

GUIDE 15 / PREPARE YOUR EVIDENCE

Applicant statement writing workbook

Build your own SF 3112A account with specific duty examples, an honest timeline, and a usable first-person outline.

What you will leave with: Create a factual draft that answers the official questions without exaggeration or borrowed medical conclusions.

Use this guide with current official instructions. Complete worksheets privately; do not send sensitive information through the website.

Start with the official questions, not a dramatic story

Your statement explains your experience in your own words. It helps the reviewer understand which conditions you identify and how they affect service in your position. Use SF 3112A and the corresponding ORA questions as your structure. A continuation attachment can add room, but it does not replace completing and certifying the required application. This workbook is educational; it is not a script you must adopt or a guarantee of approval.

1. Read each question before drafting. Separate the conditions themselves from their effects on duties, attendance, other activities, and accommodation.
2. Gather the official position description, critical performance elements, relevant medical records, and a short timeline.
3. Choose specific examples you can explain accurately. When a date is approximate, label it approximate rather than inventing precision.
4. Keep diagnoses and medical opinions consistent with your records. You may describe a symptom you experience without claiming to diagnose its cause.

Describe each condition and its course

Your private worksheet

Condition or injury identified in my records: _____. Treating professional or record supporting that description: _____.

When symptoms began: _____. When they affected my current federal duties: _____. If those dates differ, the explanation is _____.

Typical symptoms: _____. Frequency: _____. Episode duration: _____. Recovery time: _____. Variation between better and worse days: _____.

Treatments tried or continuing: _____. What improved: _____. What remains difficult: _____. Side effects I actually experience: _____.

Important uncertainty or a point for my clinician to clarify: _____. My own observations, separated from the clinician's opinion, are _____.

Diagnostic codes can be included if accurately documented but are not a substitute for explanation. Avoid copying an unfamiliar code from a sample. A pre-existing condition can worsen or become incompatible with a position during covered employment; do not state that all conditions originated during federal service unless that is true.

Connect symptoms to the job

For each affected duty, write a short cause-and-effect paragraph: what the duty requires, what happens because of the condition, how often it happens, and the resulting work effect. Explain performance, attendance, or conduct only where genuinely applicable. A satisfactory appraisal is not something to conceal; describe the effort, support, leave, modifications, or restrictions that explain the fuller picture without pretending the appraisal says something different.

Fictional worked example

"My position requires reviewing case records and producing written findings by daily deadlines. During documented vertigo episodes, I lose my place when scrolling and need to stop reading. Over the four weeks covered by my log, this occurred on six workdays and caused two deadlines to be reassigned. Between episodes I can review shorter records. I use this example to explain the interruption and recovery time, not to claim every day is identical." This is fictional and should not be copied as a client's experience.

Your private worksheet

Duty and source in my position documents: _____. Required pace, accuracy, physical effort, or attendance: _____.

Symptom or restriction affecting that duty: _____. What occurs during the task: _____. How frequently and for how long: _____.

Work consequence and one specific example: _____. Record or observer that may corroborate it: _____.

What I can still do, including any support or modification that makes it possible: _____. What remains unsustainable or unreliable: _____.

Answer activities and accommodation accurately

Other activities help explain functioning, but avoid statements broader than your actual limits. Describe an activity's duration, assistance, flexibility, aftereffects, and frequency. Being able to perform a short task at home does not automatically answer whether you can sustain the demands of your federal job. Equally, do not claim complete inability when you perform the activity with limits.

1. For other restrictions, explain what you avoid, shorten, modify, or do with help, and why. Include variability when it matters.
2. For accommodation, list what you actually requested, when, the response, what was tried, and its result. Attach relevant correspondence where requested.

3. If you did not request an accommodation, explain the factual history. Do not copy a prewritten claim that no accommodation could work.
4. State current employment or leave status accurately and answer questions about other work honestly. The agency makes its own certification; your statement must not certify its findings for it.

Assemble a clear continuation attachment

1. Use a simple title identifying the official question or item continued. Use only the identifiers the official instructions require and protect them in the actual private submission.
2. Keep headings aligned with the application: conditions; duty/attendance/conduct effects; other restrictions; accommodation; additional requested details.
3. Put events in chronological order within each topic and remove unrelated complaints. Distinguish an observed event from your interpretation of it.
4. Check the same dates, titles, diagnoses, and employment status across your statement, records, and application. Ask authors to correct their own errors.
5. Read the draft aloud. Replace "always," "never," or "completely" if the evidence and your experience do not support them.

Final review before certification

- ☐ Every condition I ask OPM to consider is identified in my application.
- ☐ My examples show actual duties and honest frequency, duration, and work effects.
- ☐ I separated personal observations from medical conclusions.
- ☐ My accommodation history describes events without inventing an agency determination.
- ☐ My continuation pages are labeled, legible, consistent, and included in the final copy.
- ☐ I completed all remaining official questions and the required certification myself.

Do not submit this worksheet as an anonymous online form containing medical details. Draft privately, preserve a copy, and use the official application channel. A consultant may help with clarity and organization; the final statement must remain your truthful account.

Sources: OPM FERS disability · OPM ORA · OPM SF 3112 · 5 CFR 844.201

Reviewed October 14, 2026. Check current official instructions before acting.

Independent non-attorney education. Not an official form, legal advice, medical opinion, or individualized tax advice. You prepare and submit your own application. OPM determines eligibility.