



# A Guide to Your Mock Interview

**\*\*\*Failure to Read this material may be Hazardous to your Interviewing Health\*\*\***



**No-Show/NOT PREPARED Policy:**

**If you do not show up, you are subject to receiving a zero and will have to make up the interview.**

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## Your Mock Interview Experience @ At Cartersville High School

### What is a mock interview?

- A mock interview is a simulation interview. Interviews will be conducted by Community Business Members/Partners
- Although your mock interviewer is well experienced in conducting the interview, he/she may be unable to answer specific questions about your field.
- The role of the mock interviewer during this portion of the interview is to advise you on appropriate questions to ask and guide you to resources that may provide you with tips on appropriate questions to ask.

### **Purpose:**

- To simulate actual interview conditions in order to provide a more comfortable interview experience.
- To provide feedback that will aid you in assessing current strengths and weaknesses in regard to your interviewing skills.
- To help you with the interview process: developing confidence and enhancing skills.

### **Registration/Preparation:**

- Sign up with Ms. Boyer. You will receive a confirmation stating the date and time of your interview along with the name of your interviewer.
- Review the tips and suggestions highlighted throughout this guide book.
- Business/Professional dress is required.
- **On the day of your interview arrive with your resume in hand (2 copies – one for you and one for the interviewer) Wait outside room until you are called.**

### **What to Expect: From Start to Finish**

- Your mock interview experience begins the moment that your interviewer greets you. You should start with a firm handshake and appropriate greeting of the interviewer, using his or her name.
- You and your interviewer will go into an interview room. The mock interview itself will last approximately 15 minutes, and the interview will be discussed and critiqued for approximately 10 minutes.
- At the end of your mock interview you will have the opportunity to talk with the interviewer about any particular questions or concerns you have about the interviewing process. Furthermore, you will receive from your interviewer honest and helpful feedback.

### **You will be evaluated on the following...**

- ✍ **Appearance:** Dress appropriately for the interview
- ✍ **Greeting/Introduction:** We recommend that you stand to greet your interviewer with a handshake, using his/her name. Also, make good eye contact with the interviewer, smile, and be professional.
- ✍ **Body Language:** During the interview, be aware of your eye contact, subtle use of hands while speaking, good posture, etc.
- ✍ **Attitude:** Your attitude toward work and working with others is crucial in the hiring process. Be sure to convey an attitude that is enthusiastic, sincere, and genuine.
- ✍ **Responses to the Interview Questions:** Do your research and practice, practice, practice! Know your goals and be able to express them to the interviewer.
- ✍ **Oral Communication:** Speak clearly and concisely. Try to think out your response before answering a question.
- ✍ **Preparation:** Prepare questions for your interviewer and research the position and/or company/organization/agency for which you are interviewing. If applying to graduate

school, it is important to have knowledge on the particular program and be able to articulate why you want to further your education in that field.

### **Dress for Success!**

#### **Attire, Grooming, Respect**

You are a representative of Cartersville High School. Your behavior and appropriateness have great impact on the community's attitude toward all of us. Since most employers and customers represent an adult population, job site dress standards may differ from "at home wear". The business community tends to dress conservatively and those standards are required for all interviews. The following attire, grooming and behavior are considered appropriate for interviews unless other standards are specified by employer:

- Clean, wrinkle-free dress slacks: Nothing saggy, baggy or torn hemmed at bottom. No holes.
- No jeans, shorts, capri pants, short skirts, sweats or warm-up type clothes.
- Shirts: Clean and wrinkle-free, with collar. No holes, tears, extreme patterns, writing or pictures on clothing; no midriff showing, no low-cut or see through shirts.
- Footwear: Wear clean, polished shoes. Men - Socks required. No sandals, flip flops or open-toe shoes. \* Jewelry: Nothing extreme (when in doubt, DON'T); no lip, nose, eyebrow or tongue rings, no multiple necklaces, earrings or rings.
- Grooming: Hair must be clean with no extreme styles or colors. No tattoos or other Marks visible.
- Must be clean shaven; nails must be clean, no extreme nail color or chipped nails and no extreme lip color.
- Remove hat during interview.
- Turn off cell phone.
- No gum chewing.

### **Know the Facts!**

Be sure you are fully prepared for interviews by reviewing the interview questions – not all will be asked, so be prepared with a response!

### **Prepare yourself**

- Interviews can be a very intimidating task if you are unprepared.
- Preparation and practice are key ingredients to a successful interview!
- You must be able to talk about yourself with confidence.
- Exploring and understanding yourself allows you to answer interview questions as effectively as possible.
- It is vital to understand your attributes and personality so that you can convey those positive qualities to the interviewer.

A survey revealed that the following factors were most important when interviewing a candidate: (From F.I.C.C. Job Club <http://www.f-i-c-c.com/jobclub.htm>)

- ✓ **Skills & experience 10%**

- ✓ **Education 10%**
- ✓ **First impression 40%**
- ✓ **Personal characteristics 40%**

1. Personality traits or skills I have that are job related:

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2. Examples of experiences I have had that demonstrate the above traits/skills:

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3. List 3-5 accomplishments that would be of interest to the person interviewing me:

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4. What are the 3 most important things I want the interviewer to know about me?:

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5. What concerns might an employer have about me and what will alleviate those concerns?:

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### **Sample Behavior Based Interview statements for response:**

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.

3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
4. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
5. Describe a time on any job that you held in which you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
6. Give an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
7. Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
8. Give me an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
9. Describe the most significant or creative presentation which you have had to complete.
10. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
11. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person when the individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).

## **Other possible interview questions & statements for response**

### **Interview Questions: Work History**

- Name of company, position title and description, dates of employment.
- What were your expectations for the job and to what extent were they met?
- What were your starting and final levels of compensation?
- What were your responsibilities?
- What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- What did you like or dislike about your previous job?
- Which was most / least rewarding aspect of your job?
- What was the biggest accomplishment / failure in this position?
- **Questions about your supervisors and co-workers.**
- What was it like working for your supervisor?
- What do you expect from a supervisor?
- What problems have you encountered at work?
- Who was your best boss and who was the worst?
- Why are you leaving your job?
- Why did you resign?
- Why did you quit your job?
- What have you been doing since your last job?
- Why were you fired?

### **Job Interview Questions About You**

- What is your greatest weakness?
- What is your greatest strength?
- How will your greatest strength help you perform?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Describe a typical work week.
- Do you take work home with you?

- How many hours do you normally work?
- How would you describe the pace at which you work?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- What motivates you?
- Are you a self-motivator?
- What are your salary expectations?
- What do you find are the most difficult decisions to make?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What has been the greatest disappointment in your life?
- What are you passionate about?
- What are your pet peeves?
- What do people most often criticize about you?
- When was the last time you were angry? What happened?
- If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?
- If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
- Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?
- Give some examples of teamwork.
- More teamwork interview questions.
- What type of work environment do you prefer?
- How do you evaluate success?
- If you know your boss is 100% wrong about something how would you handle it?
- Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.
- Describe a time when your workload was heavy and how you handled it.
- More job interview questions about your abilities.
- More job interview questions about you.

#### **Job Interview Questions About the New Job and the Company**

- What can you do for this company?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why are you the best person for the job?
- What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- What can you contribute to this company?
- What is good customer service?

#### **Interview Questions: The Future**

- What are you looking for in your next job? What is important to you?
- What are your goals for the next five years / ten years?
- How do you plan to achieve those goals?
- What are your salary requirements - both short-term and long-term?
- Questions about your career goals.
- What will you do if you don't get this position?

## **Don't Leave Home Without Reading This Advice!**

- The first few minutes of the interview are the most important. It is at this time that you really want to sell yourself and get the interviewer interested in you. That is why it is important to package yourself and your qualifications. Having a set agenda of what you want to get across during the interview will help (i.e. education, background, experience, strengths, goals, accomplishments, challenges)
- Always try to relate what you are saying and how it can benefit the company/organization/agency with which you are interviewing. It is important to be familiar with the employer prior to the interview so you can know what type of person they seek, as well as what the position requires.
- If you get stuck on a question, it is okay to pause. Often, you can simply say, "That's a very good question; let me take a minute to think about that." Although a short pause is okay, try to avoid a lengthy one. Employers can tell if you are just buying time to make something up.
- It is important to end the interview on a positive note, either reiterating your interest in the position or telling the recruiter you look forward to hearing from him/her soon. Don't forget to thank the employer for his/her time and interest.
- In addition to knowing information about the company/organization/agency, always have questions prepared to ask the interviewer.
- Grades may be a topic. If your grades are low, be prepared to have an explanation.

### **Dos and Don'ts**

- DO answer questions honestly, thoroughly, and sincerely. If you don't know the answer, indicate that.
- DO NOT try to tell the interviewer what you think he/she wants to hear.
- DO be careful about saying negative things about past experiences (i.e. insult a company that you interned with).
- DO NOT display a negative or arrogant attitude.
- DO be polite, tactful, and sincere - eye contact is also important.
- DO dress neatly and appropriately (conservative, not trendy).
- DO NOT be late unless there is an emergency.
- DO practice the questions suggested in this guide.
- DO have a small portfolio to keep pens, extra copies of resumes, and a reference sheet.

## Mock Interviews Common Feedback

### Be prepared for these additional questions:

1. What would a college say about you based on your resume?
2. What is your process for making a difficult decision?

### Application Feedback

- Make sure your addresses match on all documents (cover letter, resume, application)
- Use complete address for references if it is asked on Application
- Application Completeness- don't make the reviewer look for the information. Provide a phone number & email address for references on reference page attached to resume
- Watch pen use on application. Make sure ink doesn't bleed through
- Use the FULL Name of your supervisor when asked on the application
- Know what minimum wage is and don't put anything less than that (except if it is waitress or waiter jobs)
- When you mess up--- GET A NEW APPLICATION AND START OVER
- Don't leave "Reason for Leaving" blank- seems like you are hiding something
- Slang Terms: "ex-boss" or "boss" - Replace with "Former Supervisor" or "Supervisor" when referencing someone's title
- Watch too much honesty in explanations- Why did you leave this job? I totaled my car. -- What is the impression that your statements make? Perception?
- Adding plans to attend college on resume and application even for Juniors

### Resume & Reference Page Feedback

- Consider ways to make the headers such as Objective, Education, Work Experience in your resume stand out (underline, all caps, bold – choose one)
- Use larger font for address information under resume header with your name and contact info
- Spell out acronyms on the resume or application- Ex. FBLA = Future Business Leaders of America
- Explain what Renaissance is: Award recipient for Renaissance program achieving a 3.5 or higher
- Students with no work experience and focus on sports – list your transferable skills. See H. Morrison and "Dance"
- When referencing bilingual skills: be specific about proficiency in different areas. List them out. Oral, Written, Reading
- Watch your lingo in different industries. Make sure it is common language. Ex. Cold line or hot line--- restate to explain what these mean instead of using those terms.
- Use past tense to describe previous jobs in resume
- Adding plans to attend college on resume and application even for Juniors
- Add email addresses for references

### INTERVIEW SKILLS Feedback

- Focus on answering questions thoroughly and not causing the interviewer to probe you for more answers
- Enthusiasm- do your verbal answers or your tone convey you want the job?
- OVER using "like" or "um"
- When discussing weaknesses or questions dealing with problem solving, do you have plan to fix what is wrong and reinforce what is right?
- Tie back long hair
- Watch Body Language- Crossed arms during the interview, slouchy
- Watch too short of dresses as well as "t-shirt material" dresses
- Be sure to keep eye contact when you are taking a minute to "think" of your answers
- Offer a copy of your resume EVEN if you think or KNOW they have one
- Take off an outside coat or vest before the interview begins (before you walk into the office)
- Watch your fidgeting
- Male dress code
- Slow down speech and control your nerves

## **BOYER THOUGHTS:**

**The biggest thing that students/everyone can do is to let your resume/portfolio work for you. Know the resume like the back of your hand. Bring several copies to an interview with you. Offer a copy to all interviewers in the room, BUT, keep one copy for yourself.**

**ANY Behavioral interview questions should play off of their resume or portfolio. Use it as a “notecard” to jog your memory of situations or examples that you can provide answers to the question. Use examples from a portfolio. Feel free to flag with sticky notes in a portfolio of the samples you are most proud of. You can play off of these examples in the behavioral interview questions.**

## **FOR EXAMPLE:**

**#1 Behavioral Interview Question: 1. Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.**

### **High school students should begin sentences like below:**

“Well, as you can see on my *resume*, I took AP US History while in high school. That course involved several projects that required completion as a group. We found ourselves, like many high school students do, crunched for time and had to work together under pressure to complete the project by the deadline that was set. I made it a challenge for my group to be the best project in the class and set individual deadlines to have the assignments done as a first draft. Then, our group came together to edit for the final product and I went home and edited the project based on that meeting with my group. By setting incremental deadlines to have tasks completed, we were able to delegate work, but all have a final say in the product. Additionally, by re-focusing and setting group deadlines, we turned in our project on time with a *quality* product, which earned us a 98 on the project. Of course, I had a great group of people to work with, but I think that my effective allocation of tasks was a major component of the success of the project.

**The STAR method is a great way to remember how to answer the question. You don't want to leave the interview wondering where**

[you are going with the answer.](#) (**CLICK HERE, I ADDED AN ANCHOR LINK TO THIS ARTICLE FOR YOU**)

## **RESOURCES**

### **Behavioral Interview Questions and Answers:**

<https://www.thebalance.com/top-behavioral-interview-questions-2059618>

### **STAR Response to Behavioral Interviewing:**

<https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-star-interview-response-technique-2061629>

# **Top 10 Behavioral Interview Questions and Answers**

During a job interview, it is likely that you will be asked behavioral interview questions. What are they and how are they different from [traditional job interview questions](#) where you describe what you did or the qualifications you have?

## **What are Behavioral Job Interview Questions?**

[Behavioral job interview](#) techniques are very commonly employed by all types of companies. The types of questions you will likely be asked will be seeking concrete examples of skills and experiences that relate directly to the position.

The interviewer will ask how you would handle a situation, and you will need to respond with an explanation of what you did. The logic is that your success in the past is a positive indicator of your success in the future.

## **Top 10 Behavioral Interview Questions and Sample Answers**

Here are the top ten behavioral interview questions you may be asked during a job interview. Review the responses, and consider how you would answer the question. You don't need to memorize answers, but know what experiences you would share and how you would describe them to the interviewer.

### **1. Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.**

I had been working on a key project that was scheduled for delivery to the client in 60 days. My supervisor came to me and said that we needed to speed it up and be ready in 45 days, while keeping our other projects on time. I made it into a challenge for my staff, and we effectively added just a few hours to each of our schedules and got the job done in 42 days by sharing the workload.

Of course, I had a great group of people to work with, but I think that my effective allocation of tasks was a major component of the success of the project.

**More Answers:** [How do you handle stress?](#)

**2. How do you handle a challenge? Give an example.**

One time, my supervisor needed to leave town unexpectedly, and we were in the middle of a touchy negotiation with a new sponsor.

I was tasked with putting together a PowerPoint presentation just from the notes he had left, and some briefing from his manager. My presentation turned out successfully- we got the sponsorship, and the management team recommended me for an award.

**More Answers:** [Tell me about how you handled a challenging situation.](#)

**3. Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it?**

Once I misquoted the fees for a particular type of membership to the club where I worked. I explained my mistake to my supervisor, who appreciated my coming to him, and my honesty. He told me to offer to waive the application fee for the new member. The member joined the club despite my mistake, my supervisor was understanding, and although I felt bad that I had made a mistake, I learned to pay close attention to the details so as to give accurate information in the future.

**Tips for Responding:** [How to answer interview questions about mistakes.](#)

**4. Give an example of how you set goals.**

Within a few weeks of beginning my first job as a sales associate in a department store, I knew that I wanted to be in the fashion industry. I decided that I would work my way up to department manager, and at that point I would have enough money saved to be able to attend design school full-time.

I did just that, and I even landed my first job through an internship I completed the summer before graduation.

**5. Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.**

When I started working for XYZ Company, I wanted to achieve the Employee of the Month title. It was a motivational challenge, and not all the employees took it that seriously, but I really wanted that parking spot, and my picture on the wall. I went out of my way to be helpful to my colleagues, supervisors, and customers - which I would have done anyway, I liked the job and the people I worked with. The third month I was there, I got the honor. It was good to achieve my goal, and I actually ended up moving into a managerial position there pretty quickly, I think because of my positive attitude and perseverance.

**More Answers:** [Interview questions about achieving your goals.](#)

**6. Describe a decision you made that wasn't popular and how you handled implementing it.**

Once, I inherited a group of employees when their supervisor relocated to another city. They had been allowed to cover each other's shifts without management approval. I didn't like the inconsistencies, where certain people were being given more opportunities than others. I

introduced a policy where I had my assistant approve all staffing changes, to make sure that everyone who wanted extra hours and was available at certain times could be utilized.

**More Answers:** [What are the most difficult decisions to make?](#)

### **7. Give an example of how you worked on a team.**

During my last semester in college, I worked as part of a research team in the History department. The professor leading the project was writing a book on the development of language in Europe in the Middle Ages. We were each assigned different sectors to focus on, and I suggested that we meet independently before our weekly meeting with the professor to discuss our progress, and help each other out if we were having any difficulties. The professor really appreciated the way we worked together, and it helped to streamline his research as well. He was ready to start on his final copy months ahead of schedule because of the work we helped him with.

**Tips for Responding:** [How to answer interview questions about teamwork.](#)

### **8. What do you do if you disagree with someone at work?**

A few years ago, I had a supervisor who wanted me to find ways to outsource most of the work we were doing in my department. I felt that my department was one where having the staff on premises had a huge impact on our effectiveness and ability to relate to our clients. I presented a strong case to her, and she came up with a compromise plan.

**Tips for Responding:** [How to answer interview questions about problems at work.](#)

### **9. Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or co-workers.**

I was in a situation once where the management of our department was taken over by employees with experience in a totally different industry, in an effort to maximize profits over service. Many of my co-workers were resistant to the sweeping changes that were being made, but I recognized some of the benefits right off the bat, and was able to motivate my colleagues to give the new process a chance to succeed.

**More Answers:** [What strategies would you use to motivate your team?](#)

### **10. Have you handled a difficult situation? How?**

When I worked at ABC Global, it came to my attention that one of my employees had become addicted to painkillers prescribed after she had surgery. Her performance was being negatively impacted, and she needed to get some help. I spoke with her privately, and I helped her to arrange a weekend treatment program that was covered by her insurance. Fortunately, she was able to get her life back on track, and she received a promotion about six months later.

## **Share Real Examples**

Interviewers develop questions to determine how successful a candidate will be, given the specific tasks of the job. Questions are generally formatted by presenting a situation, inquiring

about what action you have taken to respond to something similar in the past, and what the result was.

Obviously, you want to present your experiences as clearly as you can, using real examples, and highlighting situations where you were successful. Using the [STAR interview technique](#) can help you to give well thought out and complete answers.

## How to Prepare

To help you [prepare for a behavioral interview](#), review the job requirements, and make a list of the [behavioral skills](#) that you have that closely match them. Then write down examples of when you applied those skills during a work, school, or volunteer situation. Here's [how to match your qualifications to the job](#).

# How to Answer Behavioral Interview Questions Using the STAR Technique

The STAR interview response technique is a way of answering job interview questions. It helps the job candidate provide concrete examples or proof that he or she has the experience and skills for the job.

Read below for a more detailed description of the STAR interview response technique, and examples of how to best use it.

## What is the STAR Interview Response Technique?

The STAR interview response technique is a method for answering [behavioral interview](#) questions.

Behavioral interview questions are questions about how you have behaved in the past. Specifically, they are about how you have handled certain work situations. Interviewers ask these questions to see if candidates have the skills and experiences required for the job. One good way for them to see if candidates have what it takes is to look at past examples of performance.

Examples of [behavioral interview questions](#) include:

- Tell me about a time you had to complete a task under a tight deadline.
- Have you ever gone above and beyond the call of duty?
- What do you do when a team member refuses to complete his or her portion of the work?

Some interviewers structure their questions using the STAR technique. However, job seekers can also use the STAR interview method to prepare for behavioral interview questions.

STAR is an acronym for four key concepts. Each concept is a step the job candidate can take to answer a behavioral interview question.

By completing all four steps, the job candidate provides a thorough answer. The concepts in the acronym include:

- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Result

**Question:** Describe the context within which you performed a job or faced a challenge at work.

THINK ABOUT examples such as, perhaps you were working on a group project, or you had a conflict with a coworker.

This situation can be from a work experience, a volunteer position, or any other relevant event. Be as specific as possible.

**Task:** Next, describe your responsibility in that situation. Perhaps you had to help your group complete a project under a tight deadline, or resolve a conflict with a coworker.

**Action:** You then describe how you completed the task or endeavored to meet the challenge. Focus on what you did, rather than what your team, boss, or coworker did.

**Result:** Finally, explain the outcomes or results generated by the action taken. You might emphasize what you accomplished, or what you learned.

## How to Prepare for an Interview Using STAR

Since you won't know in advance [what interviewing techniques](#) your interviewer will be using, you'll benefit from preparing several scenarios from the jobs you've held.

First, make a list of the skills and/or experiences required for the job. You might look at the [job listing](#) for suggestions. Then, consider specific examples of times that you displayed those skills. For each example, name the situation, task, action, and result.

You can also take a look at common [behavioral interview questions](#), and try answering each of them using the STAR technique.

Whatever examples you select, make sure they are as closely related to the job you're interviewing for as possible.

## Example Questions and Answers Using STAR

**Example Question 1:** Tell me about a time you had to complete a task under a tight deadline. Describe the situation, and explain how you handled it.

**Example Answer 1:** While I typically like to plan my work out in stages and complete it piece by piece, I can also achieve strong work under a tight deadline. Once at a former company, an employee left days before a big project of his was due. I was asked to take it over, with only a few days to learn about and complete the project. I created a task force, delegated work, and we all completed the assignment with a day to spare. I think I tend to thrive under tight deadlines.

**Example Question 2:** What do you do when a team member refuses to complete his or her portion of the work?

**Example Answer 2:** When there are team conflicts or issues, I always try my best to step up as team leader if needed. I think my communication skills make me an effective leader and moderator. For example, once I was working on a team project, and two of the team members got into an argument, both refusing to complete their assignments. They were both dissatisfied with their workloads, so I arranged a team meeting where we rearranged the assignments for the team. This made everyone happier and more productive, and our project was a success.