

STAR Stories for Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral interview questions ask you to refer back to or imagine a situation or problem and describe your actions and the results. Based on the idea that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior, this style of interviewing is popular among employers. Instead of merely describing a skill, subject knowledge, a project or a personal quality, what you are really being asked is to tell a story. Your ability to construct a narrative is a key element of the interview process. These narratives highlight your level of self-awareness, logic patterns, creativity, and communication skills.

The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral-based interview question by discussing the specific **Situation, Task, Action, and Result** of the situation you are describing.

SITUATION

Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

TASK

What goal were you working toward? What needed to be accomplished?

ACTION

Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.

RESULT

Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.

Make sure that you follow all parts of the STAR method. Be as specific as possible at all times, without rambling or including too much information. Students frequently have to be prompted to include their results, so try to include that without being asked. Also, eliminate any examples that do not paint you in a positive light. However, keep in mind that some examples that have a negative result (such as "lost the game") can highlight your strengths in the face of adversity.

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Use the worksheet **to answer one of the following questions** which are asked in a manner to identify your interpersonal/conflict resolution skills, leadership, decision-making ability and project management experience.

1. What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give an example.
2. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
3. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the past year.
4. Tell us about a time when you delegated a project effectively.

Situation

Task

Action

Result
