



THE BEST ADVICE? PREPARE PREPARE PREPARE

Write down your real life stories for each of the categories below, remembering.

- More recent examples are better
- Try not to use the same example as a response to different interview questions.
- The more examples you have, the more believable you are.

No matter your experience, you should have answers to the questions below. It's ok if they are from school, sport, friends, family and work experience.

Teamwork Questions

If the role calls on being a team player, prepare an example demonstrating you work well with others and how you interact positively with colleagues.

Leadership Questions

Even if you haven't managed people, you should expect questions about your ability to lead and motivate others. Think about times during school, volunteering or sports/hobbies where you can demonstrate leadership.

Handling Conflict Questions

Some roles require interaction with clients or customers (or challenging situations with other employees). The interviewer may ask for examples of how you handled or diffused tricky situations.

Problem Solving Questions

The interviewer may want to hear about a challenging issue or situation that required some innovation or outside-the-box thinking on your part to find a solution.

Biggest Failure Questions

More and more universities and hiring managers are asking failure questions. Whether you like it or not, you need to be prepared to have a good answer.





WHAT HAPPENS FIRST?

You'll be tested. Here's how to prepare for the tough interview introductory questions. If you get past these questions, you know you've done well enough to be considered.

1. Tell me about yourself

This is your elevator pitch, your opportunity to succinctly reference your academic or other qualifications and how you gained your skills/experience related to the role you are applying for.

2. What do you know about this company? Or school? Or graduate program?

Make sure you've done your research, looked in detail at their website and/or asked people who work there about the company, what it stands for, the culture and why they like working there? What is their core business? What industry are they in? Who would their main customers be?

3. What interests you most or least about this job?

Again, make sure you've done your research and asked people what they think of the role or the program. This allows for you to be honest about what you're excited about and also what might concern you.

4. Tell me about any recent developments that have occurred in the marketplace that may affect our business or the industry

Look at industry news / trends to understand the industry landscape.

5. How would you add value to our company? Our co op program? Our apprenticeship program?

Think about the role you are applying for and match your skills, experience and qualifications to show you have what they want. Go the extra mile and add how you were proactive at high school or uni or at your previous jobs in organising or leading initiatives to bring people together for charity or other activities.





Why Use STAR METHOD?

It's proper storytelling! Have you ever been confused when someone else tells a story, but they leave a few critical pieces out? So now you're distracted and the message is lost. You can practice using the STAR method, when telling a story by remembering the acronym to describe the Situation, Task, Action you took and Result. It allows you to properly describe a time you demonstrated teamwork, leadership, problem solving, etc. You will use this method throughout your whole life, so better to get good at it now.

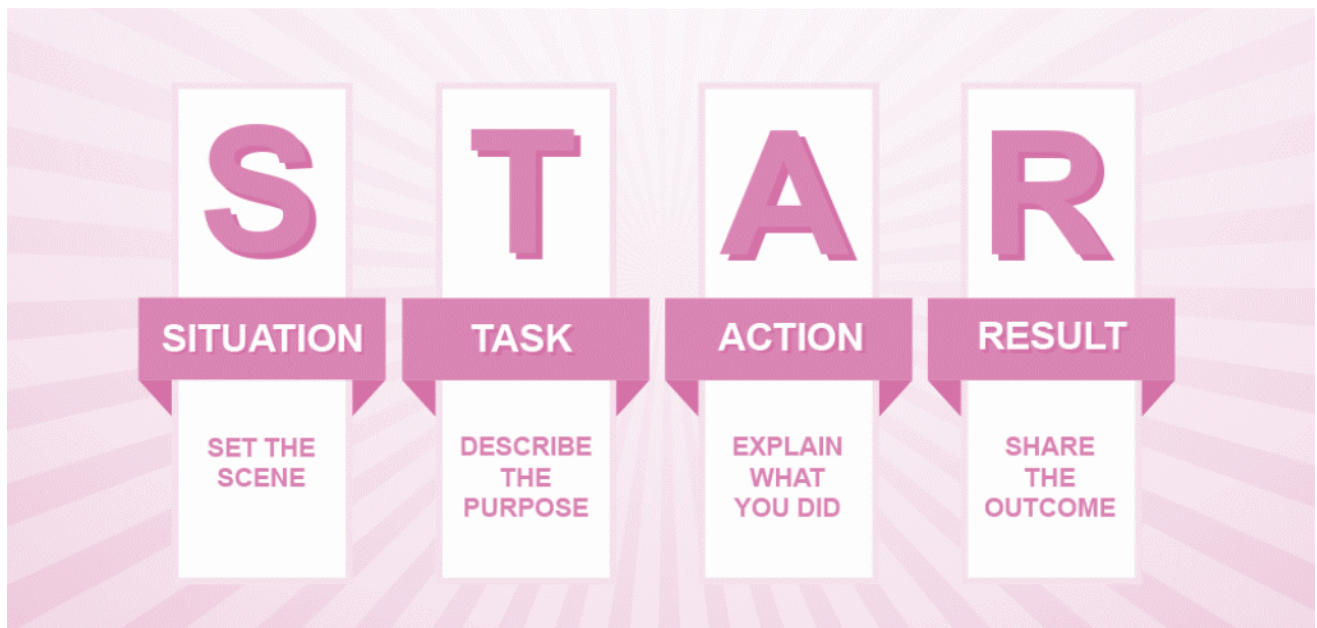


Table 1: Example Responses

Situation	I was newly hired as an all rounder, to work at a café in a shopping centre.
Task	On my second day, I was asked to fill the orders to make sandwiches, which I had never done before.
Action	I asked one of the ladies some questions, but she was not helpful and yelled at me. I found another person to ask, and after she helped me I was able to make and deliver the food order to the customer.
Result	I learned I should minimise my interactions with this lady, as I observed she was not very patient with younger employees. I was always polite when she asked me to do something but I asked for help from other people and tried to stay out of her way to avoid conflict.





Three types of Interview Techniques:

1. Competency Based or Behavioural Based Interviews.

These types of interviews focus on how you behaved in a specific situation. They are designed to explore how you react or behave in given situations. The interviewer generally asks leading questions like

“Tell me about a time you.....”

“Can you give me an example of....”

There are example competency based questions below that you can use to practice with.

2. Strengths Based Interviews

Typically a strength based interview will focus on what are you naturally good at. They can feel a little more relaxed and even a bit more personal than a competency based interview. This is mainly because they tend to explore elements outside of work such as passions, hobbies etc.

There are example strength based questions below that you can use to practice with.

3. Psychometric Interviews

Psychometric interviews tend to be similar to online personality tests where there is no right or wrong answer. The primary focus of these types of interviews may be to target a specific aptitude for a role or a key element such as ethics (Govt or compliance roles) or curiosity (research or scientific roles) even helping others which may predispose you to a customer service job.





1. COMPETENCY BASED OR BEHAVIOURAL BASED INTERVIEWS

It is very important that when you answer these questions, you don't generalise by saying "I usually do this...". This causes you to lose credibility if you can't tell a story of a specific time of you demonstrated the behaviour.

LEADERSHIP Practice Questions

1. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
2. Tell me about a time when you used your presentation skills to influence an opinion.
3. Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
5. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
6. Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
7. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
8. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
9. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
10. Please tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.
11. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
12. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.

PROBLEM SOLVING OR DECISION MAKING Practice Questions

1. Describe a time you were faced with a stressful situation that showed your coping skills.
2. Give an example of when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
3. Provide an example when you had to conform to a policy you did not agree with.
4. Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
5. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split-second decision.
6. Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
7. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
8. Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.





CUSTOMER SERVICE Practice Questions

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.

TEAMWORK Practice Questions

1. What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
2. Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).





STRENGTHS BASED INTERVIEWS

It is very important that when you answer these questions, you don't predict what they want you to say. It's better to be honest as it's better to know up front if you're a good fit. They are seeking to know what gives you energy and what you enjoy doing.

Here are some examples of strengths-based questions:

1. What do you love to do in your spare time?
2. What are you good at?
3. What comes easily to you?
4. What do you find quick to learn?
5. What did you find easiest to learn at school or university?
6. What subjects do you most enjoy studying?
7. How would a close friend describe you?
8. What strengths would you bring to this team?
9. Are you a big picture or a detail person?
10. Do you prefer to start tasks or to finish them?
11. What things are always left on your to-do list and not finished? Hint: These are probably weaknesses: things you dislike doing!
12. Give me an example of a weakness?
13. What activities give you an energy buzz?
14. Describe a successful day you have had.
15. When did you achieve something you were really proud of?

PSYCHOMETRIC INTERVIEWS

Psychometric Tests aim to measure your abstract, verbal and numerical reasoning skills. These Aptitude Tests are timed and designed in a very unique way. Most employers don't use this screening method but it's good for you to be familiar with what it does. You can't actually 'ace' a psychometric test – the recruiter is using it to see what your strengths and weaknesses are, and how they match up with the job requirements. If you think they will give you an online test, learn more about them here:

<http://www.psychometricinstitute.com.au/Psychometric-By-Job.asp>





DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Towards the end of the interview, it's a good sign if the interview runs the entire session or runs over! The interviewer may try to ask a final tough questions like;

1. Why should we choose you?

Avoid the obvious answer - because I'm the best person for the job. Reiterate the skills, experience and/or academic qualifications you have and how you will add value to the company. Include your interest in the industry and based on your research you share the same work ethic and believe in the product/service.

2. What is your biggest achievement in life?

I'm sure you've had many of these too. Pick out sporting, academic, voluntary, charitable or travel related example.

3. What would you say is your main weakness or 3 weaknesses that you have?

Everyone hates this question and it could be asked in a different way to elicit your weaknesses. Please don't say "Being a perfectionist!" It's very cliché and loses credibility. Always turn your weakness into a positive. For example: Public speaking is a weakness, however I have joined Toast Masters, a Debating team or speak at a Networking group which has improved my confidence.





Finally, what great questions can you ask?

Towards the end of the interview, you will usually be asked if you have any questions of your own. Be confident when asking your questions and use them to score additional points in your favour. If you have no questions, that leaves the interviewer disappointed and they might think you don't care.

Show you are different by preparing a few really intelligent questions!

- Can you tell me more about the role, like what a typical day would entail?
- Why is the position available?
- What kind of training will be given?
- What prospects are there for personal and professional development?
- What are the company plans for the future?
- What attributes would you hope that I bring to the job?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- What skills and attributes do successful people at your company usually have?
- What do you like best about working at the company?
- What results are expected from me?
- What specific problems are you hoping to solve during the first six months?
- What communication style do you prefer?
- What are your goals for the team?
- How can I make the strongest impact if I'm selected for this role?

