

How do I draft a

WRITING SAMPLE?!

What is a writing sample, and do I need one?

- You will be applying for many different positions throughout law school (internships, externships, summer associate positions, clerkships, and more).
- Many of these will require you submit a writing sample along with your other application materials.

First steps:



#1 Choose your sample. This will likely be a sample of legal writing.

1Ls: Use your LP I memo.

2Ls: Use your LP II memo *or* a brief or opinion from your summer internship.

3Ls: Use a brief or memo from your summer internship *or* a piece of academic writing (seminar paper, directed research, etc.).

#2 Aim to prepare a five-page writing sample. Usually, employers will ask for a sample of no more than five pages in length. However, whoever is reviewing your application will probably only read two to three pages from that sample, which means you will need to shorten your sample to five pages.

#3 Add a synopsis to the beginning of your sample. Because you will be shortening a longer work, you will need to add an excerpt to the beginning of the sample that gives the reader some context. This synopsis will likely tell the reader what the sample is from and give the reader a brief introduction into what topic the sample covers. See the below example:

The attached writing sample is an excerpt from an office memorandum submitted in my 1L Legal Practice class. The memorandum examined whether the prosecution would be likely to prove that a fictitious client, Ms. Rose, committed second-degree murder under implied malice theory. Ms. Rose drove an electric bicycle through a red light and into an intersection, striking a group of pedestrians; there were two fatalities.

How to selectively edit your sample:

- Try to select the best portion of your writing sample to provide in your application materials. But potential employers understand this means different things based on your year. **1Ls will likely select one issue or element from within their memo.** You can probably also edit the sample for length to be able to include your overarching rule paragraph and maybe an edited version of your facts. You will want to tell the reader that you selected only one element or one TRRAC for the sample (for example, only the implied malice portion).

- **2Ls and 3Ls using a sample from a summer position or an academic work will likely select a portion that best highlights their legal analysis skills.** This standard means, you will likely omit facts and rule paragraphs and focus on application.