



Law School Personal Statement Workshop

Brainstorm Topics | Reflect on Your Experiences

Identify at least three meaningful experiences from your life (interests, hobbies, places you've been, people you admire/influenced you, work/volunteer experiences, academics, adversity/challenges, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Choose one experience. Describe how did this experience change you. What did you learn?

What specific skills/strengths did you develop or demonstrate in this experience?

What was the result or impact from your contribution in this experience?

Connect this experience to a theme. Choose one word that represents the theme.

Examples:

- Growing up in a large family and having to assume responsibility early on = RESPONSIBILITY
- Transferring to a new college and having to meet new people = INITIATIVE
- Going abroad for the first time and not speaking the language = RESOURCEFULNESS
- Getting diagnosed with ADHD and how that impacted learning = SELF-ADVOCACY

Now, integrate this theme into a thesis statement. Examples:

As the oldest of eight siblings, I learned the true meaning of responsibility by the time I was 16. From ensuring my siblings got to school on time, helping my mom do weekly chores, helping my siblings with their homework, and tucking them in a night, I truly was the other parent in the absence of father. It was this strong sense of responsibility that has allowed me to accomplish things I never thought I could and know that I could be responsible for others in the future.

When I'm paddle boarding, I'm at peace and I'm in control of my experience. When I had to transfer from one college to another after one semester, I did not feel in control, yet it was through paddle boarding and taking initiative that I was able to chart a new path for myself and regain direction over my life and future.



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Develop an Outline

1. Introductory Paragraph:

- a. Hook : Personal story that connects to your interest and motivation for pursuing the field and the program you are applying for, specifically.

- b. Thesis & Preview : Explain that you are good fit for “x” graduate program and preview some of your rationale

2. Body Paragraphs

- a. Current/Past Experiences, Future Goals, Why X law school, etc.
- b. Transitions: Include a topic sentence at the beginning and a connection back to your thesis at the end of each body paragraph.

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

BODY PARAGRAPH 3

BODY PARAGRAPH 4

3. Conclusion:

- a. Restate Thesis : Connect to the mission/values of the program and explain why it’s a fit.
- b. Wrap-up : Connect back to original story from your hook and/or the bigger picture.



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Develop an Outline – EXAMPLE

1. Introductory Paragraph:

- a. Hook: Personal story that get's the reader's attention and relates to the theme

Start with imagery of paddle boarding, describe the experience and how long I've been doing it and how I got started; I use it as a stress reliever

- b. Thesis & Preview: Connect the initial "hook" into your theme and what story you will tell; you can tie it into why law school as well

Connect paddle boarding to main theme of having to take initiative when I transferred from one college to the next; "out of control" feeling; starting over, fear, unknown; but relate it to law school, how I can help others regain control over their "out of control" feeling situations

2. Body Paragraphs

- a. Current/Past Experiences, Future Goals, Why X law school, etc.
- b. Transitions: Include a topic sentence at the beginning and a connection back to your thesis at the end of each body paragraph.

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

Discuss the first college; why I wanted to transfer – what I was struggling with and why the decision was a difficult one – how I was doubtful about Villanova too

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

Then discuss transition to Villanova, Spring semester – the challenges, not knowing anyone – low points – not sure what to do next – feeling lost

BODY PARAGRAPH 3

Describe summer vacation getting into paddle boarding again – gave it up but decided to get back into it – re-energized me again, motivation, control, confidence – how it impacted the Fall semester

BODY PARAGRAPH 4

How I began to take more initiative and examples of how that worked out in a positive way – my sorority, Acapella group, service, choosing my career path – connect to law and wanting to help others

3. Conclusion:

Reiterate what I learned from taking initiative – you can't wait around to take control of your situation; proactive; want to do that for others in the legal field; add in why X law school; end with paddle board imagery