What's a behavioral question?

A behavioral question looks at how you've handled a specific challenge in the past to assess if you'll be a good match for the role. Sample requirements include:

- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Decision making
- ❖ Initiative
- ❖ Organization

- ❖ Time management
- ❖ Flexibility
- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Problem solving

Behavioral questions usually start with phrases such as "tell me about a time when" or "give me an example of" or "describe a decision you made." Interviewers are looking for examples of what you have done and how you have done it. They may follow up with more probing questions such as, "what did you do then?" or "what was the result?" **Using a behavioral interview technique like the STAR approach can help structure your answers.**

Situation	Task	Activity	Result
Describe the situation you were in or the task you needed to accomplish.	Explain the goal you were working toward.	Detail the specific steps you took and the role(s) you played.	Describe your accomplishments and the overall outcome.

Examples of behavioral questions

Describe a specific problem you solved for an employer or team. How did you approach the problem? What role did others play? What was the outcome?
> *Things to consider for your answer:*
> - Examples from your past experience where you demonstrated behaviors and skills applicable to the role you're applying for.
> - Who you involved and how you influenced them.
> - Challenges you faced and how you dealt with them.

Describe two specific goals you set for yourself and how successful you were in meeting them. What factors led to your success?
> *Things to consider for your answer:*
> - Your objectives—be clear on those up front.
> - Reasons you chose those particular goals.
> - Any measures you set up to track progress.
> - Obstacles you overcome and things learned along the way.

Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What did you fail to do? What did you learn?
> *Things to consider for your answer:*
> - The root cause.
> - How you applied what you learned in future projects.

TIP: For interviews at Google, come prepared with several examples that demonstrate your skills in the four categories we assess. Practice these examples using the STAR approach.

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What's a hypothetical question?

While behavioral questions assess your past performance, hypothetical (also known as situational) questions evaluate how you would handle a challenge you may not have encountered yet.

Questions often begin with "Imagine that…" and are designed to assess your thought process rather than "right" or "wrong" solutions. We don't use brain teasers, but instead want to know how you would approach a typical problem scenario that is related to the role or that Googlers have faced in the past. A strong answer will illustrate or include:

- **An understanding of the problem:** Did you display a general understanding of the question asked by outlining what experiences and factors are relevant to solve the problem and what additional work needs to be done?

- **Thoughtful problem solving**: Are you gathering information in order to address specific factors or pulling from specific experience? Are you thinking about how to gather information or conduct research and how to use that information to solve the problem? Are you getting to the root cause?

- **Potential solutions:** Does your solution answer the initial question or solve the initial problem? Are you considering and appropriately weighing the pros and cons of your solution?

- **Support for your solutions**: Are you providing rationale for why a certain solution is best, despite previously stated pros and cons? Did you describe potential success metrics to support your solution?

- **Strong communication**: Are your responses structured and logical, do you balance brevity and detail?

Examples of hypothetical questions:

Imagine you are in charge of organizing the grand opening of a new Google office in Bangalore, India. What steps would you take to plan this event?

> *Things to Consider for your answer:*
> - The objective of the event, and measurement of success.
> - Who will be invited to the event.
> - Logistics around the event, set-up, location, timing.
> - Stakeholders to involve in the process.

Imagine you are working on Gmail and a competitor starts charging a $5 monthly fee for their product. How would you assess this situation, and what recommendation would you make to your team?

> *Things to Consider for your answer:*
> - How this change impacts the market.
> - Target users and the impact of fees on them and their behavior.
> - Pros and the cons of your recommendation.
> - How you would assess if this was a sustainable model moving forward.

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