

Preparing KSA Responses



In applying for Federal jobs, applicants must demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities, (**KSAs**) related to the position. **Knowledge** statements should refer to an organized body of factual or procedural information that you possess which enables you to perform an activity. **Skill** statements should refer to your proficiency in manual, verbal, or mental manipulation of data or tasks. **Ability** statements should refer to your power to perform an observable activity. KSA's, also referred to as Evaluation Criteria, are an important part of the recruitment process. They are a tool used to assess a candidate's ability to perform a job and to distinguish between best qualified and basically qualified applicants. KSA and application responses are evaluated by raters who have thorough knowledge of the requirements of the position to be filled. Each knowledge, skill and ability response is scored based on how it compares to various levels of possession of the KSA (e.g. superior, satisfactory, and minimal).

Tips for Writing KSAs

- Type your application. Make sure it and supporting information are neat and legible.
- Address the KSAs separate from the resume.
- Type your name, announcement number and number each page of your documents.
- Each KSA response should be no longer than two single-spaced, typewritten pages.
- Do not be humble, but do not exaggerate. Include concrete examples, dates, results, by stating specifically what you have done.
- Write KSA responses as though the person reviewing them does not know you or the job you do.
- Get to the point. Write clearly and concisely; be sure to say what you mean using lots of examples to support your claim of possession of the KSA.
- Use the old Journalism technique, Who, What, When, Where, Why and How, this method will help you create a well written product.
- Refrain from giving generalized statements, since no assumptions can be made from statements such as, *I have thorough knowledge of, or familiarity with, or considerable skill in,* these statements can not be measured.
- Use strong action verbs. Direct language is more likely to impress raters than vague, flowery prose.
- Express accomplishments in specific terms, number or kinds. An example would be "wrote a monthly column for three weekly newspapers with a combined circulation of 40,000."
- List your actions and results achieved, not the philosophy on how things should be.
- Show increases in output or other indicators of progress.
- Your response to a particular KSA should stand on its own. Do not refer the rater to other documents in the application package.
- Do not ignore a KSA if you do not have the experience. If you lack certain experience, say so, but mention pertinent training or other related experience such as voluntary experience. (i.e. volunteer basketball coach demonstrates the ability to train and coordinate other's activities).
- Avoid using acronyms or abbreviations.
- Do not use bullets; you could get too brief and not provide sufficient information. On the other hands, do not be wordy or needlessly repetitive.
- You may want to have another person review your application package to ensure the materials are complete, easy to read and concise.
- Finally, **edit** and **proofread**.