


MIAMI UNIVERSITY

CAREER SERVICES

# *Telling Your Story*



How can you communicate what you learned and all you accomplished in a thoughtful and concise way? This workbook will help you critically think about the skills you acquired in class and extracurricular experiences and how you can incorporate these skills into telling your story to employers.

**THE EXERCISES IN THIS WORKBOOK WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH INFORMATION TO HELP YOU DEVELOP YOUR:**

- Skills
- Elevator pitch
- Answer to “Tell me about yourself” and other interview questions



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Miami University prides itself on providing the best undergraduate experience in the country. To prepare yourself for the job search, it is important that you know how to communicate the knowledge, skills, and experience you gain through your classes, co-curriculars and work experience to employers in a clear and concise way. By completing this workbook, you will be able to articulate how your learning in classes and extracurricular experiences will contribute to being a successful employee.

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## ***NACE Top 10 Skills Employers Seek in Recent College Graduates***

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducted a national survey to learn more about the skills employers look for in recent college graduates. In 2014, the top skills employers sought according to the NACE survey were:

- ❑ 1. Work in a team situation.
- ❑ 2. Make decisions and solve problems.
- ❑ 3. Plan, organize and prioritize work.
- ❑ 4. Verbally communicate with persons inside/outside the organization.
- ❑ 5. Obtain and process information.
- ❑ 6. Analyze quantitative data.
- ❑ 7. Technical knowledge related to the job.
- ❑ 8. Proficiency with computer software programs.
- ❑ 9. Create and/or edit written reports.
- ❑ 10. Sell or influence others.

## OTHER LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION RELATED SKILLS:

- ❑ 1. Leadership skills
- ❑ 2. Design and Planning skills
- ❑ 3. Research and Investigation skills
- ❑ 4. Building Relationships and Interpersonal skills
- ❑ 5. Management and Administration skills
- ❑ 6. Personal/Career Development and Learning skills
- ❑ 7. Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
- ❑ 8. Civic Knowledge and Engagement: local and global

### *Articulating Your Skills*

It is important to remember employers do not expect candidates to possess all of these skills, and much of what you learned will contribute to helping you acquire these skills on the job. However, it is important to consider how your experiences and skills contribute to any one of these ten areas. This will help you effectively

communicate your preparation to employers through your resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, and interview.

Based on the knowledge, skills, and experiences you gained at Miami University, check the NACE and liberal arts top skills you believe you have started to acquire.

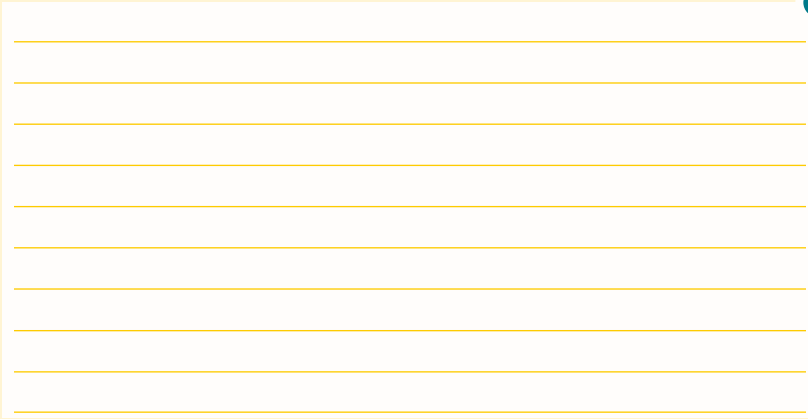
### *Building On Your Skills*

There is always time to acquire more skills! Think about the kinds of jobs you are interested in pursuing. What is required of professionals in those fields? If you do not know, use a website like indeed.com or simplyhired.com to find job descriptions and identify some of the skills the job descriptions point to. Are they consistent with the NACE and liberal arts skills?

On the next page, consider how you can continue to improve on your already solid foundation. Brainstorm the skills you would like to continue to develop or improve upon and the ways in which you could do this. If you are unsure, consider talking with someone in Career Services, or a trusted mentor.

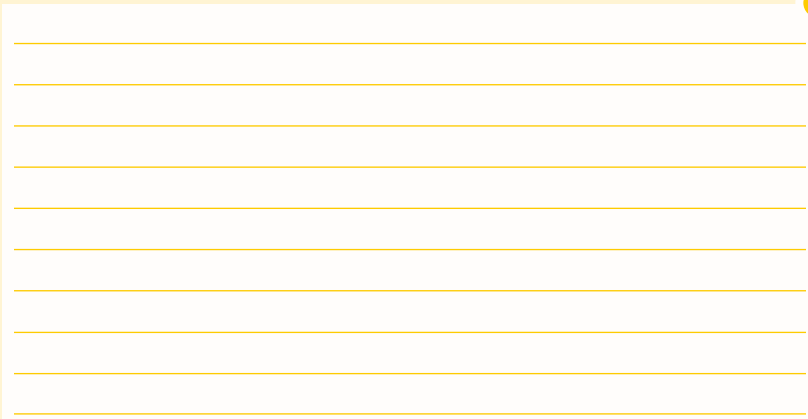
## CLASSROOM LEARNING:

What are the skills (e.g., critical thinking, teamwork) you have acquired in the classroom? What is necessary for success in your major?



## CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT:


What are the ways you have been involved on campus (e.g., athletics, work study, student organizations)? Did you have a leadership role in any of these activities? What did you learn about yourself and what skills did you acquire from those experiences?





## PRACTICED LEARNING:

What work or project experiences (e.g., research, summer internship, summer job) have you had? Have you done community service? What did you learn about yourself and what skills did you acquire from those experiences?



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## YOUR TOP SKILLS:

Based on your experiences in and out of the classroom, what do you believe are some of the most important skills or qualities that you could bring into a job or internship, whether they are listed in the NACE and liberal arts skills or not?



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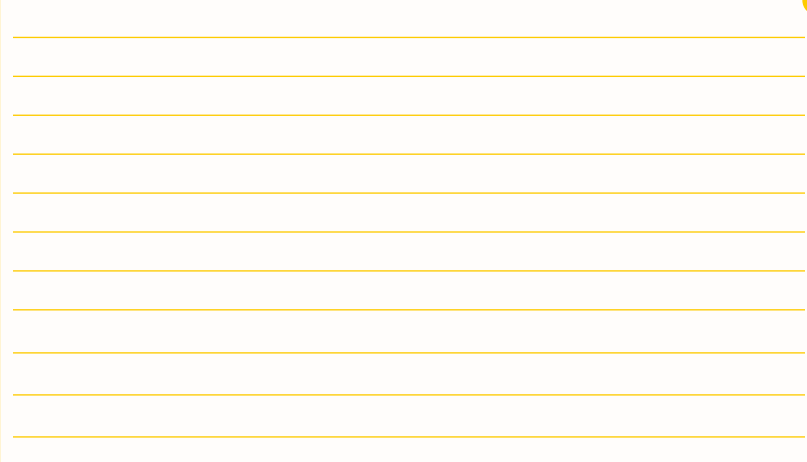
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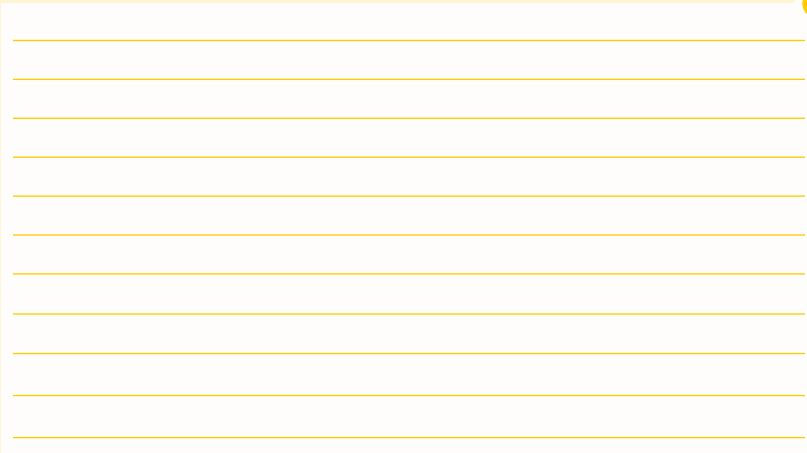
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**SKILLS I NEED TO IMPROVE:**



**HOW I COULD START TO WORK TOWARD THESE SKILLS:**



## Telling Your Story

Imagine you are on an elevator with someone and that person asks you what you want to do after college. You quickly learn that person has a network aligned with your post-college plans. The person asks you about what it is that makes you uniquely qualified for the position and you have the remainder of the 30 second ride to explain. You quickly consider the unique skills, knowledge and experiences you just highlighted in the previous pages and craft your elevator pitch!

Elevator pitches are an important way to help employers, family, friends, and anyone in your career community know who you are and what you bring to the table as an employee. This can help them help you find the right opportunity.

In the space to the right, start to draft your elevator pitch – remember you don’t have to highlight every single thing you’ve done – you just have to think about your skills and talents and how they align with your career goals. An elevator speech is composed of four distinct parts and a follow-up question:

1. Your education and credentials (what you have studied),
2. Your experience in the field (employment, internship/co-op, volunteer positions),
3. Your strengths (what you do best),
4. An open-ended probing question about a prospective employer’s needs, problems, and challenges.

Here’s an example, “*Good afternoon. My name is John Smith. I am a junior Environmental Science major. I am looking for a position that will allow me to strengthen my research and analytical skills. During my time at Miami University, I am strengthening these skills through my involvement with a local environmental council on conservation strategies for water quality and local sustainability efforts. I read that your organization is involved in sustainability projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experiences might fit into your organization?*”



**CRAFT AN ELEVATOR PITCH:**



A large white rectangular area containing 25 horizontal yellow lines, intended for writing an elevator pitch.





## ***Interview Preparation***

The “telling your story” elevator pitch also translates into the commonly asked question by interviewers, “tell me about yourself.” In this next section, we will discuss how to convey your experiences and qualifications to an employer in an interview. Imagine you are in an interview for a job or internship and the employer begins to ask you questions about how you have behaved in certain situations. This interview technique is called Behavioral-Based Interviewing. This type of interview focuses on discovering how an applicant acted in specific work-related situations. Employers ask these questions because your previous

performance in a work-type setting will predict your future performance. The interviewer wants to know *how* you handled a certain situation, rather than *what* you might do in a hypothetical situation. The objective of this exercise is to build responses to common behavioral-based interviewing questions highlighting the NACE and liberal arts skills you gained during your classroom and other experiences. Though they do not need to be memorized, familiarity with the key elements of the stories you share as examples of how you handle various scenarios, is helpful when you find yourself in an actual interview situation.

### **TO FRAME YOUR RESPONSE IN A CONCISE MANNER, USE THE “CAR” METHOD AS A GUIDE:**

**Context** – background of a specific situation

**Action** – the actions you took

**Results** – the results you achieved

## HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A BEHAVIORAL-BASED QUESTION AND RESPONSE USING THE CAR METHOD:

*Question: Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation.*

**C:** In my psychology research course, my teacher assigned our class a semester-long group project. When stressed to meet the deadlines for our project, one of my group members used very harsh language when communicating to the other group members and myself, both in person and via email. This created a very negative atmosphere with the one group member constantly putting down the other members of our team.

**A:** After getting upset the first few weeks of the semester, I decided to speak with this group member about the way he communicated under pressure. I understood the stress he was under and suggested that we together create a clear timeline to set deadlines for portions of the project. We also delegated responsibilities for these portions of the project to the group members.

**R:** Speaking with this group member in person and early on in the semester helped diffuse my classmate's inappropriate communication to the other members of our team and promote a more positive, supportive, and open working environment. We were able to sort out issues immediately, anticipate any likely problems, and plan a clear timeline for the remainder of the semester.

## *Examples of Behavioral-Based Interviewing Questions*

1. Tell me about a situation in which you worked effectively under pressure.
2. How do you take initiative and communicate with others while working as a member of a team?
3. Tell me about a time you made a mistake. What did you learn from it?
4. Give an example of a goal you set, and tell me how you achieved it.
5. Describe a decision you made that was not popular and how you handled implementing it.
6. Tell me about a situation in which you had to be assertive.
7. What do you do if you disagree with someone you work with?
8. Share an example of how you were able to motivate classmates or co-workers.
9. How have you handled a difficult situation?
10. Describe a situation when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty.

In the space provided, choose four of the above examples of behavioral-based interviewing questions to answer using the CAR method. In your own time, it is important to review all of these questions to prepare for your interview.

**QUESTION:**

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**C:**

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**A:**

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**R:**

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**QUESTION:**

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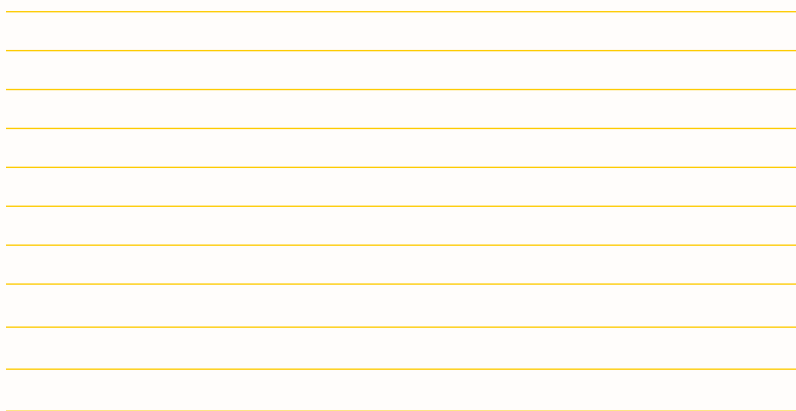
**R:**

## OTHER COMMON QUESTIONS EMPLOYERS WILL ASK YOU THAT YOU SHOULD PREPARE FOR IN ADVANCE INCLUDE:


- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- How do you see yourself fitting into this job?
- What supervisory or leadership roles have you had?
- What do you know about our organization/company?
- What are your long term and short term goals?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now? Why did you choose the career for which you are pursuing?
- Why did you select your major?
- What qualities do you believe a person interviewing for this position should possess and do you believe you possess those qualities?
- What types of qualities do you look for in a supervisor?

For more information on interviewing, refer to Career Services' Interviewing Guide available on Career Services' website [<http://miamioh.edu/student-life/career-services/letters-resumes-interviews/interviewing/>] or schedule a Mock Interview.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES







**Stop by Career Services in 200 Hoyt Hall for assistance in taking the next steps to further develop your career skills with:**

**Career Advising**

**Career Fairs**

**Miami CAREERlink**

**Internship and Job Search**

**Major and Career Exploration**

**Mock Interviews**

**Programs and Workshops**

**Visit our Website  
MiamiOH.edu/careers  
for more information**

**Download the Career Services App!  
Search for: Miami University Events**

**Love. Honor. *Success.***

