



Vijay Institute of Management
(Approved by AICTE, New Delhi & Affiliated to Anna University)
MBA – TANCET Counselling Code 683
Phone: 852 6396 369, 852 6396 469, 852 6396 569

B.B.A

GROUP DISCUSSION SKILLS

(UG Course Material for MK University - Madurai)

Unit 1

Self assessment: Preparing Bio data, curriculum vitae, resume – Functional, chronological

Preparation of Bio data

Personal Profile:

Name	:	Your Name
Father's Name	:	
Date of Birth	:	Your Date of Birth
Permanent Address	:	Your Address
Marital Status	:	-----
Religion	:	-----
Nationality	:	-----
Hobbies	:	-----
Communication Language	:	-----
Contact No.	:	Example:- 0123456789

Educational Qualification:

- Passed High School (Art) from U.P. Board in the year 2004.
- Passed Intermediate (Art) from U.P. Board in the year 2006.
- Appearing B.A. from Kanpur University.

Experience:

Two year experience in Marketing.

Certification:

I, the undersigned certify that to the best of best of knowledge and belief, The Resume correctly describes my qualification and everything.

Date:

Yours sincerely,

Place:

(Your Name)

Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae, commonly referred to as CV, is a longer (two or more pages), more detailed synopsis than a resume. Your CV should be clear, concise, complete, and up-to-date with current employment and educational information.

The following are examples of information that can be included in your curriculum vitae. The elements that you include will depend on what you are applying for, so be sure to incorporate the most relevant information to support your candidacy in your CV.

- **Personal details and contact information.** Most CVs start with contact information and personal data but take care to avoid superfluous details, such as religious affiliation, children's names and so on.
- **Education and qualifications.** Take care to include the names of institutions and dates attended in reverse order; Ph.D., Masters, Undergraduate.
- **Work experience/employment history.** The most widely accepted style of employment record is the chronological curriculum vitae. Your career history is presented in reverse date order starting with most recent. Achievements and responsibilities are listed for each role. More emphasis/information should be put on more recent jobs.
- **Skills.** Include computer skills, foreign language skills, and any other recent training that is relevant to the role applied for.
- Brief biography
- Scholarships
- Training
- Study abroad
- Dissertations
- Theses
- Bibliography
- Research experience
- Graduate Fieldwork
- Teaching experience
- Publications
- Presentations and lectures

Resume

A resume is a summary of your education, experience and skills for potential employers. The resume's physical appearance, and more importantly, what you say and how you say it, will affect an employer's decision to interview you. Your resume should highlight your qualifications for employment in a particular position or career field. A resume prepared for one position might leave out information that would be included in a resume for another position. In all cases, your resume should focus on your qualifications and transferable skills, and suggest future contributions you could make to the employer.

Your resume should always be up-to-date, so rewrite and reprint as often as necessary- in fact, it is a good idea to update your resume every time you have a new accomplishment or credential. Keep in mind that your resume may get as little as 15- 30 seconds of consideration. Be relevant, concise, and consistent in your layout and writing style. Always remember, resumes get interview, not job!

CHECKLIST

Use this before asking someone to critique your resume for you.

- **Most Important Info First-** Everything on your resume should be written with the most important information first. Consider this when choosing the order of sections after the Objective.
- **Reverse Chronological Order-** Within each section, each entry should be arranged with the most recent experience first.
- **Relevant to Objective-** When you're trying to decide what to leave in and what to leave out, make certain that everything relates back to your Objective. Also, make sure that your descriptions highlight and accentuate the connection to your Objective.
- **Meet the Employer's Needs-** (academic, experience, leadership)- Everything on your resume should communicate to the reader that you know what the employer's needs are and that you have the experience, skills, leadership and education to meet employer's needs.
- **Be Professional-** When people seek an entry-level position, they are generally trying to bridge the gap between student and professional. You can accomplish this by keeping out or changing the items which remind people that you are student (high school education/activities, listing dates by semester rather than month, listing many "interests").
- **Consistency-** Everything from dates to abbreviations and formatting should remain consistent throughout your resume.
- **Past Tense-** Use past tense action words to demonstrate the transferrable skills you can offer the employer.
- **No Pronouns**
- **Sentence Fragments-** Employers look for short, direct pieces of information. If it is too long or overly descriptive, people may choose to skip it.
- **Include Skills, Memberships, etc.**

What is a Chronological Resume?

A chronological resume is the **most commonly used resume format among job seekers**. Also referred to as a reverse-chronological format, this style is what most people traditionally think of when they hear the word "resume." This resume style gets its name from the way the Professional Experience section lists a candidate's past jobs in a reverse-chronological order.

The reason this format is preferred by the majority of job seekers is that it **accommodates all industries and levels of experience**. Since the chronological style is so conventional, most veteran HRs also favor it over other formats. Since its work experience is listed chronologically, this format is really nice for those who want to demonstrate a vertical career progression.

Chronological Resume Example

James white

17017 Fuzzy Blvd, Edmond, OR 00222
c: 455-999-3333 | e: JaFree@copxs.net

Energetic and motivating leader with proven ability to effectively manage both personnel and projects.

Self starter and strong independent worker. Excel at analyzing products and procedures to generate new ideas to improve efficiency and production quality. Highly adaptable to ever-changing circumstances. Key member in any team developing and executing strategic business plans.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Comfort, Inc., 20XX-Present Manager

- *Manage* daily operations of a \$1 million foam insulation company.
- *Train* and *supervise* work crews in more efficient product installation techniques that have reduced material waste by 20% and labor hours by 43%.
- *Develop* sales team's knowledge in the areas of building science and energy conservation in order to provide customers with the information to successfully plan for and utilize spray foam insulation.
- *Developed* an effective marketing campaign and restructured product pricing/discounts resulting in an 80% bid acceptance rate.
- *Implemented* new bidding process utilizing Excel spreadsheets to formulate more accurate bids. Allowed for the tracking of individual job costs and provided feedback as to efficiency of crews with regards to material waste and labor hours.

United States Rescue Officer, 19XX-20XX Manager (20XX-20XX)

- **Data Network Manager** - *Managed* command and control data network used to generate video representation of geographic area surrounding ship. Team consisted of 38 individuals from four departments.
- **Production Control Officer** - *Coordinated* the efforts of 135 personnel utilizing 37,000 man hours, completed 520 jobs totaling over \$4 million during 13-month refurbishment period.
- **Assistant Command Duty Officer** - *Directed* daily routine utilizing a duty section of 600 personnel from 12 different departments.

Instructor Pilot (19XX–20XX)

- Administered, coordinated, and supervised flight and academic training for United States flight training program. Encompassed over 200 instructors and 600 students in five units.

- Coordinated and supervised four Flight Commanders to insure pilot completion rates met quarterly and annual goals.
- Managed and scheduled 11 instructor pilots and 38 flight students to complete primary and intermediate level flight training.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **MBA** - Finance, Auburn University,
- **B.A. Business Economics** - University of Costa Rica
- **Aviator** - Advanced Flight Training, United States Flight Patrol
- **Integrated Project Team Course** - Project Management College, United States Flight Patrol

Selective courses in building construction, construction management, and cost estimating.

AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS

- Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal
- Humanitarian Service Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

Unit 2

Group discussion – meaning, uses and objectives

Group Discussion

The group discussion is a personality test most popular with public / private sector undertaking, government departments, commercial firms, iims, universities and other educational organizations to screen candidates, after the written test.

In GD all there equal as participants. No one is officially chosen as leader. But a candidate by his / her initiative / ability to join in the discussion, maturity and clarity or ideas and understanding of group dynamics gradually beings to direct the course of discussion and mediate between the opposing views to above a evolve a comprehensive view of the whole group.

Techniques for GD

1. The group usually consists of 8 to 10 candidates
2. No one is nominated as leader, coordinator or chairman to conduct the discussion.
3. Normally, 20 to 30 min. is given as time to complete the discussion.
4. Each candidate is indicated by his / her roll number and is to be addressed adoringly.
5. The seating is arranged is a circle and the candidate are seated adoring to the ascending order of whole members.

Characteristics of Group Discussions

Some of the salient features common to all group discussions are as follows:

(i) Interface: A basic feature of group discussions is the interaction among the various members of the group. They see, hear and communicate with each other orally by paying attention to each other.

(ii) Leader and Members: Group discussions are effective only when there is a group of members and a leader. The leader has to summarize facts and information, integrate them, stimulate thinking and agree to a unanimous solution of the problem. The members of the group become actively related to each other in their respective roles.

(iii) Participation: The effectiveness and efficiency of a group discussion depend, to a large extent, upon the active participation of the members.

(iv) Interpersonal Attraction: Another characteristic feature of a group discussion is interpersonal attraction. As long as interaction continues, the likes, dislikes, behavior and temperament of members are known to each other. Among them, empathy develops and as such they share each others problems.

(v) Pressure to Conform: In a group discussion, there is always an element of pressure to conform to norms. The pre-defined and established standards are always enforced and followed.

(vi) Conflict: A conflict is a difference or disagreement among the members of the group, which often arise during deliberations and discussions. A conflict is inevitable and usually develops when alternative solutions are present. It can stimulate the members to find new solutions to the problem. Thus, conflict is not necessarily bad. But if it arises due to the political behavior of the members it will have dysfunctional consequences.

The Uses or advantages of GD:

- (i) It provides a deeper understanding of the subject.
- (ii) It improves the ability to think critically.
- (iii) It provides different approaches to solving a problem.
- (iv) It helps the group in taking a decision.
- (v) It gives an opportunity to hear the opinions of other persons.
- (vi) It enables a participant to put across his/her viewpoint.
- (vii) It enhances confidence in speaking.
- (viii) It can change your opinion and show you things from a different perspective

Objectives

- (i) To reach a solution on an issue of concern
- (ii) To generate new ideas or new approaches to solving a problem
- (iii) For selecting candidates after the written test for employment or for admission to educational institutes

(iv) To provide us with an avenue to train ourselves in various interpersonal skills

Unit - 3

Preparing for discussion – leading the discussion

What is a Discussion?

A discussion is understood as an activity of sitting and talking about a specific subject. The word ‘discuss’ has been derived from the latin root ‘discutere’, which means to shake or strike. Thus ‘discussion’ refers to thoroughly shaking up the subject, that is, examining it thoroughly to reach a conclusion.

Preparation of discussion

During the GD the candidates are evaluated for the following traits:

- Knowledge base.
- Alertness and presence of mind
- Communication
- Confidence
- Leadership
- Listening Skills
- Team Skills
- Goal Orientation

An effective group discussion generally has a number of elements:

- ❖ All members of the group have a chance to speak, expressing their own ideas and feelings freely, and to pursue and finish out their thoughts
- ❖ All members of the group can hear others’ ideas and feelings stated openly

- ❖ Group members can safely test out ideas that are not yet fully formed

Group members can receive and respond to respectful but honest and constructive feedback. Feedback could be positive, negative, or merely clarifying or correcting factual questions or errors, but is in all cases delivered respectfully.

- ❖ A variety of points of view are put forward and discussed
- ❖ The discussion is not dominated by any one person
- ❖ Arguments, while they may be spirited, are based on the content of ideas and opinions, not on personalities

Even in disagreement, there's an understanding that the group is working together to resolve a dispute, solve a problem, create a plan, make a decision, find principles all can agree on, or come to a conclusion from which it can move on to further discussion

Lead the discussion

How active you are might depend on your leadership style, but you definitely have some responsibilities here. They include setting, or helping the group to set the discussion topic; fostering the open process; involving all participants; asking questions or offering ideas to advance the discussion; summarizing or clarifying important points, arguments, and ideas; and wrapping up the session. Let's look at these, as well as some do's and don't's for discussion group leaders.

Setting the topic. If the group is meeting to discuss a specific issue or to plan something, the discussion topic is already set. If the topic is unclear, then someone needs to help the group define it. The leader – through asking the right questions, defining the problem, and encouraging ideas from the group – can play that role.

Fostering the open process. Nurturing the open process means paying attention to the process, content, and interpersonal dynamics of the discussion all at the same time – not a simple matter. As leader, your task is not to tell the group what to do, or to force particular conclusions, but rather to make sure that the group chooses an appropriate topic that meets its needs, that there are no “right” answers to start with (no foregone conclusions), that no one person or small group dominates the discussion, that everyone follows the ground rules, that discussion is civil and organized, and that all ideas are subjected to careful critical analysis. You might comment on the process of the

discussion or on interpersonal issues when it seems helpful (“We all seem to be picking on John here – what’s going on?”), or make reference to the open process itself (“We seem to be assuming that we’re supposed to believe X – is that true?”). Most of your actions as leader should be in the service of modeling or furthering the open process.

Part of your job here is to protect “minority rights,” i.e., unpopular or unusual ideas. That doesn’t mean you have to agree with them, but that you have to make sure that they can be expressed, and that discussion of them is respectful, even in disagreement. (The exceptions are opinions or ideas that are discriminatory or downright false.) Odd ideas often turn out to be correct, and shouldn’t be stifled.

Involving all participants. This is part of fostering the open process, but is important enough to deserve its own mention. To involve those who are less assertive or shy, or who simply can’t speak up quickly enough, you might ask directly for their opinion, encourage them with body language (smile when they say anything, lean and look toward them often), and be aware of when they want to speak and can’t break in. It’s important both for process and for the exchange of ideas that everyone have plenty of opportunity to communicate their thoughts.

Asking questions or offering ideas to advance the discussion. The leader should be aware of the progress of the discussion, and should be able to ask questions or provide information or arguments that stimulate thinking or take the discussion to the next step when necessary. If participants are having trouble grappling with the topic, getting sidetracked by trivial issues, or simply running out of steam, it’s the leader’s job to carry the discussion forward.

This is especially true when the group is stuck, either because two opposing ideas or factions are at an impasse, or because no one is able or willing to say anything. In these circumstances, the leader’s ability to identify points of agreement, or to ask the question that will get discussion moving again is crucial to the group’s effectiveness.

Summarizing or clarifying important points, arguments, or ideas. This task entails making sure that everyone understands a point that was just made, or the two sides of an argument. It can include

restating a conclusion the group has reached, or clarifying a particular idea or point made by an individual (“What I think I heard you say was...”). The point is to make sure that everyone understands what the individual or group actually meant.

Wrapping up the session. As the session ends, the leader should help the group review the discussion and make plans for next steps (more discussion sessions, action, involving other people or groups, etc.). He should also go over any assignments or tasks that were agreed to, make sure that every member knows what her responsibilities are, and review the deadlines for those responsibilities. Other wrap-up steps include getting feedback on the session – including suggestions for making it better – pointing out the group’s accomplishments, and thanking it for its work.

Follow-up

Even after you’ve wrapped up the discussion, you’re not necessarily through. If you’ve been the recorder, you might want to put the notes from the session in order, type them up, and send them to participants. The notes might also include a summary of conclusions that were reached, as well as any assignments or follow-up activities that were agreed on.

If the session was one-time, or was the last of a series, your job may now be done. If it was the beginning, however, or part of an ongoing discussion, you may have a lot to do before the next session, including contacting people to make sure they’ve done what they promised, and preparing the newsprint notes to be posted at the next session so everyone can remember the discussion.

Leading an effective group discussion takes preparation (if you have the opportunity for it), an understanding of and commitment to an open process, and a willingness to let go of your ego and biases. If you can do these things, the chances are you can become a discussion leader that can help groups achieve the results they want.

Unit 4

Answering question, accepting others view and summarizing

A group discussion:

- Gives everyone involved a voice. Whether the discussion is meant to form a basis for action, or just to play with ideas, it gives all members of the group a chance to speak their opinions, to agree or disagree with others, and to have their thoughts heard. In many community-building situations, the members of the group might be chosen specifically because they represent a cross-section of the community, or a diversity of points of view.
- Allows for a variety of ideas to be expressed and discussed. A group is much more likely to come to a good conclusion if a mix of ideas is on the table, and if all members have the opportunity to think about and respond to them.
- Is generally a democratic, egalitarian process. It reflects the ideals of most grassroots and community groups, and encourages a diversity of views.
- Leads to group ownership of whatever conclusions, plans, or action the group decides upon. Because everyone has a chance to contribute to the discussion and to be heard, the final result feels like it was arrived at by and belongs to everyone.
- Encourages those who might normally be reluctant to speak their minds. Often, quiet people have important things to contribute, but aren't assertive enough to make themselves heard. A good group discussion will bring them out and support them.
- Can often open communication channels among people who might not communicate in any other way. People from very different backgrounds, from opposite ends of the political spectrum, from different cultures, who may, under most circumstances, either never make contact or never trust one another enough to try to communicate, might, in a group discussion, find more common ground than they expected.
- Is sometimes simply the obvious, or even the only, way to proceed. Several of the examples given at the beginning of the section – the group of parents concerned about their school system, for instance, or the college class – fall into this category, as do public hearings and similar gatherings.

Summarize

- You should summarize all the points discussed in a Group Discussion, in a nutshell.
- While concluding a GD, avoid raising new points.
- Do not emphasize on your individual viewpoint while summarizing a GD.
- Keep the conclusion of a GD concise.

- While summarizing a GD, include all important points that came out during the group discussion.
- Avoid emphasis on one aspect of the Group Discussion.
- If someone has concluded the Group Discussion, do not contradict unless the conclusion has flaws or you have vital point to add.

Things to remember while concluding the GD:

- **1. Time Tracking:**

Keeping a track of the time is very crucial while making a closing argument. You should neither conclude the GD in a very short time nor stretch the conclusion very long.

- **2. Recall each and every point:**

You must mention each and every important point discussed in the group discussion early on and also mention its impact on your conclusion, if possible.

- **3. Closure Argument:**

The closure argument is always the crux of the group discussion. Make sure that your closure argument must be correct and based on the actual data. You must add the final points in the conclusion and make your closure argument strong and persuasive.

- You must wait for the right moment to conclude the GD.

During a GD, you need to take up different and important task roles to make the Group Discussion more effective and productive. These task roles in a GD can be positive as well as negative. You should avoid taking up negative task roles in a GD.

Unit 5

Post discussion behavior – evaluation of merits & pitfalls in discussion

Evaluation

In any kind of GD, the aim is to judge the participants based on personality, knowledge, communicative ability to present the knowledge and leadership skills. Today team players are considered more important than individual contributors. Hence the potential to be a leader is evaluated and also ability to work in a team is tested. The evaluators generally assess the oral competence of a candidate in terms of team listening, appropriate language, clarity of expression, positive speech attitudes and adjustments, clear articulation, and effective non-verbal communication.

Personality:

Even before one starts communicating, impression is created by the appearance, the body language, eye-contact, mannerisms used etc. The attire of a participant creates an impression, hence it is essential to be dressed appropriately. The hairstyle also needs to suit the occasion. Other accessories also have to be suitable for the occasion. The facial expression helps to convey attitudes like optimism, self-confidence and friendliness. The body language, a non-verbal communication skill gives important cues to personality assessment. It includes the posture of a person, the eye-contact and overall manner in which one moves and acts. In the entire participation in the GD, the body language has an important role in the impact created. As non-verbal cues such as eye contact, body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and so on can speak louder than words, examiners closely watch the non-verbal behaviour of candidates. They generally evaluate the body language cues of candidates to determine personality factors such as nervousness, cooperation, frustration, weakness, insecurity, self-confidence, defensiveness, and so forth. So, it is important to be careful while using non-verbal messages. However, one should recognise the power of non-verbal messages and use them effectively.

Content:

Content is a combination of knowledge and ability to create coherent, logical arguments on the basis of that knowledge. Also a balanced response is what is expected and not an emotional response. In a group discussion, greater the knowledge of the subject more confident and enthusiastic would be the participation. Participants need to have a fair amount of knowledge on a wide range of subjects. The discussion of the subject must be relevant, rational, convincing and appealing to the listeners. One needs to keep abreast with national and international news, political, scientific, economic, cultural events, key newsmakers etc. This has to be supplemented by one's own personal reasoning and analysis. People with depth and range of knowledge are always preferred by dynamic companies and organisations. The topics for GD tests may include

interesting and relevant ideas pertaining to social, economic, political or environmental problems; controversial issues, innovations or case studies. To read daily newspapers, relevant magazines and periodicals, to watch news bulletins and informative programmes on television are a simple way to gather the general knowledge. One can use the Internet to improve one's knowledge about recent developments in different areas. Internet is a valuable source to acquire information along with multimedia form. Subject knowledge also includes the ability to analyse facts or information in a systematic way and to place them in the context of the framework of one's personal experiences. For the expertise in the GD, the only way is to practice wherever one can. The other members can evaluate the performance and give suggestions.

Communication Skills:

First and foremost feature of communication skills is that it is a two way process. Hence the communicator has to keep in mind the listeners and their expectations. The participants need to observe the group dynamics. Since GD tests one's behavior as well as one's influence on the group, formal language and mutual respect are obvious requirements. One may not take strong views in the beginning itself but wait and analyse the pros and cons of any situation. If one needs to disagree, learn to do so politely. One can directly put forward the personal viewpoint also. One may appreciate the good points made by others; can make a positive contribution by agreeing to and expanding an argument made by another participant. An idea can be appreciated only when expressed effectively. A leader or an administrator has the ability to put across the idea in an influential manner. Hence the participants in a group discussion must possess not only subject knowledge but also the ability to present that knowledge in an effective way. Since oral skills are used to put across the ideas, the ability to speak confidently and convincingly makes a participant an impressive speaker. The members of the selection committee closely evaluate the oral communication skills of the candidates. The effective communication would imply use of correct grammar and vocabulary, using the right pitch, good voice quality, clear articulation, logical presentation of the ideas and above all, a positive attitude. It is expected that there are no errors of grammar or usage and that appropriate words, phrases etc. are used. One should try to use simple and specific language. One should avoid ornamental language. Clarity of expression is one of the important criteria of communication. When there is clarity of thinking, there is clarity in usage of language. Positive Speech Attitudes is another criterion of evaluation in the GD whereby the participant's attitude towards listeners including other group members is judged. The temperament of the participant is also evaluated through the speech pattern.

Listening Skills:

Lack of active listening is often a reason for failure of communication. In the GD, participants often forget that it is a group activity and not a solo performance as in elocution. By participating as an active listener, he/she may be able to contribute significantly to the group deliberations. The listening skills are closely linked to the leadership skills as well.

Leadership Skills:

The success of any group depends to a large extent upon the leader. One of the common misconceptions about leadership is that the leader is the one who controls the group. There are different approaches to the concept of leadership. By studying the personality traits of great leaders

or actual dimensions of behavior to identify leadership one can learn to cultivate essential traits of leaders. In a GD, a participant with more knowledge, one who is confident, one who can find some solution to the problem and display initiative and responsibility will be identified as the leader. A candidate's success in a GD test will depend not only on his/her subject knowledge and oral skills but also on his/her ability to provide leadership to the group. Adaptability, analysis, assertiveness, composure, self-confidence, decision making, discretion, initiative, objectivity, patience, and persuasiveness are some of the leadership skills that are useful in proving oneself as a natural leader in a GD. The leader in a group discussion should be able to manage the group despite differences of opinion and steer the discussion to a logical conclusion within the fixed time limit. The examiners will assess whether each participant is a team player who can get along with people or an individualist who is always fighting to save his/her ego. Employers today look for candidates who can work in a team-oriented environment. GD participants need a number of team management skills in order to function effectively in a team. Some of the skills needed to manage a group effectively include adaptability, positive attitude, cooperation, and coordination.

In a selection GD, the group, which may consist of six to ten persons, is given a topic to discuss within 30 to 45 minutes. After announcing the topic, the total GD time, and explaining the general guidelines and procedures governing the GD, the examiner withdraws to the background leaving the group completely free to carry on with the discussion on its own without any outside interference. In the absence of a designated leader to initiate the proceedings of the discussion, the group is likely to waste time in cross talks, low-key conversations, cross-consultations, asides, and so on. The confusion may last until someone in the group takes an assertive position and restores the chaos into order. It could be any candidate. In order to get the GD started, the assertive, natural leader will have to remind the group of its goal and request them to start the discussion without wasting time. A few examples of the opening lines are given below:

- Well friends, may I request your kind attention? I am sure all of us are keen to begin the GD and complete it within the allotted time. Let me remind you that we have only thirty minutes to complete the task. So, let us get started.
- My dear friends, may I have your attention please? As you all know, we have to complete the discussion in 45 minutes and we have already used up five minutes. I think we should start the discussion now. Hello everybody. I am sorry to interrupt but I have something very important to say. We are here to discuss the topic — " Human cloning should be banned."—and the time given to us is just 30 minutes. Let us begin, shall we?

Leadership functions during a GD include initiative, analysis, assertiveness and so on. GD does not have a formal leader, hence one of the participants is expected to take the initiative. The leader will promote positive group interactions; point out areas of agreement and disagreement; help keep the discussion on the right track and lead the discussion to a positive and successful conclusion within the stipulated time. The ability to analyze a situation is a quality of leadership. Analytical skills and objectivity in expressing opinions are absolute requirements for leadership. With patience and composure one can develop the analytical skills. Reaching consensus by considering the group opinion will make the GD successful. Assertiveness that is an ability to bring order to the group by handling the conflict is another desirable quality of leadership. Self confidence is a quality which helps win the agreement from other participants. In GD, participants can make a favorable and

forceful impact on the group by being persuasive and convincing. In order to be persuasive, one has to advance strong, convincing, and logical arguments properly supported by factual data and forceful illustrations. A firm tone and a sober voice would also help in establishing oneself. A leader's ability to convince others and make them accept his/her views and suggestions will establish his/her credentials for leadership. Leaders are characterized by a high level of motivation and can motivate others too. A person with motivation can work hard to do the best job possible and can achieve targets. Team Management skills are important for a leader to manage the members of varied interests. Some of the skills needed to manage a group effectively include adaptability, positive attitude, cooperation, and coordination.

Pitfalls in discussion

- ***Endless Talking***

A GD, of course, is meant for talking and putting forth your opinions and ideas. But unlike the common perception, speaking endlessly in a GD **does not** make a good impression. Group discussion, as the name says, is essentially a discussion and **not a one-sided mouthing**. Most people think that speaking more, will work in their favor. Unfortunately, it works the other way around.

- ***Nervous Silence***

As much as talking too much is bad in a GD, keeping mum when you are supposed to speak is bad too. You may say nervousness is the reason for the silence, but the truth is **everyone of us gets nervous**. It is such a common phenomenon. It should **never** stop you from making your point. Calm down, take a deep breath and chip in with your ideas.

- ***Emotional Outburst***

It is true that every one of us has an emotional attachment with a particular topic. This attachment should not carry you away. Often people start **losing focus, get angry and deviate from the topic** during an emotional outburst. Keep in mind that you are being noted. Put your opinions forward in a **calm and appropriate manner**.

- ***Lack of Confidence***

At times, it is the lack of confidence going into a GD, that can ruin your chances of success. Thinking that other participants would be better than you are, will only put **more pressure** on you. You may possess **good knowledge and understanding of the topic**, but what good can it do, if you can't speak up?

- **Poor Communication Skills**

Your **knowledge can't help you if you can't express what you think**, in words. Most often, people ignore communication skills. They don't realize how important it is. Communication skills are important to convey your intended message – clearly and effectively.

- **Bad Body Language**

Body language plays an important role in a GD. **Pointing fingers at others** while speaking, **thumping on the table** to make a point and **sitting in bad postures** are some body signs that leave a bad impression on you.

- **Interrupting**

No one likes being interrupted. Especially when making a point. Though it is important to grab the opportunity to speak, it is **bad to interrupt someone midway** through his/her speech. This unsettles the other person and also the entire group. Wait for the other person to finish and then start speaking.

- **Drifting away from the topic**

The goal of any discussion is to arrive at a consensus. **Stay clear** of any points that can drift the topic away from reaching a conclusion. One way of doing this is to **consider what you are saying** and analyzing whether it applies to the context. Try to be **brief** and to the point.

- **Grabbing Attention**

Never try to grab attention. You will end up feeling awkward speaking something that doesn't relate to the topic of discussion. **Try to be yourself** and put forth your points clearly. You will very certainly be recognized for who you are.

- **Failing to keep track**

In a GD, always **listen keenly** to what every other person is saying. A moment's distraction would make you miss a point and lose track of the proceedings. This **could land you in trouble** and you may make a point irrelevant to the conversation.