

Group members often have different levels of commitment and ideas on how a particular group should function. These differences can sometimes lead to conflict.

Common Challenges

- ▶ Group member(s) not pulling their weight
- ▶ Disagreements on project details, such as timelines, goals, and division of work
- ▶ Personality clashes
- ▶ Tensions among team members that may be unrelated to the project itself

How to Handle Group Conflicts

- ▶ Don't ignore the conflict, even if it feels awkward to acknowledge it.
- ▶ Keep your group's goals in mind, and remember that conflict will make it more difficult for your group to successfully complete the assignment.
- ▶ Try not to take sides, as this can deepen the rift within the group.
- ▶ Discuss a plan to work past the conflict, even if it's just getting to the end of the project, and not solving the actual conflict.
- ▶ If necessary, seek support from your professor.

Recruiters and graduate schools seek candidates who can communicate clearly, solve problems, and work in collaboration with others. They also value candidates with the following traits:

- ▶ **Reliability** – You do what you say you're going to do, and you don't make excuses.
- ▶ **Honesty** – You're straightforward about your abilities, and aren't afraid to provide honest, constructive feedback.
- ▶ **Positive attitude** – You maintain an upbeat and optimistic attitude, even when a project is difficult, frustrating, or boring.
- ▶ **Flexibility** – You have your own ideas, but you're open to change and the suggestions of others.
- ▶ **Confidence** – You have the self-assurance to express your ideas and ask for help when you need it.
- ▶ **Diligence** – You do your share of the work to the best of your abilities.

Developing the above traits will serve you well in all facets of your life!



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Doing Group Work

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Doing Group Work

Tips and strategies to help you improve your group experiences





Group Roles

Group Tips

Doing Group Work

- ▶ Do you dread or avoid group projects?
- ▶ Do you sometimes feel that other group members don't pull their weight—or don't let you contribute enough?
- ▶ Do you ever get frustrated with how disorganized groups are, or how long things take to get done?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, you may want to look for ways to improve your future group experiences.

At some point in college, you will likely be involved in one or more group projects. You're not alone if you're the type of person who prefers completing assignments independently. Many students dislike group projects; however, being part of a well-functioning group can be a very worthwhile and rewarding experience.

Whether you're working on a group project, involved in an extracurricular activity, or working at a part-time job, being able to collaborate and work as part of a team are valuable skills—skills that will be assets in college and beyond. **Look at group work as an opportunity to develop and improve these important skills.**

Group members take on a variety of roles. Some roles are positive, and some are not.

Positive Roles

In successful groups, members assume roles that help the group move forward and complete their task.

- ▶ **Leader** – takes charge of the group
- ▶ **Secretary** – records the group's ideas and plans
- ▶ **Encourager** – supports and helps group members stay positive
- ▶ **Contributor** – offers new ideas and ways to complete tasks



Negative Roles

Unfortunately, people sometimes take on negative roles that make group work more difficult.

- ▶ **Blocker** – opposes every idea, but doesn't offer suggestions
- ▶ **Disrupter** – uses group time to play around or be in the spotlight
- ▶ **Non-participant** – doesn't contribute or do his/her share of the work

Think about the roles you have assumed—and how well you have contributed to the groups you've been a part of. Are there things you can do to be a more positive and productive group member in the future?



Here are some tips to ensure that your groups work well together and are able to successfully complete assignments/projects.

Set goals

- ▶ Make sure the task or project is manageable, and that the goal of the group is understood by all.
- ▶ Set short-term and long-term goals, and assign equitable tasks to each group member.
- ▶ Create deadlines to ensure that all tasks are completed in a timely fashion.

Focus group meetings

Begin each group meeting by going around the table and allowing everyone (even the quiet ones) to give updates on their individual progress, share ideas, and ask questions.

Don't take negative feedback personally

If your group suggests changing one of your ideas or tasks, be open to their suggestions. Remember, the goal is to create the best product possible.

Collaborate and keep in touch

Establish how the group will communicate, collaborate, and store their work. Consider apps such as Facebook Messenger, GroupMe texts, Google Drive and Dropbox.