

How does the STAR method work?

The [STAR method](#)

helps you create an easy-to-follow story with a clear conflict and resolution. Here's what each part of the technique means:

Situation

Set the stage for the story by sharing context around a specific situation or challenge you faced. Share two or three important details about relevant work situations, academic projects or volunteer work. You should spend the least amount of time on this part of your answer as interviewers are more concerned with the actions you took and the results you achieved.

Task

Describe your responsibility or role in the situation or challenge. In other words, discuss the goal or task set out for you. Consider just one or two main points that best illustrate the task you needed to complete. This section requires a minimal amount of time, similar to the situation component.

Action

Explain the specific actions you took to handle the situation or overcome the challenge. Identify and discuss a few of the most impactful steps you took to find success. Even if your actions were taken as part of a team, avoid using "we" in your response and instead use "I" to highlight your particular contributions. This part of your answer requires the most in-depth description as this is what largely indicates your fitness for a role.

Result

What was the outcome you reached through your actions? Focus on two or three main results of your actions and discuss what you learned, how you grew and why you're a stronger employee because of the experience. And, if possible, provide concrete examples of the results of your efforts. You should spend only slightly less time discussing the results than your actions.

Related Article: [5 Questions To Ask Yourself Before a Job Interview](#)

How to prepare your STAR interview response

Here are steps to help you develop a [STAR interview](#)

response in preparation for a job interview:

1. Review the job description and its list of required skills and consider what sorts of challenges or obstacles you may have to navigate in the open position.
2. Review the [common behavioral interview questions](#)

2. mentioned in this article. While the phrasing of these questions may vary from interview to interview, the general intent of the question typically remains the same so it can be helpful to prepare your answers with that in mind. For example, the interviewer might ask about “a time you were under pressure,” or they might ask about “how you handle stress.” Either way, their goal is to understand how you deal with tense situations.
3. Write down the various situations you’ve handled in your career that display the sorts of strengths you’ll need to succeed in the open role. Prepare each example using the STAR method.
4. Practice talking through your answers out loud to make sure each story is as concise and coherent as possible. This will also help you feel more confident and natural when delivering the answers in an interview.

If you’re new to the workforce and don’t have a long professional history to draw from, consider examples from internships, volunteer work or group projects you completed for school. In some cases, employers may ask you to share a non-work-related example, so consider challenges or obstacles you’ve overcome in your personal life, too.

No matter what stories you decide to share, make sure you define a situation, task, action and result, and showcase skills and abilities most relevant to the job.

Related Article: [Job Interview Tips: How To Make a Great Impression](#)

STAR interview question examples

While you won’t know the interview questions ahead of time, most behavioral interviews will focus on various work-related challenges that demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving, and situations that showcase [leadership skills](#)

, conflict resolution and performance under pressure. Here’s some additional background on behavioral questions and a few tips to help you leverage the STAR method when answering them.

Here are a few examples of common behavioral questions you might be asked during an interview:

- Share an example of a time when you faced a difficult problem at work. How did you solve this problem?
- Have you ever had to make an unpopular decision? How did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you were under a lot of pressure at work. How did you react?
- Tell me about a mistake you’ve made. How did you handle it?
- Share an example of a time you had to make a difficult decision. What did you do?
- Explain a situation where you used data or logic to make a recommendation.
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss. How did you resolve it?
- Describe a time when you had to deliver bad news. How did you do it?
- Tell me about a time you worked with other departments to complete a project.
- Share an example of a time when you failed. What did you learn from the experience?
- Tell me about a time when you set and achieved a specific goal.
- Tell me about a time when you had to persuade someone to do something.
- Describe a time when you had a conflict with a colleague. How did you handle it?
- Have you ever had to motivate others? How did you do it?

- Tell me about the last time your workday ended before you were able to get everything done.

Related Article: [How To Prepare for a Behavioral Interview](#)

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Examples of STAR method responses

Here are three examples of how to answer popular [behavioral interview questions](#)

using the STAR method:

Share an example of a time when you faced a difficult problem at work. How did you solve this problem?

- Situation: “I was working as a [retail manager](#)
- at a department store during prom season. A customer purchased a dress online and had it delivered to the store. One of my associates accidentally put the dress out on the floor, where another customer immediately purchased it.
- Task: I knew I needed to make this right for the customer to meet my own service level standards and to uphold the reputation of the company.
- Action: Before calling the customer to let her know about the mistake, I located the same dress at another store location nearby. I ordered it to be pressed and delivered to her home the morning of prom, along with a gift card to thank her for her understanding.
- Result: The customer was so thankful, she wrote us a five-star review on several review sites.”

Describe a time when you were under a lot of pressure at work. How did you react?

- Situation: “In my previous job as an [account executive](#)
- , one of my co-workers quit immediately after signing the biggest client our firm had ever taken on.
- Task: Although I was already managing a full load of accounts, I was assigned this new client as well. I knew the stakes were high and if we lost this deal, then we wouldn’t hit our quarterly goal.
- Action: I first took some measures to destress. Then I carefully evaluated and restructured my task list to make sure I could manage all my duties. Because of this, I was able to make myself completely available to the client and I also sacrificed some evenings and weekends to take calls until the project was delivered.
- Result: The client was so impressed with my dedication, they immediately signed an annual contract that netted our company \$5 million.”

Tell me about a mistake you’ve made. How did you handle it?

- Situation: “I was working as an intern for an events company, and I was responsible for ordering the floral arrangements for a private event hosted by a high-profile client. Unfortunately, I mixed up the information from another event, and the flowers were delivered to the wrong venue on the other side of town.
- Task: I took this very seriously and knew I needed to find a solution quickly as we were working on a tight deadline.
- Action: After considering a few different ways to resolve the issue. I admitted my mistake to my boss and informed them of my plan and why I thought it was the best course of action. I took an early lunch break, drove to the other venue, picked up the flowers and delivered them to the appropriate venue an hour before the event.
- Result: The client never knew about my mix-up, and my boss was very grateful.”

<https://youtu.be/rcrnHWv-wHc>

Video: Top Common Interview Questions and Answers

Jenn, an Indeed Career Coach, breaks down the intentions behind employer's questions and shares strategies for crafting strong responses.