

Action Word Definitions

The following words are valuable for identifying and defining the activities of a job. Through the use of concise terminology, it is possible to minimize ambiguity or misunderstanding relative to what is being done. It is not a complete list, however, and job description writers may find other suitable words.

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| ACCOUNTS | To furnish a justifying analysis or explanation. |
| ACQUIRES | To buy or take possession of. |
| ADAPTS | To modify to suit or fit specific needs. |
| ADJUSTS | To bring the parts of something to a true, more desirable, or effective position. |
| ADMINISTERS | To carry out or regulate organizational or program operations, policies, and procedures; to apply a remedy. |
| ADOPTS | To accept and use as one's own. |
| ADVISES | To provide, based on specialized knowledge and usually only on request, information, ideas, suggestions, or informed opinions which aid/support others in deciding on a course of action or making a decision. |
| ADVOCATES | To endorse in an assertive and deliberate manner. |
| ALLOCATES | To set aside money, property, power, or other resources for a particular individual or program, group of individuals or programs, or an organization. |
| ALLOTS | To distribute a share or portion for a specific purpose. |
| ALTERS | To make different without changing into something else. |
| AMUSES | To provide any form of distraction that contents the mind. |
| ANALYZES | To separate all or any part of something into its constituent parts for the purpose of identifying and examining relationships of the parts to one another and to other factors. |
| ANSWERS | To speak or write in reply to an inquiry. |
| APPLIES | To put to use for a purpose. |
| APPOINTS | To officially designate. |
| APPRAISES | To give an expert judgment of worth or merit. |
| APPROVES | To exercise final authority with regard to the acceptability of an action. |
| ARBITRATES | To act with defined authority to resolve a dispute. |
| ARRANGES | To prepare for an event. |
| ASSEMBLES | To convene individuals out of common interest or purpose; to fit together with component parts of a structure or machine. |
| ASSESSES | To determine the exact value or extent prior to judging it or using it as the ground for a decision. |
| ASSIGNS | To specify or designate tasks or duties to be performed by others. |

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| AUDITS | To examine accounts in a final, official sense to verify their correctness. |
| AUTHORIZES | To give permission for or to empower through vested authority. |
| AWARDS | To confer or bestow for performance or quality. |
| BALANCES | To arrange or prove so that the sum of one group equals the sum of another. |
| BARGAINS | To negotiate the terms of a sale, exchange, or other agreement. |
| BATCHES | To group into a quantity for a future operation. |
| BUDGETS | To plan a summary of probable expenditures and income for a given period. |
| CALCULATES | To determine by mathematical or statistical processes. |
| CALIBRATES | To check, adjust, or standardize the graduation of. |
| CARRIES | To move something or someone from one place to another, using the hands. |
| CATEGORIZES | To group on the basis of a comparison of certain readily perceived characteristics and criteria. |
| CERTIFIES | To officially endorse something in conformance with set standards. |
| CHECKS | To compare with a source as to verify accuracy. |
| CIRCULATES | To move from person to person or place to place. |
| CLASSIFIES | To arrange, distribute, or group facts/items according to common characteristics. |
| CLEANS | To remove dirt or impurities; to prepare for cooking. |
| CLIMBS | To move progressively upward. |
| COACHES | To befriend and encourage individuals on a personal, caring basis. |
| CODES | To translate words or figures into symbols (letters or numbers). |
| COLLABORATES | To work jointly with. |
| COLLATES | To assemble in proper numerical or logical sequence. |
| COLLECTS | To bring data or material together in a group or mass. |
| COMPARES | To examine for the purpose of discovering similarities or differences. |
| COMPILES | To place information or arrange material from other documents into a formalized order. |
| COMPOSES | To create by artistic labor. |
| COMPUTES | To determine by arithmetical processes. |
| CONDENSES | To shorten material without altering its meaning. |
| CONFERS | To seek and compare views, opinions, and judgments with others through discussions. |

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| CONFIRMS | To assure the accuracy, consistency, or completeness of. |
| CONSOLIDATES | To bring together; to combine several into one. |
| CONSTRUCTS | To make or form by combining parts; to draw with suitable instruments and under specified conditions. |
| CONSULTS | To give expert/definitive professional advice. |
| CONTROLS | To evaluate, verify, regulate, and/or be informed about actions to the point of influencing or directing activities/functions toward conformance with plans or desired results. |
| CONVERTS | To alter the physical or chemical nature of something. |
| CONVEYS | To transfer by legal means ownership of property from one individual to another. |
| COORDINATES | To guide, regulate, or adjust the interrelated and interdependent activities of individuals or functions of a unit(s) to facilitate a common action and to attain a common purpose or goal. |
| COPIES | To reproduce an original. |
| CORRECTS | To eliminate error or defect. |
| CORRELATES | To establish a direct or inverse relationship. |
| CORRESPONDS | To communicate with others in writing. |
| COUNSELS | To provide advice, usually on one's own initiative, in which a course of action is suggested or urged and some recourse of follow-up is implied. |
| COUNTS | To list or name, one by one, to find the total number of units involved. |
| CREATES | To bring into existence; to produce through imaginative skill. |
| DEBATES | To discuss and argue a question formally, and usually in public. |
| DECIDES | To make up one's mind as to action, course, or judgment. |
| DEFENDS | To ward off something that actually threatens; to repel something that actually attacks. |
| DEFINES | To determine and state the limits and nature of; to give the distinguishing characteristics of. |
| DELEGATES | To designate with authority another to perform tasks or duties which in turn may carry specific degrees of accountability and authority. |
| DELIBERATES | To consider carefully and thoroughly a matter with abstract/complex variables to arrive at a conclusion. |
| DELIVERS | To carry something to an intended destination. |
| DEMONSTRATES | To explain or make clear by using examples/experiments or showing the operations of. |
| DESCRIBES | To give an-account in words that create a visual image to the minds of others. |
| DESIGNATES | To choose an incumbent or to detail a person to a certain |

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| DESIGNS | To conceive, create, and execute the form or shape of a physical object or the method for doing something. |
| DESTROYS | To completely tear down, do away with, or bring to an end. |
| DETECTS | To take notice of something by physical means (e.g., visual, tactile). |
| DETERMINES | To fix conclusively or authoritatively the course, character, functions, or scope of something. |
| DEVELOPS | To expand or realize the potentialities of; to bring gradually to a fuller, greater, or better state. |
| DEVISES | To form in the mind by new combinations or applications of ideas or principles; to invent. |
| DIAGNOSES | To identify a disease, malfunction, or cause of disorder by symptoms or distinguishing characteristics. |
| DIGS | To break and turn over or remove with a tool. |
| DIRECTS | To personally oversee, inspect, or guide the work of others, with responsibility for ensuring certain standards of performance are met. |
| DISBURSES | To pay out or distribute with authority. |
| DISCIPLINES | To penalize individuals or groups, whose behavior is contrary to existing regulations; to establish habits of self-control. |
| DISCOVERS | To intentionally search for and acquire or find something that already exists but is new to the discoverer. |
| DISCUSSES | To exchange views to arrive at a better understanding. |
| DISMANTLES | To take apart or raze; to remove furniture or equipment. |
| DISPATCHES | To send off or out. |
| DISPENSES | To give a carefully weighed or measured portion to each of a group as a right or as to need. |
| DISPLAYS | To show; to place before the view of others. |
| DISSEMINATES | To spread or disperse information or ideas. |
| DISTRIBUTES | To deal out portions or spread about units among a number of recipients. |
| DRAFTS | To prepare papers or documents in preliminary form for clearance and approval by others. |
| DRIVES | To start, stop, and control the movement or action of machines. |
| DUMPS | To empty out or unload in a heap or mass. |
| DUPLICATES | To make a copy or reproduction through the use of machinery. |
| EDITS | To correct spelling, faulty phrasing, and imperfect punctuation, and mark a manuscript to ready it for publication. |
| ELABORATES | To work out in detail; to give details. |

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| ELECTS | To vote for. |
| ELIMINATES | To get rid of; to set aside as unimportant. |
| EMPLOYS | To use or engage the service of; to provide a job with consideration. |
| ENCOURAGES | To inspire with spirit and hope. |
| ENDORSES | To support or recommend actively. |
| ENLISTS | To secure the support and aid of. |
| ENTERS | To write down in a record, diary, log, or list; to make an entry of. |
| ENTERTAINS | To provide some activity or attraction that will give pleasure or relieve monotony or boredom. |
| ESCORTS | To accompany another or others to give protection or to watch over; to accompany as a courtesy or honor. |
| ESTIMATES | To make a rough approximation of the size, extent, or value of. |
| EVALUATES | To judge reports, data, plans, or performances in relation to established goals, policies, and standards; to compare critically to a standard for suitability. |
| EXAMINES | To look over closely to determine the condition, quality, validity, or nature of. |
| EXCHANGES | To give or take one thing in return for another. |
| EXERCISES | To train by drills and maneuvers in order to strengthen and develop. |
| EXHIBITS | To put forward prominently or openly, either with the express intention or with the results of attracting other's attention or inspection. |
| EXPERIMENTS | To undertake an action to discover something not yet known or to demonstrate something known. |
| EXPLAINS | To make clear or easier to understand that which appears vague, causeless, or inconsistent. |
| EXTRACTS | To pull out by effort; to make a selection or quotation of; to determine by calculation. |
| FABRICATES | To build by assembling; to manufacture. |
| FASTENS | To make secure by locking, shutting, buttoning; to fix firmly in place. |
| FEEDS | To move into a machine or opening in order to be used or processed; to furnish with something essential for growth and sustenance. |
| FILES | To arrange in a methodical manner; to rub smooth or cut away with a tool |
| FORECASTS | To predict or indicate a condition or event beforehand as a result of rational study of available data. |
| FORMULATES | To prepare mentally a rough plan, policy or procedure. |

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| GARNERS | To gather and store in a granary. |
| GATHERS | To pick, pluck, and cull a crop. |
| GAUGES | To assess a thing as authentic, good, or adequate or the degree it is so in relation to a standard measure or scale. |
| GENERATES | To originate by a vital, chemical, or mechanical process. |
| GOVERNS | To exercise continuous sovereign authority over. |
| GRADES | To divide into groups based on ascending or descending order. |
| GUARDS | To watch over to keep safe from any potential attack or harm. |
| GUIDES | To show the way or approach by applying intimate knowledge or experience of the way or approach and of all its difficulties. |
| HAULS | To move by pulling or drawing; to transport by vehicle. |
| HIRES | To engage the service of for a set sum. |
| HYPOTHESIZES | To form a tentative assumption to test its logical or empirical consequences. |
| IDENTIFIES | To recognize, acknowledge, or establish based on the characteristics of. |
| ILLUSTRATES | To make clear something which is difficult, abstract, or remote from experience especially to use pictures or sketches to make vivid or real what is being explained. |
| IMPLEMENTS | To carry out or into effect a plan, program, or operation. |
| IMPORTS | To bring in from a foreign or external source. |
| IMPROVES | To correct or advance something by supplying what it lacks or wants. |
| INDEXES | To classify information, usually by subject matter or name, to facilitate reference. |
| INDICTS | To bring legal charges against an individual or organization. |
| INFORMS | To make known; to call attention to. |
| INNOVATES | To exercise creativity in introducing something new or in making changes. |
| INSPECTS | To search, through direct observations, for conditions such as errors, defects, flaws, or shortcomings. |
| INSTALLS | To establish in an indicated place, condition, or status; to set up for use in service. |
| INSTRUCTS | To impart knowledge systematically. |
| INTERPRETS | To explain meanings or intentions, not immediately apparent to others, in light of individual judgment; to translate. |

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| INTERVIEWS | To obtain facts or opinions through oral inquiry or examination. |
| INVENTORIES | To catalog; to count and list; to make an itemized record of. |
| INVENTS | To create; to think up or imagine. |
| INVESTIGATES | To make a methodical, searching inquiry into a situation. |
| ISSUES | To put forth or to distribute officially. |
| ITEMIZES | To enumerate one after another; to set or note down in detail. |
| JOINS | To bring or put together. |
| JUDGES | To investigate and compare the evidence and merits of all issues in a case and decide where the truth lies. |
| JUSTIFIES | To prove or show to be right or reasonable in light of individual belief or facts. |
| LEADS | To guide or direct others on a course or in the direction of without final responsibility for results achieved. |
| LIFTS | To use effort to overcome the force of gravity. |
| LOADS | To place in or on a means of conveyance. |
| LOCATES | To search for and find. |
| LUBRICATES | To apply a substance to machinery to reduce friction in operation. |
| MANAGES | To guide and coordinate worker activities and organizational or program policies, rules, practices, methods, and standards. |
| MANIPULATES | To move, guide, or place objects or materials with skill and dexterity. |
| MANUFACTURES | To make or process raw material into a finished product. |
| MAPS | To make a survey of for the purpose of representation. |
| MATCHES | To pair up or put into a set those items possessing equal or harmonizing attributes. |
| MEASURES | To determine the quantity, mass, extent, or degree of in terms of a standard unit or fixed amount. |
| MEDIATES | To interpose with parties to reconcile them; to reconcile differences. |
| MENDS | To repair; to restore to soundness that which is broken or torn. |
| MIXES | To combine or blend particles, parts, or elements into one. |
| MODIFIES | To limit or restrict the meaning of; to make minor changes in. |
| MONITORS | To watch, observe, or check for a specific purpose. |

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| MOTIVATES | To stimulate the active interest or desire within someone for something. |
| MOVES | To go or transport from one point to another. |
| NEGOTIATES | To confer with others for the purpose of reaching agreement. |
| NOTIFIES | To send a formal notice giving required or pertinent information. |
| NULLIFIES | To make of no value or consequence; to cancel out. |
| OBSERVES | To obtain data visually. |
| OBTAINS | To acquire or gain possession of. |
| OPENS | To make available for entry or passage. |
| OPERATES | To start, stop; control, and adjust machinery or equipment. |
| ORGANIZES | To take steps to set up the administrative structure or functions of an office or process. |
| ORIGINATES | To bring into being; to initiate. |
| OUTLINES | To make a summary of the significant features of a subject. |
| OVERHAULS | To make repairs, adjustments needed to restore to good working order. |
| OVERSEES | To watch, to monitor. |
| PACKAGES | To wrap or box an item or group of items. |
| PERMITS | To consent to; to authorize. |
| PERSUADES | To induce others by argument or entreaty to accept a belief or position; to prevail upon others to take a course of action. |
| PICKS UP | To collect or lift an object or material. |
| PLANS | To devise a detailed means of course of action for attaining an objective/goal. |
| POSTS | To transfer or carry information from one record to another; to display prominently. |
| PREDICTS | To foretell on the basis of observation, experience, or scientific reason. |
| PRESCRIBES | To recommend medical treatment with authority. |
| PRESENTS | To lay as a charge before the court; to offer for view. |
| PRESERVES | To keep safe; to protect; to keep free from decay. |
| PREVENTS | To stop something from occurring; to take advance measures against. |
| PROCURES | To obtain possession of. |
| PRODUCES | To grow; to make, bear, or yield something. |
| PROGRAMS | To arrange or work out a sequence of operations to be performed by equipment or machinery. |

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| PROMOTES | To advance to a higher level or position; to foster the growth or development of. |
| PROOFREADS | To read copy of a printer's proof against the original manuscript. |
| PROPOSES | To formulate and suggest for adoption. |
| PULLS | To cause to move in the direction toward the source of the force. |
| PURCHASES | To buy or procure by committing funds. |
| PUSHES | To use force upon an object to move it away from the source of the force. |
| QUANTIFIES | To determine or express the amount of. |
| QUESTIONS | To interrogate; to inquire. |
| RANKS | To determine or assign the relative importance of data, people, or things. |
| RATES | To determine the rank of in relation to others of the same kind. |
| REAPS | To cut grain and pulse for harvest. |
| REBUILDS | To make extensive structural repairs. |
| RECOMMENDS | To suggest and support for adoption a course of action. |
| RECONCILES | To adjust; to make congruous; to seek agreement. |
| RECORDS | To set down in writing; to preserve in some permanent form. |
| REDUCES | To narrow down; to diminish in size or amount. |
| REFERS | To send or direct for aid, treatment, information, or decision. |
| REFINES | To free from impurities, imperfections, or vulgarities; to make more polished. |
| REGISTERS | To enter in a record or list officially. |
| REGULATES | To order or restrain by rule, method, or established mode. |
| REINFORCES | To strengthen with additional forces. |
| REJECTS | To refuse to hear, receive, or admit. |
| RELEASES | To permit the publication or dissemination of. |
| REMITTS | To send money in payment of. |
| REPAIRS | To put into good or fitting order something that is injured. |
| REPLACES | To provide a substitute for something now lost, gone, or worn out. |
| REPORTS | To give an account, in detail, of facts and figures. |
| REPRESENTS | To foster general interest in, through speeches, and consultation and contacts with individuals, groups, and constituencies. |
| RESCINDS | To make void; to repeal; to abrogate a contract by restoring preexisting conditions. |

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| RESCUES | To free a person or animal from imminent danger by prompt or vigorous action. |
| RESEARCHES | To perform a systematic, critical, intensive investigation directed toward development of new or fuller knowledge of the topic or issue studied. |
| RESOLVES | To decide to do or refrain from doing something; to take remedial action. |
| RETRIEVES | To recover from a location where previously placed, set, or thrown. |
| REVIEWS | To consider or to reexamine results for the purpose of giving an opinion or approval. |
| REVISES | To rework in order to correct or improve; to make a new, improved, or up-to-date version. |
| REWARDS | To give something in recompense for worthy behavior. |
| SALVAGES | To rescue or save (as from wreckage or ruin). |
| SCANS | To survey from point to point in a cursory manner. |
| SCHEDULES | To plan a timetable; to set specific time for. |
| SCORES | To assign a numerical evaluation. |
| SCREENS | To examine for the purpose of separating one group. |
| SEALS | To secure the contents of by closing with adhesive. |
| SEARCHES | To systematically look over and through for the purpose of finding an item. |
| SELECTS | To decide on one, or a few from several possibilities. |
| SELLS | To give up property to another for money or other valuable consideration. |
| SENDS | To dispatch by a means of communication; to convey. |
| SERVES | To attend to the personal needs or requests of people. |
| SERVICES | To make fit for use by providing maintenance, supplies, repairs, or installation. |
| SMELLS | To acquire and examine the odor or scent with the nose. |
| SOLICITS | To approach with a request or plea; to strongly urge. |
| SOLVES | To answer a question or work out a problem. |
| SORTS | To group or categorize according to systematic relations or common characteristics; to put in a definite place or rank according to kind, class, or other category. |
| STACKS | To load or arrange in a somewhat orderly heap or pile. |
| STORES | To put away for future use; to deposit or receive for safe keeping. |
| STUDIES | To contemplate; to learn all the possibilities, applications, variations, or relations of a subject before making plans and/or taking action. |
| SUBMITS | To present for the decision, judgment, or information of others. |
| SUGGESTS | To direct attention to something for consideration. |

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| SUMMARIZES | To present in a concise and compact manner. |
| SUPPLIES | To provide space, equipment, material, and other non-financial resources. |
| SURVEYS | To look at or consider in a general or comprehensive way; to determine the location, form, or boundaries of by measuring the lines and angles. |
| SYNTHESIZES | To compose or combine parts or elements in order to form a whole. |
| SYSTEMATIZES | To arrange or make by the use of a method or orderly planning. |
| TABULATES | To put in table form; to set up in columns, rows. |
| TEACHES | To apply a guided process of assigned work, discipline, direct study, and the presentation of examples to increase the general knowledge of another person. |
| TENDS | To start, stop, and monitor the functioning of machinery and equipment. |
| TESTIFIES | To provide oral or written testimony on facts known. |
| TESTS | To put a thing to decisive proof by thorough examination under controlled conditions. |
| TOTALS | To add up; to compute. |
| TRACES | To copy as a drawing. |
| TRADES | To give in exchange for another commodity; to make a purchase. |
| TRAINS | To develop a particular faculty or skill in others to bring them up to a predetermined standard of work performance. |
| TRANSACTS | To carry on or handle business in accordance with a prescribed procedure. |
| TRANSCRIBES | To transfer data from one form of record to another or from one method of preparation to another, without changing the nature of the data. |
| TRANSFERS | To change from one mode of conveyance to another, or from one depository to another. |
| TRANSLATES | To turn into one's own or another language. |
| TRANSMITS | To transfer or send out a signal either by radio waves or over a wire. |
| TREATS | To give medical or surgical care; to subject to chemical action. |
| URNS | To make to rotate or revolve; to cause to move around so as to effect a desired end (as locking, opening, shutting). |
| TUTORS | To instruct on an individual basis and in a special subject or for a particular occasion or purpose. |
| TYPES | To write with a typewriter. |

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| UPDATES | To make current with most recent facts, methods, or ideas. |
| USHERS | To guide to a particular place. |
| WASHES | To clean by means of water and/or other substances by dipping, tumbling, or scrubbing. |
| WAXES | To rub, polish, cover, smear, or treat with a sealing substance. |
| WEIGHS | To determine the heaviness of an object. |
| WRITES | To set down letters, words, sentences, or figures on paper or other suitable material. |

Reprinted from the State of Minnesota's manual Describing Job Content: Class Specifications.