

What is the STAR technique?

Fact sheet

What is the STAR Technique

This is an effective technique to use when answering questions on application forms or at interviews that ask you to provide an example of a skill or competency.

STAR stands for:

- **Situation:** What situation are you using as your example and when did it take place?
- **Task:** What was the actual task, and what was the objective?
- **Action:** What action did you take to achieve this?
- **Result:** What happened as a result of your action?

You may have more than one example to consider. Try to choose the one that:

- explains clearly the skill being asked for
- demonstrates an achievement and is something you actually did, rather than what you learned or might do in an imagined situation
- is about you (state what you did rather than what other people did or what happened)
- has a positive outcome
- gives you something you can talk comfortably about if asked for more detail
- is specific – if the question asks for an example, only describe one and don't confuse different examples in your answer.

Your examples don't all have to be about one aspect of your life (e.g. school or project work); interests and hobbies are relevant too.

Keep your examples specific, recent and relevant. We want to hear how you have used skills and behaviours in a positive way, so that we can see how you would apply them in the workplace.

Opposite is an example of how an employer has used skills on an application form; the STAR technique has then been used to answer the question.

Question

Charity fundraisers need to show initiative and imagination; they need to be good communicators and stick to deadlines. Tell us of an occasion where you were involved in an activity to meet the deadline and had to use your initiative.

S

What was the Situation

I have recently been volunteering to raise funds for my local youth club as we need to build a new hall for us to run extra activities.

T

What was the specific task you needed to do?

The youth club leader wanted us to come up with imaginative ways to raise money. We had a target of £500 to raise by the end of the month.

A

What action did you take to complete the task?

I decided to set up a stall to sell items to the local community. To help the group decide what to sell, I used my initiative to research what people would be interested in buying. I developed a short questionnaire with tick boxes to show what people might be willing to buy and how much they would pay (e.g. cakes, plants, key rings, tea towels). Cakes came out as the most preferred answer so, as there were seven of us in the group, I suggested we divided up tasks to make the cakes based on people's strengths in the team.

R

What was the Situation

We raised over £600 in one afternoon and spent the funds on materials to make costumes and scenery for our youth club pantomime – you've got to speculate to accumulate!

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