

# GROUP DISCUSSION: TIPS, TRICKS & IDEAS

*For General Studies Department Students*



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KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI  
JABATAN PENDIDIKAN POLITEKNIK DAN KOLEJ KOMUNITI

**POLITEKNIK**  
MALAYSIA  
UNGKU OMAR

# COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH

## GROUP DISCUSSION

**TIPS**

**TRICKS**

**IDEAS**



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## *Preface*

This e-book is written for all polytechnic students pursuing their diplomas in various courses. This book is also useful for those who wish to improve their communicative skills.

The content of this book is designed in compliance with the English Syllabus of Polytechnic in Malaysia. This volume emphasizes on Communication Skills.

This e-book presents useful notes in an engaging manner to equip students with adequate information on the topic covered. Additionally, it provides ample real-world tasks as well as practices to enable students to apply the skills they have learned in real-world scenarios.

The writers of this e-book are dedicated polytechnic lecturers with an impressive teaching experience in teaching Communicative English subjects.

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Yours sincerely

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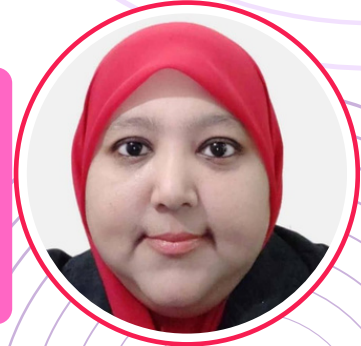
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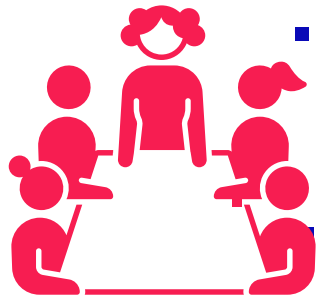
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# Table of Content

Introduction to Group Discussion

6

Language Functions : Enquiries , Clarifications, Making Suggestions/ Counter Suggestions, Agreeing or Disagreeing politely and Making interruptions politely

7

Turn Taking in a Group Discussion

19

Gestures and Facial Expressions during Group Discussion

21

6 Effective ways to initiate a Group Discussion

22

3 Effective ways to wrap up a Group Discussion

24

5 Common mistakes to avoid in a Group Discussion

25

Tips & Tricks to ace Group Discussion

26

Do's & Don'ts in Group Discussion

27

Sample group discussion situations with answers

28

Sample group discussion videos

29

Practice

31

# GROUP DISCUSSION



*A group discussion is an organized setting where a set of potential candidates are given a topic and are required to discuss and develop their ideas, examples, and opinions.*

*People can learn from one another, defend their positions on issues, and improve their group collaboration and interpersonal skills.*

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slides on GD

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# LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS :

## ENQUIRIES

**Enquiry is the act of asking questions to get information.**

**You may use these types of questions when enquiring:**

**WH - Questions**

**YES / NO Questions**

**Polite Request**

## WH Questions

**WHAT**

To ask about  
**THINGS**

**WHEN**

To ask about  
**TIME**

**WHERE**

To ask about  
**PLACES**

**WHO**

To ask about  
**PEOPLE**

**WHOM**

To ask about  
**PEOPLE**  
(Object of Verb)

**WHICH**

To ask about  
**CHOICES**

**WHOSE**

To ask about  
**POSSESSION**

**WHY**

To ask about  
**REASONS / CAUSES**

**HOW**

To ask about  
**MANNER / PROCESS**

Scan this QR code to access slides on WH-Question

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# Question Words in English ???

## Who

- Ask about person
- Act as subject of the sentence

- Who is that woman?
- Who are you phoning?



## Where

- Asking in or at what place or position

- Where do you live?
- Where are my boots?



## When

- Asking about time, occasion, moment

- When can I see you?
- When did you last see him?



## Why

- Asking for reason, explanation

- Why were you late?
- Why was he late?



## What

- Asking for specific thing, object

- What's the matter?
- What time is it?



## How

- Asking for way, manner, form

- How does it work?
- How do you go to school?



## Which

- Asking about choice
- Which is better exercise? – swimming or tennis
- Which of the applicants has got the job?



## How many

- Asking about quantity
- Used with countable nouns
- How many people were there?



## How often

- Asking about frequency
- How often do you go swimming?



# YES / NO Questions

Yes / No questions are the questions that are answered YES or NO.



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# POLITE REQUEST

**A request is when we ask someone for something.**

**So, it's important to be polite when asking for help. Use these expressions:**

Polite Requests	Accepting	Refusing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can I have a copy of this letter?</li> <li>• Can I borrow your pen?</li> </ul>	Sure. Here you are. Yes, no problem.	I'm afraid that's not possible. Sorry. I'm afraid I need it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you help me with this please?</li> <li>• Could I have some more tea please?</li> </ul>	Yes, of course. Yes, I'll get some.	I'm afraid I can't. Sorry. Sorry - there is no tea left.
'May' is more polite than 'can' or 'could' when requesting permission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May I sit here?</li> <li>• May I use your phone?</li> </ul>	Sure, please do. Yes, of course.	Sorry, that's Carla's seat. Sorry, the line is out of order.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will you join us for dinner?</li> </ul>	Yes, with pleasure.	I'm afraid I can't – sorry.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you translate this for me please?</li> <li>• Would you care to join us for lunch?</li> </ul>	No problem. With pleasure.	I'm sorry. I don't speak ..... Sorry. I've got an appointment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you mind if I open the window?</li> <li>• Do you mind if read your newspaper?</li> </ul>	No not at all. Please do.	I'd rather you didn't. I feel cold. I'm afraid it's not mine!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you mind if opened the window?</li> <li>• Would you mind closing the door?</li> </ul>	No, of course not. No problem.	I'd prefer if you didn't. I'm afraid I can't. It's blocked.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it ok if I use your dictionary?</li> </ul>	Yes, that's ok.	Sorry, I need it for the moment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think I could borrow this book?</li> <li>• Do you think you could give this to Alex?</li> </ul>	Sure, go ahead. Yes, sure.	Sorry, it must be left here. I'm afraid I don't know Alex.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it all right if I park here?</li> </ul>	That's fine.	No. That's the boss's space!



# CLARIFICATION

There are **two reasons** why people ask or make clarifications in conversations:

The root word of **CLARIFICATION** is **CLARIFY**. Its meaning is "to make clear".



1

## CLEAR UNDERSTANDING

- Sometimes, people might not understand or hear you well.
- Clarifying helps to clear up any confusion and ensures everyone understands well

2

## AVOIDING CONFUSION

- Clarifications help prevent miscommunication by asking for more details or explanations.

## LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS

### HOW TO EXPRESS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

- I beg your pardon?
- Sorry, I didn't hear what you said
- Sorry, I'm not sure I understand you

### HOW TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION

- What do you mean by ...?
- Could you explain more?
- Could you give us an example?

### CLARIFYING ONE'S POINT

- In other words ....
- What I mean is ....
- Let me put explain this in another way



# GIVING / MAKING SUGGESTIONS

Let's revise our plan for the final year project.

Don't you think it's better if we leave a bit early?

Shall we have a walk at the park?

What about going to the library after this?

Why don't we invite our lecturer to our class party?

## COUNTER - SUGGESTIONS

That's a good point, but why don't we ...

Very true, but it is better to...

I am afraid I have to disagree with you

Don't get me wrong,...

Scan this QR code to access slides on Making Suggestions & Counter Suggestions

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## AGREEING TO SUGGESTIONS

**Sure!**

**Exactly!**

**I'd love to.**

**Yes, I'd like to.**

**That's a good idea!**

## DISAGREEING TO SUGGESTIONS

**No, let's not.**

**I don't think so.**

**I'm not so sure about that.**

**I'm afraid I disagree with you.**

**I beg to differ.**

**That's a good idea, but not at this moment.**

# MAKE INTERRUPTIONS POLITELY

You might need to interrupt someone, to

**Ask a quick question**

**Share your opinion on the conversation topic**

**Join the conversation**

**Give a message to someone**

## HOW TO INTERRUPT (POLITELY)

**Make Signal:**

- Eye-contact
- Clear your throat
- Smile at them



**Say :**

- "Excuse me"
- "May I interrupt for a moment?"



**Act quickly:**

- Express your opinion
- Ask question





## EXPRESSIONS TO INTERRUPT POLITELY

Can I say something?

Sorry to interrupt

Excuse me for interrupting

Just a moment, I'd like to add that...

Can I add something here?

Excuse me, I'd like to point / say that...

## EXPRESSIONS TO INTERRUPT IMPOLITELY

Wait a minute!

Quiet! I need to say something.

Hold on!

What are you talking about?

Now listen to me.

# Turn-Taking



Turn-taking refers to the process of alternating between speaking and listening in a conversation or interaction. It involves giving others the opportunity to express themselves while also actively listening to their thoughts and ideas. By taking turns, we create a balanced and respectful exchange that fosters understanding, empathy, and effective communication.

Turn-taking involves actively listening to others and waiting for our turn to speak. It requires patience, respect, and the ability to regulate our own impulses. By taking turns, we create a balanced conversation where everyone has the opportunity to express themselves and be heard.



## Turn-taking - key takeaways

- Turn-taking is a conversation structure in which one person listens while the other person speaks. As the conversation progresses, the roles of the listener and the speaker are exchanged back and forth.
- Turn-taking is organized and structured according to the three components that speakers use to allocate turns - the turn-taking component, the turn allocation component, and rules.
- The types of turn-taking are adjacency pairs, intonation, gestures and gaze direction. They are indicators of a change of turn.
- In order for turn-taking in conversation to be maintained, interruption, overlaps and gaps must be avoided.

## 4 Turn-Taking Strategies



- Recognizing when to take a turn
- Signalling that you want to speak and interrupting
- Holding the floor during your turn
- Recognizing when others want to speak .



### Tips to take turn in a Group Discussion

#### Physical Cues



Facial expression



Gestures



Voice tone

#### Verbal Cues



Make noises like  
“mmm-hmm”



Use words like “well..”,  
“So..” or “But..”



Sorry to interrupt,  
but..”



# Gestures & Facial Expressions



Gestures and facial expressions are part of your nonverbal communication, which can complement, reinforce, or contradict your verbal communication.

It can also help you establish rapport, credibility, and emotion with your audience. By using appropriate and consistent gestures and facial expressions, you can make your speech more engaging, memorable, and effective.

## How to use gestures and facial expressions effectively?

- make them natural, relevant, and varied. Don't force or overdo your movements; they should match your personality and tone.

- Practice in front of a mirror or camera to see how you look and feel. Make sure your gestures and facial expressions support your message and purpose.

- Use different types of gestures to show confidence, enthusiasm, precision, detail, emotion, interest, and empathy.

- Avoid using the same gestures throughout your speech as they can become monotonous.

Scan this QR code to access slides on Body Language in a group discussion

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# 6 Effective ways to initiate a Group Discussion

**1**

## **INTRODUCE YOURSELF**



While initiating the group discussion, try to introduce yourself before you start speaking on the topic. Take a moment to introduce yourself to other participants and the supervisor. For instance, you can start with a simple 'Hello, my name is 'Syafikah,' and then continue with the topic. Confidence is key while introducing yourself.

**2**

## **COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND FLUENTLY**



While you introduce yourself and the topic, try not to stutter or stammer. Present your views and communicate with complete confidence and fluency. If you have a minute to prepare, try rehearsing your introduction with someone else or by yourself and make any necessary changes according to the feedback. The key to a successful group discussion is to stay active and involved throughout the discussion.

**3**

## **PRESENT THE TOPIC WITH AN INTERESTING TAKE**



While initiating the group discussion, make sure that you start with a conventional take on the topic. This way, you can attract attention in the room and increase interest. Even though group discussions are spontaneous, you can always prepare beforehand by practising mock discussions on different industry-related topics.

**CONTINUE**

## 4

**KEEP THE CONTENT RELEVANT**

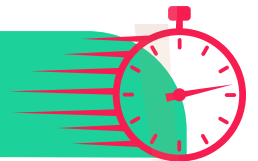
When starting a group discussion, it is ideal if you add relevant information on the topic. It is crucial that you at least have a basic knowledge of the topic. If necessary, you can take a moment to understand the topic before starting. Ensure you do not present ambiguous or unnecessary information.

## 5

**USE QUESTIONS AND QUOTES**

Starting with a powerful and relevant quote, question or fact is one of the most effective tactics that can grab attention in a group discussion. It captures the interest of your listeners and shows your in-depth knowledge of the subject. Make sure that you make a neutral statement. Here, it is instrumental that you maintain a neutral perspective and do not present a biased opinion in the beginning.

## 6

**USE YOUR TIME EFFICIENTLY**

If you plan on initiating the group discussion, remember to keep it brief and to the point. Avoid over elaborating or exaggerating the topic at the beginning. Keep in mind that the supervisors are not looking for additional or unnecessary information. Ensure that you utilise the time you get, especially when you are starting a group discussion.



# 3 Effective ways to wrap up a Group Discussion



Effectively wrapping up a Group Discussion (GD) involves candidates summarizing key points, refraining from introducing new information, and keeping the focus on the central theme. The following strategies characterize successful conclusions:

## Summarizing All Points

Briefly recap the essential points discussed during the conversation, offering a comprehensive overview of the critical aspects. This recap should culminate in a final perspective on the topic, consolidating various viewpoints.

# 1

## Being Concise

Keep the conclusion brief, avoiding unnecessary details that could dilute the impact of the summary. Emphasize clarity and brevity to ensure that the main takeaways are highlighted effectively.

# 2

## Closure Argument

Directly tie all summarized points back to the main idea or theme of the discussion. Avoid unnecessary digressions or off-topic remarks, providing a coherent and logical closure to the conversation.

# 3

# 5 Common mistakes to avoid in a Group Discussion

## **Not allowing others to speak**

The aim of a GD is to come up with a possible conclusion to a given topic and it's a TEAM activity so you should actually encourage others to speak and bring their points on the table. Your ability to work in a team is judged by this task

## **Getting into arguments**

If you disagree on some point then you should politely show your denial rather than getting into arguments

## **Speaking too loud/too slow/too much**

Anything in excess is bad so the balance of tone should be maintained. Speaking too loud makes it very ugly in professional set up. Speaking too slow is obviously not audible and shows a lack in confidence and speaking too much is pushing oneself too much by suppressing others which are not perceived as a nice trait.

## **Thinking that rest is better than me and keeping quiet**

Remaining quiet is the worst thing to do during a GD. At least you can re-emphasize on any topic already mentioned by some other candidate and add a small detail to it.

## **Missing out on opportunities like initiating the gd, summarising the gd**

Although, This is not mandatory one should try initiating a GD or summarising it proactively. This helps in getting extra points among others.

# TIPS & TRICKS TO ACE GD

How do you ace a group discussion?



**Follow &  
Crack It!**

Here are some simple tips and tricks that you can follow to be successful in a group discussion.

## BEFORE DISCUSSION

### Practice

Record yourself talking and watch it or talk in front of the mirror.



### Improve

Improve your speaking skills, especially your pronunciation skills.



### Prepare

Physically - Practice your body language.  
Mentally - Store necessary information in your brain.



## WHILE DISCUSSION

**NON VERBAL**



### Engage

Participate actively (both verbally and non-verbally) in the discussion.

### Share & Ask

Share your opinions/ideas and ask questions where necessary.

### Stand

Take a stand by giving your final opinion.



# DO'S

# DONT'S



Be well-prepared



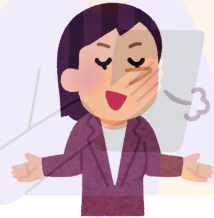
Go-off topic



Understand the topic



Overspeak



Express ideas and opinions



Be silent & silence others



Listen attentively



Repeat ideas/ points



Speak clearly & loudly



Pose negative gestures & expressions

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Scan this QR code to access slides for more do's and don'ts in a group discussion

## SAMPLE GROUP DISCUSSION SITUATION WITH ANSWER



### SITUATION 1

Technology has changed people's lives in many ways. It has made their lives easier, faster, and better. In your group, discuss the benefits of technology in people's lives.

- a) Online shopping
- b) Communication
- c) Travel around
- d) Online learning

At the end of the discussion, decide one main benefit of technology in people's lives.

**Scan this QR code to access the suggested answer**

**SCAN ME**



## **SAMPLE GROUP DISCUSSION SITUATION WITH ANSWER**



### **SITUATION 2**

Good health is essential for a physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of an individual. In your group, discuss the effective ways to stay healthy.

- a) Exercise regularly
- b) Eat fruits and vegetables
- c) Drink 8 glasses of water
- d) Sleep for 7 – 9 hours

At the end of the discussion, decide on the most effective way to stay healthy.

**Scan this QR code to access the suggested answer**

**SCAN ME**



**SAMPLE GROUP DISCUSSION SITUATION WITH ANSWER****SITUATION 3**

There are several serious issues in Malaysia today. In your group, discuss the serious issue facing the nation today.

- a) Increase in crime rates
- b) Increase in the price of goods
- c) Misuse of internet
- d) Drug consumption

At the end of the discussion, decide on the most serious issue in Malaysia today.

**Scan this QR code to access the suggested answer**

**SCAN ME**





# Sample Videos



LIKE AND SHARE

## Situation

Discuss the best way to save money.

- i. Spending less on entertainment.
- ii. Spending less on shopping
- iii. Growing one's own vegetables
- iv. Using public transportation.

Each student will be assigned to speak on one of the options given above. You should begin by saying why your choice is the best with relevant supporting details. After listening to all the other candidates, you may choose to stay with your choice or agree with the choice of another candidate. Ideally, the group should agree on ONE of the options.

SCAN ME



## Situation

Discuss the challenges of studying abroad.

- i. Homesick
- ii. Language barrier
- iii. Financial problems
- iv. Culture shock

Each student will be assigned to speak on one of the options given above. You should begin by saying why your choice is the best with relevant supporting details. After listening to all the other candidates, you may choose to stay with your choice or agree with the choice of another candidate. Ideally, the group should agree on ONE of the options.

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# Sample Videos

 LIKE AND SHARE

## Situation

Decide the most suitable person in educating young people about their safety.

- i. Parents
- ii. Friends
- iii. Teachers
- iv. Police

Each student will be assigned to speak on one of the options given above. You should begin by saying why your choice is the best with relevant supporting details. After listening to all the other candidates, you may choose to stay with your choice or agree with the choice of another candidate. Ideally, the group should agree on ONE of the options.

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## Situation

Decide the biggest challenge that a university/college student might face.

- i. Time management
- ii. Understanding lectures
- iii. Transportation
- iv. Financial management

Each student will be assigned to speak on one of the options given above. You should begin by saying why your choice is the best with relevant supporting details. After listening to all the other candidates, you may choose to stay with your choice or agree with the choice of another candidate. Ideally, the group should agree on ONE of the options.

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## More Interactive Videos

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**Interrupt Politely**

<https://youtu.be/hSopar38aWQ?si=vVAHyOhhhv7ocSOP>

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**Don't Pose Negative Gestures  
& Expressions**

<https://youtu.be/AyMSUhK9Fow?si=KNDKY37JIGPwcUTG>

SCAN ME!



**Don't Interrupt**

<https://youtu.be/hSopar38aWQ?si=vVAHyOhhhv7ocSOP>

SCAN ME!



**Don't go-off topic**

<https://youtu.be/Otwf1JnuXWY?si=bAc-xT1eqQRuW3-a>

SCAN ME!



**Don't Be Silent & Silence Others**

[https://youtu.be/tjx1\\_rbX7Yo?si=3b-V91Jakmq4Epv6](https://youtu.be/tjx1_rbX7Yo?si=3b-V91Jakmq4Epv6)

SCAN ME!



**Listen Attentively**

[https://youtu.be/cnf9o47qM88?si=fiGuGA6nPv\\_xJeJX](https://youtu.be/cnf9o47qM88?si=fiGuGA6nPv_xJeJX)

SCAN ME!



**Express Ideas & Opinions**

[https://youtu.be/lwSsv4oGORO?si=f3\\_NbZVJF9IL8Y-4](https://youtu.be/lwSsv4oGORO?si=f3_NbZVJF9IL8Y-4)

SCAN ME!



**Don't Overspeak**

<https://youtu.be/WaQObUkbHFM?si=ZwKXOtI-IF9itbDG>



## Practice Makes PROGRESS

### **PRACTICE 1**

**Working in a team has many advantages. Give examples of some advantages of working in a team.**

**A: Talk about how working in a team encourages the exchange of ideas.**

**B: Talk about how working in a team increase work efficiency.**

**C: Talk about how working in a team strengthens relationships.**

**D: Talk about how working in a team reduces stress.**

**Scan this QR code to access the  
suggested points**

**SCAN ME**



# Practice makes PROGRESS

## **PRACTICE 2**

**Young people these days lead unhealthy lifestyle. Give examples of some unhealthy habits that young people practise.**

**A: Talk about how lack of exercise affects young peoples' overall health and wellbeing.**

**B: Talk about how eating junk food affects young peoples' overall health and wellbeing.**

**C: Talk about how too much screen time affects young peoples' overall health and wellbeing.**

**D: Talk about how not enough sleep affects young peoples' overall health and wellbeing.**

**Scan this QR code to access the  
suggested points**

**SCAN ME**





1. In groups of three or four, carry out a group discussion based on the situation given.
2. Each student will be assigned to speak on one of the options given (A/B/C/D).
3. You should begin by saying why your choice is the best with relevant supporting details.
4. After listening to all the other candidates, you may choose to stay with your choice or agree with the choice of another candidate.
5. Ideally, the group should agree with ONE of the options.

### Situation 1

Living in a hostel has its advantages. Suggest some of these advantages.

- A: Talk about making new friends.
- B: Talk about living in a safe place.
- C: Talk about enjoying hostel activities.
- D: Talk about learning life skills.

### Situation 2

Many things can cause stress in our lives. Suggest some ways to reduce stress.

- A: Talk about exercising regularly.
- B: Talk about listening to music.
- C: Talk about keeping a pet
- D: Talk about spending time with friends.

### Situation 3

We have to pay for different goods and services. What are some of these?

- A: Talk about paying for personal care products.
- B: Talk about paying for transport.
- C: Talk about paying for food.
- D: Talk about paying for entertainment.

### Situation 4

Watching movies is a good form of entertainment. How do you choose a good movie to watch?

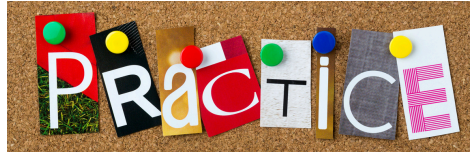
- A: Talk about the actors.
- B: Talk about the type of movie.
- C: Talk about the storyline.
- D: Talk about the special effects.

### Situation 5

Watching movies is a good form of entertainment. How do you choose a good movie to watch?

- A: Talk about the actors.
- B: Talk about the type of movie.
- C: Talk about the storyline.
- D: Talk about the special effects.





1. In groups of three or four, carry out a group discussion based on the situation given.
2. Each student will be assigned to speak on one of the options given (A/B/C/D).
3. You should begin by saying why your choice is the best with relevant supporting details.
4. After listening to all the other candidates, you may choose to stay with your choice or agree with the choice of another candidate.
5. Ideally, the group should agree with ONE of the options.

#### Situation 6

Many university students work part-time while studying. Where can they work?

- A: Talk about working at a supermarket.
- B: Talk about working at a restaurant.
- C: Talk about working at a cinema.
- D: Talk about working at a tuition centre.

#### Situation 7

Cooking your own food is better than eating out. What are the advantages of cooking your own food?

- A: Talk about cleanliness.
- B: Talk about good ingredients.
- C: Talk about saving costs
- D: Talk about bringing family together

#### Situation 8

Children can learn good behaviour by helping around the house. Suggest some ways they can do this.

- A: Talk about taking care of pets.
- B: Talk about keeping their rooms clean.
- C: Talk about helping in the garden.
- D: Talk about helping in the kitchen.

#### Situation 9

Students need to have good habits. What are some of these?

- A: Talk about not missing classes.
- B: Talk about doing homework.
- C: Talk about paying attention in class.
- D: Talk about going to the library.

#### Situation 10

You want to encourage your foreign friends to visit Malaysia. State some reasons why they should visit Malaysia.

- A: Talk about interesting places.
- B: Talk about variety of food.
- C: Talk about nice weather.
- D: Talk about different cultures.

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