

SOMETHING ABOUT LAWYER

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In the past few decades, there has been an explosion in the number of people applying for admission to law schools. A lot of this increase is the result of more and more women and minorities pursuing a legal career. But this means it's tougher than ever to get into law school these days, as not nearly enough new law schools have been created to meet the huge increase in competition for admission to law school. So not only do you have to have an excellent academic profile to be admitted to law school, you've also got to write an intelligent, personal, and persuasive essay on your application if you hope to be admitted. We'll discuss the most common types of essay questions you'll find on law school applications.

By far, the essay question you're most likely to see on a law school application is *Why Do You Want To Be A Lawyer?* Everyone has their own reasons for wanting to be a lawyer, and for many, it's the prestige and income of the profession. But you certainly don't want to write that, even if it's your main reason for wanting to be a lawyer. You'll want to come up with something that demonstrates that you understand how important the legal profession is, and how they can defend the innocent, speak out against injustice, help people protect their rights, and speak up for the oppressed. And you'll want to have a story or incident that you personally experienced that made you want to be a lawyer to achieve these ends. Admissions committees don't want to hear that you were inspired to become a lawyer by watching *Law & Order* or that your mother is a lawyer and you want to follow in her footsteps. You'll need a real, meaningful experience to relate about how and when you first realized just how much good attorneys can do, and that you knew from then on it was your calling in life. About a time when you witnessed or experienced injustice, or when legal counsel saved you or a friend or loved one from being defrauded or wrongly accused. But have a story to tell about how the legal profession has profoundly affected your or someone you know and love, and then tell that story with passion and sincerity. That's the key to success with this type of essay.

Another common essay question on law school applications is *Why Do You Believe You're Qualified To Be A Lawyer?* Of course, you'll want to write something about your personal qualities like compassion, love for study, an analytical mind, etc., that you feel would be assets in a legal career. And if you've had actual experience in the world of law, such as volunteering at Legal Aid, or working in a prosecutor's office during the

summer, or any other directly applicable experience, you'll want to stress that.

Some law schools will ask you to write an essay about an issue or controversy that you feel strongly about. You can approach this in two ways. The first approach is to write about something that means a lot to you, and advocate for that position in your essay. By doing so, you'll demonstrate that you're politically aware, that you think for yourself, and that you're passionate about things. These are all good qualities in a lawyer. Of course, you run the not insignificant risk that the reader of your essay will be someone who's violently in disagreement with your position, and will irrationally reject your application on that basis alone. Theoretically, that shouldn't happen-admissions officers are supposed to be objective and impartial, and able to leave their personal biases out of admissions decisions. And in a perfect world, everyone of them would be one hundred percent impartial every time they read an essay. But we don't live in a perfect world, and people are human. You probably shouldn't worry too much about this, unless you hold some really radical political positions. In that case, you should be aware of the danger of writing about and standing for a highly inflammatory political position. So use your best judgment. The other approach you can take is to take a current issue and look at it from both sides, or several sides, as the case may be. This demonstrates that you're open minded, that you're able to put yourself in the other person's shoes, and that you have good reasoning skills. These, too, are all good qualities that a lawyer needs. Whichever approach you take, just don't come across as either insincere, or unwilling to take any position on any controversy. Either attitude will jump out at your essay reader and have a hugely negative impact on your chance of being accepted for admission.

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