

13: Competency-based interviews



Activity 2: Writing responses and role play

Examples of competency-based questions

Job 1: Local Authority Administration Assistant

Competencies

A.	Able to communicate clearly in a way that people understand (Communication)
B.	Deals with customers in a fair, consistent and professional manner (Customer Care)
C.	Able to use own initiative to solve problems (Resourcefulness/Problem Solving)
D.	Can prioritise tasks and meet agreed deadlines (Time Management)
E.	Can work effectively with other team members (Team Work)
F.	Able to create and format a complex Word document (Technical Competency)

Note: A technical competency is the ability to use specific job-related knowledge and skill to complete a task. In this case it's being able to use Microsoft Word to produce a document.

Questions

- A. Tell me about a time when you had to explain a complicated situation to someone.
- B. Describe a situation where you were able to deliver excellent customer care.
- C. Tell me about a time when you had to make a quick decision. What were the circumstances and what did you do?
- D. Describe a time when you have successfully completed a task or project to a specific deadline.
- E. Tell me about a time when you worked successfully as a member of a team.
- F. How would you create a Word document with a number of tables and paragraphs? What formatting tools might you use?

Job 2: Department Store Sales Assistant

Competencies

A.	Able to communicate effectively with customers and colleagues (Communication)
B.	Able to provide excellent customer service (Customer Service)
C.	Can work effectively to meet team goals (Team Work)
D.	Able to influence others' views and decisions (Influence/Persuade Others)
E.	Can successfully plan and organise their own work (Planning/Organising)
F.	Capable of using their own initiative without supervision (Using Initiative)

Questions

- A. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer. How did it work out?
- B. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a special effort to help someone to resolve a problem.
- C. Describe a situation where you contributed successfully to a team task or event.
- D. Describe a situation when you had to persuade someone to see things your way. How did you go about it?
- E. Tell me about a time when you had to plan and organise an event, project or task.
- F. Give me an example of a time when you've used your initiative to achieve something.



Activity

Using the examples above, write down your responses to some of the questions in the form on the next page.

Now ask a friend or family member to help you practise your answers. Ask them to read the questions out and you answer as if in an interview situation.

- Did they think you chose a good example? Can they think of another example of you using the skills and personal qualities?
- Did you show that you have the skills and personal qualities the employer is looking for?
- Do your responses seem natural or stilted when you read them out?

STARR response sheet

Situation

Describe the specific situation.

Task

Describe the task you had to complete.

Action

Describe what you did.

Describe how you completed the task.

Result

Describe the outcome:

- what happened?
- was it a success?
- how did you know?

Reflection

- What did you learn?
- What would you do differently in future, if anything?