

## GD Interview Group Discussion: GD Initiation Techniques

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Initiating a Group Discussion is a high profit-high loss strategy.

When you initiate a Group Discussion, you not only grab the opportunity to speak, you also grab the attention of the examiner and your fellow candidates.

If you can make a favourable first impression with your content and communication skills after you initiate a Group Discussion, it will help you sail through the discussion.

But if you initiate a Group Discussion and stammer/stutter/quote wrong facts and figures, the damage might be irreparable.

If you initiate a Group Discussion impeccably but don't speak much after that, it gives the impression that you started the Group Discussion for the sake of starting it or getting those initial kitty of points earmarked for an initiator!

When you start a Group Discussion, you are responsible for putting it into the right perspective or framework. So initiate one only if you have indepth knowledge about the topic at hand.

There are different techniques to initiate a Group Discussion and make a good first impression:

1. Quotes
2. Definition
3. Question
4. Shock statement
5. Facts, figures and statistics
6. Short story
7. General statement

**Quotes:** Quotes are an effective way of initiating a Group Discussion.

If the topic of a Group Discussion is: Should the Censor Board be abolished? you could start with a quote like, 'Hidden apples are always sweet'

For a Group Discussion topic like, Customer is King, you could quote Sam (Wal-mart) Walton's famous saying, 'There is only one boss: The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company--from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.'

**Definition:** Start a Group Discussion by defining the topic or an important term in the topic.

For example, if the topic of the Group Discussion is Advertising is a Diplomatic Way of Telling a Lie, why not start the Group Discussion by defining advertising as, 'Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services through mass media like newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor'

For a topic like The Malthusian Economic Prophecy is no longer relevant, you could start by explaining the definition of the Malthusian Economic Prophecy.

**Question:** Asking a question is an impactful way of starting a Group Discussion.

It does not signify asking a question to any of the candidates in a Group Discussion so as to hamper the flow. It implies asking a question, and answering it yourself.

Any question that might hamper the flow of a Group Discussion or insult a participant or play devil's advocate must be discouraged.

Questions that promote a flow of ideas are always appreciated.

For a topic like, Should India go to war with Pakistan, you could start by asking, 'What does war bring to the people of a nation? We have had four clashes with Pakistan. The pertinent question is: What have we achieved?'

**Shock statement:** Initiating a Group Discussion with a shocking statement is the best way to grab immediate attention and put forth your point.

If a Group Discussion topic is, The Impact of Population on the Indian Economy, you could start with, 'At the centre of the Indian capital stands a population clock that ticks away relentlessly. It tracks 33 births a minute, 2, 000 an hour, 48, 000 a day. Which calculates to about 12 million every year. That is roughly the size of Australia. As a current political slogan puts it, 'Nothing's impossible when 1 billion Indians work together ''

**Facts, figures and statistics:** If you decide to initiate your Group Discussion with facts, figure and statistics, make sure to quote them accurately.

Approximation is allowed in macro level figures, but micro level figures need to be correct and accurate.

For example, you can say, approximately 70 per cent of the Indian population stays in rural areas (macro figures, approximation allowed).

But you cannot say 30 states of India instead of 28 (micro figures, no approximations).

Stating wrong facts works to your disadvantage.

For a Group Discussion topic like, China, a Rising Tiger, you could start with, In 1983, when China was still in its initial stages of reform and opening up, China's real use of Foreign Direct

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Investment only stood at \$636 million. China actually utilised \$60 billion of FDI in 2004, which is almost 100 times that of its 1983 statistics.

Short story: Use a short story in a Group Discussion topic like, Attitude is Everything.

This can be initiated with, 'A child once asked a balloon vendor, who was selling helium gas-filled balloons, whether a blue-coloured balloon will go as high in the sky as a green-coloured balloon. The balloon vendor told the child, it is not the colour of the balloon but what is inside it that makes it go high.'

General statement: Use a general statement to put the Group Discussion in proper perspective.

For example, if the topic is, Should Sonia Gandhi be the prime minister of India? you could start by saying, 'Before jumping to conclusions like, 'Yes, Sonia Gandhi should be 'or' No, Sonia Gandhi should not be 'let's first find out the qualities one needs to be a good prime minister of India. Then we can compare these qualities with those that Mrs Gandhi possesses. This will help us reach the conclusion in a more objective and effective manner.'