

Graduate Career Services

The Graduate School and Division of Student Affairs

STAR Method (Behavior Based Interviewing)

BEHAVIORAL based interview is a style of interviewing that many companies and organizations use in the selection process. The basic principle behind behavioral interviewing is that: *The most accurate predictor of future performance is past behavior in a similar situation.* These questions often start off with "Tell me about a time." The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral based interview question by discussing the specific **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, and **R**esult of the example you are describing.



PREPARING for a behavioral interview:

- ★ Review the desired skills, characteristics, and qualifications noted on the job description.
- ★ Identify examples of situations from the experiences on your resume where you have demonstrated the behaviors a given company seeks.
- ★ i.e. If the company is looking for leadership ability, brainstorm an example of a time you led a group to success.
- ★ Use examples from past job, research, volunteer, class, extracurricular, or other relevant experience.

DURING a behavioral interview:

- ★ Listen carefully to the question. Ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
- ★ Be specific and detailed. Tell about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one.
- ★ Be honest. Do not embellish or omit any part of the story.
- ★ Choose ONE situation to describe, not 2+ unless the interviewer asks for multiple examples. Give a detailed accounting of that one event.
- ★ Keep it POSITIVE.
- ★ Vary your examples; do not draw from just one experience.
- ★ Be results and action oriented; do not forget to describe the RESULTS! Quantify your results whenever possible.

SITUATION

Set the stage for the interviewer by providing an overview of the situation and any relevant background information. Be specific and succinct.

TASK

Describe the tasks involved in that situation. What goal were you working toward?

ACTION

Describe the actions *you* took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail. What specific steps did you take, and what was *your* particular contribution?

RESULTS

Describe the outcome of your actions, and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. Your answer should contain multiple positive results whenever possible.

Finish with what you **learned** from the experience.

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EXAMPLES of behavioral interview questions:

- ★ Tell me about a time when you led a group to success. (leadership)
- ★ Tell me about a time you were part of a team. What was your part in making that team successful? (teamwork)
- ★ Tell me about a time when you had to make a quick decision without all the necessary information. (conflict/time management)
- ★ Tell me about a time when you were able to help improve a work procedure by making good suggestions to your supervisor or co-worker. (initiative/leadership)
- ★ Tell me about a time you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. (communication)

PRACTICE!

★ **Question:**

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

★ **Question:**

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:
