

# Effective Communication within Teams

Based on (and taken wholesale, in most cases) from: <https://www.teaching.unsw.edu.au/group-work> (really, I can't recommend this website enough—it is so helpful!)

## Help Students Clarify their Group's Purpose

You might start groups out with a checklist to help with this process:

- What is the purpose of the task or project?
- What are we expected to produce?
- How will the task or project be assessed? What are the marking criteria?
- What are the main components of the task?
- What are the deadlines?
- Are there guidelines?

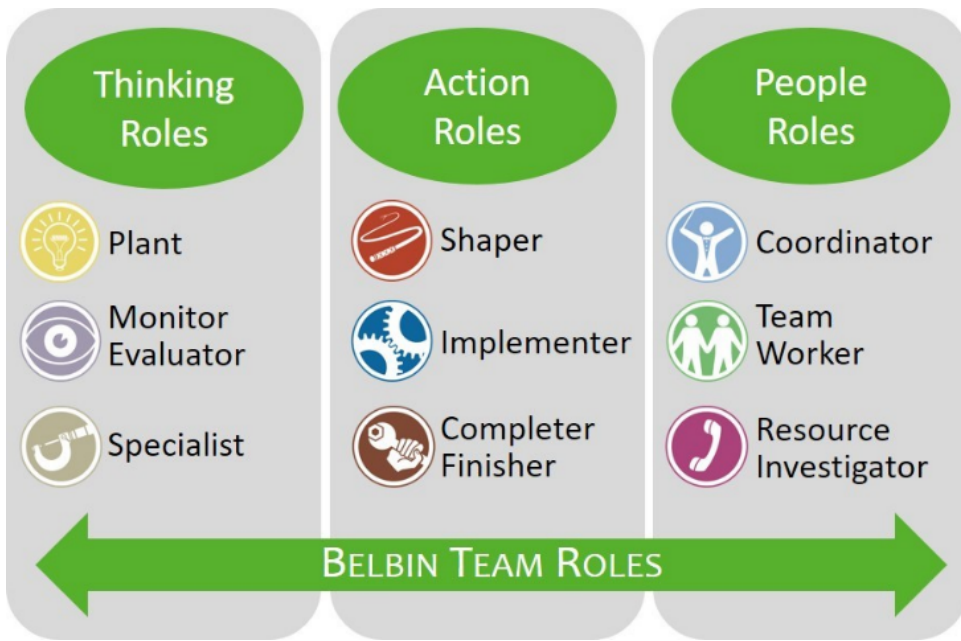
## Help Students Establish a Group Contract

Sample Ground Rules:

- All ideas and contributions in the group will be valued.
- The work will be divided evenly among the group.
- Group members will take turn chairing group meetings.
- Members who cannot attend meetings will provide notice in advance.
- Notes will be taken during meetings and circulated by email.
- Ground rules will be reviewed several times throughout the project.
- Problems will be addressed in the group as they arise.
- Offensive and discriminatory comments are not permitted.
- Tasks should be completed by the agreed dates.

## Help Students Establish Group Roles

Assign roles or have students decide on their own roles based on their strengths. Check out the Belbin 9 Team Roles: <https://www.belbin.com/resources/articles-directory/thinking-social-action>



## Help Students Understand Their Responsibilities

Some handouts and checklists you can use to help students with clarity of expectations:

What needs doing?	How long will it take?	Who will do it?	When should the task be completed?

Action planning:

- What steps are involved (e.g. Read..., Find..., Search..., List..., Produce...)?
- When should the task be finished by?
- What will the outcome look like?
- Who can help you?
- What resources do you need?
- How will you know if you have done it well enough?

## Group Timeline:

Start date:

Monday week 1 of session

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8...etc
Form team	_____							
Choose topic		_____						
Background reading		_____	_____	_____	_____			
Design survey			_____					
Pilot survey				_____				
Select sample					_____			
Modify survey					_____			
Main survey						_____	_____	_____

## Help Students Have Effective Group Meetings

Students need guidance to learn to make the most of their meeting time. Here are some handouts and checklists you can share with them.

### Agenda Checklist:

- Date, Time, and Location of the Meeting
- Notes of the last meeting (who was present and missing, what was discussed and decided, who is responsible for taking action)
- Update since the last meeting (what happened as a result of the last meeting)
- Items for discussion (review of team roles, updates on work to complete, etc.)
- Any other business (additional matters that have arisen since the circulation of the agenda)
- Time and place of next meeting

### Team Leader Checklist:

- Checking that the layout of the chairs and the room is appropriate at the start
- Setting time limits and keeping an eye on the time (pacing)
- Making the purpose of the meeting clear to everyone
- Establishing and maintaining a supportive climate in meetings
- Clarifying and reinforcing ground rules
- Drawing in quiet members and reining in talkative members
- Redirecting discussion where appropriate
- Linking points, summarizing and building up understanding as discussion progresses
- Acknowledging different viewpoints
- Identifying decisions and clearly stating them to check that they are agreed
- Moving the meeting on decisively to the next point or agenda item
- Closing the meeting with a clear statement of what is to happen next

### Checklist for Group Meetings:

#### Conducting the meeting

- It was clear who was taking responsibility for chairing the meeting.
- It was clear who was taking notes.
- We reviewed our last meeting.

- We reviewed our progress since last meeting.

#### **Meeting objectives**

- Before we arrived it was clear what the meeting was meant to achieve.
- It became clear at each stage what the meeting was meant to be achieving.
- We had a clear agenda outlining things to discuss and work on.
- We moved through the various topics in an orderly way.
- The discussions were focused on decisions we needed to make.
- We made clear decisions and recorded these.

#### **Recording and following up on the meeting**

- We have summarized what we agreed.
- We agreed on a time and place for the next meeting.
- We know what the next meeting will be for.

#### **Overall effectiveness**

- The meeting was effective.
- The meeting was enjoyable.