STAR Practice Workbook

Build the story bank that answers 30 behavioral interview questions

BARAGNINI

Interviews are decided in ninety-second windows. This workbook helps you build seven core stories from your own life, one per competency, plus a spare, shape each one with Situation, Task, Action and Result, and score yourself until every answer lands.

HOW TO USE IT

1. Read the 30 questions on the last page and note which ones you have no story for.
2. Fill one story page per competency, plus the spare. Eight pages, about twenty minutes each.
3. Say each story out loud while recording on your phone. Do not read from the page.
4. Watch it back and tick the four self-check boxes. Three out of four is interview-ready.
5. Repeat each story three times across three different days, ticking a rep box each time.

THE FOUR-POINT SELF-CHECK

- Did the whole answer finish inside 90 seconds?
- Did the Situation stay under two sentences?
- Did you say "I" at least four times in the Action?
- Did the Result carry a number or a verifiable consequence?

THE SHAPE OF A STRONG ANSWER

SITUATION	2 sentences. Where, when, and what was wrong.	~10 sec
TASK	Your specific remit, plus what was at risk.	~10 sec
ACTION	Three or four steps you personally took. Say "I".	~45 sec
RESULT	The number, then stop talking.	~20 sec

Story 1 of 8

Suggested competency: Conflict

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STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

Story 2 of 8

Suggested competency: Deadlines and pressure

BARAGNINI

STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

Story 3 of 8

Suggested competency: Leading without authority

BARAGNINI

STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

Story 4 of 8

Suggested competency: A mistake you fixed

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STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

Story 5 of 8

Suggested competency: Learning something fast

BARAGNINI

STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

Story 6 of 8

Suggested competency: A customer or stakeholder

BARAGNINI

STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

Story 7 of 8

Suggested competency: Initiative

BARAGNINI

STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

Story 8 of 8

Suggested competency: Spare story

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STORY NAME *a short handle you will remember, e.g. 'rescued capstone project'*

THIS STORY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Deadlines
- ☐ Leading
- ☐ Mistakes
- ☐ Learning fast
- ☐ Customers
- ☐ Initiative

SITUATION *Where were you, when, and what was the problem? Two sentences maximum.*

TASK *What were you specifically responsible for, and what was at risk?*

ACTION *Three or four steps you personally took, in order. Use "I", not "we".*

RESULT *What changed? Lead with a number or a verifiable consequence.*

THE NUMBER *the single figure or consequence you will end on*

SELF-CHECK AFTER RECORDING

- ☐ Under 90 seconds
- ☐ Said "I" 4+ times
- ☐ Situation under 2 sentences
- ☐ Result carries a number

PRACTICE REPS ☐ Rep 1 ☐ Rep 2 ☐ Rep 3 *space them across three different days*

The 30 Questions

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Tick the ones you already have a story for. The blanks are your homework.

CONFLICT AND DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS

- [ ] 1. Tell me about a time you disagreed with a teammate. How did you resolve it?
- [ ] 2. Describe a situation where you worked with someone who was not pulling their weight.
- [ ] 3. Tell me about a time you gave difficult feedback to a peer.
- [ ] 4. Describe a time you disagreed with a supervisor or lecturer. What did you do?
- [ ] 5. Tell me about a time you built a working relationship with someone you did not get along with.

DEADLINES, PRESSURE AND COMPETING PRIORITIES

- [ ] 6. Tell me about a time you had to meet a very tight deadline.
- [ ] 7. Describe a situation where you juggled several commitments at once. How did you prioritize?
- [ ] 8. Tell me about a time you delivered something with far fewer resources than you needed.
- [ ] 9. Describe a time a project was falling behind. What did you do?
- [ ] 10. Tell me about a time you had to push back on a request.

LEADING WITHOUT FORMAL AUTHORITY

- [ ] 11. Tell me about a time you led a team or group project.
- [ ] 12. Describe a situation where you motivated people who did not report to you.
- [ ] 13. Tell me about a time you made a decision without complete information.
- [ ] 14. Describe a time you took responsibility for a group's outcome.

MISTAKES, FAILURE AND FEEDBACK

- [ ] 15. Tell me about a goal you did not reach. What did you take from it?
- [ ] 16. Describe a mistake you made and how you corrected it.
- [ ] 17. Tell me about a time you received criticism that was hard to hear.
- [ ] 18. Describe a time your idea was rejected. How did you respond?

LEARNING FAST AND ADAPTING

- [ ] 19. Tell me about a time you had to learn a new skill or tool quickly.
- [ ] 20. Describe a situation where the goalposts moved mid-project.
- [ ] 21. Tell me about a time you stepped into a task you had never done before.
- [ ] 22. Describe a time you worked in an unfamiliar environment or culture.

CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- [ ] 23. Tell me about a time you dealt with an unhappy customer or client.
- [ ] 24. Describe a situation where you explained something technical to a non-technical audience.
- [ ] 25. Tell me about a time you persuaded someone to change their mind.
- [ ] 26. Describe a time you managed expectations when you could not give someone what they wanted.

The 30 Questions

continued

INITIATIVE AND IMPROVING THINGS

- [ ] **27.** Tell me about a time you improved a process nobody asked you to improve.
- [ ] **28.** Describe a situation where you spotted a problem before it became serious.
- [ ] **29.** Tell me about a time you went beyond what was expected of you.
- [ ] **30.** Describe a time you used data or evidence to make a case.