Job Search-
strategies to find a career

Lori M. Conlan, PhD
Director, Office of Postdoctoral Services

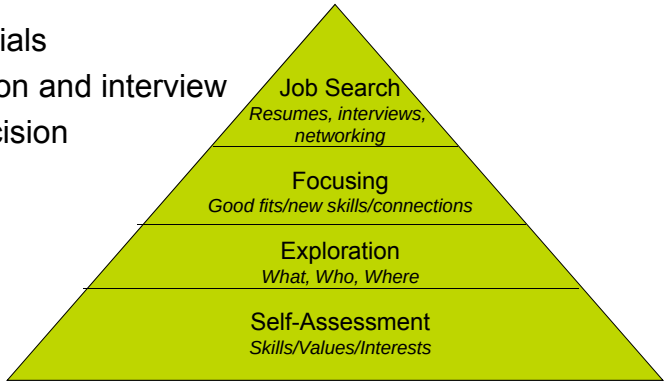
Office of Intramural TRAINING & EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

My Career Path

- Jobs
  - Postdoc, 2002-2006
  - Non-profit, NYAS-Science Alliance (2006-2008)
  - Government, OITE (2008 – present)
- All using similar skills, but to varying degrees and in very different ways
  - Analytical and problem-solving
  - Interpersonal
  - Communication
  - Tenacity
- Each transition was difficult in the same ways
  - Was I certain I wanted the job?
  - Could I let go of what I already had?
  - Was I "good enough" to get the job, keep the job, and thrive in the job?

Career Decision Process

- Figuring out what options are out there and you want
- Networking
- Build credentials
- The application and interview
- Making a decision



Job search timelines

Academics

- Aug-Oct Apply
- Jan-Feb Interview
- March-April 2nd Interview
- April Accept
- August Move

- Total time: ~ 1 year

Anything else

- Any month Apply
- + 1 Month Interview
- + 2 Weeks Accept***
- + 1 month Move

- Total time: ~2 months

That said, on average 1 month/$10K

What sectors are the jobs in?

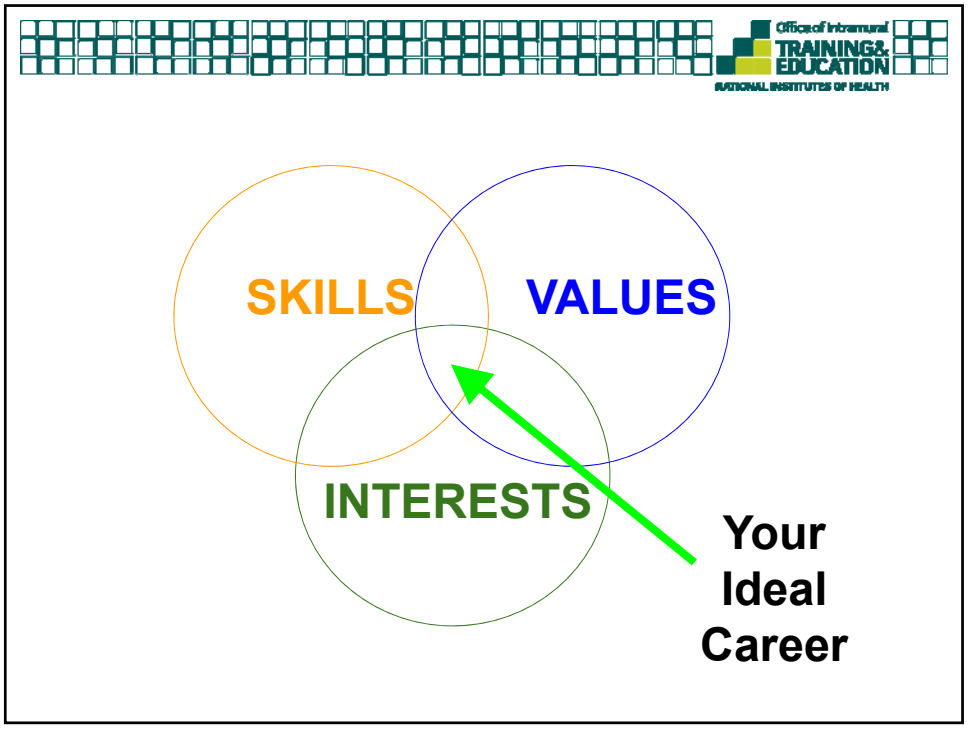
- Academics
- Government
- Industry
- Non-profit

- On or off -the bench

But first, you need to know yourself

- Interests within the field
- Personality and learning style
- Highly developed and developing skills
- Work preferences (work values)
- Management and leadership style
- Credentials
- Personal and geographic restrictions

- Skills-Interests-Values



Your Skills

- Can be learned and enhanced
- Typically can be described as a verb ("-ing")
- Important to define skills as specifically as possible
  - For career exploration and for your job search
- **Transferable skills**
  - Skills acquired during any activity in your life that are applicable to what you want to do in your next job
  - Many junior scientists have difficulty identifying their transferable skills

Skills Recruiters Want

1. Communication
2. Problem solving
3. Team work
4. Self motivation
5. Initiative
6. Logical thinking
7. Ability to work under pressure
8. Time management
9. Work ethic
10. Dependability
11. Adaptability
12. Leadership
13. Organization
14. Self confidence

Reference: Monster 2011 Biotech Job Conditions Report

Skills ➡ Career Choices

How would skills change based on career type?

1. Pick a skill from the slide before
2. From your past how would you prove that skill?

This will help you to expand your key skills that should be developed for different career paths

ACTIVITY

Your Interests

- What we actually like to do
- Does not mean we have those skills
  - Although they can be learned!
- Just because we have a **skill**, does not mean we have an **interest**
- Jobs can combine multiple interests
- Interests don't always equal vocations
  - That's what hobbies are for!

Interests

- Realistic (Doers)
  - Like to work with things
- Investigative (Thinkers)
  - Like to analyze data and ideas
- Artistic (Creators)
  - Like self-expression
- Social (Helpers)
  - Like to work with people
- Enterprising (Persuaders)
  - Like to build organizations
- Conventional (Organizers)
  - Like to organize data/info systems

Interests

What people like to do…

Involve:
Data
Things
Ideas
People

http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/multimedia/wwmap/world.htr

Science Specific Interests

PRACTICAL Technical Systematic Application	SCORE	INVESTIGATIVE Research Discovery Curiosity	SCORE
Conducting experiments, collecting data Using mathematical/statistical tools Equipment and methodologies Instrumentation knowledge & understanding Applying specialist technical skills Practical and physical experimental tasks Collecting samples, taking measurements Taking responsibility for lab resources, incl. cell, animal and plant care/maintenance.		Making new discoveries Interpreting results and data Conceptualising and designing investigative research projects to test a hypothesis Thinking up new theories/processes Learning about new research Researching/reviewing literature Researching/Reviewing research literature Writing and reviewing research articles	
ENTERPRISING Inventive Resourceful Leadership	**SCORE**	**SUPPORTIVE** Advising Instructing Cooperating	**SCORE**
Preparing and conceptualising grants Promoting and 'selling' your ideas Setting up new projects Thinking 'big picture' and having new ideas Coordinating/leading projects Technology transfer/IP opportunities Establishing new collaborators Freelance consultancy work Marketing and promoting research		Helping and supporting others Supervising/mentoring Teaching/tutoring Demonstrating in undergraduate practicals Liaising with people (eg colleagues, peers, collaborators, editors, students) Networking at conferences Being involved in/organising events that bring people together	
CREATIVE Artistic Imagination Design	**SCORE**	**ADMINISTRATIVE** Executive Management Organisation	**SCORE**
Imaginative data presentation Technical/research design innovation Artistic realisation (visual, performance etc) Popularising science to the public Creating imaginative designs Theatrical and dramatic presentation Writing press stories, media engagement Writing general interest science articles Blogging and other social media		Organising experimental schedules Keeping records of data and/or budgets Working to deadlines Managing finances Organising workload and prioritising tasks Serving on committees Writing reports Editing manuscripts Marking and assessing student essays	

Your Values

- More personal, **often ignored**, and subject to a variety of cultural, personal and family influences
- Mismatch between values/needs and actual job is often a source of job dissatisfaction and stress

- Intrinsic values: motivation and satisfaction
- Extrinsic values: physical environment, pay/benefits, and titles
- Lifestyle values: the intersection of work and life

Values Exercise

Take off sticker for a value that you must have in your job and place it on the back of the paper
Cross off any value you must NOT have in your job

It is likely you moved a ton of stickers! What are your top 3-5 you cannot live without.

Compare with a neighbor

ACTIVITY

There are Big Consequences for Ignoring This Self-Reflection

- The 90,000+ hours rule
- You can NOT get this from the web, from reading a book, or by asking others.
- Provides some rationale for exploring some jobs over others, but this is not proscriptive

So you have an idea, now what?

- The types of jobs available to individuals with a particular degree and experiences
- Details of the responsibilities and duties of the occupation or position
  - Specific job demands and tasks
  - Unspoken “rules of the trade”
- The qualifications and experiences needed to get the job
- Salary, typical benefits, perks, and advancement opportunities
- Down-sides, risks, and typical de-railers

More On Options

- Have expanded in some areas and contracted in others
  - See http://stemcareer.com/ for updated information in all STEM disciplines
- Some decision nodes:
  - Amount of schooling you are willing to consider
  - Amount of risk you are willing to accommodate
  - Your flexibility and ability to relocate, "climb the ladder" and tolerate work-life imbalance (at least temporarily)
  - Level of responsibility and independence you want in the long-term
- Exploration leading to a list of specific jobs and sector(s) you will target

Major Categories of STEM Career Options:

- Health care delivery/management
- Research and development
- Administration
- Education
- Policy
- Business
- Writing
- Law
- Consulting

Gaining Options Knowledge

- OITE website, blog and YouTube
- Read
  - Books
  - Blogs
  - Web sites
- Attend workshops
  - On campus
  - Local and national opportunities
- Talk with mentors, colleagues and friends
- See a career counselor in the OITE
- INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Informational Interviews

- Help prepare strong application
- A good way to find a career path or get info on a current job opening
- Allows insider information
  - Responsibilities and duties of an occupation or position
  - Salary, typical benefits, perks, and advancement opportunities
  - Down-sides, risks, and typical de-railers
  - The qualifications and experiences needed to get the job
- Are not a way to ask for a job!!

Four Areas

- Present
  - Tell me about your current position
- Past
  - How did you get into the field
- Future
  - Long term opportunities in the field
- Advice
  - Contacts, feedback, professional societies, insights into possible positions
  - Questions from your values exercise

Example 1

Dear Dr. XXX:

Dr. XXXX suggested I contact you because of your experience in science education. I am a fellow here at XXX and I am very interested in transitioning from my current position to one where I can use my communication and organizational skills to enhance science education at the undergraduate or graduate level. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you briefly to discuss your thoughts on how I might make this career transition. I am especially interested in your views regarding some potential volunteer experiences and differences you see in your staff who work with undergraduate vs. graduate students. I can meet at your convenience and greatly appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

The hard part: choosing

- It feels like you are stepping off a cliff…
  - But you never know unless you let yourself try.

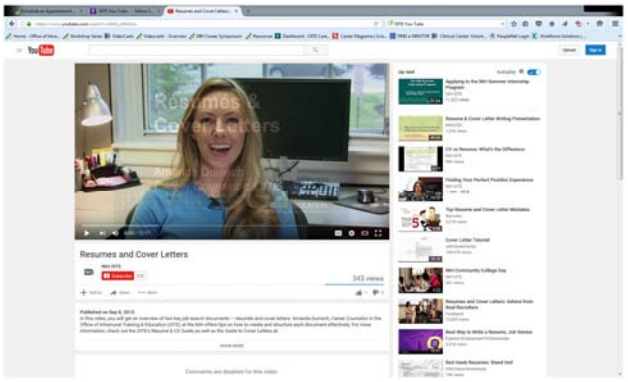
FYI—this is what a job search looks like!

	I'll send out some CVs and be hired in a month!	75 apps to all kinds of jobs!! Why no calls?	Resume - ✓ Network - ✓ Interview - ✓ Job - Not yet	I've got this, I see a job in my future!
	Enthusiastic Beginner	Disillusioned Learner	Cautious Performer	High Achiever
Competence	Low	Some	Moderate	High
Confidence	High	Low	Variable	High
Needs	Direction	Support	Support	Independence

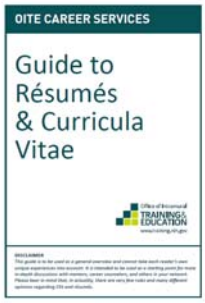
Adapted from Ken Blanchard, *Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager*

Resources

NIH OITE YouTube Channel
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQQHo_QnuBxdfcsRy4INGGw



More Resources – & Must Read Blogs



Our blog is chock-full of info

Resumes and CV:
https://oitecareersblog.wordpress.com/category/resumes-and-cvs/

Interviewing:
https://oitecareersblog.wordpress.com/category/interviewing/

Networking:
https://oitecareersblog.wordpress.com/category/networking/

Skills:
https://oitecareersblog.wordpress.com/2015/03/23/what-are-my-transferable-skills-3/

More resources

- Join our Listserv to get info while you are not at the NIH
  - Go to www.training.nih.gov to sign up.
- Connect with me on Linked-In and join the NIH Intramural Science Linked-In group
- Watch previous OITE career workshops, including many on CVs, resumes and cover letters
- Read the OITE Careers blog
- Join the OITE NIH Training Alumni database if you are/were a student or fellow here
- Email me at conlanlo@mail.nih.gov

Building Interview Opportunities

Lori M. Conlan, PhD
Director, Office of Postdoctoral Services

The Interview is a Two-way Street

- Interviewers want to learn about your skills and experience to decide if you are a fit for the position
- You can learn about the job, colleagues, workplace to decide if the position is a fit for you
- Be positive! Express interest in the job.

Key to Successful Interviewing is Effective Preparation

Prepare by:

1. Researching the job and company
2. Knowing the types of questions you'll be asked and interview format
3. Preparing your answers
4. Practicing your interview responses

Researching the Job and Company

- Employer's website
- Network – use LinkedIn, professional and alumni networks
- Library resources
- Current employees ***
- Other professionals in the field

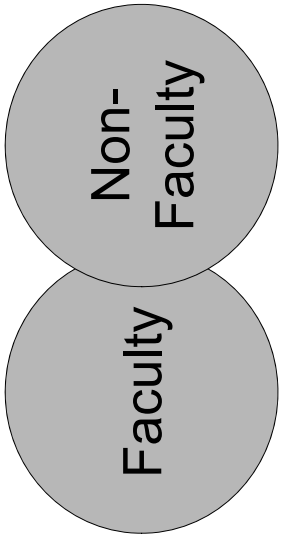
Understand Interview Formats

- One to one
- Panel
- Telephone
- Skype
- Recorded Video

Interviewing by Phone or Skype

- Land-line and find a quiet place
- Typically 30 - 45 minutes, anywhere from 1 - 3 interviewers
- Remember and use interviewers names
- Loss of facial and body language cues can be challenging
- Conversation will likely end with them asking you if you have questions

Interviews



- Start with a phone interview
- In person interview
  - easy vs. tough
- Total process: 1 month+

- Interviews start in early Spring
- Seeing more phone/skype interviews
- First interview: meet with faculty/students, talk/chalk-talk/teach
- Second interview: wooing
- Total process: months

Types of Questions

Traditional/Opportunity:
Tell me about yourself and your science.

Skill:
Specific to the science/job

Situations:
If this happened, what would you do?

Behavioral:
Tell me about a time…

Faculty:
Current/Future plans, teaching, how would you fit in.

Prepare for Opportunity Questions

- Tell me about yourself?
- Why are you interested in our company?
- What interests you most about this position?
- What do you know about our organization (products, services, research, departments) ?
- Strengths/Weaknesses?

Skill-Based Questions

- Science, communication and interpersonal
  - Tell me about this technique you used.
- “Tell me about your research”
- “How do you give feedback to teammates?”

Behavioral Questions

- Describe a time when you had difficulty working with a supervisor or co-worker in the past.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you sold your supervisor on an idea or concept.
- Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects.
- Tell me about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge your lab was facing.
- What recent scientific developments outside of your own field excite you and why?
- Do you prefer to champion one project or be spread across multiple projects?

Preparing Your Answers

- Develop examples that demonstrate how your skills and experience relate to the major job responsibilities
- Create answers that will highlight your strengths, be memorable, and set you apart from the rest
- Use the Situation-Action-Result technique

Situation-Action-Result technique

- Describe a **situation** or context, the challenge or problem to be solved
- Describe the **action** you took, what did you do.
- Describe the outcome or **result.**

Our graduate student symposium has been poorly attended over the last five years. As the 2010 symposium chair, I developed a marketing strategy targeted at increasing attendance. The results of my leadership was a 30% increase in attendance. My committee agreed the new marketing plan should be used in all of our future events.

Practice

Tell me about a time you had conflict with your boss.

1. Take a moment to write out a SAR
2. Practice "interviewing" in pairs

ACTIVITY

Preparing for Illegal Questions

- Age, race, national origin, gender, religion, marital status, children and sexual orientation are **off-limits**
- What do you do if you get one of these questions?
  - Freak out and get irate
  - Reframe the question to a legal answer
  - Ask why it matters

How Would You Navigate?

1. "Sokolove", that's an interesting name. Where does it come from?
2. Do you remember the original Bandstand? Am I correct that it originated in Pittsburgh?
3. I see that you list Little League as a volunteer activity. Does one of your children play?
4. Do you speak fluent Spanish?
5. Are you a U.S. citizen?
6. Will your child-care arrangements permit you to…?
7. Will you be able, occasionally, to work late or on weekends?
8. Do you drink socially?

ACTIVITY

PREPARE!!!!

- Understand travel and other logistics Read institution websites
- Research your interviewers
- Make lists of questions & resources you need to learn about
- Make an impression – clothes that are comfortable & neat. Do NOT get new shoes!
- Be prepared for all types of questions
- Practice your talk MANY TIMES
- Bring copies of your CV/resume

- Send a thank you note after the interview

More resources

- Join our Listserv to get info while you are not at the NIH
  - Go to www.training.nih.gov to sign up.
- Connect with me on Linked-In and join the NIH Intramural Science Linked-In group
- Watch previous OITE career workshops, including many on CVs, resumes and cover letters
- Read the OITE Careers blog
- Join the OITE NIH Training Alumni database if you are/were a student or fellow here
- Email me at conlanlo@mail.nih.gov

Office of Intramural TRAINING & EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Developing a Networking Map

Have a conversation

- Elevator Speech
  - Who you are, where you work, what you do, what you are looking for
- Open ended questions
- Have talking points ready
  - Recent events, weather, current science headlines, etc.
- Have a purpose, informational interviews

Now you can create your job search documents

- Resume
- Cover letter

What is a Résumé?

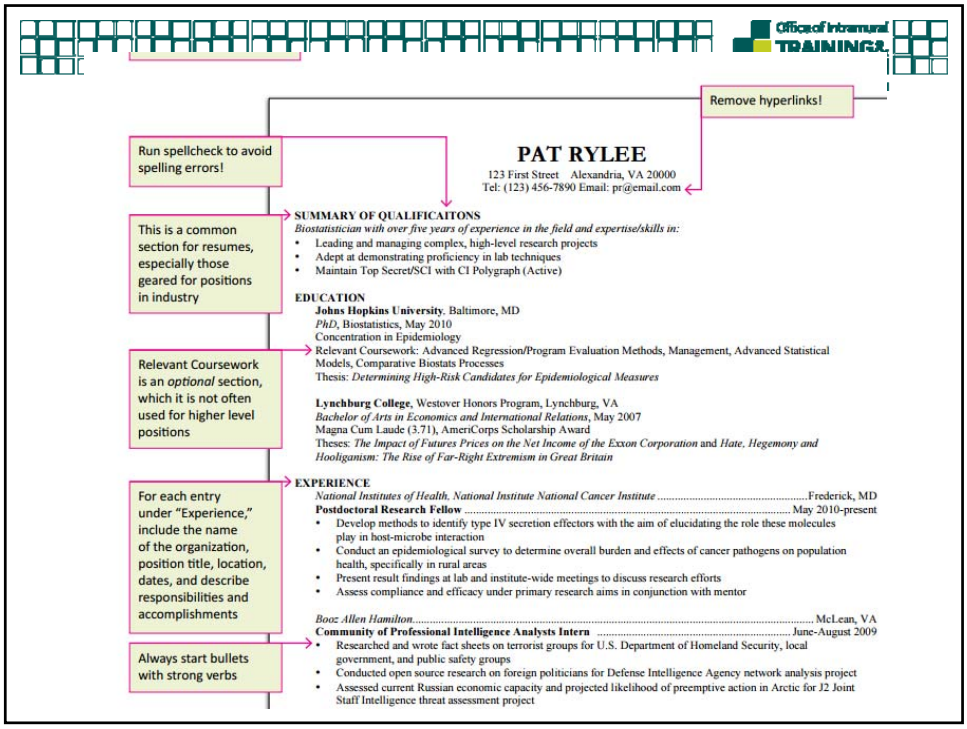
- A résumé is a job search document.
- A résumé presents relevant experience, accomplishments, and education.
- A résumé is short: generally 1 to 3 pages.
- Résumés often contain lists of skills or techniques.
- Résumés are adapted/edited for each job application or employment sector.
- A résumé is a marketing document.

Resume Components

- **ALWAYS ITEMS**
- Contact information
- Education
- Certifications/Licensures
- Research/Employment history
- Skills

* Not exhaustive; order can vary; section titles can be personalized

- **SOMETIMES ITEMS***
- Summary of Qualifications
- Teaching/Mentoring
- Leadership
- Honors and awards
- Service
- Memberships
- Grant support
- Relevant Coursework
- Major invited speeches
- Patents/Inventions
- Publications



New OITE Resumes and CV Guide

- Recommendations and tips
- Do's and Don'ts
- Accomplishment Memory Jogger Questions
- Lists of transferable action verbs
- Samples geared toward postbacs, graduate student and postdocs
- Ideas on how you can create and/or update your own documents

http://go.usa.gov/sBhz

Cover letters

- First Paragraph-
  - How you found the job
  - Basic info on yourself
- Second:
  - Why you are interested in position/employer
  - Why the employer does good work (homework)
  - How you best fit the position
- Third:
  - Interesting in interviewing
  - Follow-up
  - Thanks them for their consideration

- Homework on the To:
  - Note degree

- Dear Hiring Manager,
  - I saw your ad for a Product Manager/Developer: RNA Enzymes/PURE - 6071RG on the New England Biolabs website. I am currently a postdoctoral fellow in Marlene Belfort's lab at the Wadsworth Center, New York State Department of Health.
  - I have extensive experience in restriction enzyme biochemistry, and have had ongoing collaborations with scientists at NEB, including Paul Riggs. I am very familiar with the science at NEB, and am extremely impressed by not only the high quality products that the company produces but also with the academic atmosphere of the research and development centers. My specialty is in protein-nucleic acid interactions, with an emphasis in exploring enzyme mechanisms. As a postdoc I expanded my scientific skills to include RNA biology, including RNA purification and analysis. I have a strong background with high quality *in vitro* protein synthesis and purification, including media modifications and preparations of quantities needed for biophysical and structural characterizations. I excel in improving and developing research programs as seen by incorporation of novel techniques to examine DNA binding and cleavage by restriction enzymes and the use of new system to monitor the fidelity of the group II intro reverse transcriptase. I took a strong leadership role in the lab to ensure coordination of chemical inventory and ordering systems. I have excellent organizational skills as noted by completion of 8 peer reviewed papers with the participation of technicians and students that I supervised. Additionally, I have a strong attention to detail. My diverse background in DNA/RNA-protein biochemistry would be a terrific fit for this position.
  - I look forward to continuing this conversation in an interview. I will contact you by X date to follow up on this application. Please feel free to contact me at anytime, the best method is by email atgghhg. Thank you for your consideration.

Finally—the interview

- Ice breakers
  - "So, Tell me about yourself"
- Skill-based
  - "Tell me about your research"
  - "How do you give feedback to team-mates?"
- Behavioral
  - Identify character traits and motivations for seeking the job
  - to see if you are a "good" fit
  - "Strengths and Weaknesses"
  - "What excites/worries you about this job"
- Off-the-wall
  - What is your greatest passion?
  - How would your friends describe you?
  - If you had high school to do over again, what might you have done differently?

Preparing Your Answers

- Develop examples that demonstrate how your skills and experience relate to the major job responsibilities
- Use the Situation-Task-Action-Result
- STAR technique

Situation-Task-Action-Result Technique

1. Describe the **situation** or context.
2. Describe the **task**, challenge or problem to be solved.
3. Describe the **action** you took, what did you do.
4. Describe the outcome or **result.**