

Group Discussion techniques

source:<https://gdpi.hitbullseye.com/GD-Tips.php>

- **Strategy for what to do in GD:**

When proposing an idea or argument, be very clear and structured in thinking and communication. Charm and personality takes you up to a certain point but after that it is simply your intelligence, thought process and command over the language which pulls you through. After proposing your idea, you must put forth a question. The person who answers the questions will have to look at you while answering, giving you a chance to intervene with another idea. Once you learn to handle the group discussions in a scientific way, there is no need for you to resort to techniques such as shouting, hammering your fist on the table, etc

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- **Group communication** is considered effective as it provides an **Keep the following GD preparation tips in mind:**
- **Be Yourself:**
The most important mantra to ace GDs is “Be Yourself”. The more you change things about yourself, the more trouble you would find yourself in. The best way to go about things is to be natural and make sure all your responses are natural and spontaneous. To ease the burden of yourself, see a group discussion as an extension of your everyday conversation. This would enable you to think straight, and make sure you do not let negativity cloud your thought process.

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- **A Group Discussion is not a seminar:**
- The most fundamental principle of participating in a Group Discussion is that you need to speak; there is no escape to this bare minimum requirement of a group discussion. One simple task is to take notes and generate a list of points to speak on; unless you are specifically asked by the invigilators not to take a pen and paper inside. On the rough sheet of paper, prepare a small little framework analyzing the topic from every angle and ensuring that you have understood the multiple facets of the topic that are generally there.

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- The success of an interjection depends not only on assertiveness but also on the receptiveness of others. If you interject when someone else has just begun speaking is unlikely that he will let you have your way. On the other hand, if you wait till he has made at least some of his points, he will be more amenable to letting you speak. A discussion has to flow naturally.

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- **Prologue and Epilogue:**

A lot of students generally think that opening the GD is the best way of entering one. But do remember that this approach is fraught with dangers, and the risks and rewards of doings so are generally very high. As far as time to speak in a GD goes, the opening speaker has the best chance to speak for the longest duration of time. During the time the opening speaker speaks, the others are still grasping the issue and coming to terms with it, and this gives him a chance to dwell on the topic and illustrate his viewpoint

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- This also means that the evaluators get a good look at time and can clearly listen to his views. But, the greatest challenge with opening a discussion is that the speaker needs to do it well. If he fails to deliver quality content, he misleads the group, as well as he earns negative points from the evaluators as full attention is placed on him. All of a sudden, he would be viewed as someone who jumps the gun and does not provide topics the kind of rational thinking they require. In a nutshell, speaking first has its rewards but only if done well. If you make a meal of it, you are bound to entertain the wrath of the invigilators.

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- **Taking the Stage:**

In a hostile environment, with a number of speakers putting across their points in a vociferous manner, it becomes hard to enter a group discussion. The solution to this problem is not a cut and dried one, and it requires a lot of practice to get over this problem. In such a scenario, making your presence felt is absolutely essential. Here are some of the things that you could do in a loud group discussion:

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- **Enter the lows-** GDs are peculiar in the sense that move like a wave, and have their highs and lows. You are advised to note these patterns, and whenever you find that the noise levels have reduced, that is your moment to enter the discussion. But do remember, at times, you would not get such a chance at all. And if in the first few minutes of the GD, you observe that there are no lows, you would be left with no choice but to barge your way in.
- **Interjecting in a discussion with a question-** A good way to enter group discussion is to ask a question from other participants. Questions attract the attention of the group towards you, providing a vital chance to jump in the discussion and provide inputs. At this juncture, ask follow up questions or give thoughts on the question that you raised.

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- **Enter after a person has made his point** - It is vital for you to understand that interjections need to be made at the right moment. For example, someone has just started with his points and you try to cut him short. It is rare that the other person would give you a chance to speak before he completes his points. On the other hand, if you allow him to put across his points and then enter the discussion by interrupting him, there is a greater chance you succeed.

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- **Tips to enter the group discussion**

- **Enter with a supportive statement-** Generally, when we enter a group discussion, we do so by interjecting the other person and contradicting his viewpoint. A street-smart way to enter the discussion could be by supporting the point of another person. By using statements such as “I agree with what my friend says...” or “I would like to add...” or “I think a point we could add here...”
- **Enter by increasing volume-**The popular way adopted to enter a loud GD is to increase one’s volume. Though it a method that comes almost naturally and one is prone to shouting in such an environment, this may contribute to the melee. It is in your best interest that you combine this method with other mentioned in this section so that you are able to make an impact. Also, make sure that even though with a raised voice, it does not pass the impression that you are shouting.

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- **Generate supportive data:**

Use facts and illustrations to add value. However, be very sure of the validity of any statistic you quote. If you mention a wrong figure, someone in the group could point out the mistake. If that doesn't happen, the evaluators might notice the mistake. A fact or a statistic cannot be an argument in itself. It can only support a point you are making. So do not quote a fact and let it land. Follow it up with some sort of inference or conclusion that can be drawn from it.

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- **Be an active listener:** Listen carefully to others' contributions to avoid pitfalls. Listening will benefit you in the following ways:
 - It will prevent you from repeating something already said
 - It will give you new areas to think about since a participant may have introduced an excellent point, which you had not thought of
 - It will help you take the discussion forward, taking on from where another participant has left
 - It may even help you understand a topic, which you were ignorant of, before the first speaker defined it.

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- **Be assertive, not aggressive:**

It is a myth that successful managers are aggressive. They are not aggressive, rather they are assertive. There is a fine dividing line between assertiveness and aggressiveness. An aggressive person is someone who puts forward his point and tries to dominate others. He raises his voice, does not listen to or understand other people's viewpoint, takes it as a personal affront if others disagree with him and ends up offending others. On the other hand, an assertive person puts across his point strongly and rationally. So, do not be aggressive in your next GD. Instead, be assertive.

- **Make Friends:**

Building allies is often an important aspect of a GD. Being heard is one thing and getting a positive response to your arguments is another. Get people on your side and ensure that they are receptive to your arguments. They will not only allow you to interject in the discussion, but they will also support your arguments. When supporting someone else's arguments does not just say "I agree". Try to add value by adding points of your own that extend the argument. You could build allies by giving others a chance to speak when they are in agreement with you (but only after you feel you have made your point). The final weapon at our disposal is your body language. Try and appear friendly, not intimidating. Smile, it often works! Speak clearly, speak sense and also let others speak. In a GD, you must speak, but you must also be heard by the other participants. Other participants will listen to you IF:

- Your voice is audible and clear
- Your contribution is relevant and made at the appropriate time
- You listen to others; you let them speak and you are not too aggressive. This does not mean that you should only let others speak. You must let them speak and also speak yourself.

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- **Quality of Content:**
More important than the amount of time you speak for, is the quality of what you have said and the impact that it has on the group. You do not have to dominate the GD by speaking for a long period of time. You have to influence a group by providing it direction, highlighting the crucial issues and putting forth persuasive arguments. There is no formula to calculate the right duration of participation in a GD. In a 15-minute GD in which there are 12 participants, if you are able to speak for two minutes spread across four or five occasions, it should be enough.
- **Value-Additions:** You can add value to a discussion keeping the following in mind:
 - Provide a structure that enables the discussion to carry on
 - Provide analysis that helps in distilling the discussion
 - Provide new facts and details
 - Examples should be rational and clear
 - Avoid flimsy repetition of thought
 - Do not lose focus and discuss trivial issues
 - Try to provide a summary to the discussion