

Tutorial: Assessments and interviews

Academic level

This activity is suitable for level 2 and 3 students.

Time needed

60 minutes

Aim

To help students to understand the different aspects of the recruitment process. Students will receive information and tips on approaching common recruitment and selection methods used by employers, such as online applications, assessments and telephone interviews.

Students will learn about the STAR technique, which they can use to effectively structure examples of their skills and competencies for job applications and interviews.

Activity outcomes

By the end of the tutorial students will:

- Understand the possible stages in the recruitment process
- Have identified the barriers to success when applying for a job
- Understand the behaviours that can help them to succeed
- Know a technique which they can use to provide well structured examples of their skills and competencies

Key learning point

To enable students to feel more confident about the recruitment process and provide them with tips on how to excel in the various stages.

Resources provided:

- Session PowerPoint (available to download from the online college portal)
- Handout 1: Jade's story
- Handout 2: The STAR technique
- Handout 3: Interview practice

Resources you need to provide:

- PC and screen to display the PowerPoint presentation
- Post-it notes
- White board or flip chart
- Flipchart paper and pens

Method	Time
1. Explain to students that they are going to look at different processes employers use to recruit new people to work for them. Ask students what they think these might be. When they have given their thoughts, show slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation.	5 mins
2. Go through slides 3-8 to explain the main features of the different processes and provide tips on approaching them.	5 mins
3. Ask students to get into groups of 3-4 and give each a copy of Handout 1: Jades story. Ask one student in each group to read the case study to the rest of their group, after which they should attempt to answer the questions on slide 9 of the PowerPoint presentation.	10 mins
4. Once students have had a chance to answer the questions, ask each group to feedback their answers to the rest of the class and run through the suggested answers on slide 10 of the PowerPoint presentation.	5 mins
5. Explain to students that in the rest of the tutorial they will get a chance to practice some interview techniques. Point out that people of all ages find interviews difficult, but knowing how to prepare and approach them can make all the difference. Ask students what things they should remember about their body language when at an interview (N.B the tutorial: What employers want, covers this in more detail). Write the answers that students come up with on the flipchart or white board and then show the suggested answers on slide 11, focusing on any that the students did not mention. Explain to the students that how they answer interview questions is a key factor in getting the job. It is an opportunity for the candidate to show the interviewer that they have the required skills.	10 mins
7. Give students a copy of Handout 2: The STAR technique. Using the handout, explain how the technique can be used to effectively structure answers during an interview. Run though the example provided on the handout to ensure that they are clear about how the technique should be applied. Remind students that they should make sure that their examples are specific and clear.	5 mins
8. Explain to students that they will now practice making a good first impression at interview and answering questions using the STAR technique by pretending that they are in an interview. Ask students to get into groups of 3 and give each student a copy of Handout 3: Interview practice. Let them know that they will take it in turns to take on the roles of interviewer, candidate and observer. Using Handout 3, run through the responsibilities of each role. Ask each group to select one person to take on each of the roles first. Explain that the candidate should greet the interviewer and try to make a good first impression. The interviewer will then ask the candidate a question from Handout 3: Interview practice, which they will have up to 5 minutes to answer using the STAR technique, before receiving feedback on their performance from the observer. Students should then swap roles and repeat the activity until each group member has had the opportunity to take on each role.	20 mins

Handout 1: Jade's story



Jade was soon to finish her childcare course at college and wanted to find a job working with young children. She had applied for a job at her local nursery and was really excited when she was selected for a telephone interview.

She was very nervous about talking on the phone, so she practiced greeting the interviewer with her mum the day before – she wanted to sound professional and make a good first impression. Jade also thought about some of the questions that she might be asked and the answers she would provide.

Jade was at college on the day of the telephone interview; she found a quiet spot in the cafeteria. It became a bit noisy when the students came in for lunch and on a few occasions she found it hard to hear the interviewer – she hoped that the interviewer could hear her OK.

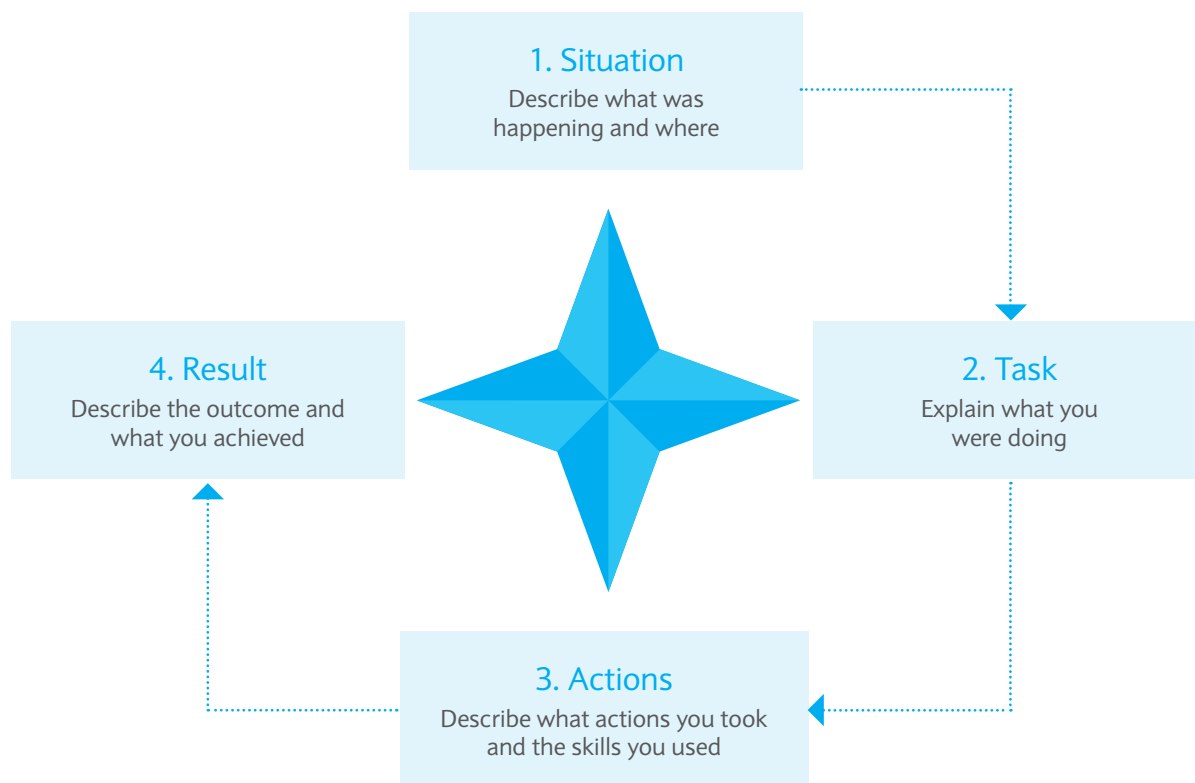
During the call she was asked about the two week work placement that she had completed as part of her course. Jade managed to give some good examples of what she had learnt during her placement, but couldn't remember exactly what she had included on her CV.

A few days later, Jade was delighted to receive an email asking her to attend a face-to-face interview. After getting over her excitement, she started to prepare.

Handout 2: The STAR technique

The STAR technique helps you to give great answers to interview questions. It helps you to structure your examples so that you cover everything that the interviewer needs to know.

The diagram below explains the four stages to be followed when using the STAR technique:



Example:

Tell me about a time that you provided good customer service?

Situation: I work part-time in a local bookshop as a customer service representative.

Task: One day I was approached by a customer who wanted to buy a specific book for her niece's birthday. Unfortunately we didn't have it in stock and she needed it the following day.

Action: I called all other local store branches to check if they had the book in stock. As the book was not available anywhere else, I discussed the customer's needs in detail and suggested alternative books that her niece might like.

Result: The customer bought one of the books that I suggested, she also told my manager that she was delighted with the service that she received.

Handout 3: Interview practice

Working in teams of three you will practice using the STAR technique.

Imagine that you are in an interview setting. You will each take it in turn to take on the roles of interviewer, candidate and observer.

The candidate has up to 5 minutes to answer a question asked by the interviewer, using the STAR technique, before receiving feedback on their performance from the observer. You should then swap roles and repeat the activity until each of you has had an opportunity to take on each of the roles.

Below is a detailed explanation of each of the roles:

The Interviewer

Your role: Welcome the candidate, shake their hand and ask them to take a seat. Ask the candidate one question from the following list:

Tell me about a time when you...

1. Worked well in a team?
2. Came up with a new idea?
3. Had to deal with a situation that didn't go to plan?
4. Had to deal with a difficult person and how you over came this? (e.g. a customer, college lecturer, parent etc)?
5. Were under pressure to meet a deadline?

The Candidate

Your role: Greet the interviewer, shake their hand and try to make a good first impression. Answer the interviewer's question, in 5 minutes or less, making sure that your answer is structured using the STAR technique.

Make sure that you cover the following:

- **Situation** – describe what was happening and where
- **Task** – explain what you were doing
- **Actions** – describe the actions you took and the skills that you used
- **Results** – describe the outcome and what you achieved

Try to be as clear and concise as possible when providing your answer.

The Observer

Your role: Make notes about how the candidate performs and give them feedback on how they did once they have answered the question. Remember to let them know what they did well and suggest ways in which they could improve their answer.

You should make notes on the following:

- Do they make a good first impression, i.e did they smile, make eye contact, stand tall, shake hands, sound confident, etc?
- Does their answer cover the situation, task, action and result?
- Do they explain how they used their skills?
- Do they describe what they achieved?

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.