

## MAKING APPLICATIONS - Thinking about your skills

Whether you are applying for university, an apprenticeship or a job, the chances are that at some point you are going to have to complete an application or go to an interview. All the resources available within this themed week (Making Applications) will help you with that process.

To get started, it's important to think about your skills, qualities and experiences. When making an application these are what you talk about to explain why you are suited to a particular course or job.

### This workbook will help you:

- Think about times when you have used your skills.
- Talk and write about these experiences in a clear and concise way.

### Before getting started

If you haven't already, have a go at completing the 'Self-Assessment Task' (Day Two, Week 6).

This task will help you think about what your skills are.

### Quick Recap:

#### What are skills?

- You learn skills, and they can help you across a number of different areas and experiences. You can develop skills through study, work or activities you do in your spare time.
- By recognising and talking about your skills, it will be easier to think about what you would like to do in the future. This will also help you when applying for courses, apprenticeships or jobs.

#### What are personal qualities?

- Personal qualities are the characteristics that make up your unique personality.

#### Why do my experiences matter?

- Different experiences give you different opportunities to develop certain skills and also provide evidence of when you have used them.

**For example:** *'I help my mum out looking after my younger brother, collecting him from primary school every Monday, Wednesday and Friday'. Skills/Qualities shown and developed - caring, reliable, trustworthy, organised.*

### What experiences do you have? What skills and qualities did they show?

## Activity STAR Method

Having thought about some examples of when you have used certain skills, now we are going to look at breaking this down and describing these skills and experiences in more detail. The **STAR** method helps you think about your skills. It involves you breaking down *when, why* and *how* you used the skill in question, and the *result* of you using it.

**STAR** is useful for writing your CV and for apprenticeship, job and university applications, making sure that you are showing your skills. It's also a great technique to help you prepare answers for interviews. The **STAR** method helps you to prepare for *competency-based* questions.

e.g.

- *'Tell me about a time when you worked well as part of a team'*
- *'Give me an example of a situation where you solved a problem in a creative way'*
- *'Describe a time when you overcame a challenge'*

By answering questions using **STAR**, you will back up what you are saying with evidence. It's a good idea to think of the **STAR** method in terms of you telling a story. The parts of the story are represented by:

<b>Situation</b>	Set the context for your story – When was this? Where was this? What were you doing? Describe the situation you had to deal with.
<b>Task</b>	Describe what you had to do. What were you hoping to achieve?
<b>Action</b>	Describe what you did to achieve the task, how you did it and what skills you used?
<b>Result</b>	What happened because of what you did? What did you learn from the experience? Would you do anything different in hindsight?

### Example:

*Can you describe a time when you completed a task or job particularly well?*

<b>Situation</b>	I worked part time in a busy café in Liverpool the summer after my GCSEs in 2019.
<b>Task</b>	My job was to work front of house and serve customers, clean tables and handle cash. I wanted to earn some extra money but also work on my confidence by talking to the public and working with several staff of different ages.
<b>Action</b>	I made sure to talk to both the kitchen and front of house to ensure that everybody was clear on what food was needed when. This involved teamwork. I used my maths skills to handle the cash and was even trusted to cash up at the end of several shifts through the summer, demonstrating I was seen as responsible and doing my job well. I earned money but also got tips from satisfied customers – this helped with my confidence because it was another sign I was doing my job properly!
<b>Result</b>	I did my job very well, working as part of a successful team. Sometimes team work is about helping each other out and understanding how other people work. If the kitchen got stressed we would offer them some help and this helped everyone work together. Each of us would listen to concerns or complaints and try our best to overcome them. It was a valuable experience and showed me the value of hard work, communication and confidence in my own abilities

Grab a pen and some paper and have a go yourself with this example question:

*'Tell me about a time when you worked well as part of a team'*

**Situation** - When, where, what?

**Task** - Describe what you had to do.

**Action** - What you did and the skills you used.

**Result** - What happened because of what you did? What did you learn from the experience?

### [Click here to find more information and advice](#)

Click [here](#) if you have any questions to chat with a member of our team (about this workbook, making applications generally, or anything to do with university and your next steps).

National Careers Service - Skills Assessment

## Skills assessment

UCAS - The Buzz Quiz (get started thinking about your strengths)

## The Buzz quiz

If you have any questions, you can live chat a member of our team [here](#).

We'd love to know if you found this resource helpful, let us know [here](#).