

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliant Words for Job Descriptions

In writing job descriptions, some words are better than others. Certain words tend to exclude individuals with disabilities (e.g., see or hear). It is better to choose words that convey the actual requirements of the job without limiting the physical demands to certain abilities. The following table contains examples of words that tend to be exclusionary and substitutes for these words.

<i>Physical Demand</i>	<i>ADA-Compliant Words</i>	<i>Job Description Language Example</i>
Stand or Sit	Stationary position	Must be able to remain in a stationary position 50% of the time.
Walk, Run	Move, Traverse	The person in this position needs to occasionally move about inside the office to access file cabinets, office machinery, etc.
Use hands/fingers to handle or feel; reach;	Operate, Activate, Use, Prepare, Inspect, Place, Detect, Diagnose, Install/place Remove/replace, Adjust Attach, Positions Sets up Handle/tend, feeds or controls, Applies, Measures Modifies, Signals, Inputs Drafts/writes, Compiles/retrieves Makes/constructs Creates/fabricates Collects, Serves/services	Constantly operates a computer and other office productivity machinery, such as a calculator, copy machine, and computer printer.
Climb (stairs/ladders) or balance	Ascend/Descend, Work atop, Traverse	Occasionally ascends/descends a ladder to service the lights and ceiling fans.
Stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl	Position self (to), Move	Constantly positions self to maintain computers in the lab, including under the desks and in the server closet.
Talk/hear	Communicate, Detect, Converse with, Discern, Convey, Express oneself, Discuss, Exchange information	The person in this position frequently communicates with students who have inquiries about their tuition bill or financial aid package. Must be able to exchange accurate information in these situations.

**Americans with Disabilities Act
Compliant Words for Job Descriptions**

See	Detect, Determine, Discern, Distinguish, Perceive, Identify, Recognize, Judge, Observe, Inspect, Estimate, Assess, Compare	Must be able to detect funnel clouds from long distances.
Taste/Smell	Detect, Distinguish, Determine	Occasionally must be able to distinguish sweet and bitter flavors when creating desserts for customers.
Strength, Carry weight, lift	Move, Transport, Position, Put, Install, Remove/replace	Frequently moves Audio/Visual equipment weighing up to 50 pounds across campus for various classroom and event needs.
Exposure to work	Exposed, Work around	Constantly works in outdoor weather conditions.

Examples:

Administrative Support Positions:

Work Environment

This job operates in a professional office environment. This role routinely uses standard office equipment such as computers, phones, photocopiers, filing cabinets and fax machines.

Physical Demands

This is largely a sedentary role; however, some filing is required. This would require the ability to move files, open filing cabinets and bend or stand as necessary.

Building and Grounds (some manual positions):

Work Environment

Regularly works around moving mechanical parts and in outside conditions that include inclement weather, heat and humidity. Noise level may be loud at times.

Physical Demands

Must be able to move objects, and use abdominal and lower back muscles to provide support over time without fatigue. Constant movement and use of limbs; this position requires good manual dexterity, coordination and stamina.

We suggest the following terms for describing the amount of time a task takes:

Task takes less than one-third of the time—describe as “seldom” to “occasionally”

Task takes one-third to two-thirds of the time—describe as “occasionally” to “frequently”

Task takes more than two-thirds of the time—describe as “constantly”

If the amount of time spent on a task or responsibility is “none,” then omit that task from the job description.