

STAR Technique: Effectively Answer Interview Questions

No candidate is expected to memorize answers for every possible interview question. What you can do as a candidate is understand what information a prospective employer wants in each answer.

The goal for both candidate and interviewer is the same, to see if the candidate's KSAAAs (knowledge, skills, abilities and achievements) are a good fit for the position and the company.

Researching the company to determine corporate culture and identifying desired traits listed on job descriptions are good preparation to understand the qualities the hiring company values. Let your examples reflect those qualities that you possess.

Interview questions are often phrased in behavioral (Tell me about a time when...) or situational (What would you do if...) terms. Using concrete examples (stories from your experience) enables you to convey your KSAAAs in every answer.

The STAR technique will guide you through an answer with the appropriate amount of detail in the correct aspects, so that you can highlight KSAAAs without rambling or providing unnecessary details.

STAR is an acronym that stands for:

Situation	1. Pose the Situation in one or two sentences
Task	2. Analyze the Task in regard to the group and your role
Action	3. Explain the Action and explain the implementation, which consists of <i>what</i> , <i>how</i> , and (most importantly) <i>why</i>
Result	4. Evaluate the Results

For example, if an interviewer said, "Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure in a leadership role" a response that incorporates the STAR Technique could be:

S In the capstone project of CHEM 431W, the class was split into three groups and assigned a chemical patent in order to create a product that would be "most appealing to consumers."

T The project was broken into seven different syntheses that were dependent on the previous synthesis's product yield and purity. Each synthesis took different lengths of time to complete.

A As a team member, I suggested a schedule based on everyone's availability to effectively and efficiently make a product with enough time left to redo the experiments if the products were not pure enough. This also allowed the group to have enough time to brainstorm about the ultimate goal: making a product that appeals to consumers.

R Even though there were issues with some yields and purity, our group was able to produce a transition material that changes color when blocking out UV light. We implemented the 91percent yield of product on the windshield of a car to reduce glare and the need for sunglasses when driving. Our group came in second for product appealing to consumers.