

## X. WRITING SAMPLES

Generally, employers will ask you to provide them with a writing sample, this may occur prior to the first interview or at the call-back. Your writing sample must be the best example of *your* writing and must be free of misspellings, typographical errors, and grammatical mistakes.

Good writing samples are legal writing. The following are some guidelines to follow: provide persuasive writing if available; provide something from the real world; provide something recent; provide about ten pages; provide your own work; excise confidential/sensitive information.

Although you generally want to submit a sample that is 6-12 pages long, follow whatever guidelines the employer specifies. If they say submit a five page sample, do that.

As indicated above, you must submit your own work. Each year the CSO receives calls from employers complaining about students who submit opinions written for a judicial externship. Such work does not provide a good writing sample because the employer will wonder how much of the work is yours and how much is the judge's. If the piece you wrote for an externship is your best work and is substantially your own writing, redact parts written by someone else and attach a cover letter explaining that it is substantially your own work. The same is true for published articles.

Each year during fall recruiting the CSO also hears from an embarrassed student or a disappointed attorney about a major mistake or typographical errors in the writing sample. You have all summer to choose and prepare a writing sample, don't lose out on an opportunity by failing to take the time to sit down and read over a hard copy of your sample. Also, check the copy before you mail it -- copy machines have been known to skip pages.

Finally, be comfortable talking about your writing sample. Re-read it before your interview. Writing samples are often a source of interview questions. You want to be especially prepared in case your interviewer has some experience or expertise in the area you wrote about.