A good discussion depends in large part on the skills we develop as participants. Here are some suggestions (based on the New York Public Library's book discussion program):

1. **SPEAK UP.** Group discussion is like a conversation; everyone takes part in it. Each speaker responds to what the person before him said. Nobody prepares speeches; there should be a spontaneous exchange of ideas and opinions. The discussion is your chance to say what you think.

2. **Listen** thoughtfully to others! Try to understand the other person's point of view. Don't accept ideas that don’t have a sound basis. Remember, there are several points of view possible on every question.

3. **Be brief.** Share the discussion with others. Speak for only a few minutes at a time. Make your point in as few words as possible. Be ready to let someone else speak. A good discussion keeps everyone in the conversation.

4. **Share your viewpoint and experience.** Don’t expect to be called on to speak; enter into the discussion with your comments of agreement or disagreement. When you find yourself disagreeing with other people's interpretations or opinions, say so and tell why, in a friendly way. Considering all points of view is important to group discussions.

5. **Come with your own questions in mind.** As you read the selection, make note of the points on which you’d like to hear the comments of group members.