

WRITING SAMPLE GUIDELINES

Selection: Choose a recent sample that reflects your legal reasoning and analytical skills. Most students choose to use a sample from a legal writing course, advocacy, or work completed for a legal employer. Law journal articles are not recommended because they are usually heavily edited by someone else and are too long. Whatever you choose, be prepared to discuss the content of your writing sample during an interview.

Cover Sheet: Your writing sample should include a cover sheet with a header (name, address, phone, etc., just like the header on your resume), proper title (Writing Sample), brief description, and a brief explanation if you are submitting an excerpt.

Length: Some employers will specify page length guidelines, in which case your sample must not exceed the stated page limit. If no guidelines are provided, generally 5-10 pages are appropriate (not including the cover page). Ideally, you should provide an entire product, but if the document is too long then provide an excerpt of your analysis and provide a brief contextual description on your cover page.

Submit your own work: You must provide an unedited sample, but that does not mean you have to use the original draft that you tendered to your instructor or supervisor. The sample should be your own writing, but it is fine to provide a version of your writing that has been revised as a result of feedback from others as long as you are the one who made the revisions. If possible use a sample that was not co-authored. If you worked collaboratively with a practitioner or Moot Court teammate, you need to clearly indicate which portions of the sample are yours.

Confidentiality: If you use a sample from an employer or externship, you must ask permission before using the sample and redact any confidential information, such as party names.

Proofread Carefully: Your sample should be free of misspellings, typos, grammatical errors, and all citations should be in accordance with Bluebook and Shepardized. Try reading it backwards, out loud, or with a ruler.

Always bring a writing sample to an interview: Even if the employer does not request a writing sample with your resume and cover letter it's a good idea to bring a sample with you to your interview in case you are asked for it.