

Team Roles (and gambits)

It is very useful for team members to adopt specific roles during a team project. The members should cycle through the different roles during the term to gain insight and experience with the other skill-sets.

A “gambit” could be considered an approach to take to help fulfill the function of your role on the team. Below are listed example statements that could be used/modified to assist in your duties in your particular role.

Different roles will be assigned for different team projects – here are general descriptions of the types of roles we use:

Recorder/Summarizer – Project author and organizer

Taskmaster – Keeps team on task – keeps track of time/responsibilities

Devil’s Advocate – Provides an “opposite” viewpoint – challenges assumptions

Fact or Reference Checker – Checks for internal consistency – monitors “constraints” in the system

Consensus Checker – Monitors agreement among the members

Encourager – Provides optimism that the project can be done – acknowledges forward movement

Gatekeeper – Monitors contributions from team members – encourages equal input

Facilitator – Monitors “health” of the team function – tries to spot problem areas

Task Roles/Gambits	Group Maintenance Roles/Gambits
Recorder/ Summarizer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shall we say it this way?• Let me read this back to you to make sure it’s right.• Let me sum up what we have decided.• Here’s what we have accomplished so far – we have one section left to draft. Taskmaster <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let’s get back to the main point• I think we need to move on to the next question. We only have three minutes left to get the job done.• Who is going to take responsibility for tracking down that information? Devil’s Advocate <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you sure that this issue is important?• What if we didn’t assume this is true?• How confident are you that it really works?• Can we make a distinction between these two categories? Fact or Reference Checker <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let’s look at Step 3 again. I don’t think we’ve got it quite right.• I’m think we’re violating the second constraint.	Consensus Checker <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do we all agree?• Is that answer okay with all of you?• Any final thoughts before the recorder writes that down?• I’m not convinced that everyone is all right with that decision. Can we do a quick poll? Encourager <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let’s think hard. I’m sure we can figure this out.• We’re doing a wonderful job with this.• That’s a great answer.• Let’s give ourselves a hand for that! Gatekeeper <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We haven’t heard from you yet.• Thanks for your input. Can we get another opinion now?• Before we jump into an open discussion, let’s all write down our initial impressions.• Everyone each gets thirty seconds of uninterrupted time to advocate their position before we move on. Facilitator <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let’s review our Code of Cooperation and see how we’re doing.• I think we need to agree upon a decision-making strategy before we go any further.• How about doing a plus/delta at the end of this meeting?