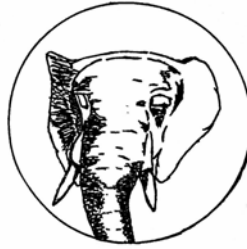


Grammatix, Inc.



presents

Free Evaluation Section of the Complete LSAT Strategy Guide: All About the Writing Sample

This free evaluation section of the Complete LSAT Strategy Guide will show you how to crank out a Writing Sample quickly and easily.

The Complete LSAT Strategy Guide is the best way to get ready for the LSAT. To learn more about the Guide, its author, and how you can get unlimited personal help with your LSAT preparation for an incredibly low price, go to www.AceTheLSAT.com.

Congratulations in advance!

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All About the Writing Sample

The writing sample of the LSAT is probably the easiest writing “test” you’ll ever take, for two reasons:

- It doesn’t affect your numerical score on the test in any way.
- It’s rumored to be widely disregarded by admissions committees.

So there isn’t a whole lot of pressure on you for this part of the test.

But it would be a huge mistake to ignore it and blow it off! First of all, whether they use it often or not, the admissions committee will definitely see your Writing Sample—and they always have the option of considering it when they review your application.



One popular rumor is that some committees use the Writing Sample as a way to determine the authenticity of your personal statement. This is a good reason to take the Sample seriously—and to write your own statement. You never want your integrity to be an issue, especially during the law school application process.

Still, the committee members understand that nobody does their best writing under pressure, so they are unlikely to hold your work to the highest standard.

Here’s the bottom line: you need to do a good job on the Writing Sample, but you don’t need to do a great job. We’ll discuss some of the basics of a good Writing Sample without getting too bogged down. Frankly, your time is better spent worrying about the scored sections of the test, and if you’ve been taking college exams (or writing corporate memos) for the past few years, you should have no trouble with this section.

The Setup

Every Writing Sample prompt gives you a scenario with two possible decisions. Your job is to consider all the information and formulate an argument in favor of a particular course of action. Since law school is all about learning to see different sides of an issue, and these scenarios are very nuanced, we can expect that the LSAT wants your argument to do a little equivocating, consider the pros and cons of each option, and then come to a conclusion that generates the most benefit to the people in the scenario who have to make the decision. It’s pretty easy once you get the hang of it—and like we said, it doesn’t have to be Pulitzer material.

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The Formula

Here's the formula I recommend for cranking out a Writing Sample. Of course, you don't have to follow this if you don't like, but it'll work just fine if you choose to use it.

1. Begin the response with a flat statement of the best course of action.

If the scenario in the Writing Sample were real, and we really had to help make the decision in the prompt, the memo announcing the decision would probably begin with a very clear statement of the decision itself. This is different from a classroom exercise, where we usually arrive at a conclusion near the end of the essay. People in business are always in a hurry, so effective memos start with the conclusion of the argument and then provide the support later on, so the reader doesn't have to dig through information she might not care about.

2. Continue the first paragraph by re-casting the scenario in your own terms.

Re-casting the scenario does *not* mean paraphrasing it. Instead, you should say something new about the scenario that shows you understand it, and that you have your own insights to add.

3. Finish the first paragraph by explaining why the alternate course of action is inferior.

Explain what, specifically, makes the other choice the worse of the two.

4. Begin the second paragraph by noting the benefits of both alternatives.

This shows your ability to see both sides of an issue.

5. End the second paragraph by pointing out the most important trait of either alternative.

Here, you either point out that the winning choice has a benefit that clearly outweighs the losing choice, or that the losing choice has a drawback that must be avoided at all costs.

6. In the final paragraph, restate the decision and explain its superiority in light of the organization's greater goals.

This shows that you can consider external forces that might shape a decision.

Let's consider a fake Writing Sample prompt, and then we'll craft a response to it. And that's really all you need to do in the way of preparation. (For real prompts you can

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work with, consult your copy of the LSAC publication *10 More Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests*.)

An LSAT-ish Writing Sample

THIS IS NOT A REAL LSAT WRITING SAMPLE! IT'S A MADE-UP EXAMPLE. GRAMMATIX, INC., HAS NO AFFILIATION OF ANY KIND WITH THE LSAC. Here's the prompt:

Fairlake Communications, the owner of a local AM radio station in the small town of Fairlake City, needs to hire a new morning anchor. Consider the following, and then write an argument in favor of one of the candidates:

- Fairlake Communications wants to maintain ties to its listener base by hiring a morning anchor familiar with local issues.
- Fairlake Communications wants to gain national attention for its morning programming, in the hope of syndicating that programming to other small radio stations.

Sandy Allen was born and raised in Fairlake, even though she hasn't lived in the town for over 30 years. She is currently the assistant host of a regionally syndicated afternoon talk show, after working as a host or call-screener in a variety of small- to medium-sized local markets around the country. In the last three years she has won two prestigious industry awards.

Tom Sawgram comes from Chicago. He has lived in Fairlake for the past 15 years, holding a position as a television anchor and reporter for the local news. His reporting has won him numerous regional and national awards, most recently a Gallagher Prize for Excellence in Local Reporting. In the last few years, his work has been regularly featured on regional and national all-news channels, and people in the region recognize his face.

As you can see, both alternatives would be fine choices; there's no clear-cut winner. This is common on the LSAT Writing Sample.

In this particular scenario, we might choose Allen because she already has experience as a syndicated host, her work has been recognized by her peers, and she's native to the area, even if she hasn't lived in Fairlake for a long time.

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On the other hand, we might just as easily pick Sawgram, who has lived in the area more recently, who has experience as a host, and whose name and face are recognizable.

For the sake of this example, we'll come out in favor of Allen.

Step 1:

Fairlake Communications should hire Sandy Allen as its new morning anchor.

Step 2:

While both Allen and Sawgram are clearly qualified candidates for the position, Allen is in the best position to help the company syndicate its programming.

Step 3:

Sawgram's biggest strength is his local recognition, but he would have little to offer to the syndication campaign, which should be our primary focus.

Step 4:

Each candidate has something meaningful to offer. Allen's experience in the related position of assistant anchor will allow the company to capitalize on her insight, and her native status should play well to the local audience, once they get used to her. Sawgram already has a following, and his most recent award suggests a thorough knowledge of local issues.

Step 5:

In the final analysis, though, Allen's experience in the industry, and with syndication, makes her the superior choice.

Step 6:

Initially, hiring Allen will do more to further the goal of syndication than it does to strengthen the ties between Fairlake Communications and the town of Fairlake City. Since Fairlake Communications is a business, and since more immediate revenue can be generated through syndication, the company should place the goal of syndication over the goal of community for the moment. As time passes and Allen establishes a rapport with the community, Fairlake Communications will find that both its goals have been satisfied.

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Here's the whole thing when we put it together:

Fairlake Communications should hire Sandy Allen as its new morning anchor. While both Allen and Sawgram are clearly qualified candidates for the position, Allen is in the best position to help the company syndicate its programming. Sawgram's biggest strength is his local recognition, but he would have little to offer to the syndication campaign, which should be our primary focus.

Each candidate has something meaningful to contribute. Allen's experience in the related position of assistant anchor will allow the company to capitalize on her insight, and her native status should play well to the local audience, once they get used to her. Sawgram already has a following, and his most recent award suggests a thorough knowledge of local issues. In the final analysis, though, Allen's experience in the industry, and with syndication, makes her the superior choice.

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How to Train for the Writing Sample

There's not a whole lot of training to do, really. Use the formula above as a starting point, try a couple of prompts from *10 More Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests*, and call it a day!

Refer to the Special Report *Timing and Training* for advice on how your preparation for the Writing Sample fits into your overall study plan.