A Guide to KSA Writing (KSA = KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES)

So you found your dream government job. Now it's time to write your resume. How far you get in the application process will likely be determined by your ability to convincingly address the KSAs identified in the position description in the bullet points on your resume. Be sure to include as much information as you can that responds to each KSA factor. This worksheet will help you learn how to write KSA bullet points that will get the job.

Step 1: Practice Studying Job Announcements

Directions: Look at a random job announcement from USAJobs.gov or a state/city/county agency hiring website. Focus on the "requirements," "skills" or "qualifications" sections of job ads and look for qualities and desirable credentials sought for the job. Highlight eligibility requirements, duties, tasks, qualities and skills by copying and pasting them to a Word doc so you can be sure you haven't missed anything. Finally organize them so there are no repeats and remove any that you know you do not have. Now you are ready to write your KSA-focused bullet points.

Step 2: Take Credit for ALL Your Experiences

Directions: Brainstorm all the ways you've gained knowledge, skills and abilities. Use these boxes to fill in some of the experiences that you can use to prove your KSAs. Remember*, you don't need to be 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 STAR Method

• **S**ITUATION Describe the specific problem you had to address (What did you have to solve, resolve, respond to, handle)

• **T**ASK Describe the factors that contributed to a particular challenge such as budget cuts, new legislation, institutional reform, new goals from upper management, etc.

• **A**CTION Describe the steps you took to resolve the situation

• **R**ESULT Outcomes of your actions - where possible, use numbers to highlight your accomplishment (time & money)

Sample Paragraph of a KSA

Directions: Label each sentence of this description below with its part of the STAR method.

KSA = Ability to work with data on a computer: Acted as the network intern for the company's network operations center. The company was experiencing data communication problems, including fault isolation, equipment fault detection, and circuit outages. Learned how to correct these problems by attending professional training classes and was able to decrease data communications problems within 3 months following training.

Use STAR to Write a KSA Bullet Point

Directions: KSAs include several examples, so you can put a few STAR paragraphs together to form each complete KSA. Write one of your KSA factors from the job announcement you are applying for on the line below and use STAR to explain your accomplishment. You can use ideas from brainstorming in Step 2.

	S	T	A	R
KSA FACTOR #1 *EX: Ability to work with data on a computer*	*Intern in network opps center*	*Need to correct data communications errors*	*Took professional classes*	*Decreased data comms problems within 3 months*
KSA FACTOR #2				
KSA FACTOR #3				
ETC…..				

Step 4: Tips for Writing KSAs

- Pay attention to keywords in the job announcement. Highlight keywords or phrases describing the position and try to incorporate them into your bullet point if it won't sound too "cheesy."
- Connect your experiences with 2-3 STAR paragraphs for each KSA by selecting items that best illustrate the KSA.
- Be concise. Make sure the reader can quickly scan for your accomplishments. Do they jump off the page? Sell yourself from the start.
- Check that you have addressed the KSA (Did you follow STAR?)
- Proofread your answers. Make sure they are succinct and easy to read. Write clearly and don't use acronyms.
- Get a professional to look it over until you feel comfortable doing this on your own. Your reader should make sure that you have included all your relevant experiences, that your responses flow well, and that the answers don't contain any typos or grammatical errors.

Practice Writing a KSA Bullet Point

Directions*:* On a separate piece of paper, use the tips above to write out your own KSAs using what you wrote in Step 3 using STAR