

# BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING: THE “STAR” TECHNIQUE

**What is behavioral interviewing?** Behavioral interviewing is based on the premise that a person’s recent, relevant past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Instead of asking how you would behave in a particular situation, a behavioral interviewer will ask how you *did* behave. You will be asked to provide a specific example of a past situation or task to demonstrate the way you performed in that specific situation or task.

**How do I answer a behavioral question?** First of all, prepare for an interview by recalling recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions involving coursework, work, experience, leadership, teamwork, or customer service. Be sure that each story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. *Be specific.* Don’t generalize about several events; give a detailed account of one event. Use the STAR technique described below to structure your answer. Expect the interviewer to question and probe; for example. *What did you say? What were you thinking? What was your role?*

**Sample Question:** A behavioral interviewer might ask: *Tell me about a time when you were on a team and one of the members wasn’t carrying his or her weight.*

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**Situation or Task:** Describe a specific situation or task you have encountered that will make a point about one of your skills or strengths. Be ready to describe the details, if asked.

*Example: I was assigned to build a concrete toboggan for one of my classes. One of our teams members wasn’t showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. His behavior was affecting the performance and morale of the entire group.*

A

**Action:** Describe the specific action you took to remedy the task or situation.

*Example: I decided to meet with the student in private, and explained the frustration of the rest of the team, and asked him if there was anything I could do to help. He told me that he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn’t passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course.*

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**Result:** Explain the result of your action. Make sure that the outcome reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).

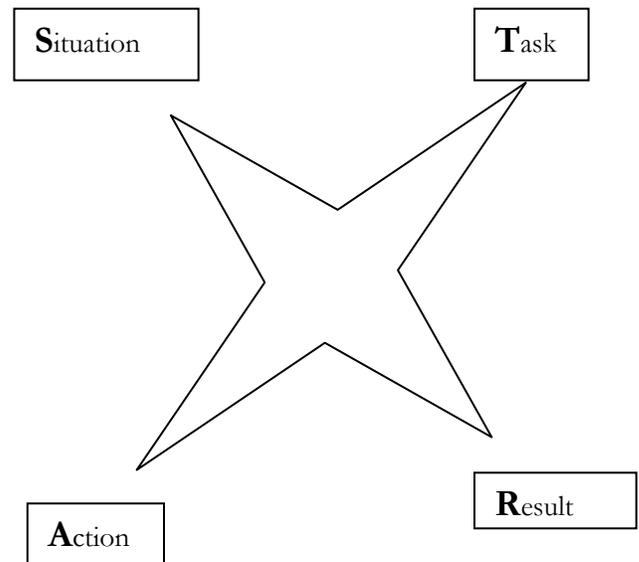
*Example: After I found someone to help the student with his other course, he was not only able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time and got a “B” on it.*

The STAR technique can be utilized effectively to discuss a wide range of experiences, including classroom projects, work situations, extracurricular activities, and leadership experiences.

### Preparing for the Behavior Based Interview

When answering behavior based questions use the star technique to illustrate how you handled a specific situation.

1. Begin with the situation; how the event presented itself.
2. Describe the goal or task you hope to achieve.
3. What actions did you take to reach your goal?
4. Did you meet your results and did the results meet your expectations? Illustrate the point you intended to make in answering the question.



### Top Ten Reasons for Rejection

10. Lack of Career Planning: purposes and goals ill-defined
9. Lack of knowledge of field of specialization; not well qualified
8. Inability to express yourself clearly
7. Insufficient evidence of prior achievement
6. Little interest, energy or enthusiasm expressed; indifferent
5. Overbearing, aggressive or conceited behaviors
4. Unwillingness to start at entry level
3. Make excuses, be evasive or hedge on unfavorable factors in record.
2. Lack confidence or poise; fail to make eye contact
1. Poor personal appearance

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