

## Career Services' KSA Writing Guide

### Step 1: Practice Studying Job Announcements

When reviewing federal job announcements, focus on the “requirements,” “skills,” or “qualifications” sections of the ad. Continue to look for “buzzwords” and desirable credentials. Highlight buzzwords and frequently mentioned words. You’ll want to use these in your KSA. Circle the KSA factors and make a list of words to use in your KSA.

### Step 2: Take Credit for ALL of Your Experiences

Brainstorm all the ways you gain knowledge, skills and abilities. Use the boxes below to fill in experiences that can include in your KSA. Remember, you don’t need to get paid to gain from an experience.

Class Papers, Exams, Presentations, Projects	Summer Jobs, Internships, Work Study, Volunteering	Student Government, Clubs, Hobbies, Family Life, Religious Organizations

### Step 3: Use the CCAR Method

- **CONTEXT**  
Describe the specific problem you had to address (What did you have to solve, resolve, respond to, handle, etc.).
  
- **CHALLENGES**  
Describe the factors that contributed to a particular challenge such as budget cuts, new legislation, institutional reform, new goals from upper management, etc.
  
- **ACTION**  
Describe the steps you took to solve the problem.
  
- **RESULT**  
What were the outcomes of your actions. When possible, use numbers to highlight your accomplishment. Think time and money.

### Sample Paragraph of a KSA

Directions: Label each sentence of this sample KSA paragraph below with its part of the CCAR method.

#### Ability to work with data on a computer

As a summer intern with PPS, Inc. I acted as the network controller for the company's network organizations center. The company was experiencing data communication problems, including fault isolations, equipment fault detection, and circuit outages. In order to correct these problems, I attended professional training classes. The knowledge and experience I gained from the classes enabled me to decrease communications problems from within.

### Use CCAR to Write a KSA

Directions: KSAs include several examples, so you can put a few CCAR paragraphs together to form each complete KSA. Answer each KSA in a half of a page to one page response. This may mean you give 2-3 example paragraphs. Write one of your KSA factors from a job announcement below and use CCAR to explain your accomplishment. You can use the ideas from brainstorming in Step 2.

KSA Factor	C	C	A	R
Paragraph 1				
Paragraph 2				
Paragraph 3 (optional)				

The information used in this handout was taken from Our Public Service:

<http://ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve/toolkit/KSAs.pdf>

For more information on writing KSAs:

- Review Career Services' online KSA tutorial
- Or Making the Difference at: <http://www.makingthedifference.org/federaljobs/ksa.shtml>