

# STUDENT GUIDE TO GROUP WORK

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## Guide to Group Roles & Maximizing Group Performance

Role Type	Key Tasks	Typical Phrases
<b>Leader/Facilitator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarifies the aims of the group and helps the group to set sub-goals at the beginning of each meeting. Sub-goals should serve as an agenda of issues that need to be addressed during the meeting</li><li>• Makes sure that all group members understand the concepts and the group's conclusions</li><li>• Starts the meetings, introduces each topic, and keeps the group on task and oriented towards its goals</li><li>• Ensures that the group completes its tasks before deadlines</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Thanks for your contribution, Zihao. What do you think, Daniela?"</li><li>• "From what I'm hearing, it appears that the key issues are A, B, and C. Why don't we start by discussing A, if that is agreeable to everyone?"</li><li>• "So, it appears that we are all agreed that ..."</li></ul>
<b>Arbitrator/Monitor</b>  <i>Note: For larger groups the roles of arbitrator and monitor could be</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observes group functioning carefully and initiates regular discussions on group climate and process, especially if he or she senses tension or conflict brewing</li><li>• During disagreements or conflicts, clarifies the arguments and proposes suggestions for resolving dispute</li><li>• Ensures that all group members have a chance to participate and learn; may elicit</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "We haven't heard much during our meeting from you, Ahmed. Do you have any thoughts?"</li><li>• "It might be helpful if you backed off a bit, Kate, so we can hear what Nadir has to say."</li><li>• "I'm sensing a bit of tension among us over this decision; I think we should get our disagreements out into the open."</li></ul>

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<p><i>filled by two group members</i></p>	<p>comments from members if they are not participating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a cheerleader for the group whenever possible, praising members for work well done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I think we can feel really good about what we've accomplished to this point. Especially nice work on the project outline, Jordana!"</li> </ul>
<p><b>Note keeper/Timekeeper</b></p> <p><i>Note: For larger groups the roles of note taker and timekeeper could be filled by two group members</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes notes during meetings to keep a record of what has been decided, tasks that have been assigned, when meetings are scheduled, etc.</li> <li>• Summarizes discussions and decisions for the rest of the group. Distributes a summary of each meeting to all group members</li> <li>• Presents group material to the rest of the class/supervisor</li> <li>• Keeps track of time during meetings to avoid spending excessive time on one topic. This is best handled by deciding how much time will be allocated to each issue in the agenda and letting everyone know when this time is up. It is also useful to point out when time is almost up so that issues can be wrapped up appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Hold on, please, I just need to get this down before we move on."</li> <li>• "I'll send you an updated version of our report tomorrow, along with a summary of today's meeting."</li> <li>• "We've spent about 15 of the 20 minutes we allocated to this topic, so we've got about 5 more minutes to sort it out."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Devil's Advocate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remains on guard against "groupthink" scenarios (i.e., when the pressure to reach the group goal is so great that the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Let's give Mike's idea a chance."</li> <li>• "OK, we've decided to go with plan C, but I noticed that we still haven't dealt with the</li> </ul>

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	<p>individual members surrender their own opinions to avoid conflict and view issues solely from the group’s perspective)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that all arguments have been heard, and looks for holes in the group’s decision-making process, in case there is something overlooked</li> <li>• Keeps his or her mind open to problems, possibilities, and opposing ideas</li> <li>• Serves as a quality-control person who double-checks every detail to make sure errors have not been made and searches for aspects of the work that need more attention. Keeps an eye out for mistakes, especially those that may fall between the responsibilities of two group members.</li> </ul>	<p>same problem that plan A didn’t address. What can we do to solve this?”</p>
<p><b>Checker/Editor</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews assignment requirements and makes sure all pieces have been completed</li> <li>• Pulls together contributions from different team members as work progresses and follows up with team members as needed</li> <li>• Ensures that all sources used for group work research are given proper attribution and cited correctly</li> <li>• Engages in copy editing to ensure the work of the group forms a cohesive whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Anshul, our interim report is due by Friday. I need to get your contribution by Wednesday.”</li> <li>• “There are some inconsistencies in structure and pagination that I’m working on, to improve our final report. I’m also adding a Table of Contents to pull together all report elements and make them easy to navigate.”</li> <li>• “Faheema, can you give me more information on the source you used for this</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensures the team is ready to submit a project on time</li></ul>	part of the report. I need to make sure we are citing this correctly.”
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