## Speak like a STAR

The STAR approach helps to structure both the answers to basic questions (What’s new?) and to make longer statements.

**Situation**

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**Task**

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**Action**

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**Result**

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## Examples

**Situation**

First, stake what the situation is. Keep this reasonably short, it is just to set the scene. If you are having trouble, ask yourself, “Where?” “Who?” and, “When?”

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| Back in December, Dave Parry, the Project Manager, asked me if I would be interested in joining his team. Of course, I jumped at the chance. | I was in Frankfurt at a meeting with your training department late last year. |

**Task**

Briefly outline the task. Again, keep this quite short. Use the question, “What?” to frame your sentence, and add the “Why?” if appropriate.

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| I’ve done quite a bit of project coordination work already so I was pretty confident – until he told me that the team was spread over 3 continents and that all the operational language would be English. Meetings, presentations, reports, the lot. | They had asked me if I could come up with a concept for an on-the-job training programme for young managers.  |

**Action**

Now, state what you did. Use the question, “How?” to frame this part of the statement.

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| Well, the position was too good to turn down so I had to make sure I was up to the job.I took 2 week’s holiday and booked a home-stay coaching programme in the UK.For 8 hours a day we worked on project-based language stuff – and in the evening I went to the pub and talked to anyone who would listen. | I gave an overview of projects we have run for other clients and asked them what would be appropriate here. This led to a constructive discussion that gave me the chance to put an attractive proposal together. |

**Result**

Finally, state what the result was. This will generally be the essence of what you want to say.

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| The first few weeks on the job were hard and everything seemed to take longer than it normally would but, step by step, I think I got there. My English still isn’t perfect but that doesn’t stop me getting the job done.It has worked out pretty well. | Your management was convinced that we could develop a training solution that would deliver results without cutting too deeply into your productive worktime. And today is the first day of our making that happen. |

**Trainer’s notes**

**This is more of an idea than a piece of material – but it is a pretty flexible one. Although the STAR approach can help B1 learners to make their first coherent, multi-layered statements, I tend to use it to support more competent speakers who need to add structure and routine to reports and status updates.**

My participants are often uncomfortable when they have to make a longer statement / tell a story without the chance to bounce ideas off their partners in a dialogue. The STAR structure gives them a framework within which to develop their ideas and, with practice, builds confidence and spontaneity.

This is not a one-off exercise.

The benefits come when the learners are encouraged to create STAR statements (of various lengths, on various themes) over a period of weeks and months.