

Hints and tips on your examples

Choosing your examples

- When deciding which examples to use, keep referring back to the job advert and the Success Profiles framework document for effective behaviour indicators.
- Tailor your responses on strengths within the behavior to the job that you are applying for. There are different levels of the Success Profiles framework for different grades.
- Try to fit your examples to the advertised post.
- Underline any key words and phrases in the job advert to include in your examples. If you have any doubts about the advert please speak to the contact point named in the advert to find out more about the advertised post.

Writing your examples

- Allow yourself plenty of time for writing your examples – avoid leaving them until the last minute.
- Tailor your responses on strengths within the behavior tested to the job that you are applying for.
- There are different levels of the Success Profiles framework for the different grades.
- Use the Success Profiles framework to highlight effective behaviours you used.
- Choose your most powerful examples – demanding/challenging situations that have lots of substance.
- Focus on the 'how' throughout your response. For example "I worked collaboratively across teams, establishing relationships and encouraging cross team working".
- Use 'I' not 'we'. This is about your role in the task and how you affected the outcome.
- Use your own words. Consider using active verbs to create greater impact.
- Don't assume the sift panel has any knowledge of the situation or context.
- It's all down to you. The sift panel cannot infer what is not included in the example and can only assess what you have actually written.
- Ensure that there is a clear outcome stated.
- Don't get caught up telling a story in your example. Just give enough to show - how you went about the task, why you did it the way you did and describe any obstacles you encountered.

Approaches to writing Behaviours.

Behaviour examples require more than just information about what you did, it requires you to explain. There are many different approaches you could take to writing your examples, such as the STAR, or the CAR method. As to which one you chose to use, it's all down to your personal style of writing.

Within the Civil Service, the most common approach is:

The STAR method

Using the STAR method, allows you to set the scene, show what and how you did and the overall outcome. The job holder (and later the interviewer) will use these methods to gather all the relevant information about a specific capability that the job requires.

Situation - Describe the situation you found yourself in. You must describe a specific event or situation. Be sure to give enough detail for the job holder to understand.

- Where are you?
- Who was there with you?
- What had happened?

Task - The job holder will want to understand what you tried to achieve from the situation you found yourself in.

- What was the task that you had to complete and why?
- What did you have to achieve?

Actions - What did you do? The job holder will be looking for information of what you did, how you did it and why. Keep the focus on you. What specific steps did you take and what was your contribution? Remember to include how you did it, and the behaviours you used. Try to use “I” rather than “we” to explain your actions that lead to the result. Be careful not to take credit of something that you did not do.

Results - Don't be shy about taking credit for your behaviour. Quote specific facts and figures making them easily understandable.

- What results did the actions produce?
- What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your goals?
- Was it a successful outcome? If not what did you learn from the experience?

Keep the situation and task parts brief. Concentrate on the action and the result. If the result was not entirely successful describe what you learned from this and what you would do differently next time. Make sure you focus on your strengths.

Not everyone can relate to the STAR method, so an alternative approach is:

The CAR approach

Context - Explain the situation; what, where and when. Simply describe the challenge that you faced. Give the reader some background, just enough to set the scene.

Actions - Make sure that you explain how you did something not just what you did. What action or steps did you take? How did you do it? For some jobs, it might be quite detailed, but don't talk about every single thing. Summarise as best as you can.

Results - What was the outcome? What results did you achieve? Talk about the results. Use numbers and percentages whenever possible. Remember if your result is not positive, describe what you have learnt.

Summary

- When writing your Behaviour example make sure you cover both 'what' you did and 'how' you did it. In most examples you should focus more words on the 'how' than the 'what'.
- Follow this by a brief summary of the 'outcome'.
- Use either STAR or CAR approach for writing your Behaviour.
- Behaviours allow job holders to see what you are capable of doing, it shows them what you can also do for them as well.