

References

Create a separate reference sheet with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of 3–4 references. The reference sheet should have the same heading (name, address, phone number, and email) as your résumé and be on the same paper stock. Bring the reference sheet to your interviews, even if you previously submitted a copy.

Choose references that can speak to your ability to perform well in a legal job. Professors, former employers, and supervisors are good people to ask for references. If you are in your first year, undergraduate professors are acceptable references.

Remember: Personal references, such as family, friends, or relatives are not appropriate references. You should ask law professors and former employers to serve as references.

Sample Reference Sheet

<p>Ima Student 315 S. Plymouth Court, Apt. 222 Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 987-1402 student@law.jmls.edu</p>
<hr/> <p>REFERENCES</p> <hr/>
<p>Professor George Washington (Legal Writing Professor) The John Marshall Law School 315 S. Plymouth Court Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 427-2737</p>
<p>The Honorable Ben Franklin Circuit Court of Cook County Richard J. Daley Center 50 W. Washington Street, Room 1107 Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 123-4567</p>
<p>Ms. Outta Paper Burrie Them & Paper 77 W. Wacker Drive Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 411-0999</p>

Transcripts

At some point before you are hired, an employer will probably ask for a law school transcript. An unofficial transcript is fine unless the employer specifically asks for an official transcript. Patent law students may also be asked for their undergraduate transcripts.

An official John Marshall transcript costs \$5. To get a copy, fill out a transcript request form, which is available in the Registrar's Office (3rd floor).

Once you have an official copy, you may make as many photocopies as you wish. To upload your John Marshall transcript onto Symplicity, you must scan your transcript into a PDF.

Writing Samples

Similar to being asked for a transcript, it is likely that during the interview process an employer will ask you for a legal Writing Sample. A Writing Sample should highlight your legal reasoning and analytical skills. Keep these points in mind when choosing a Writing Sample:

- A Writing Sample should highlight your legal reasoning and analytical skills. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your legal abilities. In the end, your goal is to provide the best evidence of the skills you possess.
 - Unless an employer indicates otherwise, a Writing Sample should be 5–10 pages long. Often first-year students use a memorandum from their legal writing class that is usually longer than 10 pages. Employers understand that first-year students may not have shorter samples available yet.
 - You may include a Cover Sheet that provides the reader with context regarding the sample. Matters to address in the Cover Sheet include:
 - Original purpose of the Writing Sample
 - When and for whom the sample was originally written
 - If the Writing Sample is an excerpt, include the nature of the larger document and the context of the excerpt.
 - If confidential information has been redacted, explain the nature of what was redacted (*e.g.*, all party names have been redacted).
- You may want to use a recent Lawyering Skills memo/brief or a moot court brief; current writings will most likely reflect your best legal analysis and writing skills. Ideally, your Writing Sample will be less than two years old.
 - Typos, poor grammar, incorrect citation form, and inaccurate citations can and will be used against you. Your Writing Sample should reflect your best writing ability in all ways. Use the law school's Writing Resource Center for any assistance you seek regarding writing issues.
 - You may find that to best demonstrate your legal writing and analytical skills, you need to excerpt the legal analysis section of a larger sample. When doing so, remember to describe the nature of the larger document on the Cover Sheet, as well as the context of the analysis.
 - If you use a brief or other writing taken from a job or externship, you must obtain permission from your supervisor and redact any confidential information (including blacking out party names). The Cover Sheet should note that information has been redacted.
 - If using a Writing Sample from Lawyering Skills or from any other source where comments may have been added, do not submit a copy with comments on it. Rather, make revisions, proofread, and then submit.
 - When possible, provide to the employer a Writing Sample that demonstrates your ability to practice law in an area of interest to the employer. For example, if you are applying to work for the Environmental Protection Agency, a Writing Sample concerning environmental law may be useful.
 - Some employers have specific Writing Sample guidelines, either described in their job posting or on their website. Make sure the Writing Sample you submit adheres to such guidelines (*e.g.*, the City of Chicago's Department of Law has its own specific guidelines).
 - Do not use a Writing Sample that was co-authored.
 - At times, employers may lose your documents. Make sure to include a header or footer with at least your name.

Remember: Your Writing Sample is an employer's first impression of the work product you will provide.

Writing Sample Cover Sheet Examples

Sally Student

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The attached writing sample was originally written as the final appellate brief for Lawyering Skills II. The argument presented was in support of *Senior* (the appellee) that summary judgment was proper when it is clear and free from doubt that *Junior* (the appellant) failed to satisfy his unconditional obligation to pay a demand note to *Senior*.

Senior and *Junior* entered into a lease agreement for an auto body shop that *Senior* owned and operated. The lease further provided that *Senior* would loan \$500,000 to *Junior* without interest for a five-year term. The lease was amended to indicate that *Senior* loaned an additional \$250,000 to *Junior* for a total amount of \$750,000 and to be payable on demand. Disputes arose between *Senior* and *Junior* as to the lease agreement. *Senior* made written demand for the payment of the \$750,000. *Junior's* failure to make that payment was the subject of this lawsuit.

The attached excerpt of the appellate brief addresses the following positions:

- Summary judgment is proper where it is clear and free from doubt that the demand note was an unconditional obligation that *Junior* failed to satisfy;
- There was no genuine issue of material fact that the demand note and lease agreement were separate obligations; and
- *Junior's* affidavit in response to summary judgment was improper under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 191.

I am attaching a copy of six pages of the argument section of an appellate brief that was submitted to the Illinois Supreme Court. I wrote this brief as an extern for the Appellate Defender in summer 2015. As supervising attorney, Joe Salem edited the brief and signed the final form. Mr. Salem has given me permission to use this brief as a writing sample, and has done minimal editing of the argument section.

OR

Attached is a copy of an argument section of my spring 2015 moot court brief on constitutional free speech guarantees. I wrote the attached section, while the subsequent sections and facts were written by my partner. Please contact me if you would like a copy of the entire brief.

OR

I am attaching a six-page section of a patent application I drafted this past summer. My supervising attorney, Jill Smith, has authorized me to use this application as a writing sample.

Thank You Letters

A short thank you letter should be mailed or emailed within 24 hours of an interview to every person with whom you interviewed. If this is not practical (*e.g.*, if you interviewed with 10 people), then at least send a letter to the contact person, the hiring attorney, the attorney you would be reporting to if hired, and any other person who made a special effort to help you secure an interview (*e.g.*, a John Marshall alumnus).

Vary the wording if you interviewed with several people, since they will all end up in your file. Also, be sure to personalize the letter and try to mention topics you

discussed with the person during your interview. The thank you letter is a final way to sell yourself to a future employer and to confirm your continued interest in the position.

Thank you letters can be typed or handwritten (provided you have good, legible handwriting, and use a simple, professional card). And don't forget to proofread. A typo in a thank you letter will more than likely cost you a job opportunity.

Sample Thank You Letter

315 S. Plymouth Court, Apt. 222
Chicago, Illinois 60604

September 14, 2015

Ms. Hope Keeler
Keeler & Waite
Sears Tower
233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 1213
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Dear Ms. Keeler:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you concerning your employment needs. I enjoyed learning the facets of your firm's services and functions. I think that my knowledge and understanding of the many areas of taxation and interest in the market economy would enable me to contribute substantially to your firm's service to its clients.

If you need transcripts, a fall class schedule, more writing samples, or recommendations, please feel free to contact me. I remain very interested in the position and would be able to begin as soon as October 1. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ima Student

Sample Handwritten Thank You Note

[Date]

Dear Mr./Ms. [Interviewer],

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me earlier today regarding the [Title] position. I enjoyed our conversation and it has increased my desire to be part of your team at [Employer].

I believe my [Skills/Talents/Experience] make me a great fit for this role because [Why].

As discussed, thank you for suggesting I join the [Organization]. I will follow up on your suggestion [When/How].

Please contact me with any questions or comments. Thanks again for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Email/Phone]