

Law School Personal Statement Guide

Length

- Refer to individual school instructions
- Maximum length is generally 2 pages, single-spaced

Tone

- More mature than an undergraduate personal statement
- Can be personal (describing why you, as a human being, want to enter the legal field)
- Being glib or funny is not a good idea. Your essay doesn't need to be solemn, but the overall tone should be serious.

Content

- Your personal statement should give a sense of who you are, and how that relates to who and what you want to be. What about the trajectory of your life makes you want to be a lawyer?
- Broader scope than most graduate school admissions essays.
 - This essay is not necessarily a deep dive into the legal field; many good law school personal statements only deal with law in the final third of the essay.
 - You can go anywhere you want with this essay as long as you return to the 'why law?' question.
- Unlike your undergraduate personal statement, you need to show that you have done something to this point to substantiate your stated interests.
 - If you say you want to do something, give examples of things you've done or capacities you have that demonstrate/substantiate your interest.
- What can you do with a law degree? What do you want to use the law to do?
 - Think about the law as a tool. How can you think creatively about what the law can help you to do?
 - Themes of advocacy and public interest.
- Demonstrate your ability to "think like a lawyer"
 - Ability to view a problem dispassionately from multiple angles, construct a strong argument, anticipate counterarguments, be solutions-oriented, and advocate for your client.
- No need to demonstrate any previous knowledge in a specific legal subject or the law generally.
 - However, IF you mention an area of law you are interested in, you should show some understanding of that area and/or demonstrate experience within it.

Format

- Refer to individual school instructions
- Keep in mind that if you are copy/pasting your essay into an online form, you will likely lose any formatting you have done.
 - Italics and bold are often stripped when you copy/paste into a form, so don't use them in your essay if you will be submitting your essay through a form (use quotation marks for titles of books, etc.).