

The STAR Method



For the **EPA Professional Discussion underpinned by portfolio assessment (AE2)**, you don't need to use the **STAR method**, as long as you apply consistency across all items in your portfolio. However, when you search online for advice on presentations, interviews, discussions, or preparing for a **Professional Discussion in an apprenticeship EPA**, you'll often see recommendations to use the **STAR method**.

It's also a useful approach in other parts of your apprenticeship and in the workplace. You'll find that the guidance and support documents for this assessment element include an example that uses the **STAR method** structure.

When you're asked to describe something, you've done in your past work, we're not just looking for a quick answer—we're hoping to hear a complete story. A strong response gives us insight into how you think, act, and problem-solve. It should include:

Context – What was going on, and what was your role?

Task – What were you trying to accomplish?

Actions – What did you specifically do to move things forward?

Outcome – How did it turn out? What did you learn?

We don't expect perfect answers or rehearsed scripts. In fact, it's the assessor or interviewer's job to help guide the conversation and get the details they need. But if you come in with an understanding of the kind of information we're looking for, it can help the conversation flow more naturally.

The **STAR method** is a useful tool to help you organise your thoughts and tell a story that highlights your strengths.

S = SITUATION - Start by setting the scene. What was going on? Where were you working (or studying or volunteering), and what were you trying to tackle? Give just enough background so we understand the big picture and what made the situation interesting or challenging.

T = TASK - What was your goal? What were you responsible for? This helps us understand your role and what you were trying to achieve.

A = ACTION - Walk us through what you did. What steps did you take? How did you approach the challenge? Be sure to focus on your individual contributions—even if you were working on a team. It's helpful to use "I" instead of "we."

R = RESULT - How did things turn out? What happened because of your actions? Don't be shy—share what you accomplished and what you learned. If you have any numbers or specific outcomes to back it up, even better.

Frame your answers in relation to the [Leadership Principles](#). And remember, not every story has to be a success. We know that failure is part of innovation. What matters is what you learned and how you grew.

Tips for using STAR:

- Keep each section concise but detailed enough to convey impact.
- Use real, recent examples relevant to the role or competency being assessed.
- For **distinction-level** responses (e.g., in apprenticeships or interviews), emphasise initiative, problem-solving, and measurable results.

AMAZON, 2025. *Interview Loop - The STAR method* [viewed 30 July 2025]. Available from: <https://amazon.jobs/content/en/how-we-hire/interview-loop>