

H-YOU

COLLECT YOUR STATEMENTS

In this exercise, you will power up your self-awareness by drafting short story statements that show how you employed your skills in different situations. You can use these in application letters or when verbally expressing your experiences, for example, during application interviews, but also in more informal situations.

Duration: 30 minutes

Goal: Learn to illustrate your skills for application letters or crucial conversations such as job interviews

Who: Individual

Steps

1. Write down three **skills** you are quite confident about and think could be of value in your future career journey. Need inspiration?
 - Have a look at your humanities skill profile report and pick a role category or a specific skill statement to start with (create one if you still need to).
 - You can also look around some open job advertisements that interest you to see what skills are expected from applicants.
 - Do not worry if you do not have all the skills mentioned in the vacancy. For now, the goal is not to fit this vacancy but to find inspiration for specific skills that click with you.*
2. For each of the skills, you are going to write down a **statement** that illustrates you employed this skill with a positive outcome in the past. You can see this as proof to show you have some successful experiences.
3. We will be making use of **the STAR method**, which is a well-known method used for application letters as well as during job interviews (see The STAR technique below).
4. For each skill, come up with a real situation where you used your skill to drive a situation, such as an issue or a project, in a certain direction. Write down a few words per skill now so you remember the situation.
5. Describe each skill's S, T, A, and R components and make it a coherent whole according to the explanation and examples below.
6. Make sure to answer the reflection questions.

* Hint: many vacancies mention skills that the company would like to see in applicants in a utopian world. However, the posted skill sets are often far from realistic, and it can very well be that the hired person only possesses some of the described skills. So do not hesitate to apply even if you do not tick all the boxes.

The STAR technique

Use the following four different components to write a statement of evidence for your skill:

- **Situation:** give the background that will help provide context, i.e., title, organization, department, project, and timeframe.
- **Task:** describe what was expected or asked of you in terms of responsibilities OR the challenges or obstacles you had to overcome.
- **Action:** detail the steps you took to handle the tasks or address the obstacle.
- **Result:** what impact did you have on the situation? What was the outcome, or what did you learn? Quantify or qualify your results if you can. (E.g., Initiated a neighborhood community evening that was attended by more than half the dormitory residents, far exceeding expectations)

Review what you wrote and improve. Reading it out loud can help to detect some issues.

Tips:

- Try to make it very concrete, but keep it short.
- Use the examples to understand the format better, and feel free to look up some more examples on the internet.
- If you cannot come up with situations that showcase your skills, ask for ideas from people who know you.
- You can draw from all experiences you have. It is nice if you have relevant work-related situations to refer to, but experiences from your studies and personal life can also work.
- Remember, you can see this as an exercise to better prepare for the future.

Examples

[S] While working as a restocker last summer in my local supermarket. [T] I was asked to develop ideas to improve our stock-taking system as we often have low and high stocks. [A] I looked at factors such as when the stock was last ordered, what it was used for and how often it was used. I worked out a method of streamlining the communication between different shop employees involved in this process and redesigned the relevant forms, which I then submitted to my manager. [R] My ideas were accepted and implemented, and a 10% reduction in stock levels was achieved.

[S] This past summer, I was a Teaching and Residential Faculty Intern at Philip Exeter's Summer Academy. [T] I had the assignment of co-teaching a Neuropsychology course – a subject I knew absolutely nothing about. Taking the challenge head-on, [A] I worked with my co-teacher to develop a method of teaching where she taught basic concepts while I researched and shared the ways the concepts applied in the real world. For example, I found an engaging article about scientists who successfully implanted false memories in mice. I divided the students into two groups and had them debate the pros, cons, and future implications. [R] By having the students focus on the ethical side of the subject, I kept all of them actively participating and excited about the complex subject of Neuropsychology. I fully plan to bring this innovative way of thinking to any collaborative work with my peers as we strive to improve the products produced by Curriculum Associates, Inc.

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