

HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT

One of the most essential elements of your application to law school is the personal statement. Although your GPA and LSAT scores are important, the personal statement is the only real window that the law school admissions committee has into your personality. Your personal statement should try to address questions like what are your short and long term goals, why you want to go to law school (and that particular school), and most importantly what do you as a candidate have to offer (i.e. why you should be selected over any other applicant).

One easy way to get yourself started if you are having trouble is by doing a “brain-dump.” Basically, block out 15-20 minutes, and just write everything that comes to mind. Try to answer the few questions posed above. Of course you will not ultimately use everything you produced during this exercise, but it is a good way to get your creative thoughts flowing.

If you are unsure of the format your personal statement should take, consider the following “formula.” Of course there is no one formula for a great personal statement. You want to write something that is interesting, reveals something unique about you, and suggests how an experience(s) motivated you to apply to law school:

- 1) Anecdote
- 2) Transition using anecdote to discuss relevant experiences (from resume)
- 3) Discussion of relevant experiences (from resume) and how they contribute to your strength as a candidate
- 4) Why law school, and why this particular law school
- 5) Tie essay back into anecdote

Tips to keep in mind:

- 1) Don't be overly emotional.
- 2) Don't be shy. Unfortunately, humility is not what the admissions committee of a law school is looking for. On the other hand, don't praise yourself out of bounds.
- 3) Keep your sentences simple and make sure your statement flows. This increases the chances that the admissions reader will actually read the whole piece.
- 4) Don't be afraid to be unique. Everyone has a story; your story just has to differentiate you from the rest of the pack. Use your personal statement as a tool to reveal something about you that does not come across in the rest of your application.
- 5) Be judicious. Keep it to 2 pages, double-spaced (unless the application specifies a word limit).
- 6) Do not discuss all resume experiences, but only those that are worth expounding upon. Your personal statement can even expound upon one particular experience that was meaningful to you and influenced your desire to apply to law school.