

The STARR Framework

As an internship candidate, you need to **help employers envision you in the role** for which you are being considered. With the notion that **past behavior is a key predictor of future behavior**, employers want to know how you have previously behaved and performed in related or transferrable situations. To find the answer, employers ask “behavioral” interview questions that often begin with “Tell me about a time when.”

In addition to job-specific skills, employers are looking for evidence that you can: adapt quickly to new organizational norms; get along well with others; take initiative; learn on-the-fly; focus on goals and outcomes; manage projects and time effectively; embrace change; cope with ambiguity; ask questions; seek feedback; handle criticism; be resourceful; troubleshoot issues; learn from mistakes; and communicate professionally. In short, employers need to trust that you can jump right in, hit the ground running, and get the job done.

One of the best ways to instill employers with confidence is to craft outlines of your interview answers using the **STARR Framework**. You can draw upon situations from academic, co-curricular, work, or personal life. Regardless of the context of your examples, your stories can be compelling if you convey authenticity, demonstrate evidence of skills and accomplishments, and articulate transferability (explaining how the experience reflects your future job performance).

The STARR Framework can help you organize your thoughts into descriptive and compelling stories.

As you anticipate behavioral questions, use the prompts below to analyze the stories you might share. This is not a “one size fits all” framework, so focus on whichever prompts make sense in the context of each example. Gather as many details as you can; While your answers need to be brief and concise, it’s best to be prepared for follow-up prompts if an employer wants to dig deeper into any example you’ve shared in your resume, cover letter or interview.

« Situation « Task « Action « Result « Relatability

« Situation/Background/Problem

- Describe the specific situation and context. What was the setting and timeframe?
- What was the need, problem, project, assignment, or objective?
- What deliverables, solutions or outcomes were needed or desired?
- Who was involved? Who were the stakeholders? Were you part of a team? Did you have a specific role?
- What knowledge, people, resources and skills were essential for proceeding?
- What essential values were at play?

« Task/Action

- Describe how you approached the situation. What was your initial mindset and thought process?
- How did you define what success would look like?
- What challenges and opportunities did you identify? What issues and outcomes did you anticipate?
- What approach did you take? Did you employ a specific strategy, methodology or sequence of steps?
- Did you weigh the risks, costs and benefits of different options?
- What information, resources and tools did you gather and how did you use them?
- How did you lead, consult, collaborate or support others during the process?
- What knowledge and competencies did you use? What new skills were required and how did you acquire them?
- What internal/external factors affected the task along the way?

« Result/Impact/Accomplishment

- Describe the outcome. What did you accomplish and what was the impact?
- Who benefited and how? What knowledge and skills did you utilize or gain?

« Relatability/Transferability

- How does this situation reflect and inform your future job performance?
- What takeaways / important lessons or insights can you apply to the benefit of the position for which you are applying?
- How do you envision applying the knowledge and skills from this situation to the position for which you are applying?