



## How Do I Draft a 2L and 3L Writing Sample?

### Who will be asking for a writing sample?

As 2Ls, you will likely be submitting a writing sample with your other application materials as you apply for many different positions. These positions will range from summer associateships to post-graduation clerkships.

When evaluating 2Ls and 3Ls, employers will want to see the applicant has solid legal analysis skills and is a proficient writer. Choose a piece that best demonstrates your strengths.

### First Steps:

1. **Choose your sample.**  
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, law review article, etc.). In addition, you may use a piece from your LP III class.
2. **Shorten your sample.** Usually, employers will ask for a sample of no more than ten pages in length. However, whoever is reviewing your application will probably only read four to five pages of that sample, which means you will need to shorten your sample significantly. If the employer does not specify, aim for a sample eight-to-ten pages in length.
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 a brief introduction about what topic the sample covers. See the example below:

The attached writing sample is an excerpt from a bench memorandum I completed during my internship in the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island. The memorandum examined whether the plaintiff in an admiralty case shifted the burden of proof in regards to liability for a shipwreck. For this sample, I have chosen to include [list sections included in order].

### How to selectively edit your sample:

Try to select the best portion of your writing sample to provide in your application materials. For **2Ls and 3Ls**, this means **using a sample from a summer position or an academic work that best highlights their legal analysis skills**. Remember, the work you select should be formal in tone.

For most samples, using the analysis portion will be the strongest demonstration of your abilities. Generally, you should not provide the rule synthesis. Instead, you can briefly summarize the applicable rules on the cover page where you explain the context of your selection.

Once you have shortened your sample, review your work. Be sure to eliminate as much passive voice as possible.