


WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LAW SCHOOL PERSONAL STATEMENT



with tips from an admissions expert

Widener University 

Delaware Law

Be sure to follow the directions provided by the law school when you submit your statement. The worst thing you can do is give something that isn't asked for or neglect to give something that's required. Demonstrating attention to detail is a great first step to offering an excellent personal statement.

DO



write a concise story with one or two points. The best personal statements are focused and purposeful. Choose a particular event, difficult choice, or achievement that highlights why you'd be a good fit for the law school.

DON'T



share your life story. Chronicling your life from birth to the present will dilute the message you want to convey. Using this format as a rough draft can be helpful in choosing what to focus on, but it's hard to make an impact if the reader is sifting through a story in search of what's significant.



DO

include information that reflects the present day. Telling the admissions committee who you are now and what you bring to the diversity of the incoming class will aid in their decision-making.



DON'T

focus too heavily on future hopes and goals. If your goal in attending law school is to become the next Supreme Court Justice or Attorney General, that's admirable. But remember—you're not there yet! Sharing what you hope to someday accomplish won't give the committee a clear picture of who you are today—and all that you've already achieved.



DO

write several drafts until it's right. As with any important paper, writing and rewriting (and rewriting again) always enhances the presentation and overall message. You're bound to catch mistakes, make better word choices, and clarify inconsistencies. Share the final draft with a trusted professor or mentor for feedback.



DON'T

include spelling and grammar errors. Admissions committees not only read the personal statement to gain insight on an applicant, but also often regard it as a writing sample. Submitting a statement that's full of spelling and grammar errors indicates a lack of effort on the writer's part or a weakness in writing ability. Either way, it's a bad look to the committee.



DO

include accomplishments, obstacles overcome, and/or points of pride. Your personal statement should be personal, positive, and offer reasons why the admissions committee should admit you to law school.



DON'T

include excuses for poor performance. While it's often necessary to explain a less-than-stellar UGPA, LSAT score, or a character and fitness violation, these explanations should not be included in the personal statement. Instead, they should be included in a separate supplemental statement to be read alongside the personal statement.

By Eric Kniskern

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