**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA): Definitions and Examples**

Knowledge, skills and abilities—or KSA—is a common tool used by human resources departments. They review a KSA statement, which explains a candidate’s qualities as they relate to an open role, and use it to determine if they’re a good fit. Learning more about KSAs and how to craft one can help you create a compelling document.In this article, we’ll explain what KSA is, the pros and cons of using one, how to write one and provide an example.

**What is KSA?**

A KSA statement is a description of qualifications written by a prospective candidate to describe their knowledge, skills and abilities as they relate to an open role. It helps employers quickly screen the candidates that are most suitable for each job. The KSA model was introduced as a hiring tool by the government, but the federal hiring managers are slowly discontinuing their use of it.The KSA framework is often presented as a supplement to the [job application](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/about-job-applications) and requires candidates to craft answers to job-specific questions, usually in the form of a one-page essay. Each answer is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 100 as to how closely it matches the qualification needed for the job.While KSAs in the form of essays or narratives may no longer be listed as requirements, they should not be dismissed. Employers may call it by other names, such as professional technical qualifications (PTQs) or quality ranking factors (QRFs). Some government agencies still use the form of a written essay or narrative assessment in the selection process, and some businesses require a KSA form as a method to identify the best-suited candidates to fill job listings. **Related:**[**Qualifications vs. Skills: Definition, Differences and Examples**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/qualifications-vs-skills)

**3 elements of KSA statements**

A KSA statement contains three elements:

* Knowledge
* Skills
* Abilities

**Knowledge**

Knowledge is defined as the body of information that you have that can be applied in helping you to do the job. Knowledge can be quantified and includes types such as:

* **Federal regulations:**Knowing the laws and regulations required by the federal governments
* **Document preparation practices⁠:**Knowing how documents should be written
* **Engineering practices:**Knowing how things in specific industries should be designed or engineered

**Related:**[**Experience vs. Skills: What's the Difference?**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/experience-vs-skills)

**Skills**

Skills are also quantifiable and are measured as handling or manipulating things, data or people, either verbally, manually or mentally to accomplish an objective. Skills can be developed with practice or appropriate training. Here are some examples of [hard and soft skills](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/hard-skills-vs-soft-skills):

* Carpentry
* Computer repair
* [Leadership](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/leadership-skills?from=careeradvice-US)
* Public speaking

**Related:**[**Top 11 Skills Employers Look for in Job Candidates**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/skills-employers-look-for)

**Abilities**

Abilities are difficult to quantify but are not much more than the capacity to express the skill. Typically, abilities are the tasks completed on the job. Skills and abilities are often used interchangeably, but there are subtle differences. Ability is the capacity to perform, where a skill is the actual performing.The following are examples of abilities:

* **The ability to organize:** Results are indicated by how well you organize and plan work, meetings and projects.
* **The ability to analyze issues:** This shows how the situations, programs and problems are understood.
* **The ability to communicate verbally and in writing:**This demonstrates how well others can understand you.

**Related:**[**15 Types of Professional Soft Skills (With Definitions)**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/professional-skills)

**How to write a KSA statement**

A KSA is your opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, skills and abilities as they apply to an open position. For an effective KSA, you can often follow the [STAR method](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/how-to-use-the-star-interview-response-technique).Here are five steps to creating a KSA:

1. **Prepare a short summary or range of appropriate skills in the relevant area.**Review the job description to gather the requirements for the role. Identify [keywords](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/resume-keywords-and-phrases) in relation to the skills needed and add them to the beginning of your KSA. This summary should be one or two sentences.
2. **Describe the situation or context.**Describe the [challenge or issue you faced in one of your past jobs](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/describe-a-challenge-you-overcame). If you’re an entry-level candidate, you can use an example from a school project or internship. Make sure to include as many details as you can.
3. **Explain the task.**Describe your role in the situation. You could use your specific [job title](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/job-title) or your part in the challenge. For example, you could explain that you were a financial analyst or that you were leading the specific budgeting project.
4. **Describe your actions.**Include the actions you took to overcome the challenge. You can write about how others may have assisted you, but make sure to keep the focus on yourself.
5. **Detail the results.**Describe the outcome of your actions. You can detail the actual results of your actions and what you learned during the process. Try to quantify the results with data and [statistics](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/what-is-statistics) to create a greater effect.

**Related:**[**How To Write a Cover Letter (Plus Tips and Examples)**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cover-letter)

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**Knowledge, skills and abilities statement**

Review this KSA example for reference:*Demonstrated creativity, analytical thinking and*[*leadership*](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/what-is-leadership)*skills by the ability to stay within budget.As a payroll manager, I was responsible for monitoring, tracking and controlling the annual budget of $500,000 for two offices. My job included report generation, trend tracking, anticipating shortfalls and drafting requests for additional funds. I also was responsible for auditing to ensure that funds were justified and properly allocated.In 2017, our budget was reduced to $475,000, meaning I needed to eliminate excess in the offices. To focus on budget cuts, I delegated my report generation and trend tracking duties to senior payroll clerks who were more than capable of completing the tasks. Next, I gathered all of the office-related expenses for the past five years, including salary amounts. I ran several analyses comparing different cuts and how they would affect the offices.After reviewing all of the analyses, I realized it would be nearly impossible to make the necessary cuts without letting someone go. Instead of making that decision, I performed more research into other departments that experienced the same cuts. I found that the research and development department had recently received a grant to supplement their budget. I met with my most senior payroll clerk, and together we created a grant proposal to cover the additional $25,000. We received the grant and were able to keep all department members.*