
UNIT 6 FORMAL CONVERSATION

FACE-TO-FACE—1

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Making Enquiries and Giving Information at Public Offices
- 6.3 Buying at Shops
- 6.4 Placing Orders
- Offering Apologies
- 6.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.6 Suggested Books and Audio-Cassettes
- Answers

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit carefully, you will be able to

- make polite enquiries at banks, railway stations and other places where public services are available;
- provide information accurately in reply to such enquiries;
- enquire about various goods sold in markets and bargain about their prices;
- complain about service at hotels, restaurants, etc.; and
- offer apologies in reply to such complaints.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

English continues to be used in India for administrative and other purposes. Even when people speak an Indian language, they still use a number of English words. It is necessary to express ourselves effectively whenever we have to take part in a conversation in English. We must learn to convey the correct attitude; for example, to sound polite while making requests and to offer a proper apology when the circumstances demand it.

6.2 MAKING ENQUIRIES AND GIVING INFORMATION AT PUBLIC OFFICES

In everyday life, you often have to visit a public office like a bank, a post office or a railway station to get some information relating to the various facilities available there. It is also possible that you work at the enquiry counter at one of these places. It is then your duty to provide accurate information to the public in clear language. Let's see how a conversation proceeds on such occasions. To begin with, let's take a conversation at a railway enquiry counter.

Example 1

Conversation : At a Railway Counter

Passenger (at Dhanbad Station) : Excuse me. I'd like to have some information.

Enquiry Clerk : Yes?

Passenger : What trains are there for New Delhi?

Enquiry Clerk : There are a number of trains. The 81 Up and the 101 Up, the....

Passenger : I want a night train.

Enquiry Clerk : Well, you can take the 101 then. That's the Rajdhani Express.

Passenger : What's the time of departure from Dhanbad?

Enquiry Clerk : 19-02

Passenger : And the arrival time at New Delhi?

Enquiry Clerk : 9-50 the next morning.

Passenger : What days does it go?

Enquiry Clerk : Five days a week — Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Passenger : What's the second class fare?

Enquiry Clerk : Rs. 85

Passenger : Thanks.

Enquiry Clerk : You're welcome.

Style : Notice that the conversation is businesslike. There are no diversions which you find in a friendly conversation.

Vocabulary

Ex'cuse me : a polite way of drawing the attention of the person at the counter.

The 81 Up and the 101 Up : Trains are given numbers like 81 and 101. Trains going in one direction are called 'up' trains, and those going in the other direction are called 'down' trains.

22 hours : On railways and airways, it is customary to talk of time on the basis of a 24-hour clock beginning at midnight. Thus 9-50 means 9.50 a.m. and 19-02 means 7.02 p.m.

You're 'welcome : A polite expression in reply to someone's 'thanks'.

Grammar

'I'd' is a short form of 'I would'. The modal auxiliaries 'would' and 'could' are often used to make polite requests, e.g., "Could you give me some information?"

'information' is what we call an 'uncountable' noun. It is not preceded by the indefinite article or a numeral, and it has no plural form. To denote a particular item, we say 'a piece of information', or 'a bit of information'.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1 Study the following conversation that takes place at a bank and answer the questions given below. Check your answers with those given by us at the end of the unit.

Conversation at a Bank

Suresh : Excuse me. I'd like to open an account with you and deposit some money.

Bank Clerk : What sort of account — savings, fixed deposit, or current?

Suresh : A fixed deposit account. What's the rate of interest for a fixed deposit for 1 year?

Bank Clerk : 9%.

Suresh : And for 5 years?

Bank Clerk : You'd better study this chart. It gives you all the details. And here's a form for you to fill in.

Suresh : Thank you. I'll come back tomorrow.

Vocabulary

'savings ac'count : A bank account which earns a specified rate of interest and from which money can be taken out when required.

'fixed de'posit : money deposited in a bank or other concern for a specified period.

'current ac'count : a bank account which usually does not earn interest and from which money can be taken out at any time by cheque.

Grammar

Formal Conversation :
Face-to-Face - 1

You'd better : "You had better"....
= ought to, should

Check Your Progress 1

- i) What words in the conversation at the bank show that Suresh is polite in his enquiries?
.....
.....
.....
- ii) A word can have multiple meanings, that is, more than one meaning. Use these words in contexts and meanings other than those in which they are used in the conversation given above:
current, interest, form
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
- iii) Make four meaningful sentences from the substitution table below:

You'd		take your warm clothes		he wishes to pass the exams.
I'd	better	learn English well	if	I have to make a long train journey tomorrow.
He'd		study hard	as	you're going to Britain.
		have some sleep now		you don't want to be ill while travelling in the hills.

- 2 Here's a brief conversation between a person making enquiries at the ticket counter of a cinema hall. The questions are given. Provide possible answers.

Ganesh : Excuse me. I want three tickets for the balcony seats.

Clerk at the Counter : Sorry,.....

Ganesh : Then could you give us three in the first class?

Counter Clerk :

Ganesh : How much does it come to?

Counter Clerk :

Conversation

Ganesh : Is it possible to book some tickets in advance for next Sunday?

Counter Clerk :

Ganesh : When does the advance booking counter open?

Counter Clerk :

- 3 Here's a short conversation at a circus counter. This time answers are given. Fill in the questions.

Rani :

Man at the Counter : Three; at 3.30, 6.30 and 9.30

Rani :

Counter : 20 rupees for the front row and 10 rupees for the middle rows.

Rani :

Counter : Yes. It's half rate for children below 12.

Rani :

Counter : Yes. It's the last item of the show.

- 4 Write a brief conversation of about 150 words that takes place between you and the clerk selling stamps, etc. at a post office. You are enquiring about the postage rate for a letter, the price of an airmail letter form, the registration fee, postal orders, etc. Compare your answers with that given by us at the end.

[illegible]

6.3 BUYING AT SHOPS

Shopping is a common feature of our daily lives and English is often used for this purpose. Here is an example of a conversation at a cloth shop.

Conversation at a Cloth Shop

Shopkeeper

(with a welcome smile) : Yes, Madam. What can I do for you?

Shopkeeper : In cotton or in tery-cotton?

Customer : Show me a few varieties in both.

Shopkeeper : Here you are. This is the latest craze, and this one.....

Customer : mm (looking at the shelf) Let me see the second roll from the left. No, no the blue one on the top shelf. That's right.

Shopkeeper : Here you are.

Customer : How much is it?

Shopkeeper : Rs. 105 a metre.

Customer : That's rather expensive. Only last month I bought similar stuff for...

Shopkeeper : That must have been an inferior variety. The imitation is so good sometimes that it's difficult to distinguish it from genuine stuff. This one is very durable. Just feel the texture.

Customer : Well. I'm a regular customer at your shop. Durable or not, I'm not going to pay more than Rs. 80 a metre.

Shopkeeper : But....But, Madam, I myself bought it for more than Rs. 85. That leaves me no profit at all.

Customer : Well then make it Rs. 85. Not a paisa more!

Shopkeeper : Rs. 90 . That's my final price. Please don't embarrass me by asking for further reduction.

Customer : O.K. Give me 5½ metres.

Vocabulary

ma'terial : Here it is used as an uncountable noun to mean 'cloth'. 'Materials' would refer to various things from which something is made, like building materials, course materials, raw materials, etc.

the 'latest 'craze : a very popular fashion now. A slang phrase for this is 'the in-thing'.

'How much 'is it? : It's more usual to say this than 'what's the price?'

stuff : material

..... : The dotted line denotes that the speaker has been cut short by the other speaker or that some time elapses before he continues.

in'ferior : less good in quality.

,mi'tation : a copy of the real thing.

di'stinguish : be able to see the difference between two things.

'genuine : real

'durable : long-lasting

'texture : the manner in which the cloth is woven.

But...But : A slight hesitation or stammer to indicate the speaker is in a hurry to say something.

em'barrass : make one feel ashamed or uncomfortable.

Grammar

the blue one : 'one' here stands for the object being referred to or indicated. Notice its use in the sentence 'I want the book back, the one I lent you last month.'

Durable or not : a way of saying one is determined about something; the decision is final.

Not a paisa more : clipped sentences like this without a verb are common in conversation. The full sentence would be something like 'I won't pay a paisa more.'

must have been : modal + *have* + *been* + noun phrase. This construction denotes that the speaker is certain of a fact relating to the past.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1 i) Use the following words in sentences, in meanings other than those they have in the conversation given above.

roll, metre, stuff, leaves

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ii) 'Last month I bought similar stuff for...' shows that the customer is bargaining about the price.

What other sentences in the conversation show that the customer is bargaining?

.....

.....

- iii) What sentences show that the shopkeeper is trying to justify his price as reasonable?

.....

.....

.....

.....

- iv) In shopping we use terms like "This cloth is Rs.105 a metre."

Match the two columns below:

A

These pencils are

Milk is

Petrol is

Land here is

This paper is

B

Rs. 2000 a sq. metre.

Rs. 8 a litre.

Rs. 50 a ream.

Rs. 7 a litre.

Rs. 10 a dozen.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- v) These sentences from the conversation above show that the speaker is performing one of the following functions. Say which one.

showing determination;

justifying his price;

asking the other person to do something.

- a) Show me a few varieties in both.

- b) Just feel the texture.

- c) I'm not going to pay more than Rs. 80 a metre.

- d) Not a paisa more!

- 2 Rearrange the following sentences which form part of a conversation between a tenant and the house-owner. It should read like a normal conversation. Write 'tenant' or 'house-owner' beside the sentences said by each. Check your answer with ours.

So you're suddenly raising the rent to almost double.

Rs. 800 a month.

And how much rent do you want now?

Not really. I'm very considerate. The rent in other places is much higher.

Well I can't help it. The prices of all the things are going up.

But this is downright exploitation.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6.4 PLACING ORDERS; OFFERING APOLOGIES

In section 6.2, we showed you how enquiries could be made at various public offices. In section 6.3, we gave you a specimen conversation related to shopping. Sometimes a conversation covers a number of communicative functions : for example, orders, complaints and apologies; or enquiries and the giving of information. Here is an example.

Conversation at a Hotel

Kailash Sharma : Er...Excuse me. My company, Goel Earth Movers, booked a single room with an attached bath here in the name of Kailash Sharma.

Receptionist : Let me see.....(Checks register). I'm sorry, sir, there's no reservation in that name.

Mr. Sharma : But I was told that the accommodation had been booked.

Receptionist : Are you sure of the name of the hotel? This is the Grand Park Hotel.

Mr. Sharma : Now let me see...Was it, was it ...

Receptionist : You must have mixed up the names, sir. Are you sure it wasn't the Grand View Hotel?

Mr. Sharma : Well anyway, can you give me a room now?

Receptionist : I'm afraid, sir, we're fully booked up for today.

Mr. Kailash : But surely there must be some room available.

Receptionist : We're very sorry, sir. It's the tourist season and there's a great rush.

Mr. Sharma : But you must do something. I can't go anywhere now.

Receptionist : Well. Let me see.....If you like, we can provide a bed in a dormitory.

Mr. Sharma : Anything will do for tonight. How much is it?

Receptionist : Rs. 50, including breakfast.

Vocabulary

booked : reserved; arranged in advance to have (something)

Conversation

a 'single 'room : a room for the use of only one person.

I'm a'fraid : I'm sorry; an expression to show regret.

'tourist 'season : the period when there are a large number of tourists.

'dormitory : a large room containing a number of beds.

Grammar

'must' is used three times in this conversation.

- i) 'You must have mixed up the names' (*must* + *have* + past participle of verb) means 'It is certain that you have confused the names of the hotels.'
- ii) 'There must be some room' (*must* + *be* + noun phrase) means 'I'm certain there is a room available'.
- iii) 'But you must do something' (*must* + verb) indicates that the speaker insists on something being done for him.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1 Here is a conversation. Guess the situation or the possible place where it could take place. Indicate the roles played by the different speakers, like customer, etc.

Conversation

Menu, please.

Here you are, sir. Would you like to order a la carte or a table d'hote meal?

I don't feel very hungry; so make it a la carte.

Would you prefer North Indian, South Indian, or Chinese?

What would you like?

I prefer Chinese any time.

(After the dinner)

Please bring the bill.

Here you are, sir...

Keep the change.

Thank you, sir.

Glossary

a la carte / ,xlá ka:t / : according to the menu, where each dish has its own price.

table d' hotel / ,ta:bl' daut / : (a complete meal) served at a fixed price.

.....

.....

- 2 Here's another conversation in which a young lady is ordering a treatment at a beauty parlour. Read it carefully and then do the exercises below:

Conversation/ at a Beauty Parlour

Beautician : Yes, madam. What can we do for you?

Mrs. Noorani : I want my hair style changed. Can you show me some models?

Beautician : Here you are.

Mrs. Noorani : I like this style with a bun. Can you do my hair like this?

Beautician (toying with Mrs. Noorani's hair) : Madam, I think you need a shampoo too. You have dandruff. I can also suggest some herbal treatment. It'll strengthen your hair.

Mrs. Noorani : You don't mean to say my hair's getting thin.

Beautician : I did'nt say that, madam. I only thought a herbal treatment would help.

Beautician : Only 25 rupees.

Mrs. Noorani : Go ahead. And I want this unnecessary hair on my chin removed.

Beautician : We could do that by electrolysis.

Mrs. Noorani : Is there anything else you can do to improve my looks?

Beautician : A facial massage would do you a lot of good, madam.

Mrs. Noorani : How?

Beautician : It tones the skin and removes wrinkles.....

Mrs. Noorani : Now don't you suggest I've got wrinkles!

Vocabulary

bun : a mass of hair twisted and fastened into a tight round shape

'dandruff : a common disease in which bits of dead skin form on the head

elec'trolysis : the destruction of hair roots by means of an electric current

Grammar

'I want my hair style changed.'

'I want this unnecessary hair on my chin removed.'

Notice the structure of the sentences above: (pro)noun + *want* + noun phrase + past participle form of verb. It is used when one has a strong desire to get something done by another person.

i) Say whether these statements are correct or incorrect.

a) Mrs. Noorani is a fussy woman who is very difficult to please.

b) Mrs. Noorani is vain and conscious of her beauty, which she obviously hasn't.

c) She's a bossy type of woman who likes ordering people about.

ii) Say what functions are performed in the following sentences.

a) Can you do my hair like this?

b) A facial massage would do you a lot of good.

iii) What sentences show that Mrs. Noorani thinks she is still young and beautiful?

iv) Consider the difference between these two sentences.

a) "I'll change my hair style." (I'll do it myself.)

b) I want/I'll get my hair style changed. (I'll get it done by someone else.)

Change the following sentences into type (b) above.

I'll polish my shoes.

I'll wash my clothes.

I'll make a new suit.

- 3 Write a brief conversation of about 100 words in which Mr. Vatsa orders a special type of house to be built by a contractor. Begin your conversation like this.

Vatsa : Can you show me some models of the houses you have designed?

Compare your answers with ours.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt how to

- make polite enquiries at various public offices,
- give information in clear and accurate language,
- enquire about various things at shops and discuss the prices,
- make complaints, and
- offer apologies.

6.6 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND AUDIO CASSETTES

- 1 *Keep Up Your English* — book and audio cassettes (BBC, London)
- 2 *Getting on in English* — book and audio cassettes (BBC, London)
- 3 An audio-cassette recording based on this unit is available at the study centres of the university.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1 i) Excuse me.
I'd (I would)...: use of the modal.
Thank you.

ii) **Possible answers :**

There is no electric *current*, so the mixer won't work.

His friendship with Ravi Shankar encouraged him to take *interest* in Indian music.

He built the house in the *form* of a big shoe.

- iii) You'd better take your warm clothes if you don't want to be ill while travelling in the hills.
I'd better have some sleep now as I have to make a long train journey tomorrow.
He'd better study hard if he wishes to pass the exams.
You'd better learn English well if you're going to Britain.

- 2 Sorry, the balcony is all full.
Yes, here you are.
Sixteen rupees and fifty paise.
At 6.
Yes.
At ten in the morning.

- 3 How many shows do you have everyday?
What are the rates for the front row and the middle rows?
Is there a reduced rate for children?
Are you going to show the elephant performing 'puja'?

Raghu : Can you tell me how much postage is required for this letter by ordinary post?

Clerk : mm (after weighing the envelope) Rs. 1.40.

- 4 Raghu : How much does an airmail letter form cost?

Clerk : Rs. 5.

Raghu : And how much would it cost to send this packet by registered post?

Clerk : mm (weighs the packet) Rs. 10.50.

Raghu : Please give me two postal orders, one for 25 rupees and one for 15 rupees.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1 i) **Possible answers :**
The drum *rolled* down the hill.
This poem has been written in an iambic *metre*.
The child *stuffed* the food down his throat.
The *leaves* of the trees turned yellow.
- ii) I'm not going to pay more than Rs.80 a metre.
Well then make it Rs. 85. Not a paisa more!
- iii) That must have been an inferior variety.... This one is very durable. Just feel the texture. I myself bought it for more than Rs. 85. That leaves me no profit at all.
- iv) These pencils are Rs.10 a dozen.
Milk is Rs.7 a litre.
Petrol is Rs. 8 a litre
Land here is Rs. 2000 a sq. metre.
This paper is Rs. 50 a ream.
- v) a) asking the other person to do something.
b) justifying his price.
c) showing determination
d) showing determination

Tenant : And how much rent do you want now?

- 2 House-owner : Rs. 800 a month.

Tenant : So you're suddenly raising the rent to almost double.

House-owner : Well, I can't help it. The prices of all the things are going up.

Tenant : But this is downright exploitation.

House-owner : Not really. I'm very considerate. The rent in other places is much higher.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1 This conversation takes place in a restaurant. There are three speakers — the waiter and two customers.
- 2
 - i) (a) incorrect (b) correct (c) incorrect.
 - ii) a) asking for something to be done.
b) making a suggestion; recommending.
 - iii) 'You don't mean to say my hair's getting thin'.
'Is there anything else you can do to improve my looks?'
'Now don't you suggest I've got wrinkles'.
 - iv) I'll get my shoes polished.
I want my clothes washed.
I'll get a new suit made.
- 3 Vatsa : Can you show me some models of the houses you have designed?
Contractor : Yes, sir. Here are some models. That one there is very popular nowadays.
Vatsa : What accommodation does it have ?
Contractor : 3 bedrooms, a drawingroom and two attached bathrooms.
Vatsa : Can you turn the model? Let me see how it looks from behind.
Contractor : Here you are, sir.
Vatsa : I like it. But I want a sloping roof made of red tiles. It will give the house the look of a cottage.

UNIT 7 FORMAL CONVERSATION :

FACE-TO-FACE — 2

Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Consulting a Doctor
- 7.3 Making Complaints; Replies to Complaints
- 7.4 Arguing and Persuading People
- 7.5 Describing Processes
- 7.6 Checking and Investigating
- 7.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.8 Suggested Reading
- 7.9 Key Words
- Answers

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit carefully, you will be able to

- describe your ailments to a doctor;
- complain to a company about a defective product;
- reply to such complaints;
- express an opinion about a course of action in matters concerning a business;
- persuade people to buy your products;
- describe a process; and
- answer queries during an investigation.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed some important functions of communication in formal situations. In this unit, we shall take up some other functions that one can perform through conversation in other situations, especially those relating to business and official matters. For instance, we need to complain about wrongs in such a manner that we can get proper redress. We cannot succeed in business without being able to persuade others about the quality of the goods and services being offered. The investigation of crimes is common in modern life and it has to be done through the use of effective language. These different situations require a set phraseology without which communication would be hampered. We shall see in this unit how we can communicate in such formal situations.

7.2 CONSULTING A DOCTOR

Let's study this conversation between a patient and a doctor.

Conversation with a Doctor

Doctor : Yes, Mr. Nair. What's your trouble?

Mr. Nair : Everything.

Doctor : Please relax first. That's right. Now let me know your problems.
(pushes a stool towards the patient)

Mr. Nair : I've had a splitting headache for a week.

Doctor : Have you taken any drugs?

Mr. Nair : I've tried everything, Doctor. Even massages and naturopathy. Nothing seems to work.

Doctor : Do you feel any strain in the eyes when you read?

Mr. Nair : I hardly do any reading.

Doctor : How's your digestion?

Mr. Nair : What's the use of asking that? I hardly eat anything. My appetite's poor.

Doctor : Let me see your tongue. Say aah.

Mr. Nair : Aaah.

Doctor : Lie down here.

(applies a stethoscope to the chest).

Breathe deeply, now.

Your lungs seem to be all right.

What do you do, Mr. Nair?

Mr. Nair : I'm the manager of the sales section in a factory.

Doctor : Does that involve any travel?

Mr. Nair : Oh, yes. A lot. I'm about 50 now. And I've probably travelled for about 30 years of my total life-time.

Doctor : It's obvious you're run down. Let me check your blood pressure.

.....
Hm. It is on the high side. No more running around, Mr. Nair.

Mr. Nair : But this is the time when I have to show my best. A promotion is at hand.

Doctor : I'm afraid there's no other way. And take this medicine for a fortnight. Also get your blood tested.

Vocabulary

'splitting 'headache : a headache giving the feeling of a sharp blow

drugs : medicines

,natu'ropathy : treatment of illness by such means as changing the diet and helping the body to cure itself without the use of dangerous drugs

'appetite : a desire for food

'stethoscope : an instrument that enables the doctor to hear the sounds from inside the chest.

'run 'down : tired and weak, and in a poor state of health

'blood 'pressure : the force with which blood travels through the blood-stream

at 'hand : near

Grammar

ache : meaning 'a continuous pain', is often combined with other words to form compounds like 'headache'. We can say headache, stomachache, earache, toothache and backache, but not throatache or eye-ache.

for a 'week : for here means 'during' (the period indicated). Since last Monday: since means from (a point of time in the past).

I hardly do any reading : 'hardly' means 'almost not', but in 'I have to work hard', hard means 'with great effort'.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1 Can you point out one statement made by the patient which shows he is exaggerating?

- 2 Given below is the beginning of a conversation between a patient and a dentist. Complete it using these clues:

aches when something sweet or cold is taken
root is exposed
decayed
has to be extracted
anaesthesia
fee

Vocabulary

exposed : uncovered

decayed : gone bad

extracted : pulled out

anaesthesia : making one insensitive to pain

Patient : I have a severe toothache, Doctor.
It's the fifth upper tooth on the left.

Dentist : Just sit down here, tilt your head, and open your mouth.
(Dentist directs light into the patient's mouth and taps the affected tooth gently.)

Patient : Softly, doctor! It aches.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7.3 MAKING COMPLAINTS

We sometimes have to make complaints about the quality of the goods bought by us. Study this letter of complaint and the reply to it.

Letter of Complaint

	16, Ballygunge, Calcutta
	5 Nov., 88
Dear Sir,	
I bought an Eltron T.V. set from your dealer at Rajat Park market last month. After using it for ten days I noticed that the picture was not clear and there were horizontal lines moving downwards on the screen. It was obvious that there was some fault in the set. After another week, the volume control stopped working.	
I complained to your dealer but he has refused to do anything about it. Please instruct me what I should do.	
	Yours sincerely, (Mushtaq Ahmed)

Answer to the letter of complaint

Dear Sir,

Your letter of 5th November '88 was received by us today. We are sorry that your T.V. set has given you trouble so early. We would, however, like to say that our products have to undergo strict quality control checks before going to the market. So we are somewhat surprised at your complaint.

Kindly arrange to send your set to our workshop at 10, Shahpur Road, Delhi, so that we can attend to the defect. There will be no charge for the repairs, but I'm afraid we have to charge for any parts that need to be replaced.

Thanking you and assuring you of our best services,

(Pilo Dillon)
Manager (Sales)
Eltron

Vocabulary

'dealer : a person or company engaged in a particular business.

'volume con'trol': mechanism for adjusting the loudness.

'quality con'trol': testing the quality of a product before sending it to the market.

Check Your Progress 2

Convert the two letters above into a brief conversation.

.....

7.4 ARGUING AND PERSUADING PEOPLE

Formal Conversation :
Face-to-Face - 2

Very often people have to discuss matters and decide upon a course of action or find the solution to a problem. This naturally involves some arguing, since people don't agree on all points. In fact, one person may try to persuade the others to accept his own views as correct. This function of persuasion requires special skill in business and other fields.

Let's study this conversation which takes place at a meeting of the Board of Directors of a company.

Conversation

Chairman : You all know, ladies and gentlemen, why this emergency meeting of the board has been called. Ten thousand workers at our Rewati Rolling Mills have gone on strike. Their demand is wages on a par with those in government-owned mills. What is your opinion in this matter, Mr. Cherian?

Mr. Cherian : Well, I think the workers' demand is quite unfair. The total working hours in a month are much less here than in government mills. Besides, we provide benefits which workers in other mills don't get. For instance, educational benefits for children. We also give a 20% bonus compared to the 10% given by other mills. I just can't understand why the workers are creating all this trouble.

Mrs. Jayanti Nagpal : I think we'll have to give them what they want, as otherwise they are not going to end the strike. It's obvious that the trade unions are behind them.

Mr. Cherian : But if we submit to their demand, it will be taken as a sign of weakness. They will make further demands later.

Chairman : We really are between the devil and the deep sea. What are we to do?

Vocabulary

'Board of Directors : A committee consisting of the directors who run the company

'Chairman : one who presides over the meetings of the Board

e'mergency : an unexpected happening which must be dealt with at once

on a 'par : at the same level

'bonus : an additional payment beyond what is usual

'trade 'union : an organisation of workers to represent their interests

are be'hind them : support them

be'tween the 'devil and the 'deep 'sea : facing two choices, both of which are bad.

Grammar

'If we submit to their demand, it will be taken as a sign of weakness'. Notice that an 'if clause' does not take a verb in the future tense.

Check Your Progress 3

1 i) Which of these statements are true?

- a) The workers are striking out of sympathy for the workers in government-owned mills.
- b) Mr. Cherian argues that the demand is unfair because the workers in their mill are lazy and work much less.
- c) Mrs. Nagpal thinks that the striking workers are supported by the trade unions, and will not therefore give up their demand.
- d) Mr. Cherian insists that the company should not submit to the workers' demand, because this will lead to further demands in future.
- e) The meeting ends with a solution proposed by the Chairman.

ii) What do 'the devil' and 'the deep sea' represent here?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The following is a conversation between the representative of a firm manufacturing medicines and a doctor. The firm's representative is trying to persuade the doctor that the medicines his company manufactures are the best in the market. There are gaps in the conversation. Fill them in with meaningful words and phrases from this list:

products, system, effects, company, Kaushal Kumar, Curegesic Ltd., damage, scalpels, samples, improves.

Representative : I am....., I represent
..... at Hyderabad.

Doctor : What sort of does your
..... specialise in?

Representative : Surgical goods like..... We also manufacture tonics. For instance, this preparation strengthens the nervous..... and psychomotor activity.

Doctor : Anything else?

Representative : 'Feverges' is an anti-pyretic drug, which is also an expectorant.

Doctor : But there are plenty of other medicines of this type.

Representative : Yes, but they have side-..... Some drugs can even
.....the digestive system.

Doctor : Can you leave some so that I can try them and see for myself.

Representative : Yes, doctor. Please take these. And here's a small calendar from my company. We hope you'll patronize us.

Vocabulary

'surgical : for surgery

'psychomotor ac'tivity : movement resulting from mental activity.

'anti-py'retic : a drug that brings down fever.

ex'pectorant : a medicine that helps the ejection of phlegm from the throat and the lungs.

'patronize : support (by using the firm's products)

3 Read the following conversation

Conversation

Harry is being interviewed by Mr. MacAndrew.

Harry : The advantage of this umbrella is that you can keep it in your pocket. Then when it rains you just take it out, press a button and there you have as good an umbrella as you can find anywhere.

MacAndrew : Anywhere? I'm sure it's impossible to improve our umbrellas.
Mr. Sallis.

Formal Conversation :
Face-to-Face – 2

In the conversation above, Harry is trying to sell his new invention, a new type of umbrella, to a manufacturer of traditional umbrellas, but the latter is not impressed because he refuses to believe any new umbrella can be better than the traditional ones. Imagine a different situation now. The umbrella manufacturer only sells the new type of umbrella – the one which can be kept in the pocket and opens when it is filled with air. Harry goes to the manufacturer to sell the traditional, or the old type of umbrellas. The manufacturer is again not impressed. Write a brief conversation of about 200 words on this topic.

[illegible]

7.5 DESCRIBING PROCESSES

A formal face-to-face conversation may take place when you are describing the working of a machine or explaining how a certain institution works or what the procedure is for applying for something.

Let's study this conversation in a factory. The manager is describing the machinery and the processes going on in the factory

Conversation

Manager : You see how the iron ingots are being melted in the furnace.....And now the melted iron is being poured into moulds. These moulds are shaped like the components we need for our cars. Shall we go ahead?

Visitor : Yes, please.

Manager : This is Bay 2. The components are being removed from the moulds and treated through a process that strengthens them.

Visitor : I'm anxious to see where they are assembled finally.

Manager : Let's walk ahead....This is the assembly line. It's all automatic. The work here is repetitive and hazardous, so we've shifted the workers to another section.

Notice how the different parts of the car are fitted together. See how those two parts are being dove-tailed.

Visitor : It's simply marvellous. But doesn't this automation displace many workers?

Manager : No. As I said, they have been absorbed elsewhere in the plant.

Visitor : Has the output gone up after introducing automation?

Manager : Yes, almost 500 per cent.

Vocabulary

'ingot : a lump of metal in a regular shape

'mould : hollow vessel having a particular shape into which melted metal is poured, so that when the substance becomes cold and hard, it takes this shape

com'ponents : parts that make up a machine

bay : part of the floor between two main beams or pillars

'treated : put through some industrial process to get changed in some way

as'sembly 'line : an arrangement of workers and machines in such a way that each person has a particular job and the work is passed from one worker or machine to another until the product is complete

re'petitive : involving the same action again and again.

'hazardous : risky

'dovetailed : joined by having a shaped piece sticking out at the end of one piece fitting closely into a cut-out place in the other piece

'simply : really

'marvellous : wonderful, because it is so good

,auto'mation : the use of machines that need little or no human control.

dis'place : remove from the usual place.

ab'sorbed : taken in

plant : factory

'output : production

'500 per'cent : five times

Grammar

'are being melted' : Note the use of the present progressive in the passive voice. The

passive voice is common when we describe the processes in a factory, a mechanical device, etc. Here it helps us to describe what is happening at a particular time.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1 The progressive form describes what is happening at the time the speaker is describing a process. But the simple present tense describes what generally happens, the usual process. e.g. The iron ingots are melted in the furnace.

Describe in about 60 words the processes described in the conversation you have just read as if you were describing what generally happened.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2 The process for a certain activity is described below. Guess what it is for. Write a brief dialogue on it in about 100 words with one person enquiring and the other describing the process.

The filled-in form is sent to the Director of Admissions. The details from this are fed into the computer. Once all the data from all the applications are recorded, the computer processes them. Then it produces a list of all the applicants in the order of merit. The top 100 from this list are called for interview.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7.6 CHECKING AND INVESTIGATING

When a crime is committed in your locality, the police have to investigate the causes. They ask eye-witnesses and people living nearby a number of questions and cross-examine them. Investigations are carried out by the government to find out the

causes of accidents like air crashes and to probe into cases of corruption. Similarly, when you enter another country, you are checked properly to see that you aren't carrying contraband goods or firearms. Your passport and other papers are also checked to make sure that they are in order. Let's begin with a conversation between a police inspector and a man outside whose house a woman has been found murdered.

Conversation

Inspector : Where were you on the night Sushila Ketkar was murdered?

Mrs. Shroff : We were inside our house.

Inspector : Did you hear any shouts for help?

Mrs. Shroff : Oh yes, we did.

Inspector : But you didn't go out or open your windows to see what had happened?

Mrs. Shroff : No. We didn't think it safe to do so.

Inspector : How well did you know Sushila Ketkar?

Mrs. Shroff : She was just an acquaintance whom I had met at the Women's Club.

Inspector : Did you ever hear anything about her? A scandal or....

Mrs. Shroff : Er yes. I once overheard someone saying 'that woman is going around with a certain man'.

Inspector : Did you ever see this man?

Mrs. Shroff : No. Not really.

Inspector : What d'you mean 'not really'? After all they've been seen together by almost everyone in this street.

Mrs. Shroff : Yes, but.....

Inspector : Mrs. Shroff, you're hiding something. I assure you no harm will come to you, if you tell us the truth.

Mrs. Shroff : Well, I suppose, we did see him once or twice.

Inspector : Can you identify him in these photographs?

Mrs. Shroff : Yes. This is the man.

Inspector : Thank you very much. Sorry for all the trouble. We might ask you to come to the police station for further investigations.

Vocabulary

ac'quaintance : a person whom one knows but who may not be a friend.

after 'all : it cannot be denied that.

i'dentify : recognize who a person is.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1 i) Why do you think Mrs. Shroff is hesitant to show any close acquaintance with the victim or the man? What sentences show this hesitation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ii) Why do you think the policeman wants to know whether the Shroffs knew the victim well or not? How might this help in his investigations?

.....

.....

iii) What is the difference between 'murder' and 'assassination'?

.....

.....

.....

iv) a) What is the meaning of 'But you didn't go out or open your windows to see what had happened?' a statement used as a question?

.....

.....

b) What does the same sentence mean in the following contexts?

1) 'The poor woman screamed for help, but you didn't go out or open your windows to see what had happened'.

2) 'So you were careful. The woman screamed, but you didn't go out or open your windows to see what had happened.'

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2 When we speak, there are pauses in our speech. Here is a conversation at the airport. It is given without punctuation marks, i.e. without commas, full stops, question marks etc. Punctuate the conversation.

is that all your luggage yes these two boxes and that bag there have you anything to declare anything dutiable any spirits or electronic goods no nothing except a camera and a bottle of wine that'll be alright.

Vocabulary

de'clare : make a full statement of goods on which customs duty has to be paid.

'dutiabale : on which customs duty has to be paid

'spirits : alcoholic drinks like whisky and brandy

elec'tronic 'goods : electronically operated apparatus, like a recordplayer, a television set, a video-cassette player, etc.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3 Here is a conversation between the Immigration Officer (who is in charge of seeing whether persons entering the country have proper passports and visas) and a foreign visitor. Only the officer's questions are given. Answer them.

Conversation

Officer : What's the purpose of your visit here?

Visitor :

Officer : How will you meet your expenses here?

Visitor :

Officer : How much money are you carrying in cash or traveller's cheques?

Visitor :

Officer : Let me see your passport please.

Visitor :

7.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt how to

- make complaints in various situations,
- argue and persuade other people,
- describe various processes, and
- answer queries during an investigation.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1 'And I've probably travelled for about 30 years of my total life-time.'

2 'Hm! When does the tooth ache most?'

'When I take something sweet or cold.'

'Naturally. The root is exposed. The decayed tooth has to be extracted.'

'Will that be very painful?'

'No. We'll do it under anaesthesia.'

'What's the fee, doctor?'

'Rs. 50'.

Check Your Progress 2

(At the counter of Eltron T.V. Company)

Mushtaq Ahmed : Excuse me. I bought an Eltron T.V. set from your dealer at Rajat Park market last month. After using it for ten days I noticed that the picture was not clear and there were horizontal lines moving downwards on the screen. After another week, the volume control stopped working.

Sales Manager : Why have you come to us so late?

Mushtaq Ahmed : I complained to your dealer but he refused to do anything about it.

Sales Manager : Well, I'm sorry that your T.V. set has given you trouble so early. It's a bit surprising really, because our products have to undergo strict quality control checks before going to the market.

Mushtaq Ahmed : So what should I do now?

Sales Manager : Please arrange to send your set to our workshop at 10, Shahpur Road, Delhi. We'll attend to the defect.

Mushtaq Ahmed : What will the charges be?

Sales Manager : There will be no charge for the repairs. But, I am afraid we have to charge for any parts that need to be replaced.

Mushtaq Ahmed : Thank you.

Sales Manager : You're welcome.

Check Your Progress 3

1 i) c, d.

ii) Here they represent the two courses of action open to the management — to accept the demands of the striking workers or not to accept them. Either of these

choices could lead to trouble. If the first course is taken, it will be interpreted as a sign of weakness and may lead to further demands. If the second course is taken, the workers will not end their strike since the trade unions are behind them.

Formal Conversation :
Face-to-Face – 2

- 2 Kaushal Kumar, Curegesic Ltd., products, company, scalpels, system, improves, effects, damage, samples.

3 Possible conversation

Harry : The traditional umbrella is still in great demand. It's a sign of respectability.

MacAndrew : My dear friend, these days people care for economy and convenience. Most people are fed up with the traditional type of umbrella, because they have to try to avoid other peoples' umbrellas in a crowded street and are always afraid of losing their own umbrellas. Our new inflatable umbrella can be carried in the pocket. There is no fear of loss or of injury to others.

Harry : But how can we ignore tradition altogether? The traditional umbrella has become associated with our everyday life and our culture.....

MacAndrew : Yes, but people soon learn to forget the past and get used to the new. Really, Mr. Sallis, it seems I can't make you understand. Thank you for coming, but I have to go to an important meeting....

Check Your Progress 4

- 1 The iron ingots are melted in the furnace. Then the melted iron is poured into moulds. These moulds are shaped like the components we need for our cars. Then the components are removed from the moulds and treated through a process that strengthens them. In the assembly line, where all work is done by automatic machines, the different parts of the car are fitted.
- 2 The process describes how 100 candidates are short-listed in order of merit by the computer.

Conversation

Jaivrat : Neela, have you sent your application for the manager's post?

Neela : Yes. I wonder how they are going to short-list candidates for the interview.

Jaivrat : The details from the filled-in forms we sent to the Director of Admissions are fed into the computer. Once all the data from different applications are recorded, the computer processes them. Then it produces a list of all the applicants in order of merit.

Neela : Do they call all the candidates for the interview?

Jaivrat : No. Just the top 100 on the list.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1 i) She is afraid the police may even suspect she is involved in some way in the case and harass her by cross-examining her.
'She was just an acquaintance.'
'No, not really.'
- ii) If the Shroffs knew the victim well, this might help in discovering many clues to the murder.
- iii) When an important man like a ruler or a politician is murdered for political reasons or for reward, it is called an assassination.
- iv) a) It means : 'Didn't you try to find out what had happened? I am surprised

you didn't.

b) The first sentence implies a criticism. It was wrong on your part not to try to help who was in trouble. The second sentence shows that the person was only for her own

'Have you anything to declare? Anything dutiable? Any spirits or electronic goods?'

No. Nothing except a camera and a bottle of wine.'

'That'll be alright.'

3 Possible replies

Visitor : I have come for a three-month course at the University of London.

Visitor : The University has offered me a grant.

Visitor : I have £ 10 in cash and £ 100 in traveller's cheques.

Visitor : Here you are.

UNIT 8 INFORMAL CONVERSATION :

FACE-TO-FACE — 1

Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Greetings; Enquiries about one's Health
- 8.3 Everyday Situations
- 8.4 Social Life
- 8.5 Other Informal Situations
- 8.6 Let Us Sum Up
- Answers

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- greet your friends and enquire about their health and welfare;
- discuss domestic problems;
- describe your hobbies;
- express appreciation of other people's qualities;
- invite people to your home;
- carry on light conversation with your guests at dinner;
- plan to go shopping or for a picnic;
- ask for advice about your career;
- offer advice about the choice of courses;
- narrate a story; and
- instruct a friend how to use a telephone.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In Units 6 and 7, we discussed formal conversation, i.e. the type of conversation we require in formal situations — the use of public facilities and the transaction of business and other official work. In this unit and the next, we are going to discuss informal conversation. Informal conversation may broadly be described as the type of conversation we have when talking to friends and relatives on personal or domestic matters. We also have informal conversation when we discuss topics of general interest with our friends.

Informal conversation will naturally differ from formal conversation in a number of ways. First, the topic of discussion in informal conversation will be more personal. Secondly, the language will be different. While formal conversation conforms to certain accepted rules and customs and the norms of correct behaviour associated with the conduct of official and business matters, in informal conversation we have the freedom to use the words and structures that suit us. There are bound to be a lot of colloquial words and expressions in an informal conversation because the speakers are intimate with each other and they speak naturally. There may even be abrupt transitions or diversions from the topic being discussed.

Informal conversation can often merge into intimate talk. Intimate conversation takes place on personal or domestic affairs like money matters, marriage problems, etc. It is not meant to be heard by a third person.

8.2 GREETINGS; ENQUIRIES ABOUT ONE'S HEALTH

In this section, we shall deal with the type of informal conversation that generally takes place at home with relatives and with friends or guests who come to see us.

Let's begin with a conversation between two friends who meet each other after a long time. Let's see how they greet each other and ask about each other's welfare.

Conversation

Shailaja : Hello! How are you?

Prabhu : Fine. Thank you. And you?

Shailaja : Getting along fine. How's your family?

Prabhu : The family is O.K. Thank you. What about your son Ashok? He had fever some time back. Is he alright now?

Shailaja : Oh, yes. He's alright now. He went to school this morning.

Prabhu : And where were you all these days? I didn't see you at office this week.

Shailaja : Well I caught the flu from my son.

Prabhu : Really! That's the way it is. One person gets it and then the whole family is down with it

Vocabulary

'Hello', 'How are you', etc. are examples of what is called 'phatic communication', that is, they are used to establish and strengthen social relations rather than to communicate any meaning. These short exchanges are necessary in social life.

'getting along' : doing well in general

O.K. : (informal) all right

flu : (informal) influenza

That's the way it is! : This is usually the case

down with : ill with

A conversation on the same topic — enquiry about a person's health and her family can also take place in a formal situation. Here's one example of a formal conversation between a company executive and his P.A. We can contrast it with the informal conversation we have already studied.

Conversation

'Yes, Ms. Tandon. I understand you have been absent from the office for a week.'

'Yes, sir. I sent an application on the 6th for medical leave.'

'I know. I know. How are you now? You look a bit pulled down.'

'I'm alright now, but feel a bit weak. Actually my son had influenza too. So I had to attend to him even when I was ill myself.'

'Oh, that must have been a real problem for you. Anyway, how is he now?'

'He's all right, sir.'

'Good. Well, bring me file no X21, will you?'

'Yes, sir.'

Vocabulary

I understand : I have been informed

pulled down : weakened in health

Grammar

You have been absent : the use of present perfect here indicates that she has been absent till the day she met the officer.

attend to : help

Now let's compare the two conversations we have just read.
The tone or the general attitude of the speakers to each other

In the informal conversation, the two friends talk to each other as equals; they are colleagues in an office. The conversation is natural and chatty. For instance, 'Really! That's the way it is' shows sympathy.

In the second conversation, the language changes. The bare minimum of emotion is shown when the officer says, 'Oh that must have been a real problem for you.' After a formal enquiry about her son's health, he gets back to his role as an executive by ordering her, 'Well, bring me file no. X21, will you?' Notice that Ms. Tandon says, 'influenza' instead of 'flu' while talking to the officer.

Shailaja gives details like 'He went to school this morning' when talking to her friend. While talking to the boss, she just answers his questions.

Check Your Progress 1

We are going to present two conversations on the same topic. The first is an informal conversation and the second a formal one. Read the two carefully.

Informal Conversation

'How many are you in the family?'

'Oh, it's a large family. We're ten altogether, including Mum and Dad.'

'And you're the eldest among the brothers and sisters?'

'I'm the eldest among the sisters. But my brother Dick is older than me.'

'And does Dick do anything?'

'Do anything! All he does is strum his guitar and laze in the sun.'

'So that means you're the only one working in an office?'

'No. My sister Barbara is working, too. She knits pullovers and sells them to shops.'

'That's not what you call working in an office.'

Formal Conversation

'How many members are there altogether in your family?'

'Ten including my parents.'

'Are you the eldest among the children?'

'No, the second eldest. My brother Dick is the eldest.'

'And is Dick employed?'

'No. At present he's not employed anywhere.'

'So you're the only member earning for the family?'

'No; my sister Barbara knits and sells pullovers.'

'But she's not employed in an office or a factory.'

Now compare the language in the two conversations, using two columns, like this.

Informal Conversation	Formal Conversation
Mum and Dad	my parents
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	

8.3 EVERYDAY SITUATIONS

People spend a great part of their life at home with their relatives and friends. They talk on domestic problems with each other or entertain guests at dinner, etc. They also discuss their daily life, their hobbies and interests. This helps them to feel they belong to a community. In this section, we shall study conversations which revolve around these topics.

Let's begin with a conversation between a husband and his wife. They are discussing some domestic issue that often engages their minds.

Conversation

(Mr. & Mrs. Bhargava in their drawingroom)

Mr. Bhargava : Is Prमित back?

(Mrs Bhargava carries on knitting. She seems pre-occupied and doesn't answer.)

Mr. Bhargava : Sunaina! Did you hear me? Is Prमित back?

Mrs. Bhargava : (looks up) Oh, I'm sorry. Did you say something?

Mr. Bhargava : Yes! Where's Prमित?

Mrs. Bhargava : He hasn't returned from school yet. Why?

Mr. Bhargava : D'you think we should let him go to Mussoorie?

Mrs. Bhargava : You mean with the school group? For a holiday?

Mr. Bhargava : Yes, for a holiday.

Mrs. Bhargava : I've said 'no' a hundred times. His final exams begin next month. And all he's busy with is cricket.

Mr. Bhargava : There's nothing wrong with playing cricket.

Mrs. Bhargava : And who's going to help him get admission to a college, if he doesn't do well in the exams? You? You're the one who's spoiling him.

Mr. Bhargava : Don't be silly, Sunaina. He's not going to fail if he goes to Mussoorie. It'll give him a change. He can come back and devote himself to his studies with a fresh mind.

Mrs. Bhargava : Fresh mind, my foot! Last time he came back with a fresh mind, he went straight to the cricket field.

Mr. Bhargava : Oh.....

Mrs. Bhargava : No, he's not going! That's all.

Vocabulary

pre-'occupied : with the mind fixed on something else

I've said 'no' a hundred times : an exaggeration

my foot! : (informal) I don't believe it.

Check Your Progress 2

1 i) How does Mrs. Bhargava behave to her husband?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ii) What is Mr. Bhargava's nature? Illustrate your answer with sentences from the conversation.

-
-
-
-
- iii) Rewrite Mrs. Bhargava's speech 'And who's going to help him.... spoiling him' in a different way to indicate that she is a kind and considerate woman and explains gently to her husband why Pramit should not be allowed to go to Mussoorie.
-
-
-
-

- 2 Read this conversation between two housewives chatting about their daily routine. Then answer the questions below.

Conversation

Mrs. Arora: Jayanti, what do you do after the kids have gone to school?

Mrs. Jayanti Majumdar: Oh, I've plenty of things to do any time. In fact, the moment I come out of bed, I'm rushed through so many things.

Mrs. Arora (takes a long sigh): Don't take life so seriously, Jayanti.

Mrs. Majumdar: It's easy for you to say that because in your house it's your husband who does all the work.

Mrs. Arora: Doesn't *your* husband help you with the cooking?

Mrs. Majumdar: Help me? He's in such a temper if he doesn't get breakfast in time.

Mrs. Arora: What time do you normally get up?

Mrs. Majumdar: At about 5.30.

Mrs. Arora: You'll only kill yourself like that (sighs). I get up at 9. By that time Chandan has already sent the kids to school and the omelette's sizzling on the fire.

Mrs. Majumdar: Hm! I have to get not only the kids ready, but the husband, too.

Mrs. Arora: But you can relax, now that they've all gone.

Mrs. Majumdar: And who's going to get the lunch ready? Ashok will be waiting for a warm packed lunch at 12.30.

Mrs. Arora: Why can't he take it at the canteen like my hubby does? Anyway, what do you do after lunch? I hope you take your siesta? It's what I call beauty sleep.

Mrs. Majumdar: Well, the kids are back at 1.30. They need their lunch. Then I've got to help them with their homework.

Mrs. Arora: Silly! You can ask your husband to help them when he comes back. After all it's his duty. What about the evenings? Do you watch the T.V. serials? I like the one called 'Miyan Biwi ke Kisse'.

Mrs. Majumdar: I browse through a few colourful magazines and knit for a while. It sometimes watch the serial 'Pareshaniyan'.

Mrs. Arora: When do you have dinner?

Mrs. Majumdar: At 9 sharp. Then we're off to bed.

Mrs. Arora: 8 is the ideal time to go to bed, dear. I'm feeling so sleepy today. Let me go and have a little snooze.

Vocabulary

in a 'temper : angry

'sizzling : making a hissing sound as of food cooked in hot fat

'hubby : (informal) husband

si'esta : (Spanish) a short sleep in the afternoon

snooze : a short sleep

Grammar

'But you can relax, now that they've all gone.' Notice the use of 'now that' to mean 'considering that.'

- i) Fill in the blanks in these sentences with phrases from the conversation above. Change the tense, if necessary:
 - a) I only the book because I didn't have time to read it all.
 - b) It was a short visit to the museum. We were many different rooms showing different objects of Queen Victoria's reign.
 - c) You must be punctual. You must reach the office at
 - d) Don't so seriously. Have a picnic for a change during a weekend. Otherwise you'll only with hard work.
- ii) Write these sentences in a different way according to the hint given:
 - a) Now that the kids have gone to school, I can relax. (Change by using 'as')
.....
 - b) Help me? (Change by beginning with 'No'.)
.....
 - c) After all it's his duty. (Change by using 'you must remember.....')
.....
- iii) Point out some of the words and sentences that make this an informal conversation between intimate friends.
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
- iv) a) List the phrases which indicate that Mrs. Arora is 'work-shy'.
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

- b) What sentences indicate that Mrs. Majumdar is grumbling about her husband not being helpful?

.....
.....
.....
.....

- 3 Write a brief conversation in which two friends discuss their hobbies. (100 words)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

8.4 SOCIAL LIFE

There are various situations in our daily life when we have to express our feelings and react to the situations. Thus we show surprise, anger, annoyance, joy, excitement, etc.

Let's begin with a brief conversation in which someone is complimenting another person on something or some quality in him.

Conversation

Bina: 'Hi' Asad! What a fine tie you've got on. Where did you buy it?

Asad: My brother brought it for me from the States.

Bina: Hm! It goes so well with your shirt. The magenta tie over the mauve background of your shirt.

Vocabulary

Hi! : an informal greeting

the 'States : the U.S.A.

magenta / ma'dgenta / : dark purplish red

mauve / mauv / : of a pale purple colour

Notice that appreciating something your friend is wearing is indirectly complimenting him on his taste.

Check Your Progress 3

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

i) the relationship between the speakers,

iii) the attitude of the speakers?

.....

.....

.....

.....

```
.....
.....
.....
.....
```

.....

.....

.....

[illegible]

3 Here are some dialogues. The context will tell you the mood in which the exclamations are made—anger, annoyance, disappointment, surprise, etc. Read the dialogues and say what mood is expressed by the exclamations.

a) That fool Naresh got the prize.
Really!

b) There's no electricity. We can't carry on with the video programme.
How annoying!

c) Why do you waste so much money on clothes?
That's none of your business!

d) They're demoting him for helping the contractor without taking a bribe.
This is simply ridiculous!

e) I don't want your help any more.
You're making a big mistake, Mr. Smith!

When we introduce two people who are strangers to each other, but friends of ours, the following conversation might take place.

Conversation

Mr. Roy : Meet Shefali. Shefali Roy. She's a cousin of mine working at Tatas.

(Shefali smiles)

....and this is Bhanu Singh, a colleague of mine.

Bhanu : Glad to meet you.

Shefali : So am I. Your face seems familiar.

Bhanu : Have you seen me somewhere?

Shefali : Now where could it be? Are you a member of the Lions Club?

Bhanu : No.

Shefali : Then.....Did you come to the Government School to deliver a lecture.

Bhanu : That's right. On the 16th — their annual day. You must have seen me there.

Vocabulary

'cousin' : we don't use the expression 'cousin brother' (or 'cousin sister') in English.

Now here's a conversation between two friends who are parting from each other after spending some time at a coffee house.

Conversation

Asha (Looking at her watch) : I'm getting late! I must be off now.

Nek : So soon? Stay a little longer.

Asha : Oh, I enjoyed talking to you, but I really must go now. I'll miss my last bus home.

Nek : But I can drop you by car.

Asha : Oh, don't worry. We'll meet again soon.

Nek : Well, then. Bye for the moment.

Usage

I must be off now : Another phrase is 'I'd better make a move now,'

Bye : Short for 'good bye'.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1 Continue the above conversation with one person inviting the other to his house and giving directions as to how to get there.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2 There are various informal conversations which take place on occasions when a particular activity is going on. Let's begin with a conversation inside the dining room. You have invited a guest to dinner. The following conversation may take place. Read the conversation and answer the questions that follow.

Conversation

Mr. Sethi : Please sit down here, Gulab.

Gulab : Thank you.

Mr. Sethi : Rama, you sit here. Dinesh there. That's right. Now Gulab, would you like 'poori' or 'pulao' to begin with?

Gulab : I'd prefer pulao.

Mr. Sethi : Well, help yourself.

Gulab : Hm! It's delicious.

Mrs. Rama Sethi : Please have some more.

Gulab : No, no! I've already taken so much.

Mrs. Rama Sethi : So what! Have some more. You're still young.

Gulab : Yes, but look at my size. I would make two of you. In fact, I was going to ask you, Rama, if you were dieting. You look so meagre.

Mr. Sethi : Dieting is the last thing she'll do. She eats the most, but never grows.....

Vocabulary

'help your'self' : take for yourself

pre'fer : like better

'dieting : living on a limited list of food and drink

I would 'make 'two of you : I'm twice as fat as you are

'meagre : thin

Grammar

- i) What do you think is Gulab's attitude when she says 'No, no!-I've already taken so much'? Is she being formal?
.....
- ii) What sentences indicate that the Sethis are playing the good hosts here?
.....
.....
- iii) Sometimes the intention of a speaker is different from what the words seem to convey. 'You're still young' for instance is said merely to encourage Gulab to eat more.

What is the intention behind these sentences:

- a) 'Hm! It's delicious'.
.....
- b) 'You look so meagre'
.....
.....
- c) 'Dieting is the last thing she'll do.'
.....

- 3 Here's a conversation in which some parts are missing. Complete the dialogue with the help of the context. Indicate a possible situation.

A: Fine weather

B:

A: May I put my bag here?

B: if you like.

A: By the way, where

B: To Jullundur. And you?

A:

B:

A: At 5.30

B:

A: No, thank you, I've had my dinner.
.....

8.5 OTHER INFORMAL SITUATIONS

There are so many other situations when we have to take part in informal conversations. We may have to plan picnics, advise friends and relatives on where to buy things, suggest where to stay on a journey, etc. We also need to describe events that have taken place, or narrate stories we have read or seen in films.

Let's begin with a conversation in which two persons are planning their shopping.

Conversation

Charu: Tomorrow's Sunday, Kalyani. I'm going for my usual shopping.

Charu: Not at all. It'll be a pleasure. You could carry some of my bags for me when they are full.

Kalyani: Oh! What are the things you want to buy?

Charu: All sorts of things. I have to buy provisions at Khan Market, and a cake and some toys for my daughter's birthday. Then I have to go to the tailor's to get some clothes made.

Kalyani: Where do you usually get your clothes made?

Charu: There's only one tailor who understands me—'Saheli' at Raj Market.

Kalyani: I want to get my children's shoes repaired somewhere. Is there a place for this on the way?

Charu: Oh, there are some cobblers on the roadside.

Kalyani: Where shall we have lunch?

Charu: Ah! You're going to stand me an ice-cream, and I'll treat you to a good Chinese lunch at 'Chung Wah'.

Kalyani: Done! Then, what time d'you think we'll be back?

Charu: Not before 5. I want to visit my beauty parlour and get my hair dyed.

Kalyani: How do we go?

Charu: Let's catch the bus at the turning here and buy a day pass. Then we can travel as we like.

Vocabulary

who understands me : who knows my style in clothes

stand me : pay the cost (or something) for me

treat you to : pay for your (food)

Done! : agreed

dyed : given a colour

day pass : a ticket that enables one to use any city bus during that day.

Grammar

shopping : used here as a noun. It is derived from the verb 'shop' and can be called a verbal noun or a gerund. Similarly we say 'D' you like driving?'

tailor's : tailor's shop. It is customary to say 'at the baker's', 'at the shoemaker's', 'at the butcher's', etc.

'to get some clothes made'

'to get my children's shoes repaired'

'get my hair dyed'.

When we want to say that the work will be done for us by someone else, we use the construction

get + noun object + past participle

Let's catch the bus : When we make a suggestion, 'let's' is used inviting someone to do something along with us.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1 i) What sentences show that the two women have to get some work done by others?

.....

.....

.....

- ii) Why does Charu say 'my' beauty parlour? Does she own it?

[illegible][illegible]

Papa : Well, go ahead and fill in your form

bi'ology : the scientific study of living things

***tough* : difficult to do; not easy**

- i) What is Papa's attitude to his son's choice of a career? Is he determined like most parents to impose his own choice or is he willing to let the boy decide? What words in the conversation show this?

ii) **Rajat has already decided on the medical profession, yet he wants his papa's advice. Why?**

- iii) 'You told me you wanted to take up medicine.' Write in direct speech what Rajat must have said, i.e. his exact words.

- 5 Here is a conversation in which one person is narrating the story of a film to another.**

Kajal : Om, did you see ‘Paar’?

Om : No. But I hear it's a tragic story. What is it in short?

Kajal : Well you have this very poor couple. They lead a miserable life going from one small job to another. The woman becomes pregnant and they need money badly. Someone offers them Rs. 16 if they take a herd of pigs across the river. They do the job against their will. But the woman has a miscarriage because of the exertion.

Vocabulary

'tragic : sad

mis'carriage : act of producing a lifeless baby before the proper time

ex'ertion : effort

Notice the use of simple present in story-telling. This helps to give the feeling that when the story is narrated it is taking place before you. Now narrate in about 100 words any other story you have read or seen in a film.

- 6 Here's a conversation between two friends. They are at a city telephone booth and one of them wants to make a call. But the system in the booth is new to him. His friend advises him. Read the conversation and do the exercise that follows it.

Dhiren : First, lift the receiver. Can you hear the dial tone?..... Let me try.....
That's it. Now dial. Like this 6-5-3-2-1. Can you hear the phone ringing on the other side?

Aziz : Yes! Yes!

Dhiren : Now, as soon as you hear the person at the other end, insert a one-rupee coin in this slot. Right. Remember, if you don't insert the coins quickly, you'll be disconnected. Is the bell still ringing?

Aziz : Yes, but nobody's picking up the phone. Now, I get it. (Inserts the coins.) Hello! Hello! Speak louder please. I can't hear you. Oh, we're cut off.

Dhiren : Probably he couldn't hear you and hung up.

Vocabulary

re'ceiver : the part of a telephone that is held to one's ear

'dial tone : the sound made by a telephone receiver to show that one may now dial the number that one wants

dial (verb) : make a telephone call with a dial (= a wheel which is moved round to call the number we want)

in'sert : put something inside (something else)

slot : a long straight narrow opening

'hung 'up : put the receiver back to finish the telephone conversation

Other phrases used in connection with telephone conversation :

The 'line's 'dead : it's not working

the en'gaged 'tone : a sound to indicate that the line you want is not free, as it is being used by somebody else.

I'll 'ring off 'now : I'll end the conversation

Use the informal conversation and the additional phrases above and write a set of instructions to be kept at the booth for users.

Begin

- 1 Lift the receiver
- 2 Listen for the dial tone
- 3 Dial the number you want

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you learnt

- how to take part in informal conversations on various occasions in daily life,
- how to express your feelings, and
- how to talk on social occasions.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

Informal Conversation	Formal Conversation
Mum and Dad And does Dick do anything? All he does is strum his guitar and laze in the sun. That's not what you call working in an office.	My parents And is Dick employed? At present he's not employed anywhere She's not employed in an office or a factory.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1 i) She is a stern woman who refuses to accept her husband's suggestion that Pramit should be allowed to go to Mussoorie. Her language is rough and shows little respect for her husband. E.g. 'And who's going to you?' 'My foot!'
- ii) Mr. Bhargava is gentle and does not force his views on his wife. He says, 'D'you think we should let him go to Mussoorie?', not 'we must let him go'. He is kind and considerate towards his son and pleads for him. 'It'll give him (Pramit) a change', he says.
- iii) 'You know, Sushil, Pramit's got his final exams beginning next month. He must stop playing cricket for some time.' 'It might be difficult for him to get admission to a college if he fails'.
- 2 i) a) browsed through
b) rushed through
c) 10 sharp
d) take life; kill yourself
- ii) a) As the kids have gone to school, I can relax now.
b) No, he doesn't help me at all.
c) You must remember that it's his duty.
- iii) 'Kids', 'hubby' and 'snooze' are all words used in informal speech.
Use of the first name 'Jayanti' shows intimacy.
'You'll only kill yourself like that' is meant to show concern.
'Silly!' is said in an informal style.
'8 is the ideal time to go to bed, dear': the last word 'dear' shows intimacy.
- iv) a) 'Don't take life so seriously, Jayanti.'
'I get up at 9. By that time Chandan.... fire.'
'But you can relax now....'
'Why can't he take it at the canteen like my hubby does?'
'Silly! You can ask your husband to help them....'
b) 'Help me? He's in such a temper if he doesn't get breakfast in time.'
'Hm! I have to get not only the kids ready, but the husband, too.'

3 Possible Conversation

Bhanu : Hi, Reena! How do you spend your evenings?

Reena : Well, I do a bit of gardening. I have a small plot of land in front of our house. I've filled it with roses and dahlias. And ... do you do?

Bhanu : Well, I'm fond of philately. That's another name for stamp-collecting.

Reena : How many stamps have you got?

Bhanu : Oh, about 3000.

Reena : How do you get them?

Bhanu : I have penfriends in 25 countries all over the world. We exchange letters in which we post a few stamps to each other.

Check Your Progress 3

1 Asad : What a lovely saree you're wearing today!

Bina : Really? My husband bought it for me on our first anniversary.

Asad : The purple embroidery on the border goes so well with the sky-blue of the saree.

2 a) Friends.

One is apologising. The other is considerate.

b) Strangers who bump into each other on the road. While the first speaker apologises for his mistake, the other shows he is annoyed.

c) A pupil's parent and the class teacher.

The parent enquires about his son's examination results. The teacher shows sympathy, but says the results are bad.

d) Two friends.

One informs the other of the sad news. The other shows sympathy.

e) A man who pretends to be blind, is begging in the street and talks to a passer-by.

The 'blind' man grumbles or complains.

The passer-by is at first surprised that the blind man has been able to see that it is a bad coin.

The 'blind' man apologises and explains why he is sitting there.

The passer-by enquires about the person who is supposed to be blind.

The 'blind' man informs him.

3 a) The exclamation 'Really!' shows surprise.

b) shows annoyance or irritation.

c) The speaker is annoyed at the interference in his personal affairs.

d) shows indignation or very strong feelings.

e) A warning or threat.

Check Your Progress 4

1 Nek : Why don't you drop in some day with your family?

Asha : Sure. How do I get to your house?

Nek : That's easy. Just take a bus no. 30 to Central Park. After getting off, turn left and walk to the petrol station. Just in front of it is a multistoreyed building called 'Sunview Apartments'. We are on the fifth floor. The flat no. is 806.

2 i) She is being careful because of her overweight.

ii) 'Would you like 'pooris' or 'pulao' to begin with?'
'Help yourself'.
'Please have some more', 'Have some more'.

iii) a) to express appreciation of the food.

b) to show concern for Rama's health and encourage her to eat more.

c) light-hearted banter or joking.

- 3 B : Yes, isn't it?
 B : Yes, if you like.
 A : By the way, where are you going?
 A : To Ambala.
 B : When does the train reach Ambala?
 B : Would you like to share some of this food?
 The conversation takes place in a train.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1 i) I have to go to the tailor's to get some clothes made.
 I want to get my children's shoes repaired.
 I want to.....get my hair dyed.
 ii) 'my' refers to the parlour Charu usually goes to.
 iii) 'catch a cold'

2. Conversation

Mother : So Charu, what did you do in the market today?

Charu : I bought provisions at the market, a cake for Neena's birthday and some toys. Here they are.

Mother : What a lovely cake! Did you go to the tailor's to get the clothes made?

Charu : Yes, Mother. But they say they can only give them to us after a week. I got Neena's and Rahul's shoes repaired, while we had lunch at Chungwah. Finally I got my hair dyed.

3 Conversation

Himmat : Manoj, we must leave home by 6 in the morning.

Manoj : Yes. And we mustn't forget to pack everything for lunch tonight. We'll cook the rice in the forest. It'll be fun to collect drywood and twigs for a fire.

Himmat : We'll sing and play the guitar. We can also climb up the hill to the temple.

Manoj : It'll be great fun!

- 4 i) He is willing to let the boy decide. 'My advice is to take what you enjoy studying.'
 ii) Because he respects his Papa and wants his approval.
 iii) 'I want to take up medicine.'

5 Possible answer

'David Copperfield' has a very interesting plot. David is born after his father's death. As a small child he goes for a holiday to his nurse Pegotty's house. When he returns, his mother is already married to a cruel man called Mr. Murdstone. He ill-treats David and sends him to a boarding-school. This is a wretched school, where David is not treated well. David has to discontinue his studies on his mother's death. He goes to London to earn a living. He goes from one sad situation in life to another. Finally, a great aunt of his arranges for his education. He becomes a lawyer's apprentice and finally leads a happy life.

- 6 1 Lift the receiver.
 2 Listen for the dial tone.
 3 Dial the number you want.
 4 As soon as you hear the person at the other end, insert a one-rupee coin in the slot.
 5 After you finish the conversation put the receiver back.
 6 Be brief and allow others to use the phone.

UNIT 3 GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND MEETINGS

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Group Discussions (GDs)

3.2.1 GDs at Interviews and GDs in General: Functional Differences

3.2.2 Essentials of a Group Discussion

3.2.3 What to Say and How to Say It

3.2.4 Group Communication Skills

3.2.4.1 Overcome Differences in Communication Style

3.2.4.2 Acknowledge Differences in Gender and Culture

3.2.4.3 Effective Involvement

3.2.5 Maintaining Roles in a Group

3.2.6 Group Processing and Assessment

3.3 Meetings

3.3.1 Agenda of a Meeting

3.3.2 Preparing for a Meeting

3.4 Reading: Role of Participants

3.5 Vocabulary

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we will first take up Group Discussions and cover the following topics:

- Planning what to say and how to say it in a group discussion
- Maintaining roles
- Group communication skills
- Group Processing and assessment

We then take up Meetings, where we will discuss:

- Agenda of a meeting
- Preparing for a meeting

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Group Discussion

You might have often chatted with your friends on various topics. It could be

about the prospects of a course, about a film or a book, pros and cons of politics and so on. As humans we love to talk and express our ideas on issues of our interest. In the process we learn about others' points of view on the same, agree or disagree with them, and help ourselves with a more definite understanding of a situation or a problem.



When you interact with many people on a topic a lot of ideas get generated. If done in a systematic way, these ideas prove beneficial in many ways such as solving problems or creating new avenues. When the conversation is intended to serve an objective in an organized manner, it transcends being a mere 'chat' and is called a group discussion.

A group discussion is a means of interaction within a team or between various teams in an organization. It often determines managerial success. It is a common procedure in competitive exams and job-interviews and is a standard component towards the end of an interview, which the short listed candidates have to take.

The interviewers and examiners nowadays find it necessary to evaluate a candidate's capability to work as a member of a team. Through such group discussions the interviewer looks for the candidates'

- Knowledge and awareness about a topic
- Creative aptitude
- Ability to work as a member of a team
- Ability to lead a team, especially as an opinion leader
- Conferencing skills

To make a group discussion successful you should have good listening skills, an approach to contribute ideas, and show a positive interdependence. You need to convey your thoughts in a meaningful way, and at the same time as a member of a team.

As a result a group discussion is a very useful technique to fulfill many purposes. For example, it is used to

- Generate ideas (in preparation for something such as a film or a seminar)
- Summarize
- Assess levels of skill and understanding
- Reexamine ideas presented earlier
- Review a situation
- Process learning outcomes of a session
- Compare and contrast theories, issues and interpretations
- Brainstorm applications of theory to life

3.2 GROUP DISCUSSIONS (GDs)

3.2.1 GDs at Interviews and GDs in General: Functional Differences

We have said that group discussions can form a part of a meeting, or form a part of the interview process. Although group discussions (GDs) in general and GDs in an interview have a similar structure, they have some functional differences. In a classroom or an organization the purpose of a GD is to generate thinking, enhance group communication skills, facilitate a successful exchange of ideas and derive a conclusion. It may not be very formal as the members as well as the observer are known to each other.

GDs can also be part of competitive examinations and job interviews. In the civil services, MBA admission process and Armed Forces and Private Sector examinations, GDs are conducted to observe a candidate's suitability for the course or the job. Hereafter GD in job interviews and GD in examinations will be referred together as GD in interviews.

The various functional differences can be categorized as follows:

GD in an organization or classroom	GD in interviews
1) The main purpose is to <u>generate thinking</u> on a particular topic.	The main purpose is to see who <u>communicates well</u> in a group.
2) The role of an observer may be maintained by a <u>member</u> within the group. In a class discussion, the <u>instructor</u> also observes group interaction and gives feedback.	The <u>interviewers</u> maintain the role of the observers. There may not be any feedback given to the candidates, except the interview result.
3) The roles of a team captain, a recorder, an encourager or a reflector are <u>decided in advance</u> , either by the group members or by the instructor.	The roles are not defined before the discussion. They <u>come up</u> according to the candidates' capabilities.
4) The topics depend upon the organization's interests, related to the group's work and responsibilities or the instructor's <u>requirements in a classroom</u> .	The topics are chosen in such a way that everyone is expected to be aware of it. For example, a topic related to current affairs.
5) The members know each other fairly well, so there is <u>no introduction required</u> at the beginning. By referring to a person who had made a relevant point, the discussion encourages further interaction in the group.	Usually the <u>members introduce themselves</u> when they speak. Mentioning the name of a member-while referring to her/him might help the interviewers determine your listening skills.

3.2.2 Essentials of a Group Discussion

In recent times group discussion has emerged as an important and potent tool for testing candidates for recruitment as this technique at one go analyzes almost all the behaviour competencies and some of the generic skills we have already described in earlier units. Therefore your awareness of what this technique is, how it works and how to participate in GD becomes essential for a successful performance.

There are certain conditions that must be met for a group discussion to be successful. Some of these conditions are dictated by the nature of the task, but there are some general points you must remember in order to be a successful participant. These are:

- a) There is only one topic for discussion
- b) All the members must express their views only on **this topic** under discussion.
- c) Members must take turns to talk; they must listen to one another, talk to one another and respond to one another.
- d) They must put forward more than one point of view on the topic.

Members of the group must also follow certain rules for the success of the group discussion. These are:

a) Equality, freedom to express, and respect for participating members.

The participants are all treated as equals and must have regard for the opinions of each member of the group. The participants are free to offer their opinions without fear or anxiety, pressure, ridicule or embarrassment.

b) Reasonableness, orderliness and truthfulness

All the participants must come to the group discussion with an open mind; they are not to be dogmatic or have pre-determined opinions; they all must be willing to listen to reason and to accommodate others' views on the subject. The participants must observe order and take turns to talk; must listen to others and not shout down opinions they do not like. The participants must speak what they believe to be true; they must not remain silent, be reticent or vague in their views.

Anything that violates the spirit of free and open discussion or joint enquiry breaches the spirit of GD and one must guard against this. Some examples of breach of rules are –

- i) interrupting the speaker or not allowing the speaker to complete his/her contribution.
- ii) shouting down people whose views one does not like.
- iii) refusing to listen to reason and/or evidence.
- iv) dogmatic in one's own opinion even in the face of evidence to the contrary.
- v) agreeing to a point without believing in it or under duress or threat.

This does not mean that you cannot 'interrupt' someone. You can do so at the appropriate moment and without causing offense.

The discussion group can take up any topic for discussion provided the topic poses a question and requires a joint enquiry. A discussion question invites joint enquiry whereas other forms of discussion e.g. debates discourage it. Hence a discussion question has to be an interrogative sentence, not a word or phrase. It must **not** be framed as a 'yes/no' or 'either/or' question and must **not** be broad or ambiguous.

Check Your Progress 1

Read the text once again a bit slowly this time and attempt the following:-

- 1) Are the following statements true or false according to the text? If false, rewrite the true version.
 - i) You must not question what the Manager says in GD.
 - ii) All GD members, juniors and seniors, are treated equal.
 - iii) In GD, it is better not to say anything that may offend the management.
 - iv) You should stick to your point of view even if you feel that you are wrong.
 - v) In GD, there is only one topic for discussion.
- 2) Are the following topics suitable for Group Discussion? Why/Why not?
 - i) Higher education
 - ii) Should we develop rural or urban areas in India?
 - iii) Tourism
 - iv) How can India become self-sufficient in energy resources?
 - v) Research in health issues should be left to the private sector.

3.2.3 What to Say and How to Say It

You can begin by saying:

- 1) To begin with, I would say, ...
- 2) The first thing that comes to my mind when I think of ...
- 3) We may think that it's the government's responsibility to deal with corruption but...
- 4) Let us first look at the facts known to us, for example, ..
- 5) A very good morning to all of you. I strongly support... because...

If you speak after someone you can continue with

- 6) "As my friend has just said/spoken persuasively about/argued...

To involve others in your thinking you may say

- 7) "You will all agree with me that..."

You can begin in a way that suits your own style of speaking. Try to include others in your conversation to convey that you are open to others' views as well. You can also do this by using 'we' and 'us' instead of 'I' and 'me'. It is important that whatever you say fulfills a purpose (gives information, agrees or disagrees with a point already mentioned, illustrates a point or justifies your actions).

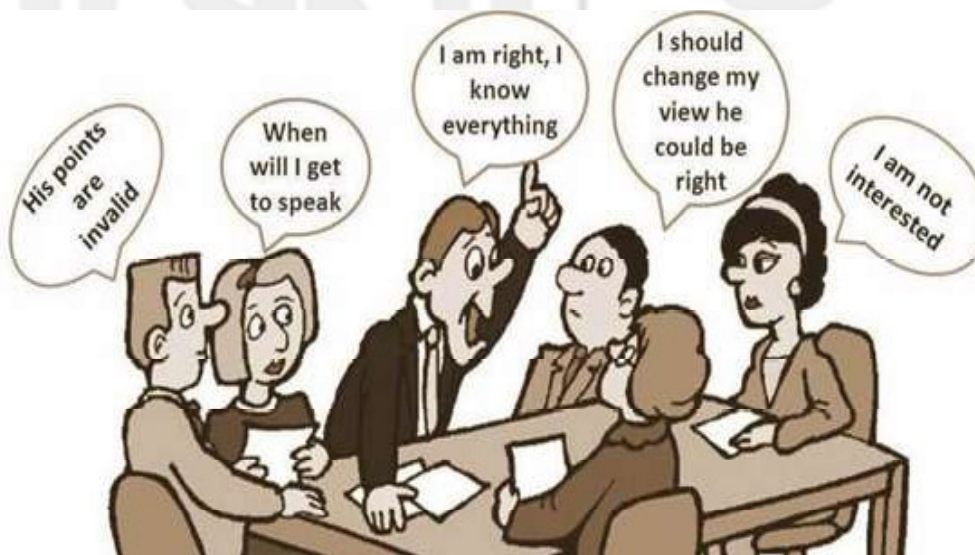
You need to consider the five **whats** given below:

- What is known to some or most of the participants?
- What may be unacceptable to some or most of the participants?
- What level of detail is needed?
- What depth ideas is required to deal with possible questions related to the topic?
- What must be said at a point, and what is to be retained for the appropriate time?

Asking for **clarification** is very important when you do not understand what another person has said. You should also respect others' contributions to the discussion even if you may not agree with everyone. Remember to address the points rather than the persons. Try to give equal time to everyone in the group for speaking. During the discussion, you may use phrases like:

- 1) I would like to add a point here, ...
- 2) As you have rightly said ...
- 3) I think we forgot to consider the fact that ...
- 4) Coining back to Nikhil's point that examinations should not be mere memory tests...

As you can see, the phrase in (1) is useful to make an additional point, and can be used even to interrupt a speaker. So is (2), which agrees with the previous speaker and adds a point. The phrases in (3) and (4) come in useful to continue the discussion from an earlier point, after a slight gap. Perhaps you wanted to say something but didn't want to interrupt the speaker. With these words, you may refer back to the person and her point when you speak again.



Here are some more suggestions of language which can be used in a group discussion.

Stating an opinion

- It seems to me...
- In my view...

- I tend to think...
- It's obvious that...
- I believe....
- Clearly ...

Interrupting

- Excuse me, may I ask for a clarification on this...
- If I may interrupt...
- Sorry to interrupt but.....

Handling Interruptions

- Sorry, please let me finish.....
- If I may finish what I am saying.....
- Could you please allow me to complete what I'm saying.....?

Moving the discussion on

- Can we go on to think about.....?
- I think we should now move on to consider.....

Expressing Agreement

- I totally agree
- I agree entirely
- I quite agree
- I couldn't agree more
- Absolutely / precisely / exactly
- I think you're right

Expressing disagreement

- I don't agree at all
- I totally disagree
- I think quite differently on this
- I don't really think so
- I'm afraid I can't agree with you there

Checking comprehension / reformulating

- To put that another way...
- If I follow you correctly...
- So what you're saying is...
- Does that mean...?
- Are you saying...?

Making a suggestion

- I suggest that....
- We could.....

- Perhaps we should...
- It might be worth....
- What about.....?
- Why don't we.....?

Activity 1

Here is an excerpt from a group discussion. Read it well and answer the questions that follow.

Observer : “The topic given to you is ‘Should children be allowed to watch TV?’ You need to discuss this in your group for 30 minutes and come to a conclusion.”

Speaker 1 : Good morning friends. In my opinion children should be allowed to watch TV because there are many programmes on TV that are instructive and educative. Cartoons and certain serials are very much liked by children and such sources of entertainment cannot be denied to children. After all they have a right to enjoy TV. Channels like Discovery and National Geographic show very good programmes and provide a lot of general knowledge to children. However parents have to ensure that children watch TV for a short time only.

Speaker 2 : Hello friends, I am of the opinion that watching TV does not help children much. There are many programmes that mislead children. If they are allowed to watch TV, they get habituated to it and lose interest in physical activities. Moreover, watching more TV affects the reading habits of children. They slowly lose their concentration on studies too. Children try to imitate their role models in style and looks, which might become an expensive affair for the parents if not checked early.

From the points mentioned above by Speakers 1 and 2, make a list of those that you agree with:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

And those that you don't agree with:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Who do you agree with more, Speaker 1 or Speaker 2?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Now can you add a few more points to strengthen your views about the topic’?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

How do you think the discussion will end? Write one or two lines in illustration.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.2.4 Group Communication Skills

Positive interdependence is when a group either sinks or swims together. It is met in a group as its members share a task, a goal and common resources. Therefore a feeling of oneness is important in the group members. This also helps them to develop a positive way of speaking in a discussion. For example, using ‘We’ instead of ‘I’ or ‘You’ will show the feeling of positive interdependence. Disagreements are a common possibility in any group discussion. These need to be dealt with in a positive way too. Aggressive behaviour affects a healthy discussion. Remember to address the point of disagreement rather than the person who makes it. **Disagreements** should be reframed in constructive ways:

Say	Instead of
1) I don't think I agree. Could you please explain...	That doesn't make sense at all
2) I disagree because ...	That is not true.
3) I see it differently because...	No, I don't agree.
4) I think we should check what we are supposed to do.	That is not what we are asked to do.
5) It might be better to...	You are dead wrong.
6) Have you considered...	How can you say this?
7) Does everyone agree?	Let's vote on it.
8) I understand how you feel, but I think you might also consider...	That really upsets me!

To be aware of possible differences among group members will help you to frame your ideas well.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The topic given to you is "Coaching is necessary for academic studies and competitive exams".

Generate as many ideas as you can on the topic and write them down as they come to your mind (you need not write complete sentences).

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Now arrange the points in order to arrive at one of the two conclusions below:

i) Coaching is necessary because

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ii) Coaching is not needed because

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Now think of speaking about your ideas to a group. Start by stating what you are going to say.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.2.4.1 Overcome Differences in Communication Style

By differences in communication style we mean that everyone does not express their thoughts in the same way. Some ‘think aloud’ composing their thoughts on the fly. That is, they state their views as they think and feel. Since they are comfortable with forceful manner of speaking, they may be uncomfortable with silence in a group. Such an extroverted communication style is completely different from one where people love to ponder on an issue or listen to what everyone else has to say before they speak their mind. They have an introverted communication style and long periods of silence doesn’t disturb them.

As a group member you have to remember that only when you appreciate varied communication styles can you achieve balanced contributions to a group. Occasionally you may step out of your form to encourage each other to participate. Group members with an extroverted style need to periodically relax and silently deliberate on an issue. Those with an introverted style need to periodically encourage themselves (if not be encouraged by others!) to contribute, even if they haven’t worked out the problem fully in their heads yet.

3.2.4.2 Acknowledge Differences in Gender and Culture

You may face culture differences when you interact in a group from different cultural backgrounds. This can sometimes make communication difficult. Growing up in a different region, state or country generates differential communication styles. Your style may be quite different from what you face at the time of discussion. Degrees of bluntness, assertiveness in speech, preferences for direct or indirect (roundabout) conversation styles may be some of the patterns based on community upbringing.

You need to remain open to talk in spite of such differences. A group member who is sensitive towards these differences will value this uniqueness and will not hesitate to share his or her ideas with the other members.

It is very common to take up roles in groups based on gender socialization. You may rely on communication styles with which you are most comfortable in *social settings*. However, groups work together best when group members experiment with a variety of roles in groups, even those with which they don't have as much experience.

3.2.4.3 Effective Involvement

Expressing one's views must be well balanced with listening to others, to reach at an understanding as a group. On the other hand, agreeing to any statement offered without any effort to analyze its worth can misfire everything. For an effective group discussion you need to adopt a middle road between the two: one that monopolizes and the other that is passive. An extended conversation that is gradual and steady helps to lead to the integration and synthesis of views. Through an effective discussion, creative, high-energy, and effective learning occurs among all members of the group. In short, a participant of a group discussion needs to ensure that (s)he has group communication skills. For that he or she can check whether he or she has fulfilled the following points after the discussion:

- Incorporated prior knowledge into discussion
- Asked questions in an open-minded way
- Built on the comments of other group members to enhance discussion
- Volunteered ideas in a Constructive manner.
- Helped to summarize the group's progress.
- Identified any missing information in the group answer.

3.2.5 Maintaining Roles in a Group

You may be required to play different roles in a group discussion. The roles are decided before the discussion begins.

- The role of a *team captain* is to keep the group focused on the task. He or she also manages time and mediates conflict.
- The role of a *recorder* is to take down the salient points. He or she also reports back to the group as a whole.
- The *encourager* gives feedback to the group members. He or she is responsible for ensuring that all group members are heard.
- The *reflector* keeps track of dynamics of group process and makes comments about focus, direction, organization, listening skills and participation of all members.

Once a role is decided upon you, try not to switch over to other roles.

In an interview GD, these roles are not decided before but come up according to the candidates' abilities. You may show an interest in playing all the roles or just

one. The role of the team captain is one of leadership. The recorder and the encourager support the smooth functioning of a GD and the reflector steers the process.

These roles are extremely important in a GD that is a part of a meeting. They help to fulfill the objectives of the discussion.

3.2.6 Group Processing and Assessment

Group processing and group assessment is very important to develop effective communication in a group. To assess your group after a group discussion you need to reflect on each other's

- contribution
- way of speaking
- attitude.

This will also help you to understand the role of an observer in a group discussion, especially in an interview GD. As you get feedback from others about your performance in the group you can ponder on your strong and weak points. You can identify your communication style and attitude towards others' views. Listening to each other will facilitate your learning. Questions such as 'What is working?' 'What isn't working?' and 'How can the groups function more effectively?' can be raised for assessment. You can also prepare a group report in this way to determine the areas on which further work is needed.

Check Your Progress 3

Read the following excerpt from a group discussion and observe the different capabilities of the speakers. Give your assessment of each speaker on the basis of skills such as leadership, decision making, logical reasoning and convincing skills. You can explore the traits that are optimistic, constructive, visionary, practical, acceptable and progressive. Then give an overall assessment of the speaker.

The group consists of Koyel, Nirmal, Suman, Rekha, Bhargav, Bala and Jeet. After the topic is chosen, the discussion begins with Suman breaking the ice:

Above all you must not forget that what you say is more important than how you say it. So pay more attention in generating more ideas and views on the topic given, and improve your presentation through practice in a group.

- Suman:** Hi friends! I strongly believe that child care is the sole responsibility of the parents. Every living creature takes care of its young ones. You will agree with me that parents feel responsible to mould their children into healthy, happy and successful human beings with love, respect and care.
- Nirmal:** Friends, to my mind, child care is the responsibility of everyone. The child is a hope for the parents, the country, and above all mankind. Therefore everyone should take care of it. The contribution of people other than parents right from its childhood makes the child emerge as a good human being, as an artist, a writer, a scientist or an inventor. Teachers, guides and other concerned people must fulfill their share of responsibilities to make the child a successful man or woman. Parents are responsible of

taking basic care of their children but they are not the only people responsible for the child's mental and physical development.

- iii) **Jeet:** Good afternoon to all! I agree with Suman and also with Nirmal that childcare is definitely the responsibility of the parents. Only their parents provide children with the basic requirements i.e., food, health, clothing and education. They are also responsible to give them a safe and carefree childhood. They take them to doctors when they are sick and bear all their expenditure till they stand on their own feet and get married. They have given birth to the child and they hold themselves responsible for both their success and failure.
- iv) **Rekha:** Dear friends, I have heard all of you who have spoken so far. I agree that parents do their best to provide the child with everything they can to make their children all rounders. But the basic necessities are not enough for a child's growth. They are of primary importance, but a child cannot develop completely if s/he does not acquire intellectual and technical skills. These may or may not be provided by parents. In order to develop these skills a child must interact with more and more different types of people. The teacher also influences the child. It is the responsibility of every adult to encourage the intellectual development of the child.
- v) **Bala:** Good afternoon everyone. I believe that childcare is parent's responsibility. They have to take care of the child as they have given birth to it. They take up the responsibilities of their children so that the children will look after them in their old age. Everybody is selfish in this world. The children are the future of the parents and so they give due care to see them grow as healthy and wealthy citizens.
- vi) **Suman:** I have listened to comments on both sides and I still hold the stand that childcare is parents' responsibility. The parents are the closest to a child and so their role is the most important in making the child an asset to the nation and to mankind. Apart from providing the basic necessities they also support the child to fight all adverse situations in life. In my opinion, family values and strong bonding is the most important step in the development of a child and this is done mostly by the parents.

Check Your Progress 4

Read this excerpt again and answer the questions below:

- 1) Can you guess the topic that was given for the GD?

.....

.....

- 2) Who do you think has displayed good group communication skills?

.....

.....

.....

.....