

Law School Application Essays/Personal Statements

The *Tips for Writing Graduate School Essays* written by Dr. Barri Gold (see page 16) offers some helpful suggestions even for law school essays. Pay special attention to the following bullets:

- Don't take "personal" too personally.
- Do not let them picture you as a child.
- Brag.
- Details! Details! Details!
- Be interesting.
- Pick and choose. You can't write it all.
- Go through a lot of drafts.
- Get others to read for you.
- Proofread

Also, more specifically for law school essays, consider the following:

- Write about what interests you, what you can be passionate about. Your enthusiasm will show through. There is no one topic that has gotten students in to law school, or one that has kept them out of it.
- Before you start, choose what you want to write about (your theme or thesis) and the order in which your essay may flow. Consider which of the following questions you may want to answer in your essay:
 1. How am I unique from other applicants?
 2. Why do I want to go to law school/be a lawyer?
 3. What are my qualifications/skills that will make me successful?
- You may decide to focus on law, or your essay may not touch on law at all. You may decide to focus on just one question through telling a story, or you may find a way to combine two or three. There is no one formula, so don't try to find one!
- Use concrete examples to support your theme. The interesting part to the reader (and the proof of the point you hope to get across) will be in the details.
- Start your essay with an attention-grabber. It may be a question, a story, or an anecdote. Decide what will launch your essay with OOMPH! Avoid using quotes - the reader want to hear your thoughts/words, not someone else's.
- Don't write excuses for your GPA or LSAT score. Your personal statement is not the place for apologies or to point out your faults! If you feel the need to explain your GPA or LSAT score, consider writing a supplemental statement to include with your application. Consult with an advisor in the Career Center on how you might do this effectively.
- Be positive. Talk about what was/is, not what wasn't/isn't.
- Remember that law schools are very interested in your writing skills - this essay is important. Your writing should demonstrate clarity of thought and an ability to think logically and analytically. Your ability to communicate in an engaging manner will also be evaluated.