

## **Group Discussion**

Group discussion (GD) is a comprehensive technique to judge the suitability of an individual and his appropriateness for admission, scholarship, job, etc. GD assesses the overall personality – thoughts, feelings and behaviour - of an individual in a group. A topic is presented to the group members for discussion. While the discussion is going on, a group of panellists observe them. Through this observation they judge intellectual, social, leadership, communicative skills of candidates taking part in the GD.

### **Importance of GD**

For admission to some of the universities, B- Schools, campus placements after graduation or for recruitment to a multinational company, you need to have knowledge of the field and also have the capability to work in a group as a leader or as a member. The group discussion technique is a very effective way to judge the candidate's ability to work in a group.

### **What are the skills that are judged in a GD?**

- How good you are at communicating with other
- How easily you behave and interact with the other group members
- How open minded you are
- How flexible or rigid you are in accepting the view- points of others in the group
- Your leadership skills
- Your analytical abilities
- Problem solving & critical thinking skills
- Time management skills
- Your skills at putting forth your ideas in an unbiased manner
- Social attitude and confidence

### **A Preview of a Group Discussion session**

Let us have a look into a typical group discussion situation.

A group was given a topic for Group Discussion – 'Education is the only way to remove poverty'. One of the candidates in the group, 'Vishal', was very aggressive in his manner of putting up the arguments in favour of the topic. Many times he even cut down other candidates and barely allowed others to speak. He spoke rudely in case anyone put up a different view and his voice was also loud. His body language was rude and not pleasant. He was doing this to appear like a leader who knew the most about the topic of discussion.

Do you think Vishal's behaviour was correct? Do you agree that Vishal's behaviour would help him get a job?

### **Do's of participating in a GD**

- Think before you speak.
- Pick up clues from the discussion and intelligently add points that come to your mind with regards to the topic, in case you don't know much about the topic.
- Back up your points with facts and figures if needed.
- Be gentle and sure in your presentation of views.
- Speak to-the-point and make sure that you do not repeat the points.
- Be calm and composed while speaking.
- Listening to others is also an important aspect of participation in the group discussion, so listen to others.
- Have respectful attitude towards the viewpoints of others.
- Your body language should convey your ease of behaviour.
- Sometimes the discussion may take a hostile turn. In such a case it is a good idea to intervene to make the situation relaxed. This act of yours will show your leadership and problem solving skills.

### **Don'ts of participating in a GD**

- Do not initiate the discussion if you do not know the topic well.
- Do not go overboard in exhibiting your knowledge even if you know the topic well.
- Do not interrupt other members when they are speaking.
- Do not change your opinion about the topic just because most of the other participants are having an opinion different from yours.
- Do not feel unconfident if a speaker prior to you has presented the points more effectively than you.
- Do not ask irrelevant questions.
- Do not let your personal biases about the topic enter the discussion

### **Points to be kept in mind before the GD**

No one knows what the topic of GD is going to be. Hence, it will be a good idea to keep yourself abreast with topics like:

#### **1. Current Affairs**

Current Affairs is something that you have to be thorough with. For this, read newspapers regularly and watch news on the television. Understand the recent crises that the world is reeling under, the latest developmental initiatives, the ties between various countries and the like.

#### **2. Historical topics**

Have a fair knowledge about the country's history and also the history of other countries. The topics may not be specifically from this area, but having historical information will help you cite examples and make references whenever needed.

#### **3. Sports, Arts & Literature**

#### **4. Data crunching**

Familiarize yourself with important data. Throwing in some data if required in your GD will definitely create an impression among the assessors.

Read as much as possible. Have good and sound knowledge on numerous topics. Watching documentaries on various topics will help here. Improve your vocabulary. This does not mean that you use heavy and big words, but it means that you will be able to understand the topic better and contribute effectively.

Last but not the least; mentally visualize yourself as succeeding and you will succeed.