<InfPALS/>

Internship Prep: Behavioural Interviews

InfPALS Week 8

Agenda

> Introduction to Behavioural Interviews

> What could come up

> The STAR method

> Top Tips

> Preparation Resources

> Mock Interview Practice

What is a behavioural interview?

> **Part of the application process for most CS internships**
> - Along with a CV check and technical interviews
> - Screens for a "fit" with the company values and previous experience

> **30-90 minutes with a recruiter/software engineer at the company**

> Typically your interviewer wants to know your:
> - Past experience
> - Personality
> - Motivations for applying for the job
> - How you approach and solve problems
> - … and overall if they think you and the team would work together

What could come up?

> ## Past Experience
> ○ The recruiter will likely ask about a past internship, work experience, or project that you have written about in your CV or cover letter

> ## Personality
> ○ Every company has a different vision of the intern they are looking for
> ○ Be true to yourself and let your personality shine!
> ○ At all times, make sure you are friendly and polite

What could come up ... continued

> ## Your motivations for applying for the job
> - Essentially, why you want to work for this company
> - Make sure you have researched the company values and can give an example of how you relate to them
> - Chat about anything from meeting people, to solving interesting problems, to the company itself
> - Make sure you have read the job posting to mention a particular feature of the internship or a technology you are interested in learning!

> ## What you are looking for in an internship
> - A common question asked at the end of the interview
> - This is your chance to let the recruiter know how they could shape your internship experience
> - Be honest and chat about particular methodologies and projects you would enjoy working on!
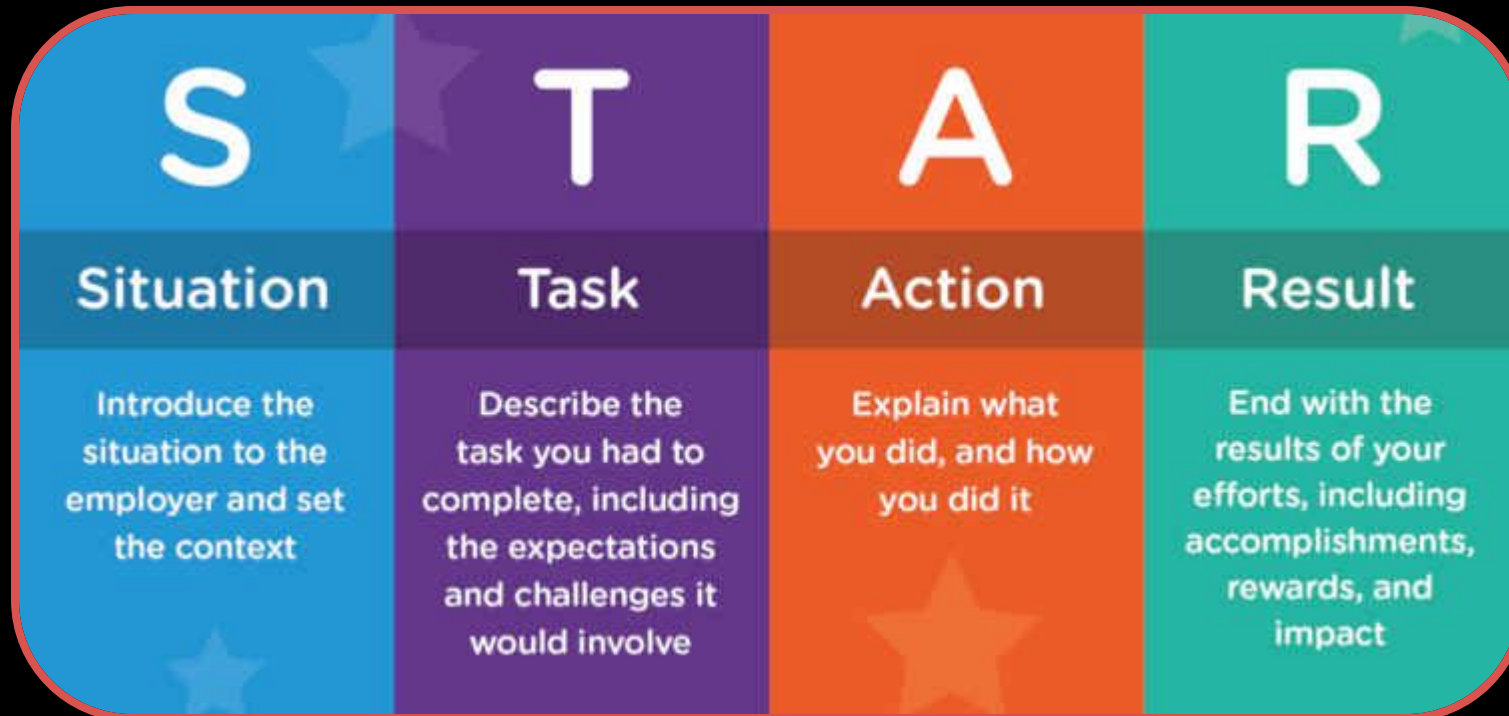
<InfPALS/>

The STAR Method

What is STAR

> An answer structure template commonly used to answer behavioural interview questions about your past experiences

S — **Situation** — Introduce the situation to the employer and set the context

T — **Task** — Describe the task you had to complete, including the expectations and challenges it would involve

A — **Action** — Explain what you did, and how you did it

R — **Result** — End with the results of your efforts, including accomplishments, rewards, and impact

<InfPALS/>

Questions to use STAR with

> What was the most difficult bug that you fixed in the past 6 months?

> Tell me about a time you had a disagreement with your manager.

> Tell me about a time you met a tight deadline.

See how all of these questions are based on a Situation?

The answer structure should be: Situation, Task, Action, Result

<InfPALS/>

Top Tips

<InfPALS/>

Be Prepared

> **Research the company**

  ○ **Especially the "Company Values" page**

  ○ **Make sure you know what the interns work on and you are passionate about it!**

> **Make sure you have looked at all preparation resources sent to you**

> **Know how you will introduce yourself - 90% of the time an interview will start with the question "Tell me about yourself"**

Be Honest

> When speaking about past experience, make sure you are using "I" instead of "we" when this was something you did

> Stick to speaking about your own contributions

> When asked for questions about your conflicts or weaknesses, choose something realistic but also take the opportunity to highlight how you are battling this and end on a positive note!

<InfPALS/>

Ask Questions!

> There will almost always be an opportunity at the end for you to ask the interviewer questions

> Take this chance to show a genuine interest in the company!

> Ask the interviewer anything you are interested in, such as their day-to-day life, favourite company project, or what the company culture and people are like

○ Don't be shy, the interviewer is always more than happy to see you display and interest

○ Don't ask about anything too personal, controversial, or private in the company

<InfPALS/>

Best preparation resources

<InfPALS/>

https://www.techinterviewhandbook.org/
- Contains guides and articles on preparing for all stages of Computer Science interviews
- Particularly useful article "The 30 most common Software Engineer behavioral interview questions"

https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice/the-star-method
- Gov.uk resource giving some question-answer examples following the STAR method

<InfPALS/>

Cracking the Coding Interview

- An iconic book by an experienced software engineer and interviewer
- Goes over both technical and behavioral topics
- Lots of practise questions and examples!
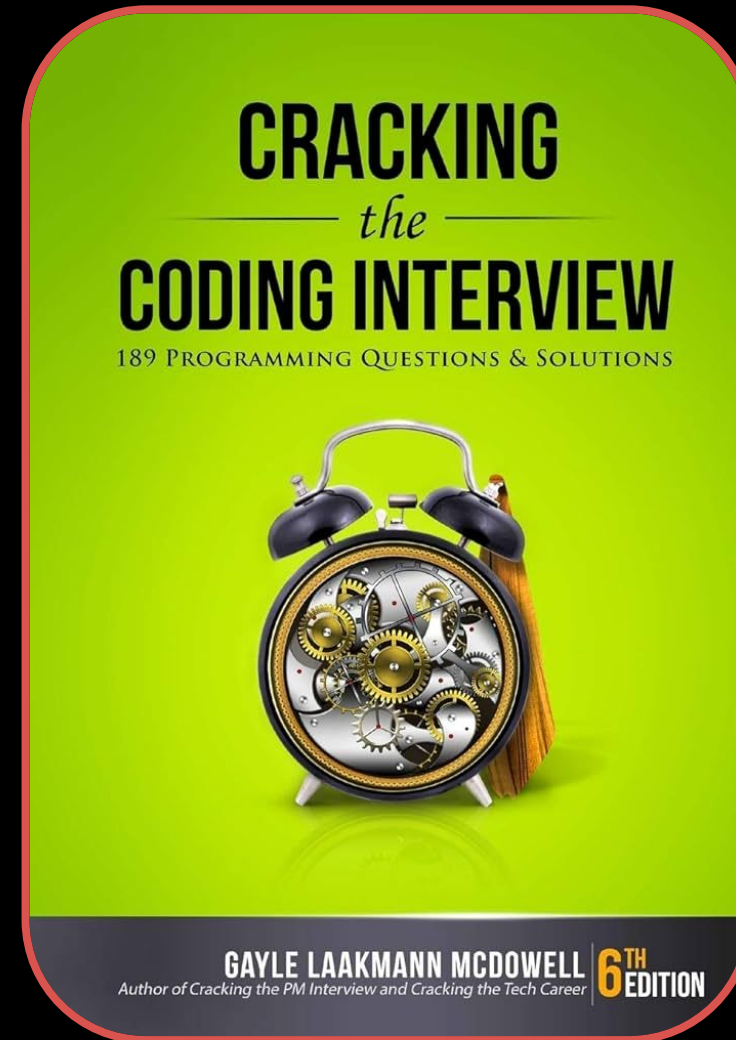
Time to practise!

The Leaders will split you into small mock interview groups.
Take turns to peer review each other and give feedback!

Mock Interview 1:
Warm-up – "Tell me about yourself"
Non-technical – "Describe a situation where you were faced with a challenge or Conflict. How did you overcome it?"
Technical – "Tell me about a technical project you've worked on" (could be at university, school, etc.)

Mock Interview 2:
Warm-up – "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"
Non-technical – "Imagine you've been at the company for 1-2 years and a new employee approaches you to ask if you could tell them more about the technologies used in the project you're working on. How do you respond?"
Technical – "Describe an important bug you had in a project and what your process was to fix it."

Mock Interview 3:
Warm-up – "What are your hobbies?"
Non-technical – "Tell me about a time you made a mistake. What was it? And what did you do to correct it?"
Technical – "What programming languages do you know best? Tell me some benefits and drawbacks of these languages".

Any questions?

Feel free to ask the leaders questions!