

Tell me about a challenge you faced.

STAR method: situation, task, your actions, result. A structure for any experience-based answer

Date started: _____

Learning Objective

By the end of this episode, you will be able to tell a structured challenge story using the STAR framework (Situation, Task, Action, Result) in 45-60 seconds.

How do you feel about this question right now, before the lesson?

Circle your confidence level (1 = nervous, 5 = confident):

Обведи рівень впевненості (1 = нервую, 5 = впевнений/а):



nervous



unsure



ok



good



confident

Key Words & Pronunciation

Word	Pronunciation	Translation	Definition	Stress Pattern
challenge	/ˈtʃælɪndʒ/	виклик, складне		CHAL·lenge
obstacle	UK /ˈɒbstəkl/ US /ˈɑːbstəkl/	перешкода	something that blocks progress and must be dealt with to move forward	OB·sta·cle
resilient	/rɪˈzɪliənt/	стійкий, здатний		re·SIL·ient
prioritise	UK /praɪˈɒrɪtaɪz/ US /praɪˈɔːrɪtaɪz/	розставляти пріоритети	to decide which tasks are most important and deal with them first	pri·OR·i·tise
deadline	/ˈdedlaɪn/	кінцевий термін,		DEAD·line

☐ Done

☐ Review

My notes · мої нотатки

Tell me about a challenge you faced.

STAR method: situation, task, your actions, result. A structure for any experience-based answer

Interview Crimes · What Not to Say

The question: "Tell me about a challenge you faced at work."

Crime 1 of 4

You say: "My biggest challenge was my previous manager. They were very disorganised and never gave clear instructions, which made everything difficult."

Interviewer thinks: "They blame others and have no self-awareness. If this person joins us and has a difficult colleague, will they just complain about that person too?"

Better: Choose a challenge you resolved through your own skill and judgment. External factors can be part of the context, but the story should be about what you did, not what others failed to do.

Crime 2 of 4

You say: "There was a difficult project once. It was hard for the whole team. We all worked a lot and tried our best but it was really stressful."

Interviewer thinks: "What exactly happened? What did they do? This tells me nothing I can evaluate. I have no idea how this person thinks or acts under pressure."

Better: Use the STAR structure. Without it, even a great story lands flat. Situation, Task, Action, Result. Each in one to two sentences. That is what gives the interviewer something to evaluate.

Crime 3 of 4

You say: "We had this challenge with the client... and then my colleague also had problems with the data... and then there were some technical issues... anyway, it eventually worked out."

Interviewer thinks: "I lost the thread after the second sentence. This candidate cannot structure their thinking even for a prepared answer. How will they present to a client?"

Better: Prepare one story and know it well. A structured, specific, 60-second answer sounds far more impressive than a rambling 3-minute one. Less is genuinely more here.

Crime 4 of 4

You say: "There were no real challenges. I always manage to handle things without major issues."

Interviewer thinks: "Either they have never worked under real pressure, or they have no self-awareness. Neither is reassuring."

Better: Every professional has faced a genuine challenge. Denying this signals either inexperience or a lack of reflection. Prepare a real example in advance. Ideally, have two or three so you can choose the most relevant one.

☐ Done

☐ Review

Tell me about a challenge you faced.

STAR method: situation, task, your actions, result. A structure for any experience-based answer

Model Answer · Read & Fill in the Gaps

Word Bank:

delayed

keep

losing

set up

prioritised

timeline

praised

"In my previous role, the product launch I was managing was _____ by three weeks due to a supplier issue. My task was to _____ the client informed without _____ their confidence.

I _____ daily status calls, _____ the two most critical fixes, and worked with the team to create a revised _____ the client could accept.

We delivered only five days after the original date, and the client _____ the communication throughout. What I took away was that transparency during a crisis builds more trust than silence."

☐ Done

☐ Review

Cultural Note

Candidates often either choose challenges that are actually failures without a resolution, or pick something trivially small to avoid looking negative. Neither works. The challenge should be real and significant enough to be worth telling. Your action and result should be clear. Interviewers are not looking for a perfect story; they are looking for evidence that you can handle pressure, think clearly, and learn from experience.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Situation. Task. Action. Result. Every behavioural question ("Tell me about a time...") is asking for exactly these four parts. Situation: one or two sentences of context. Task: your specific responsibility, not the team's. Action: what you decided and did. Spend the most time here: this is what interviewers are actually evaluating. Result: something concrete: a number, a deadline met, a problem resolved. Without a result, the story has no landing.

Check Your Understanding

1. What does STAR stand for?

2. Why is it a mistake to say "my manager was the main challenge"?

3. What makes a strong result in a STAR answer?

Tell me about a challenge you faced.

STAR method: situation, task, your actions, result. A structure for any experience-based answer

Phrase Flashcards

Phrase	IPA	Ukrainian	How to use
I faced a situation where...	/aɪ feɪst ə ˌsɪtʃuˈeɪʃən weər/	Я зіткнувся(лась) із ситуацією, де...	the STAR method opener. Sets the context professionally without dwelling on emotions. Focus on the situation.
My main responsibility was to...	/maɪ meɪn rɪˌspɒnsɪˈbɪlɪti wɒz tə/	Моєю головною відповідальністю було...	the Task step. Clarifies your personal role before describing actions. Helps the interviewer understand your individual contribution.
I decided to... because...	/aɪ dɪˈsaɪdɪd tə ... bɪˈkɒz/	Я вирішив(ла)... тому що...	the Action step with reasoning. The "because" is critical. It shows intentional decision-making, not just reactive behaviour.
As a result,...	/æz ə rɪˈzʌlt/	В результаті,...	signals the Result step. Follow with concrete outcomes: numbers, met deadlines, or preserved relationships.
What I took away from this was...	/wɒt aɪ tʊk əˈweɪ frəm ðɪs wɒz/	Що я виніс(ла) з цього, це...	optional but powerful closing. It demonstrates self-awareness and the ability to learn from professional challenges.

☐ Done ☐ Review

Answer Builder · Build Your Answer

Structure: STAR structure

S

Situation

What was the context? Set the scene in one or two sentences. Role, company, or project type is enough.

T

Task

What was specifically your responsibility in this situation? Be precise - not "we had to fix it" but "I was responsible for..."

A

Action

What did you do? Use "I" not "we". Show your thinking and your decisions, not just your effort.

R

Result

What happened? Be specific: a number, a deadline, a relationship, or a lesson. If you can add what you learned, that makes it stronger.

Tell me about a challenge you faced.

STAR method: situation, task, your actions, result. A structure for any experience-based answer

Grammar Practice · Past Simple & Past Continuous for storytelling

Fill in the gaps

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

While I _____ (manage) the project, a supplier _____ (contact) us to say they would be three weeks late. I immediately _____ (call) a team meeting. While we _____ (rewrite) the timeline, the client _____ (send) an email asking for an update.

Fill in the gaps

Complete the interview story with the correct verb forms.

"I _____ (just join) the company when the crisis _____ (hit). At the time, I _____ (still learn) the systems, so I _____ (ask) a senior colleague to guide me. Together we _____ (resolve) the issue within 48 hours."

☐ Done ☐ Review

How do you feel about this question now, after the lesson?

Circle your confidence level (1 = nervous, 5 = confident):

Обведи рівень впевненості (1 = нервую, 5 = впевнений/а):



nervous



unsure



ok



good



confident

Plan Your Next Episode

Plan Your Next Episode

When do you plan to do the next episode?

Date: _____

Words & phrases I want to remember · слова та фрази, які хочу запам'ятати

Answer Key

Model Answer - fill in the gaps:

1. delayed 2. keep 3. losing 4. set up 5. prioritised
6. timeline 7. praised

Check Your Understanding:

1. What does STAR stand for?

Situation, Task, Action, Result. A structured framework for answering behavioural interview questions. It helps you give a complete, clear answer without rambling or losing the thread.

2. Why is it a mistake to say "my manager was the main challenge"?

It shifts focus onto conflict with other people rather than professional problem-solving. It raises concerns about your ability to work with others. Challenges that you resolved through your own thinking and actions are far more convincing.

3. What makes a strong result in a STAR answer?

A concrete, specific outcome: a number, a deadline met, a relationship saved, a cost reduced. Vague results like "it went better" do not give the interviewer anything to evaluate. Even a small, measurable result is far more convincing than a large, unmeasurable one.

Grammar Practice:

Exercise 1:

1. was managing 2. contacted 3. called 4. were rewriting 5. sent

Exercise 2:

1. had just joined 2. hit 3. was still learning 4. asked 5. resolved

What to review before the interview · що повторити перед співбесідою