

UNIT 5

Advanced interview techniques

- Handling competency-based questions
- Demonstrating your skills
- Talking about your weaknesses
- Asking questions of your own
- Dealing with telephone interviews



Handling competency-based questions

Competencies are a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviour required to do a specific job.

1 a In pairs, ask and answer one of the following interview questions.

- 1 Tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult decision.
- 2 Tell me about a time when you demonstrated good customer service.
- 3 Tell me about a time when you showed strong leadership skills.
- 4 Tell me about a time when you played an important role in a team.
- 5 Tell me about a time when you experienced pressure at university or at work.

b ►5.1 Listen to three people each answering one of the questions in Exercise 1a successfully. Identify which question each speaker is answering.

Speaker 1 _____ Speaker 2 _____ Speaker 3 _____

c In pairs, discuss how you think each story ends. What would be an impressive conclusion to each story, to really demonstrate that the speaker possesses the necessary competency?

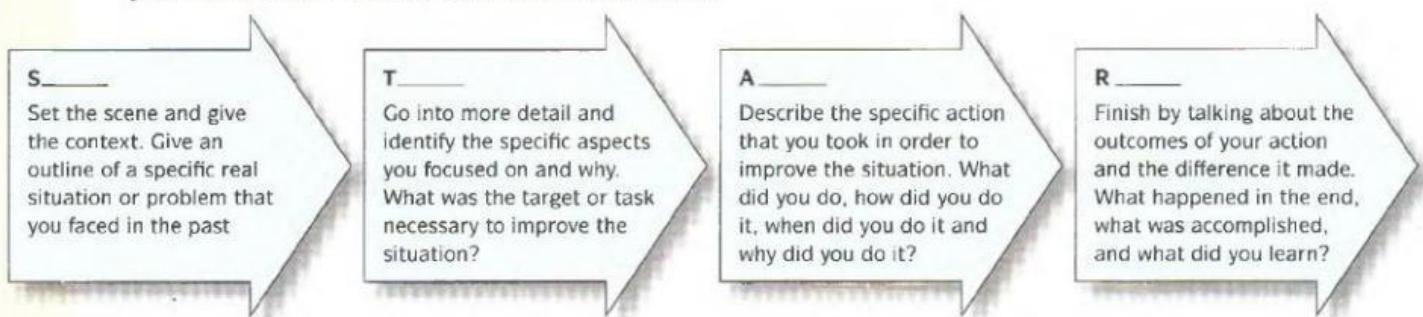
d ►5.2 Now listen to the rest of the extracts to check your predictions in Exercise 1c. Were your ideas similar?

e The questions in Exercise 1a are all examples of competency-based questions. In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What is an interviewer looking for in competency-based questions?
- 2 Why is it essential to prepare stories before your interview?
- 3 How common are competency-based interview questions?

f ►5.3 Listen to two recruitment experts, Grace and Oliver, discussing competency-based questions and compare their ideas with your answers in Exercise 1e.

g A common technique for planning and structuring answers to competency-based questions is the STAR method. Look at the diagram below. What do you think the initials S, T, A and R stand for?



h ►5.2 Listen to the extracts in Exercise 1d again. For each story, identify the four sections (S, T, A and R).

i Look at the sentences from the candidates' stories and answer the following questions.

- 1 Which phrasal verb is used to describe an unexpected success?
- 2 Which phrasal verb is used to introduce an unexpected cause?
- 3 Which phrasal verb is used to introduce an unexpected result?

It turned out that his accountant had been taken ill ...

So we actually ended up getting paid within a week ...

So it all worked out in the end.

j Prepare a STAR diagram for one of the questions in Exercise 1a. Try to use the three phrasal verbs in Exercise 1i.