

Purpose of an Interview:

It is important to remember that interviews are a two-way street; when preparing for an interview, take time to evaluate what you consider to be important qualities in an employer while anticipating interview questions relative to the position and organization.

As a job candidate, an interview is your chance to showcase your suitability for the position you applied for, while assessing how your personal and professional values fit with the organization's culture.

For employers, it is an opportunity to interact with potential employees and gain insight into their experiences, behaviour, knowledge, and other information that cannot be fully obtained from a job application. An interview helps employers verify whether potential employees meet the criteria of the job, as well as gauge the employee's fit within the current work environment.

Preparing for an Interview

Here are a few general tips for preparing for an interview:

- Research the organization; visit the company's website
- Review the job posting; take note of key responsibilities and qualifications
- Brainstorm interview questions and practice your answers; in your answers try to draw upon past work experiences as examples

Online/Virtual Interview Checklist

BEFORE

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- Find a quiet environment where you won't be disturbed
- Alert the employer if you have animals that might disturb your interview
- Make sure your desktop is presentable in case you are required to screen share during the interview
- Do a test call the day before the interview
- Dress to meet the standards of company culture
- Prepare 3-5 questions to ask the interviewer

DURING

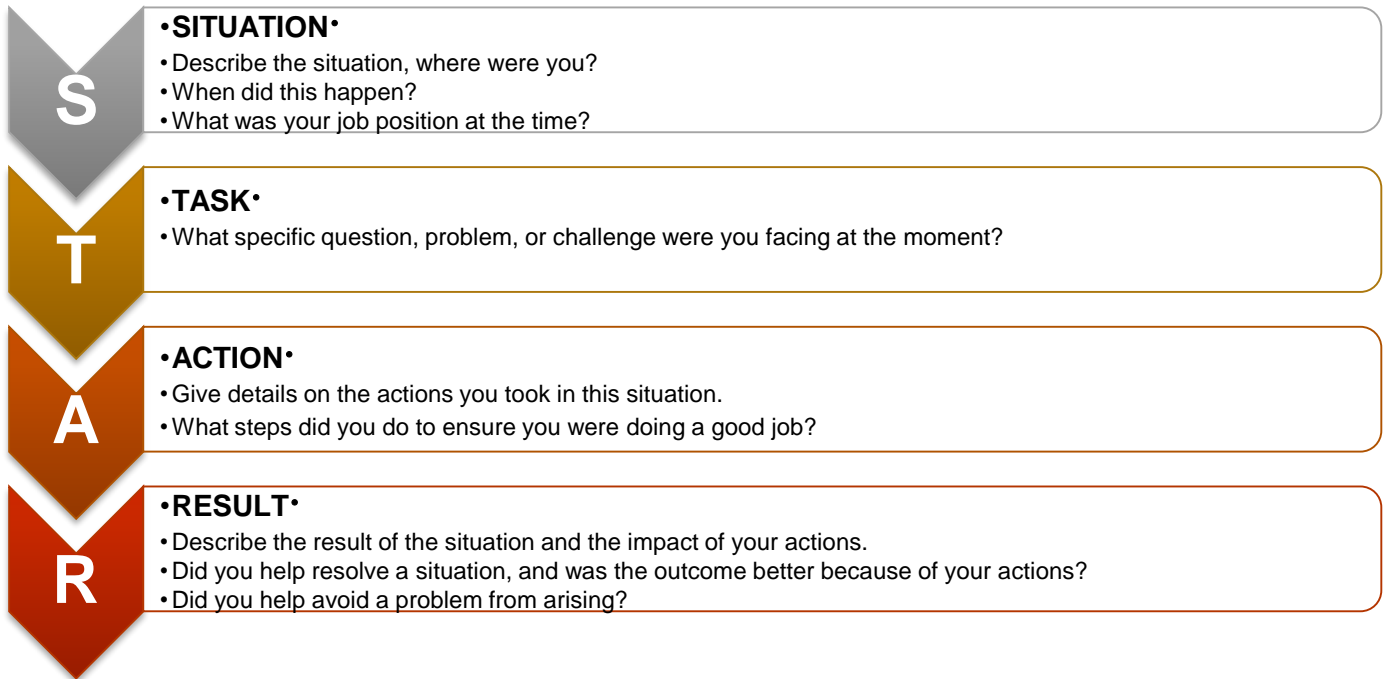
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- Login and set up ahead of the interview time
- Show the interviewer you are actively listening and engaged with what they are saying
- Stay calm if a technical error occurs during the interview
- Answer questions clearly and concisely using examples of your past experiences
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure of the question

AFTER

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- Send a thank you email to the employer within 24-48 hours after the interview
- Reflect upon your interview experience and think about areas you would like to improve on for next time
- Follow up regarding the status of your application

How to Approach Answering Interview Questions

One of the most common ways to approach answering interview questions is by using the STAR response formula. The STAR model helps you to frame a thorough response that properly reflects your past experiences as well as the value you gained from them.



Example of how to implement the STAR technique when answering interview questions:

Question: Tell me about a time when you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands.

Situation: *My university experience has prepared me for the reality of managing multiple deadlines and projects. As a full-time student, I had to balance not only my courses but also my social life, work, extracurricular activities, and at one-point, graduate school applications.*

Task: *The main challenge was time management; balancing all these activities meant prioritizing tasks appropriately and working with efficiency.*

Action: *I implemented a time management system where I began tracking all my deadlines and obligations with a personal journal. When it came to group projects, I also made sure that I was communicating with my team on my progress.*

Result: *I successfully completed my university credentials and was also accepted into a graduate program.*

Check out [Interview Essentials – part II](#) to find out some of the most common interview questions.