

What is a Federal KSA?

A KSA Supplemental Application consists of questions about your Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities relevant to a specific position or career field. It's a supplement to your application for a job with the federal government, and will detail your skills and qualifications for a specific job opening. Your responses to these questions carry a lot of weight when you apply for a government job, as they're designed to evaluate your background and demonstrate your ability to succeed in a specific position.

When you respond to the questions, be sure to carefully follow the instructions and provide as much specific information as possible. Read the job announcement carefully, and highlight key words or phrases describing the position responsibilities – you'll want to use these words and phrases later when describing your abilities in the KSA. This is also an opportunity to add information that may not be included in your resume, like specialized training, leadership roles, student activities, or awards.

You'll want to write your KSA in the first person, and use simple, concrete examples to illustrate your abilities. Especially important are examples that demonstrate your ability to take initiative. Make sure your answers reflect your level of responsibility in your previous jobs, and be specific about who you worked with and in what capacity.

As you write, try to limit each answer on the KSA to between half a page and a page in length. You want to be as detailed as possible, but remember that a busy HR employee will be reading your application, so try to strike a balance between too little information and too much. Read over your answers to make sure they're short, to the point, and easy to read. Use plain language and don't forget to proofread your KSA before you submit it. Ask a friend to read over your finished answers to ensure that you've included all of your relevant experiences, that your responses read well, and that there aren't any typos or grammatical errors.

The important thing to remember is that you're hoping to communicate the skills, experience and knowledge that will make you the best candidate for the job opening or career field for which you're applying. Filling out a KSA is no more difficult than writing a first-person essay in English class – it's just that, this time, it's all about you and what a terrific, well-qualified and accomplished employee you would be.