as it can make even the most interesting content seem dull. For example, use a louder voice for emphasis or lower your voice when making a serious point.
- ▶ **Pacing:** Speak at a steady pace—not too fast, or the audience won’t be able to follow, and not too slow, or they’ll lose interest. Use pauses strategically to let key ideas sink in.

- ▶ **Body Language:**
  - ▶ Stand tall and face the audience. Good posture conveys confidence.
  - ▶ Use gestures naturally, but don't overdo it. Avoid nervous habits like fidgeting or pacing too much.
  - ▶ Make eye contact with different audience members to build connections and keep them engaged.
- ▶ **Engage the Audience:** Ask rhetorical questions, invite short responses, or use humor (if appropriate) to keep the audience involved. For example, “How many of you have encountered this issue in coding?”

# Controlling Nervousness and Stage Fright

- ▶ **Prepare Thoroughly:** Confidence comes from being prepared. Know your material well and practice delivering it until you feel comfortable.
- ▶ **Practice in Front of Friends:** Simulate the presentation experience by practicing in front of a small audience, like friends or family, before the real thing.
- ▶ **Breathing Exercises:** Deep breathing helps calm your nerves. Inhale slowly through your nose, hold it for a few seconds, and then exhale through your mouth. Do this a few times before you start.

- ▶ **Positive Visualization:** Imagine yourself giving the perfect presentation. Visualizing success can help reduce anxiety and boost your confidence.
- ▶ **Start Strong:** Often, the first few moments are the most nerve-wracking. Focus on starting with a strong opening statement, and once you get going, the rest will flow more easily.

# Visual Aids in Presentations

- **PowerPoint Slides:** PowerPoint is a popular tool for presentations. Keep slides simple and visually appealing. Use keywords and bullet points rather than long paragraphs. For example, instead of writing full sentences, use bullet points to highlight key ideas.
- **Diagrams and Charts:** Visuals like graphs, charts, or flow diagrams can make complex data easier to understand. For instance, in a presentation about software development, a flowchart can help explain the development cycle.
- **Fonts and Colors:** Choose readable fonts (Arial, Calibri) and avoid using too many font styles or colors. The text should be legible from a distance. Stick to high contrast—dark text on a light background or vice versa.
- **Consistency:** Maintain a consistent style across all slides. This includes font sizes, slide layouts, and colors. Consistency keeps your presentation looking professional and organized.

# Interviews

# Introduction to Interviews: Meaning and Purpose

- ▶ The term 'interview' is derived from the French word 'entre voir', which means 'to glimpse' or 'to see each other'.
- ▶ By definition, an interview is a meeting to obtain information by questioning a person or persons. In this way, an interview is a classic example of communication that takes place through "the process by which meanings are exchanged between people through the use of a common set of symbols."

Interviews are held for various purposes, for example, the ones stated below :

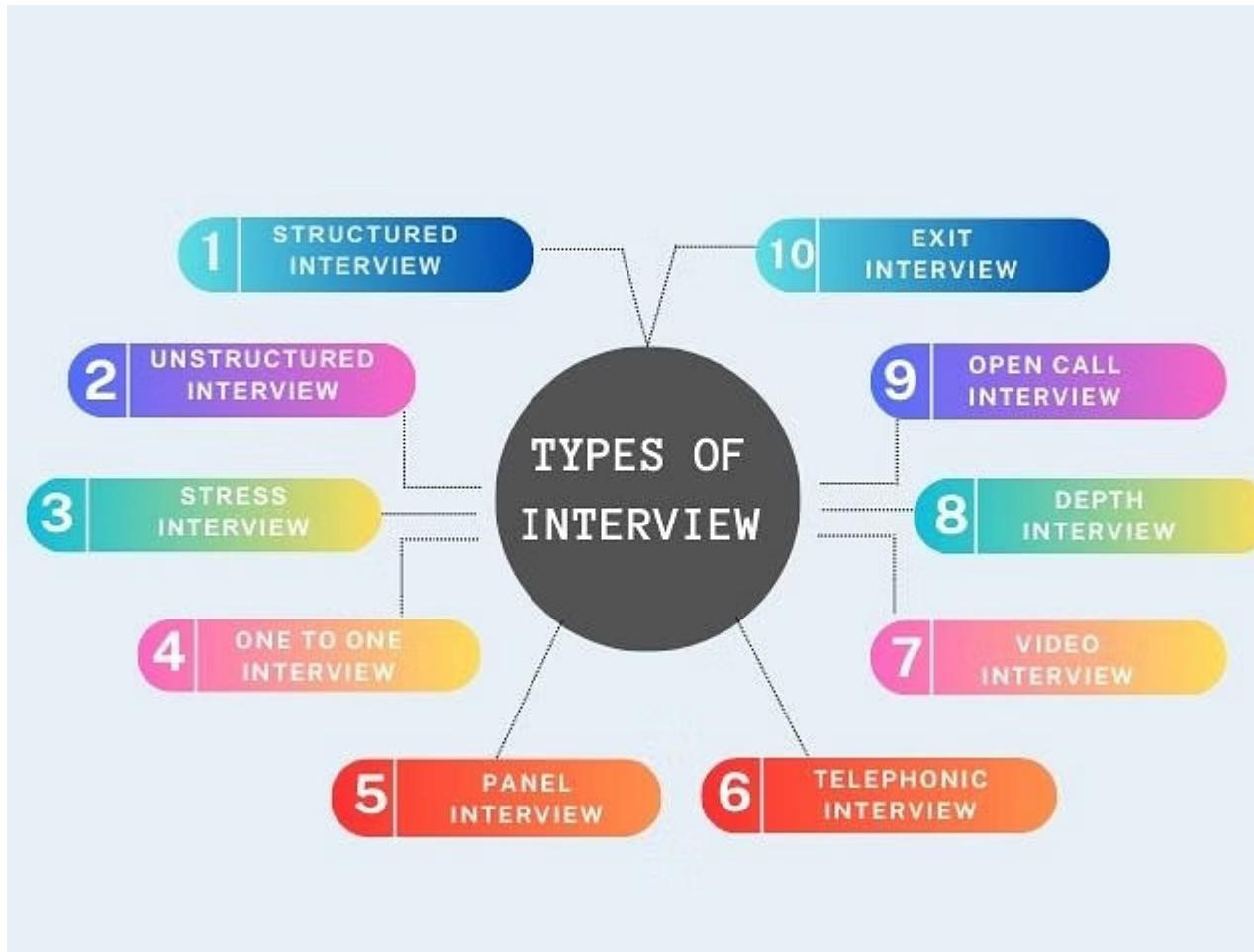
- (a) Job or employment interviews for the selection of suitable persons based on their qualifications and experience;
- (b) Interviews held by some companies for periodic evaluation of workers;
- (c) Exit interviews are held to determine a person's reasons for leaving the organization.
- (d) Interviews conducted by company personnel to gather information on matters like worker's attitudes, working conditions, managerial effectiveness, etc.
- (e) A meeting or conversation between a journalist, radio, or television presenter and a person whose views/ideas are sought for broadcasting.
- (f) Admission interview of a candidate for admission to a course in higher education/professional training.
- (g) Interrogation of a person by the police about something happening
- (h) An interview given by a celebrity in a question-answer session to a selected audience.

# Objectives of Interviews

- ▶ It helps to verify the precision of the facts and data provided by the candidate.
- ▶ The interview helps to obtain additional information about the skills and knowledge of the interviewee.
- ▶ The interview not only assesses a candidate's skills but also checks their suitability for the job.
- ▶ The interview provides the candidate with general facts and necessary descriptions about the job and the company.
- ▶ An interview gives an intuition into the candidates' rational knowledge and creativity.
- ▶ Job descriptions are given at the time of the interview. The interviewer informs the company's expectations of them.
- ▶ Through the interview process, the recruiter gets to know about the candidate's skills and the potential abilities to be trained according to their job role.
- ▶ Information flows from both directions, and the interviewee gets to know about the company and the employer.

# Types of Interviews

There are different types of interviews, depending on the scenario or situation. Here it is categorized into ten major types.



## 1. Structured Interview

It is the traditional form of an interview. Preset standardized questions are asked from the interviewee and are the same for all the candidates.

It is the kind of interview that gives the chance to examine all the candidates' skills and abilities impartially.

The questions also help the interviewer compare the responses and choose the best one.

## 2. Unstructured Interview

It is just the opposite of structured interviews. It is a free-flowing conversation. This type of interview is also known as Informal interview.

The interviewer already has a definite idea in mind about the questions to be asked.

Generally, questions are asked during the interview.

The questions can change according to the responses the candidate gives.

An unstructured interview does not follow any formal rules and procedures.

### 3. Stress Interview

These kinds of interviews are very rare. In this, the interviewer puts the interviewee under a stressful situation to test their presence of mind.

A stress interview also tests how the interviewee manages the crisis at a given time.

The interviewer tends to make the interviewee nervous by asking tons of questions at the same time.

It is done to see whether the candidate can cope with a crisis and not panic.

### 4. One to One Interview

It is a general interview. There are just two persons, i.e., the interviewer and the interviewee, and a formal discussion takes place face-to-face about the candidate's skills and abilities.

The interviewer asks general and technical questions to check the suitability.

## 5. Panel Interview

A panel interview is known as a board interview; the interview takes place between one candidate and a panel of members of the company, usually more than two.

Each one gives different scores to the candidates and combines them to see if the candidate is qualified.

Further, candidates are often victims of personal biases in a panel interview, and it is not feasible for organizations that take many interviews daily.

## 6. Telephonic Interview

Telephonic interviews are conducted over the phone and are economical and less time-consuming. The company can select promising individuals for the job through these interviews.

Its main objective is to limit the list of candidates and appoint the best ones.

These are more accurate than one-to-one interviews for judging interviewees' intelligence and interpersonal skills.

The candidates are usually surprised by the unexpected call from the recruiter.

However, they have a drawback; just as the candidate will be surprised, they likely can be panicked.

Moreover, answers are to be given in a restricted time.

## 7. Video Interview

One of the newest forms of interviews is conducted through various video conferences, online chats, or messaging due to their rapidity and inexpensiveness. It saves time and money.

The best part of these interviews is that both the interviewer and interviewee need not be in the same place, not even the same continent.

It is just like a personal interview, where the recruiter informs you about the interview a few hours before the scheduled time.

These interviews are done if the interviewee lives far off and cannot make it to the interviewer's place for valid reasons.

## 8. Depth Interview

As the term itself says, it distinguishes the interviewee in-depth. These are detailed and discovery-oriented.

It covers the candidate's life history, academic qualifications, interests, hobbies, and professional work experience.

The interviewer here is a listener and wants to know the candidates in detail, allowing more time and a free flow of conversation and making a friendly approach.

## **9. Open Call Interview**

Open-call interviews, most commonly known as walk-in interviews, are conducted on the spot. The questions are not present; they vary according to the candidates' responses. Most of these types of interviews are for seasonal or temporary job roles.

## **10. Exit Interview**

These interviews are conducted with company employees when they are leaving their jobs. In this interview, the employee is expected to deliver an honest review of his experience in the firm. Its main purpose is to give the person leaving a good feeling and take their suggestions.

# Job Interview

- ▶ A job interview is an interview consisting of a conversation between a job applicant and a representative of an employer which is conducted to assess whether the applicant should be hired.
- ▶ Interviews are one of the most common methods of employee selection.
- ▶ Interviews vary in the extent to which the questions are structured, from an unstructured and informal conversation to a structured interview in which an applicant is asked a predetermined list of questions in a specified order; structured interviews are usually more accurate predictors of which applicants will make suitable employees, according to research studies.
- ▶ A job interview typically precedes the hiring decision.
- ▶ The interview is usually preceded by the evaluation of submitted résumés from interested candidates, possibly by examining job applications or reading many resumes. Next, after this screening, a small number of candidates for interviews is selected.

# Media Interview

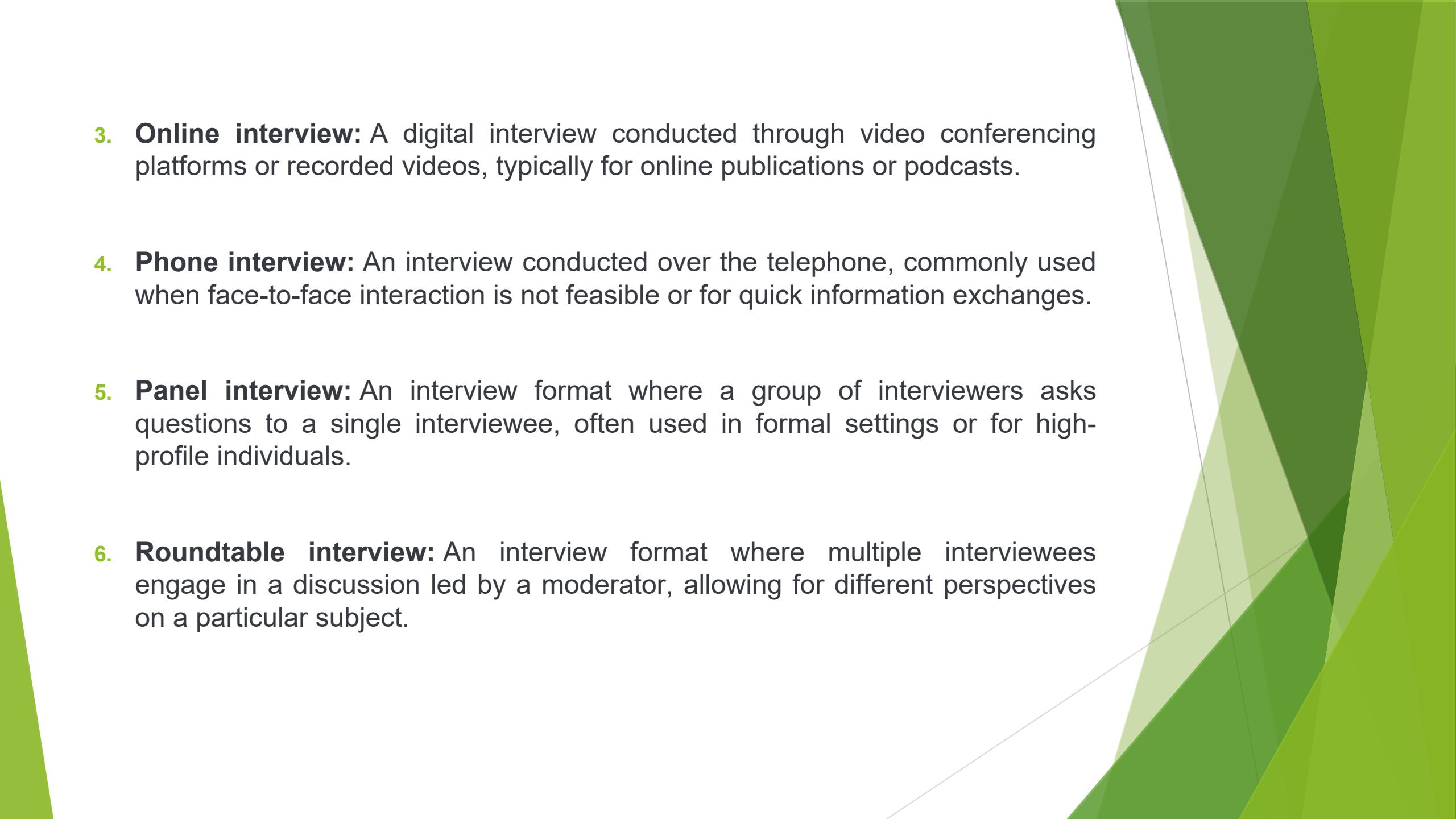
- ▶ A media interview is a conversation between a journalist and a news subject that will be used for TV or radio. The interviewee does not usually have the questions in advance, but they should take time to prepare answers to likely questions.
- ▶ The interview might be in person, over the phone, or via video chat.

# What Are The Different Types Of Media Interviews?

Media interviews provide an opportunity to reach a broad audience and expand public relations efforts. You can maximize your exposure by strategically selecting media outlets with an extensive reach, such as the BBC or prominent talk shows.

Here are some of the most common forms of media interviews:

1. **Press interview:** A traditional media interview conducted by journalists from newspapers, magazines, or news organizations to gather information and quotes for a story.
2. **Broadcast interview:** An interview conducted for radio or television platforms, on-air or recorded for later broadcast, to discuss a particular topic or share expert opinions.

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- The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping green triangles and trapezoids, creating a dynamic, layered effect.
- 3. Online interview:** A digital interview conducted through video conferencing platforms or recorded videos, typically for online publications or podcasts.
  - 4. Phone interview:** An interview conducted over the telephone, commonly used when face-to-face interaction is not feasible or for quick information exchanges.
  - 5. Panel interview:** An interview format where a group of interviewers asks questions to a single interviewee, often used in formal settings or for high-profile individuals.
  - 6. Roundtable interview:** An interview format where multiple interviewees engage in a discussion led by a moderator, allowing for different perspectives on a particular subject.

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- 7. Press conference:** An interview setting where a public figure or organization simultaneously presents information to a group of journalists, typically for major announcements or media briefings.
  - 8. One-on-one interview:** An interview between a single interviewer and interviewee, allowing for a more personal and in-depth conversation.
  - 9. Journalist-hosted interview:** An interview conducted by a journalist who acts as both the interviewer and the host, leading the conversation and engagingly asking questions.
  - 10. Celebrity interview:** An interview featuring a well-known personality, focusing on their personal life, career, and current projects, often conducted by entertainment or lifestyle journalists.

# Press Conferences

- ▶ Press conferences are events where information is distributed and where the media can ask questions.
- ▶ These events are held to respond to positive and negative news, for product launches, or to inform the media and public about any other information about a company.
- ▶ Most press conferences are announced through a press release, which is a well-crafted written statement outlining the nature of the conference.
- ▶ Press conferences are usually conducted by a company's executive management, press liaison, or communications officer.
- ▶ Lesser-known companies can hold press conferences to increase brand awareness while established companies can share news in the most positive light and increase their stature.

# Group Communications

# Introduction to Group Communication

- ▶ Group communication is sending and receiving messages between two or more people.
- ▶ It can be used to share information, ideas, and feelings.
- ▶ Group communication can occur in person or online.
- ▶ Online group communication can occur through email, chat rooms, forums, and social media.
- ▶ Face-to-face meetings are often more effective for groups because they allow for nonverbal communication, such as body language and facial expressions.
- ▶ In addition, this type of communication can help build relationships and trust among other group members.
- ▶ Overall, Group communication is an essential part of any organization.

# Forms of Group Communication

## 1. Verbal Communication:

- ✓ Verbal communication is the use of words to share information.
- ✓ This type of communication can be used in face-to-face interactions and over the phone.
- ✓ When communicating verbally, it's essential to pay attention to your tone and body language.

## **2. Non - Verbal Communication:**

- ✓ Nonverbal communication uses cues such as body language, gestures, and facial expressions to share information.
- ✓ This type of communication can be used in face-to-face interactions and over the phone.
- ✓ When communicating nonverbally, paying attention to your tone and body language is essential.

## **3. In - Person Communication:**

- ✓ In-person communication uses physical cues such as body language, gestures, and facial expressions to share information.
- ✓ This type of communication can be used in face-to-face interactions and over the phone.
- ✓ When communicating in person, paying attention to your tone and body language is essential.

#### **4. Virtual Communication:**

- ✓ Virtual communication uses email, instant messaging, and video conferencing to share information.
- ✓ This type of communication can be used in face-to-face interactions and over the phone.
- ✓ When communicating virtually, paying attention to your tone and body language is essential.

# Use of Body Language

Body language can be defined as a form of non-verbal communication that typically includes actions and mannerisms, such as the following:

- ✓ Facial expressions
- ✓ Gestures
- ✓ Posture
- ✓ Head movement
- ✓ Eye contact

These can be universal to all humans, and people may perform them consciously or subconsciously to convey their thoughts and feelings.

Experts say body language usually constitutes about half of what we are trying to communicate.

For example, a person may not always need to verbally say "no" to communicate that something is wrong or that they disagree with what a person is saying. Instead, they can shake their head from side to side to share the same sentiment. Moreover, if a student slouches in their chair in class and doesn't make eye contact with their teacher, they may be bored.

Body language can also enhance and complement verbal communication skills. For instance, if someone in a store asks for directions on where to find a product, and an employee merely says, "Over there," this information may be too vague to be helpful to the customer.

At that point, the employee can be more specific about the item's location by stating what aisle or department it is in. However, they may also gesture or point in the direction where the product is located. Even if the employee was not very specific and simply said "over there" while pointing, it would likely be more helpful than the original scenario with no body language.

# Importance of body language in communication

Body language often plays a significant role in everyday interactions, which may be why it tends to be one of the most popular topics in communication studies.

It is believed to have been of interest for thousands of years; even the Ancient Greeks interpreted the meanings behind human physical behavior.

# Group Discussion

- ▶ Group Discussion (GD) is a technique where a group of participants share their views and opinions on a topic for a specific duration. Companies conduct this evaluation process because business management is essentially a team activity and working with groups is an essential parameter in organizations.

# Group Discussion

“ Group discussion is a method of communication in which a small group of people come together to discuss a topic or problem. The group members share their ideas and perspectives with one another in order to arrive at a solution or decision that benefits the group as a whole. ”



Prior Knowledge



Active Listening



Effective Communication



Appropriate Body Language

- ▶ GD is an opportunity for an organization to evaluate a candidate's communication skills, knowledge, leadership skills, listening skills, social skills, ability to think on the spot, and improvise. A typical GD has about 8-12 participants and 2 or more assessors. The assessors sit where they can see and hear all the candidates.
- ▶ They record the behavior of participants during the group discussion. Then, they evaluate the recorded observations against the desired traits and finalize a few candidates from the group.

## Group Discussion (GD) Definition:

- ✓ Group discussion is a communication process that involves the exchange of ideas, information, and opinions among a group of people. It is a powerful tool for problem-solving, decision-making, and generating new ideas. - **Stephen P. Robbins**, author of “Organizational Behavior”
- ✓ A group discussion is an interactive process where a group of individuals come together to exchange ideas, opinions, and information on a specific topic. The goal of a group discussion is to arrive at a collective decision or solution that is acceptable to all members of the group.” - **The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)**

# Organizational Group Discussion

An organizational group discussion (GD) is a structured form of communication that involves a group of people discussing a specific topic or issue, usually within a professional or academic setting.

In organizations, group discussions are often used to assess individuals' communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and decision-making abilities. They can also serve as a way to brainstorm ideas, solve problems, or make decisions collectively.

# Key Features of Organizational Group Discussion

- 1. Purpose:** An organizational group discussion aims to reach a consensus on a particular topic, evaluate ideas, or assess the participants' views and skills. It can be used in hiring processes, internal meetings, project planning, and training.
- 2. Structure:** Typically, the discussion is time-bound and moderated by a facilitator or a leader who introduces the topic, outlines the rules, and ensures that the conversation stays on track.
- 3. Participants:** Group discussions usually involve 4-10 participants, each given the chance to share their thoughts. In an organizational context, participants can be employees, team members, or candidates in an interview setting.

4. **Topic:** The topic for discussion can range from general issues like "The impact of remote work on productivity" to specific organizational concerns like "How can we improve employee engagement?"
5. **Roles:** While every participant is expected to contribute, some discussions may assign specific roles, such as a timekeeper, note-taker, or evaluator.
6. **Evaluation (in assessment settings):** During job interviews or promotions, candidates' performance in group discussions is evaluated based on:
  - ✓ Communication skills: Clarity, confidence, and articulation of ideas.
  - ✓ Teamwork and collaboration: Ability to listen, respect others' opinions, and work together.
  - ✓ Leadership and Initiative: Ability to take the lead, organize ideas, and guide the discussion.
  - ✓ Problem-solving: Analytical skills and innovative approaches to the topic at hand.
  - ✓ Behavior and attitude: Emotional intelligence, patience, and conflict management.

# Group Discussion as a part of the Selection Process

- In recruitment, GD is often a key stage used to evaluate a candidate's communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, leadership qualities, and problem-solving ability. It is commonly used for roles requiring collaboration or client-facing skills, such as in the management, consulting, and banking sectors.
- Key aspects evaluated in GDs during the selection process:
  - ✓ Communication skills: Articulation, clarity of thoughts, and ability to express ideas effectively.
  - ✓ Teamwork: Ability to collaborate with others, respect different perspectives, and contribute constructively.
  - ✓ Leadership: Taking the initiative to steer the conversation without dominating it.
  - ✓ Critical thinking: Ability to analyze problems and provide thoughtful, relevant solutions.
  - ✓ Decision-making: Consensus-building skills and conflict resolution.
- Example: Candidates might be asked to discuss current affairs or a business scenario to see how they engage in group dynamics and problem-solving.

# Group Discussion in Meetings

- In organizational meetings, GDs are used to foster collaboration, decision-making, and problem-solving among team members. These discussions typically involve exchanging ideas, debating different perspectives, and arriving at a consensus.
- Key points about GDs in meetings:
  - ✓ Objective-driven: The discussion is focused on solving specific problems, sharing information, or planning projects.
  - ✓ Team participation: Active involvement of all team members ensures diverse inputs and comprehensive decision-making.
  - ✓ Decision-making: Meetings often conclude with action items or decisions reached after thorough discussion.
- Example: In a product development meeting, teams may engage in a GD to brainstorm ideas for new features or address customer feedback.

# Group Discussion in Conferences

- In conferences, especially academic or business-oriented ones, GDs allow participants to exchange knowledge, insights, and best practices in their field. They may be informal sessions that encourage interaction after presentations or formal panel discussions.
- GD in conferences typically involves:
  - ✓ Expert interaction: Participants can interact with experts and peers to share their perspectives.
  - ✓ Knowledge sharing: GDs allow for a deeper exploration of topics discussed in keynote addresses or presentations.
  - ✓ Networking: It fosters professional relationships among individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Example: A business conference may have breakout sessions where professionals discuss market trends, challenges, and potential innovations.

# Group Discussion in Symposia and Seminars

- Symposia and seminars are more academically inclined forums, where GDs help participants engage with complex topics and research findings. Group discussions enable the exploration of different viewpoints, challenge existing theories, and foster intellectual growth.
- Characteristics of GD in symposia and seminars:
  - ✓ Focused discussions: The topic is often academic, technical, or research-based, requiring in-depth analysis and debate.
  - ✓ Participation of scholars and experts: Group discussions may include researchers, scholars, and students contributing to the discourse.
  - ✓ Learning platform: It helps participants enhance their understanding through diverse viewpoints and collaborative learning.
- Example: In a symposium on climate change, participants might discuss policy implications, scientific advancements, and practical solutions.

# Group Discussion in Negotiations

- In negotiations, GDs play a crucial role in reaching agreements, especially in corporate, legal, or diplomatic scenarios. Here, the discussion focuses on mutual gains, concessions, and establishing terms that are agreeable to all parties involved.
- Key aspects of GD in negotiations:
  - ✓ Collaborative problem-solving: Both parties discuss terms, express their interests, and look for a middle ground.
  - ✓ Conflict resolution: Effective communication and listening skills are key to resolving disagreements and coming to a consensus.
  - ✓ Persuasion and influence: Participants aim to convince the other party of their viewpoint while balancing their demands and offers.
- Example: During contract negotiations between a company and a supplier, both sides might engage in a GD to settle on pricing, delivery schedules, and service levels.