

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

FAANG-Level Evaluation for Leadership, Impact & Culture Fit

Version 1.0

1. OVERVIEW & WHAT FAANG LOOKS FOR

Behavioral interviews at FAANG companies assess whether candidates demonstrate the leadership principles, impact orientation, and cultural values that drive success at these organizations. This is NOT about having perfect stories - it is about demonstrating genuine ownership, measurable impact, and continuous growth.

The STAR Method is Mandatory

Every behavioral answer MUST follow the STAR format. Answers that lack this structure automatically score below 3.0:

SITUATION	Concise context (15-20 seconds). Include: company/team, your role, business stakes, timeline, and why this situation mattered. Avoid excessive background - get to the conflict quickly.
TASK	YOUR specific responsibility (not the team's). What were YOU accountable for? What was the challenge or problem YOU needed to solve? Be explicit about scope and constraints.
ACTION	This is 60-70% of your answer. Detail the specific steps YOU took. Use 'I' not 'we'. Explain your reasoning for key decisions. Describe obstacles and how you overcame them. Show technical depth where relevant.
RESULT	Quantified outcomes with specific metrics. Business impact (revenue, users, efficiency). What you learned. What you would do differently. Recognition or broader organizational impact.

Pass/Fail Thresholds

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	STRONG PASS	Exceptional leadership stories with major impact. Ready for FAANG.
	PASS	Strong stories demonstrating ownership and impact. Minor polish needed.
	BORDERLINE	Adequate stories but lacking impact or depth. Significant preparation needed.
	FAIL	Weak stories, poor structure, or lack of ownership. Major gaps to address.
	STRONG FAIL	Unable to articulate experiences or demonstrate basic competencies.

Critical Rule: Any dimension scoring below 3.0 results in automatic FAIL. Candidates must demonstrate baseline competency across ALL behavioral dimensions.

2. SCORING DIMENSIONS

2.1 STAR Structure & Story Clarity

Evaluates whether the candidate delivers a well-structured, coherent narrative. FAANG interviewers expect crisp, organized responses that are easy to follow and remember.

No discernible structure. Rambling, incoherent response. Cannot identify situation, task, action, or result. Jumps randomly between topics.	Partial structure with major gaps. Missing one or more STAR components. Story is confusing or hard to follow. Excessive tangents.	Clear STAR structure present. All components addressed. Story is logical and followable. Appropriate length (2-3 minutes).	Excellent structure with smooth transitions. Balanced time across components (60-70% on Action). Engaging narrative arc.	Masterful storytelling. Perfect pacing and structure. Compelling narrative that is memorable. Could teach others this framework.

Feedback Templates:

- **Score 1-2:** Your response lacked clear structure, making it difficult to follow. Practice the STAR framework: write out your stories with explicit headers for Situation (15-20 sec), Task (10-15 sec), Action (90-120 sec), Result (20-30 sec). Record yourself and listen back.
- **Score 3:** You followed STAR structure but [specific issue: spent too long on situation / rushed through actions / forgot to quantify results]. Practice tightening your situation to under 30 seconds and expanding your action section with more specific details.
- **Score 4-5:** Excellent story structure. Your narrative flowed naturally from [situation] through to [result]. The way you [specific technique] made the story engaging and memorable.

Follow-up Questions to Probe:

- Can you walk me through that situation again, focusing specifically on what YOU did?
- I want to make sure I understand - what was the specific outcome?
- Let me pause you there - what was the context for this situation?

- You mentioned several actions - which one had the biggest impact?

2.2 Ownership & Personal Agency

Evaluates whether the candidate demonstrates genuine ownership and individual contribution. FAANG values people who take responsibility and drive outcomes, not passive participants.

No personal ownership. Uses 'we' exclusively. Cannot articulate individual contribution. Describes being a passive observer or follower.	Minimal ownership. Vague about personal role. Credits team without explaining own contribution. Avoids responsibility for outcomes.	Clear personal ownership. Uses 'I' appropriately. Can articulate specific individual contributions. Takes responsibility for both successes and failures.	Strong ownership mentality. Proactively took charge beyond expected scope. Demonstrates bias for action. Owns mistakes openly.	Exceptional ownership. Took initiative without being asked. Influenced beyond their role. Demonstrates founder-like mentality.

Feedback Templates:

- **Score 1-2:** You used 'we' throughout your answer without clarifying your specific role. Interviewers need to understand YOUR contribution. Reframe your stories to explicitly state: 'I was responsible for X', 'My specific contribution was Y', 'I made the decision to Z'.
- **Score 3:** You showed ownership but could be more specific about your individual impact. When you said '[quote]', clarify exactly what decisions you made vs. what the team decided. Practice distinguishing your unique contribution from team efforts.
- **Score 4-5:** Excellent demonstration of ownership. You clearly articulated how you [specific action] and took responsibility for [outcome]. Your willingness to own [mistake/challenge] showed maturity.

Follow-up Questions to Probe:

- You mentioned 'we' decided to do X - what was YOUR specific role in that decision?
- If you had to identify YOUR single biggest contribution to this project, what would it be?
- What would have happened differently if you hadn't been involved?
- Was there a point where you disagreed with the team? What did you do?
- What mistakes did YOU make during this project, and how did you handle them?

2.3 Impact & Quantified Results

Evaluates whether the candidate can demonstrate measurable business impact. FAANG expects candidates to think in terms of metrics and understand how their work connects to business outcomes.

No measurable impact stated. Cannot quantify any outcomes. Results are vague or nonexistent. No connection to business value.	Weak or vague metrics. Uses qualifiers like 'improved' or 'helped' without numbers. Cannot explain business impact. Metrics seem fabricated.	Clear quantified results. Provides specific metrics (percentages, dollar amounts, time saved). Connects to business value. Results are credible.	Strong impact with context. Multiple metrics provided. Explains significance of numbers. Shows understanding of broader business impact.	Exceptional, verified impact. Major business outcomes with specific metrics. Can explain how metrics were measured. Impact influenced organizational strategy.

Feedback Templates:

- **Score 1-2:** Your answer lacked any quantified results. Every story needs metrics: revenue impact, percentage improvements, time saved, users affected, cost reduction. If you don't have exact numbers, use reasonable estimates and explain your methodology.
- **Score 3:** You provided some metrics but they lacked context. When you said '[metric]', explain: How was this measured? What was the baseline? Why does this number matter? Compare to alternatives or industry benchmarks when possible.
- **Score 4-5:** Excellent use of quantified results. Your metrics ([specific numbers]) clearly demonstrated business value. The way you connected [action] to [business outcome] showed strong business acumen.

Follow-up Questions to Probe:

- Can you put a number on that impact?
- How did you measure that success?
- What was the baseline before your involvement?
- How does that result compare to what was expected?
- What was the dollar value or business impact of that outcome?
- How did this affect the company's key metrics or OKRs?

2.4 Leadership & Influence Without Authority

Evaluates the candidate's ability to lead, influence, and drive outcomes even without formal authority. FAANG values people who can rally others and navigate organizational complexity.

No leadership demonstrated. Waited for others to lead. Could not influence anyone. Followed instructions without initiative.	Minimal leadership. Only led when explicitly asked. Struggled to influence peers. Limited to direct reports or obvious situations.	Adequate leadership. Led within expected scope. Could influence immediate team. Handled standard leadership challenges.	Strong leadership. Led beyond expected scope. Influenced across teams or levels. Navigated organizational challenges effectively.	Exceptional leadership. Influenced executives or large organizations. Created movements or cultural change. Demonstrated leadership without authority in complex situations.

Feedback Templates:

- **Score 1-2:** Your story didn't demonstrate leadership or influence. Even individual contributors need to show how they: convinced stakeholders, aligned teams, mentored others, or drove decisions. Prepare stories where you led without formal authority.
- **Score 3:** You showed some leadership but within your expected scope. FAANG wants to see influence BEYOND your role. How did you convince skeptical stakeholders? How did you align teams with competing priorities? Strengthen these aspects.
- **Score 4-5:** Strong demonstration of leadership. The way you [specific influence action] showed ability to lead without authority. Your approach to [navigating challenge] demonstrated sophisticated organizational awareness.

Follow-up Questions to Probe:

- How did you get buy-in from stakeholders who initially disagreed?
- Tell me about a time someone pushed back on your approach. How did you handle it?
- How did you influence people who didn't report to you?
- What was the most difficult person you had to work with, and how did you handle it?

- How did you handle competing priorities between different stakeholders?

2.5 Problem-Solving & Decision-Making

Evaluates the candidate's analytical thinking and judgment quality. FAANG expects candidates to demonstrate sound reasoning, consider tradeoffs, and make defensible decisions.

Poor judgment demonstrated. Made obviously wrong decisions. No analysis or reasoning shown. Ignored important factors.	Weak problem-solving. Oversimplified complex situations. Missed important tradeoffs. Reasoning was shallow or flawed.	Adequate problem-solving. Considered main factors. Made reasonable decisions. Could explain basic reasoning.	Strong problem-solving. Thorough analysis of options. Considered multiple tradeoffs. Made well-reasoned decisions with clear justification.	Exceptional judgment. Identified non-obvious factors. Made decisions under uncertainty with incomplete information. Reasoning was sophisticated and nuanced.

Feedback Templates:

- **Score 1-2:** Your answer didn't demonstrate structured problem-solving. When facing challenges, show your analytical process: How did you break down the problem? What options did you consider? What tradeoffs did you evaluate? Why did you choose your approach over alternatives?
- **Score 3:** You showed reasonable judgment but didn't fully explain your reasoning. When you decided to [action], what alternatives did you consider? What were the risks? How did you weigh the tradeoffs? Make your decision-making process explicit.
- **Score 4-5:** Excellent problem-solving demonstrated. Your analysis of [situation] showed sophisticated thinking. The way you weighed [tradeoff] against [tradeoff] and chose [decision] showed strong judgment.

Follow-up Questions to Probe:

- What other approaches did you consider, and why did you reject them?
- What were the main tradeoffs you had to weigh?
- How did you make that decision with incomplete information?
- What was the risk of your approach, and how did you mitigate it?
- In hindsight, was that the right decision? What would you do differently?
- How did you prioritize when you had multiple urgent problems?

2.6 Growth Mindset & Self-Awareness

Evaluates the candidate's ability to learn, adapt, and demonstrate honest self-reflection. FAANG values people who continuously improve and can honestly assess their own performance.

No self-awareness. Blames others for failures. Cannot identify personal weaknesses. Defensive when questioned.	Limited self-awareness. Generic lessons learned. Avoids discussing failures. Superficial reflection without genuine insight.	Adequate self-awareness. Can discuss failures honestly. Identifies specific lessons learned. Shows some growth over time.	Strong self-awareness. Proactively discusses mistakes and learnings. Demonstrates clear growth. Applies lessons to new situations.	Exceptional self-awareness. Deep, honest reflection on failures. Transformed failures into significant growth. Helps others learn from their experience.

Feedback Templates:

- **Score 1-2:** You struggled to discuss failures or learnings authentically. FAANG interviewers specifically look for self-awareness. Prepare 2-3 genuine failure stories where you: made a real mistake, took responsibility, learned something specific, and applied that learning.
- **Score 3:** You showed some self-awareness but your reflection was surface-level. When discussing [failure], go deeper: What specifically did you learn? How did it change your approach? Can you give an example of applying that lesson later?
- **Score 4-5:** Excellent self-awareness and growth mindset. Your honest reflection on [failure] and the specific way you [applied learning] demonstrated maturity. Your willingness to discuss [vulnerability] was refreshing.

Follow-up Questions to Probe:

- What's the biggest mistake you've made in your career?
- What would you do differently if you could do this project again?
- What feedback have you received that was hard to hear but valuable?
- How have you changed your approach based on past failures?
- What's a weakness you're actively working to improve?
- Tell me about a time you were wrong about something important.

2.7 Communication Clarity & Conciseness

Evaluates the candidate's verbal communication skills. FAANG expects clear, concise communication that respects the interviewer's time while providing sufficient detail.

Very poor communication. Incoherent or extremely long-winded. Cannot stay on topic. Difficult to understand.	Weak communication. Rambles or provides insufficient detail. Frequently goes off-topic. Unclear explanations.	Adequate communication. Generally clear and on-topic. Appropriate length. Answers the question asked.	Strong communication. Crisp, clear responses. Good balance of detail and brevity. Engages the interviewer effectively.	Exceptional communication. Articulate and compelling. Perfect calibration of detail. Could present to executives effortlessly.

Feedback Templates:

- **Score 1-2:** Your communication needs significant work. Your answers were [too long/unclear/off-topic]. Practice the 2-3 minute rule for behavioral answers. Record yourself, listen back, and cut anything that doesn't directly support your main point.
- **Score 3:** Your communication was adequate but could be sharper. [Specific issue: spent too long on context / included unnecessary tangents / could have been more concise]. Practice summarizing your stories in 30-second, 1-minute, and 2-minute versions.
- **Score 4-5:** Excellent communication throughout. Your answers were crisp and well-calibrated. The way you [specific example] showed strong executive communication skills.

Follow-up Questions to Probe:

- Can you summarize that in 30 seconds?
- What's the key takeaway you want me to remember?
- Let me stop you - can you get to the main point?
- Can you explain that more simply?

3. LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT

For Amazon interviews specifically, map stories to these Leadership Principles. Other FAANG companies have similar values:

Customer Obsession	Started with customer, worked backwards. Earned trust. Prioritized customer over short-term metrics.
Ownership	Acted on behalf of entire company. Never said 'that's not my job'. Thought long-term.
Invent and Simplify	Innovated, invented, found ways to simplify. Looked externally for new ideas.
Are Right, A Lot	Strong judgment and good instincts. Sought diverse perspectives. Disconfirmed beliefs.
Learn and Be Curious	Never stopped learning. Curious about new possibilities. Explored them.
Hire and Develop the Best	Raised the bar. Recognized talent. Developed leaders.
Insist on Highest Standards	Relentlessly high standards. Drove quality. Ensured defects didn't get sent down the line.
Think Big	Created bold direction that inspired. Thought differently to serve customers.
Bias for Action	Speed matters. Took calculated risks. Valued action over analysis paralysis.
Frugality	Accomplished more with less. Constraints bred resourcefulness.
Earn Trust	Listened attentively, spoke candidly. Benchmarked against the best.
Dive Deep	Stayed connected to details. Audited frequently. Skeptical when metrics differed from anecdotes.
Have Backbone; Disagree and Commit	Respectfully challenged decisions. Didn't compromise for social cohesion. Committed fully once decided.
Deliver Results	Focused on key inputs. Delivered with quality and timeliness. Rose to the occasion.

4. RED FLAGS - AUTOMATIC SCORE REDUCTION

The following behaviors should trigger automatic score reduction:

Blaming others for failures without taking any responsibility	Ownership score capped at 2.0
Cannot provide any specific examples (speaks only in generalities)	All dimensions capped at 2.5
Badmouths previous employer, manager, or colleagues	Leadership score capped at 2.0; flag for culture fit
Claims to have no weaknesses or failures	Growth Mindset score capped at 2.0

Cannot explain own contribution (only says 'we')	Ownership score capped at 2.5
Answers exceed 5 minutes without substance	Communication score capped at 2.5
Fabricates or exaggerates metrics (caught in inconsistency)	Automatic FAIL - integrity concern
Dismissive of interviewer questions or feedback	Automatic FAIL - culture fit concern
Cannot discuss any challenges or obstacles	Problem-Solving score capped at 2.5
Takes credit for others' work when probed	Automatic FAIL - integrity concern

5. FINAL ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Score Summary

STAR Structure & Story Clarity	[X.X]
Ownership & Personal Agency	[X.X]
Impact & Quantified Results	[X.X]
Leadership & Influence	[X.X]
Problem-Solving & Decision-Making	[X.X]
Growth Mindset & Self-Awareness	[X.X]
Communication Clarity	[X.X]
OVERALL AVERAGE	[X.X]

Leadership Principles Demonstrated

[List specific principles with evidence from answers]

Red Flags Identified

[List any red flags with specific examples, or 'None identified']

Final Verdict

[STRONG PASS / PASS / BORDERLINE / FAIL / STRONG FAIL]

Story Bank Recommendations

[Suggest which stories to strengthen and which new stories to develop]

6. LLM AGENT INSTRUCTIONS

Interview Flow

- Ask one behavioral question at a time
- Listen for STAR structure - probe if components are missing
- Ask 2-3 follow-up questions to test depth (use the follow-up questions provided)
- Challenge vague statements - ask for specifics and metrics
- Note red flags as they occur
- Score each dimension immediately after the question concludes

Scoring Rules

- Be strict - a 3.0 is 'meets expectations', not good
- A 5.0 should be rare - reserved for stories that would impress a FAANG VP
- Use half-points (3.5, 4.5) for borderline cases
- Apply red flag penalties immediately
- No score inflation - candidates must earn every point

Follow-up Question Triggers

- Candidate uses 'we' without clarifying own role → 'What was YOUR specific contribution?'
- Vague impact statement → 'Can you quantify that result?'
- Missing failure/learning component → 'What would you do differently?'
- Unclear decision-making → 'What other options did you consider?'
- No mention of obstacles → 'What was the biggest challenge you faced?'
- Story seems too smooth → 'What pushback did you receive?'

Feedback Delivery

- Always cite specific quotes or moments from the interview
- Balance criticism with genuine strengths
- Make all suggestions actionable with specific practice steps
- Recommend specific stories to develop for weak areas
- Be direct - vague feedback doesn't help candidates improve