

# THE STAR MODEL

## A USEFUL TOOL IN PREPARING “JOB SKILL STORIES” FOR BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS








Behavior based interview questions are designed to discover how the interviewee acts in certain situations. The questions are specific and provoke a story which outlines your skills and abilities. Questions will usually start with, “Tell me about a time when...” or “Give me an example of...”. This differs from a traditional interview question where you are asked straight-forward questions like, “What are your strengths and weaknesses?”.

### SAMPLE QUESTION:

*Tell me about a time when you had to provide difficult feedback to a team member?*

<p><b>S</b> <b>SITUATION</b> Set the scenario for your example</p>	<p>“Last semester I took a psychology course that required a group project to examine motivation. The professor assigned each student a 4-person group. My group decided to look at what motivates college students to participate in community services activities.”</p>
<p><b>T</b> <b>TASK</b> Describe the specific challenge or task that relates to the question</p>	<p>“As a group, we developed a plan to distribute the work between us. However, after the first few weeks, it became apparent that one of our team members was not completing her part of the project and she missed one of our group meetings. The rest of the team decided that we needed to reengage her.”</p>
<p><b>A</b> <b>ACTION</b> Talk about the actions that you took to accomplish the task.</p>	<p>“I took the initiative to set up a meeting with her where we discussed our interest in the project as well as the other academic responsibilities. After talking with her, it was clear that if we changed her contributions to tasks that better fit her skills and interests, she would most likely contribute at a higher level.”</p>
<p><b>R</b> <b>RESULT</b> Present the results that followed because of the chosen action.</p>	<p>“It turned out that the team could redistribute tasks without compromising so every member got to work on the pieces of the project that were of interest to them. In the end, we completed the project and received positive feedback from our professor.”</p>

### A FEW IMPORTANT TIPS

-  A strong STAR response will last one to three minutes.
-  Be brief in your set-up. Give just enough background or contextual information for your story to make sense.
-  The result is critical. Everything in your example builds towards this component.
-  Use the structure of the acronym for direction if you forget what you were saying. If all else fails, skip to the R, result.
-  Identify six to eight examples from your past experience where you demonstrated top behaviors and skills that employers typically seek. Ideally, choose skills specifically required by the employers you want to target (find them listed in the employers’ job postings).
-  Half your examples should be totally positive, such as accomplishments or meeting goals. The other half should be situations that started out negatively but either ended positively or you made the best of the outcome.
-  Use fairly recent and varied examples; don’t take them all from just one area of your life.

## VERBAL COMMUNICATION



What is your experience giving presentations? What has been your most successful experience in speech making?

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

## TEAMWORK



Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

## PROBLEM SOLVING



Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem; then tell me how you analyzed the information and came to a decision.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

## ORGANIZATION



How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

## ADAPTABILITY



Tell us about situation in which things you had planned or expected fell apart. What did you do?

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

## ANALYTICAL ABILITY



Tell me about a time you made a decision or solved a problem that required a lot of hard thinking and analysis.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION



This job will require you to spend a large amount of time writing. Tell me about your writing experiences that you think will contribute to your ability to do this job well.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

## LEADERSHIP



In a leadership position/leading a task force or project, tell me how you organize the workload, set objectives, follow-up, and monitor results.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

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