

Hot Tips for Law Personal Statement Writing

1. Everything post-GCSE
 - Make a list of everything law-related you've done or read since GCSEs
 - If you haven't done / read much yet, do / read it now!
 - Whenever you do /read something, just jot down a few notes after you finished: what was it about? What did you learn from it? (they like that) What have you gone on to do as a result of it?
 - Avoid Mr. Bishop's 'short-pants stories'
 - Other end of extreme: don't talk about stuff you haven't done yet
2. Make it about law
 - 80%-90% should be about law
 - Trying to convince admissions tutor you want to study this for the next 3 years
 - I only mentioned my A-Levels once in my entire personal statement
 - Don't tell them what abilities you have: show them through what you've read and done
3. Zoom in
 - a) I went to a lecture on the concept of *mens rea* in the criminal law (ok: you and 300 other people)
 - b) I found particularly interesting the way intoxication can affect a person's ability to have the correct mental state to be guilty of an offence (better: you and 30 other people)
 - c) And as a result I went on to read this article by Mr. Academic, and further discovered how the case of *Drunkard v Wino* has changed this area of the law (brilliant: now you're standing out)
 - Not only making it individual to you, but also showing your ability to learn and research independently
4. Engage with, scrutinise and reflect on things you've done
 - An example being my analysis of the book I mentioned in my PS
 - So many statements are just 'I did this, then I read this, then I did this.' So what? The admissions tutor wants to know what you learned from it, because that's what you're going to uni to do
 - Uni is all about creating your own thoughts and opinions based on what you read: they need to see you can do that
 - One way of showing engagement is by going on to do something else as a result of the first thing (above), but you can also say 'I found this

topic particularly interesting’ or ‘what the writer said about X really made me consider Y’ or ‘I questioned the points raised about Z’

5. Grammar

- How can you show the rigour, attention to detail, accuracy and discipline needed to study law if you can’t even get your grammar write in a 600-word personal statement?
- Go over and over and over: get second and third and fourth opinions

6. Word Count

- a) Don’t worry about word count to begin with. In your first few drafts just get down every single idea you have: cutting down is the last thing you should do, and you don’t want to miss out on a brilliant point you could make because you’re worried about word count
- b) However, when it gets down to final drafts make every word count: only got 4000 characters or roughly 600 words, so every single word needs to be able to justify its place there. I did 10 drafts of my personal statement, and a good number of them were just trying to cut down words and make it more succinct

7. General points

- Be wary of semicolons: you may think they make you look fancy, but it’s very very easy to use them incorrectly and I prefer to just steer clear if possible. Only use them if you have to, not because you want to
- DON’T USE THE PHRASE ‘PIQUED MY INTEREST’