

WRITING SAMPLES

Many students are asked to submit a writing sample when applying for a legal position. Usually, this request occurs after an initial screening interview (although some law firms request a writing sample as part of the initial application).

Your legal writing sample should be approximately eight to ten pages in length and include analysis of a legal issue and case citations in blue book form.

You may submit a writing sample you developed for a class (e.g., an LPS brief) or you may prefer to submit an excerpt from an article for publication if you are on a journal. If you wish to use a memorandum, court pleading or other document from a summer or part-time job, you must ask your employer for permission first. Make sure any confidential information (such as a client's name) is deleted or "whited out" before you submit it.

Students frequently ask whether they should submit an edited or unedited writing sample. Since the employer is attempting to determine the strength of your writing ability and style, an unedited writing sample is usually requested. Therefore, you should not use something that was edited by a faculty member or employer as it does not reflect your true writing ability. You may, of course, use the original version prior to the edits. You will only hurt yourself in the long run if your actual writing skills are not parallel to those reflected in your writing sample.

If you do not have an unedited writing sample, you must include a footnote indicating that your writing sample has been edited and by whom.