

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT STAND OUT

- Create an interesting first paragraph and summarize well
- Choose a theme, not the “hit or miss” approach
- Avoid gimmicks, such as poetry, recipes, etc.
- Personalize your essay by not just relating what you did but why you did it or what impact the experience had on you
- Explain how you have broadened your horizons
- Discuss your accomplishments in terms of the obstacles you overcame
- Tell the committee what you want them to know about you that is not necessarily reflected on your academic record or in the rest of your application
- Be creative, but genuine and reflect your own values and priorities
- Individualize your essay to each law school by giving specific reasons for applying to that school (*not just pasting the name of the particular school in the last sentence of the essay*)
- Emphasize the demanding, intellectually challenging courses you took, regardless of their obvious relation to the law (*law school professors prefer to teach you the law; law-related courses or a law major are not very noteworthy*)
- Do not emphasize sports unless that is how you got into college and you have a good academic record, and/or you have learned something about yourself through your involvement with athletics
- Always explain (*but do not make excuses for*) discrepancies in your academic or personal record
- Follow directions precisely (be cognizant of word or page limits, specific questions asked, etc. for each individual school)
- Keep it brief and succinct; two pages is usually preferred (unless directions say otherwise)
- Proofread again and again and again
- **MAKE THE COMMITTEE WANT TO READ THE WHOLE ESSAY**