

WRITING SAMPLE GUIDELINES

Writing ability is often a predictor of a student's potential success in seminary. The writing sample, therefore, plays an important role in the admissions process. Please follow the requirements below for the admissions writing sample.

Minimum Requirements for a Writing Sample

- The writing sample should be **typed, double-spaced, at least 750 words, and no more than two years old.**
- The writing sample should be **academic in nature**, demonstrate your ability to write clearly and succinctly, and be free from common grammatical errors. Also, it should be evident, early in the writing, what you are trying to accomplish.
- The writing sample should demonstrate an indication of your **critical thinking skills**. Critical thinking should include a critique of the topic or author you are writing about by interacting, reflecting, evaluating, or analyzing, even if you do not agree with topic or author. Therefore, be sure to state very clearly your own ideas and beliefs about the writing topic.
- The writing sample should include at least **one citation or reference**, as in a research paper.

Acceptable Writing Sample Topics

- A previously written term, research, dissertation, response, or reflection paper from your undergraduate education, graduate education, or post-graduate work, provided it is no more than two years old and meets the minimum requirements for a writing sample, as outlined above. In addition, previously written documents should clearly identify when the document was written and for what class or purpose it was written.

If you don't have a previously written document that meets the aforementioned requirements, please choose from the following, for your writing sample.

- Write a paper on a theme that flows from the Old Testament into the New Testament and how that theme interacts with your vocation/career context. (Examples of themes include but are not limited to "following Jesus into the world", "women in ministry", "the justice of God", "ethnic diversity", etc.) In addition to meeting the minimum requirements for a writing sample above, this paper must reference a minimum of five (5) bible verses. Additional resources can be used as well.
- Write a paper that interacts with, reflects, and responds with a video on BTS' program of Christian counseling. Contact Admissions office (215.368.5000, ext 146) for video. As part of your interaction, include what you like about BTS' approach, what is challenging to you, and/or what you think are some shortcomings about BTS' approach. This paper must meet the minimum requirements of a writing sample, as outlined above.

- Read one of the following books below and write a paper that interacts with, reflects, and responds with the author, even if you do not agree with the author. **Please do not merely repeat what the author says.** This paper must meet the minimum requirements of a writing sample, as outlined above.

1. **God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist, and Racist?** by David T. Lamb (InterVarsity Press)
2. **Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church,** by N.T. Wright (HarperOne)
3. **Reconciliation Blues,** by Ed Gilbreath (InterVarsity Press)
4. **Your Church Is Too Small: Why Unity in Christ's Mission Is Vital to the Future of the Church,** by John H. Armstrong (Zondervan)
5. **Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why It Matters What Christians Believe,** edited by Ben Quash and Michael Ward (Baker Academic)
6. **With Justice for All: A Strategy for Community Development,** by John M. Perkins (Regal)
7. **Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia,** by Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom (InterVarsity Press)
8. **Evolving in Monkey Town: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions,** by Rachel Held Evans (Zondervan)
9. **Psychology and Christianity: Four Views** (or **Psychology and Christianity: Five Views**), edited by Eric L. Johnson and Stanton Jones (InterVarsity Press)
10. **The Cross of Christ,** by John R. W. Stott (InterVarsity Press)

This book list does not imply endorsement by the seminary of the authors or the contents of the books.