Answering Interview Questions Using the Star Method

Although there is no "correct" answer to any interview question, you should answer all questions completely and provide adequate context and detail. We recommend using the STAR Method.

The STAR Method stands for **Situation, Task, Action, Result**. By following this method, you provide the interviewer with the context, the goal, problem, or your role, the steps you took, and the results associated with a situation.

The STAR Method is particularly useful for behavioral questions, which typically begin with, "Tell me about a time when…" or "Describe a situation where you…" You should try to show how the past experience or skill would benefit you in the position for which you are interviewing.

Sample Question:
"Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a team member. How did you handle the situation?"

SITUATION	**Describe a situation you encountered that relates to the question.** Provide some brief context for the situation/project/problem – set the stage	*"When I was working on a group project in my Introduction to Engineering Design course, one of the members of my team would consistently show up late or not show up at all to our team meetings."*
TASK	**Describe the tasks involved in the situation.** State the goal, the problem, or your role	*"As the team leader I had to be the one to address the member who wasn't upholding his responsibilities."*
ACTION	**Specify what actions you took to complete the tasks and achieve your results.** This will be the majority of your answer	*"I contacted the teammate to schedule a one-on-one meeting. I provided examples of meetings where this had been an issue and shared how it was affecting our team members. I asked him for his perspective on why he was missing a lot of our meetings and he told me many of our meetings conflicted with his practice schedule. We decided to move our meetings to an hour later so that they did not conflict with his athletic commitments."*
RESULT	**What results followed due to your actions?** It's okay if the result was negative – just talk after that about what you learned from it and what you would do differently next time	*"At our next meeting, he apologized to the group for not communicating his problem. He was able to attend every meeting since and we earned an A on our project. I learned the importance of clear, face-to-face communication, getting others' point of view, and not making assumptions."*
	Connect your answer to the job This will strengthen your answer	*"This position requires a lot of team projects where there is bound to be conflict from time to time. I think my ability to address conflict directly and respectfully would be a great asset."*