

The 'STAR' Model

This model is useful for helping your answer competency based interview questions such as '*Describe a situation when you demonstrated creative thinking or your ability to innovate.*'

To be effective, interview answers need to be well-structured giving plenty of detailed evidence to support your claim. As with essays or report-writing, answers need to have a beginning, middle and end so that the questions are answered as fully as possible.

One way of ensuring your answers have structure is to use the 'STAR' model:

S = SITUATION	10% (Where, when, with whom)
T = TASK	10% (The task/job/project that was undertaken)
A = ACTIONS	60% (The actions you carried out, in logical order, to complete the task)
R = RESULT / REFLECTION	20% (Was it 100% successful? Would you do anything differently next time? What did you learn and take forward from this experience?)

Here's an **example answer** for the question '*Describe a situation when you demonstrated creative thinking or your ability to innovate.*'

I worked as an intern at the Museum of London in Summer 2014 [**S**] and was asked to *assist* in the development of their website [**T**]. First of all, I *devised* a simple questionnaire targeted at walk-in users of the Museum. Once that data was *collated* and *analysed*, I *conducted* an audit of our competitor sites. My work *culminated* in a 5000 word written report, including graphical and tabular data, which I *presented* to the Museums' web development team. I *recommended* the use of 'pop-ups' to advertise forthcoming events. Being aware of potential scepticism regarding my idea, I had already *researched* available data and *prepared* some visual design ideas. Despite initial concerns from the web development coordinator, I *persuaded* the team to allocate funds for an initial 4 week trial period [**A**]. Click-through rates were encouraging and the pop-ups are now a permanent addition to the website. I *learnt* that it was worth doing the research for potential objections to a new proposal and also that even I as an intern could contribute significantly to an organisation in a short period of time. This has *encouraged* me to undertake other internships whilst at University [**R**].

(NB note the use of 'action' verbs, indicated by the italicised words)

Now try planning a draft answer to the following interview question, using the 'STAR' model, with a good example of your own:

'Please describe a time when you had to collaborate with others in a group or a team to achieve a shared goal (in your studies, work or extra-curricular activities). What was your contribution to the team? What difficulties arose between members? How did you tackle these?'

Situation

Task

Action

Result / Reflection

Now **continue practising** with questions marked with a * from the '**Challenging Interview Questions**' handout.

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