

Interview with Confidence Worksheet

Two types of questions you are likely to be asked in a job or internship interview include, “Tell me about yourself,” and a behavioral query, such as, “Tell me about a time you worked on a team.” With the former question, the employer is looking for you to articulate your interest in the position and industry—and to offer information about relevant skills and experience you bring to the position. With the latter question, the employer seeks your perspective on your behavior or handling of a specific situation, understanding past behavior predicts future behavior. In preparing to answer both questions, it is important to spend time reflecting on your experiences and be able to articulate not only what you did but also how these experiences influenced your career direction, workplace behavior, and occupational attitude.

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

For this question, consider an answer that provides some relevant background information about your interest in the field or position, in addition to your experience. This could be a brief story about events that have shaped your motivation to pursue the opportunity for which you are interviewing. Draw upon your answers to all or some of these questions to create a complete response:

- How did you become interested in this industry or job function? What classes, internships, books, or other engagements piqued your interest in this field?

- What have you done in this field to pursue or explore this interest? Alternatively, what solidified your initial curiosity?

- What experiences and accomplishments have given you the skills the employer is looking for?
(*These may include activities, leadership, internships, jobs, or volunteer opportunities you've taken part in.*)

- Why does this position interest you?

Prepare your answer

Now that you have done some self-reflection, prepare your answers. Remember interaction with employers is limited, so maximize your time with them by promoting yourself in an appropriate way to ultimately answer the question, “Why should we hire you?”

Sample script

- 5 seconds—Greeting: “Hello, my name is _____”
- 5 seconds—Educational Background: “I’m majoring in (or I’m graduating in May with a degree in) _____,” perhaps including an area of concentration or your minor.
- 5-10 seconds—Description of interest: “I am especially interested in _____ opportunity with your company/organization because of my experience _____,” which can include mention of a related internship, summer job or class, or research project.
- 5-10 seconds—Strengths and accomplishments related to your job target: Whatever highlights or strengths you select, use your own words. Convey your message naturally, without sounding rehearsed.
- 5-10 seconds—Summary or goal statement: Reasons you would be a good fit for the position or organization. Show you have researched the company thoroughly by sharing a personal career goal that aligns with the mission statement of that specific institution.

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS/STAR METHOD

Behavioral questions usually start with “Tell me about a time when ...” or “Give me an example of a time or experience when ...” The interviewer is looking for a concrete example that demonstrates a specific skill or quality that will make you an asset to their team. It is very important to provide particulars rather than to speak in generalities. It is useful to think of the answer to this kind of question as a story with a specific structure that relays not only the experience, but also what you learned from it.

STAR Method

One way to structure your story is captured by the mnemonic “STAR,” which stands for: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

- **Situation:** What was the situation, problem, conflict, or challenge you were facing?

- **Task:** What task(s) did you identify to respond to this situation or solve the problem?

- **Action:** What action did you take?

- **Results:** What lessons did you learn, what skills did you gain, and/or what qualities did you develop through this experience that will help you contribute to the prospective employer’s team in the position for which you are interviewing?

Remember that an employer wants to know if you have certain transferable skills and qualities that will help you be effective in the job.

STAR Method Example

Can you tell me about a significant problem you solved?

(S) This semester I was involved in a group project and presentation for an Introduction to Communication class.

(T) We needed to complete the project, but we had a group member who procrastinated for the first portion of the project. As the second step deadline approached, it was making some students nervous. People were upset with this group member and getting angry.

(A) I went to her in person and explained that we needed her part before our next meeting. While I knew she was a good student and did good work, because she was working with a team, things needed to be done further in advance not only for her group’s peace of mind, but also so that we could organize the presentation based on everyone’s information. She still thought it was unreasonable that everyone wanted the project so early, but she complied after she heard why it was important to the team and how it could affect her grade in the class.

(R) As a result, she submitted her contribution with enough time for everyone to be comfortable when it came time to present, and she and I continue to be friendly toward each other.