

Lawyer Up: Law School Personal Statements

Directions. This sheet contains examples of Parts of Law School Personal Statements. Look for places they use CAP and determine if the work could be better or worse.

Quick reCAP (see what we did there?): CAP = Career, academics, and professional goals

- Career - why law?
- Academics - why extra schooling?
- Personal - why you?

Number One:

“I consider myself to be a life-long learner and am the type of person who thrives when challenged, a problem solver who enjoys working through puzzles in order to arrive at the ideal solution. I knew that I needed to find a role in which I could stay up-to-date with the latest scientific discoveries, while continuing to challenge myself intellectually on a daily basis. I began to look for a way to fulfill my love of science and personal interaction in my career. After talking to several program alumni, friends, and colleagues in the scientific field, I took a leap of faith and jumped into a role as a technology specialist at an intellectual property law firm. I am so very glad that I did, as this role has provided me with the balance of science and communication that I was seeking.”

Taken from: <https://www.nesl.edu/blog/detail/outstanding-real-world-law-school-personal-statement-examples>

- What fulfills them (personal goal)
 - Interweaving career and personal
- Explaining why their seemingly unrelated academic background is actually quite useful in this field (academic goal)
- Telling readers who the writer is and what they (like to) do
- Thinking through where it might go next: probably to offer some examples

Number Two:

“In sixth grade English, alongside reading Ray Bradbury’s short stories and learning that (according to Mark Twain), “the difference between the almost right word and the right word is...the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning,” my class contemplated the notion that knowledge is power and ignorance is bliss. I knew straight away, with the invisible shiver of a lightning spike through my vertebrae, that I wanted both knowledge and power—and that my life would be a thrilling, focused journey of acquiring both.

In my current profession, financial planning, I optimize my clients’ financial lives so that their whole lives can be better. I relish building my own knowledge base as I tackle esoteric pension plan provisions and subsections of our tax code, but most of all revel in the empowerment that my work creates for my clients. I intend to bring such clarity and compassion for my clients to my studies at New England Law and eventual practice as an attorney.”

Taken from: <https://www.nesl.edu/blog/detail/outstanding-real-world-law-school-personal-statement-examples>

- The notion of helping people (career goal) “I intend to bring such clarity and compassion”
- Another one that is a seemingly unrelated field but they make the link clear (career goal)
- They have a goal by the end they’ve set up to make lives clear (personal goal)

Number Three:

“Since that time, I have worked closely with the many immigrant families in my neighborhood, and now university town. I began by volunteering at a local community center. Together with social workers, I served food and gave out clothes to new arrivals. My diligent work ethic led to more responsibility, and I received training in basic counseling techniques, first aid skills and community services. Soon, I was tasked with welcoming new community members and assessing their health and social needs. I heard the many difficult stories of those who had traveled thousands of miles, often through several countries, risking everything to reach a safe, welcoming country. I was proud to contribute in some small way to making America welcoming for these individuals.”

Taken from: <https://bemoacademicconsulting.com/blog/sample-law-school-personal-statement-and-tips>

- Link to their personal values (goals)—wanting to make people’s lives better
- “Diligent work ethic” – who they are (career connection)
- Worldly view—likely inclusive, good if you don’t have a space for a diversity statement
 - Showing a pretty well-rounded individual, something you won’t necessarily get from transcripts.

Number Four:

“One of my favorite authors, Dr. Brené Brown, once said that “Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen.” As someone that has struggled with crippling timidity from a young age, it has taken over a decade to build up the courage required to put myself out there, to pursue the career that has consistently been at the forefront of my ambitions, even if it is the most uncomfortable pursuit imaginable - I have built up the courage to become a lawyer.”

Taken from: <https://bemoacademicconsulting.com/blog/sample-law-school-personal-statement-and-tips-8>

- Genuine—real about who you are: not an extrovert and that’s okay
- It’s important to be real about who you are and your expectations, so they choose you for you.
- A great way to turn a weakness into a strength
- Showing the writer has been on a journey and learned from that journey
- Offers a unique perspective; shows the career isn’t just for extroverts

Number Five:

“The image of me writhing in pain on the practice field sometimes slips back into my thoughts as I decide where to apply to law school. College football taught me to recognize my weaknesses and look for ways to overcome them. I will enter law school a much stronger person and student because of my experiences on the football field and in the classroom. My decision where to attend law school mirrors my decision where to play college football. I want to study law at the

University of Chicago Law School because it provides the best combination of professors, students, and resources in the country. In Division I college football, I succeeded when I took advantage of my opportunities. I hope the University of Chicago will give me an opportunity to succeed again.”

Taken from: <https://www.law.uchicago.edu/news/their-own-words-admissions-essays-worked>

- Sharing the things that really matter to the writer
- Relating personal experiences and his connections to other things in which he wants to (or has) succeeded
- Focusing on the specific university here as well
- Collegiate athletics—shows he can manage the balancing act between school and other aspects of his life
- Might offer some really cool experiences based on his own for lawyers employed by a college or university or by an athletic entity

Number Six:

“Inspired by my summer experience, I jumped at the opportunity to take on the position of Diversity Outreach Ambassador for the San Francisco Bar Association Diversity Pipeline Program. In this position, I was responsible for helping organize a campus event that brought educational material and a panel of lawyers to UC Berkeley in order to empower and inform minority students about their opportunities in law school. In this position I was able to unite a diverse group of organizations, including the Black Pre-Law Association, the Latino Pre-Law Society, and the Haas Undergraduate Black Business Association. Working in this position was instrumental in solidifying my desire to attend law school. The lawyers who volunteered their time had a significant impact on me. I learned that they used their legal education to assist causes and organizations they felt passionate about. One of the lawyers told me that she volunteered her legal services to a Latino advocacy association. Another lawyer explained to me how he donated his legal expertise to advise minority youth on how to overcome legal difficulties. Collaborating with these lawyers gave me a better understanding of how my passion for law could interact with my interest in social justice issues.”

Taken from: <https://www.law.uchicago.edu/news/their-own-words-admissions-essays-worked>

- A cool way to write about academics from a different side—what extracurriculars this student was involved with
- A neat way to expand on things that won’t show up in a transcript but might be on a resume