

KSAs vs. KSA Narratives

President's Hiring Reform Memo – May 11, 2010

- ☑ The Presidential Memorandum on Hiring Reform states that applicants can no longer be asked to complete essay-style questions upon initial application
 - This refers to the long narrative essays applicants were previously asked to complete
 - These essay-style questions are often referred to as KSA narratives
- ☑ KSA is also an acronym for knowledge, skills, and abilities
 - You can still (and always should) assess applicants' KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities) as part of the selection process

Differences between KSA Essays and KSAs

- ☑ Written responses to essay-style questions were commonly referred to as KSAs, KSA essays, or KSA narratives because they were used to assess applicants' knowledge, skills, and abilities
 - Responses to these types of questions can no longer be required upon initial application for most Federal jobs
- ☑ While KSA essays cannot be required during the initial application for a job, a candidate's job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities should be assessed any time you are making a hiring decision to ensure selection of the best qualified candidates

So how can you assess KSAs without using essay-style questions?

- ☑ Applicants can complete an [online questionnaire](#)
- ☑ You can review applicants' resumes and cover letters
- ☑ After the initial application and after you have screened applicants for minimum qualifications, there are a [multitude of other assessment methods](#) that may fit into your selection process to meet your hiring needs



Did you know?

The terms KSA and competency are often used somewhat interchangeably. A competency is a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs in order to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.