

Purpose of the Scholarship Essay

- Tell the scholarship committee that you can use critical thinking skills
- Showcase your grammar and writing skills
- Allows you to display creative skills
- Allows you to display strengths and facets of his/her personality
- Personalize your essay and be passionate. Write about something of interest to you. Make your application stand out from the crowd.
- Talk about your impact on other people.

Overview of 10 Tips for Writing a Scholarship Essay

- 1. Read the instructions carefully and make sure you understand them before you start writing.**
 - a. What is the deadline?
 - b. Do you meet most or all of the criteria?
 - c. Where does the application need to be turned in/mailed?
 - d. Letters of recommendation? Have you given the letter-writers enough time before the deadline?
 - e. Is an essay required?
 - f. Neatness counts! Always type.
- 2. Brainstorm what you are going to write and organize your thoughts before you start writing.**
 - a. Brainstorm
 - i. Brainstorming Prompts: Essay questions will be variance on these themes:
When given an option, choose a question you are comfortable writing about.
 - i. What are you good at? (ask your friends and parents)
 - ii. What do you like to do?
 - iii. What is important to you?
 - iv. Major accomplishments
 - v. Distinguishing qualities or skills
 - vi. A difficult time in your life...how did you overcome the difficulty?
 - vii. Have you struggled for something and succeeded? How did you succeed? Have you struggled for something and failed? How did you respond?

- viii. Describe your financial situation
 - ix. Strongest, most unwavering personality trait
 - x. Accomplishments outside the world of academics
 - xi. Important community/extra-curricular activities
 - xii. Your idea of success
 - xiii. Someone you look up to/admire and why?
- b. Choose and Analyze
 - c. Create an Outline
 - d. Create first draft
 - i. Worry about revising and editing AFTER you have some content to work with.
 - ii. Walk away from the task for an hour or two.
 - iii. There is no set style or tone. Be creative!
 - iv. You have unique talents! Don't be hard on yourself.
 - e. Revise content
 - i. Did I use imagery?
 - ii. Have I used the active voice whenever possible?
 - iii. Do I have strong transitions between paragraphs? Within paragraphs?
 - iv. Have I answered the question?
 - v. Are parts of the essay unclear? Do parts need further clarification?
 - vi. Is my essay free of clichés? Is my essay free of vague language?
 - vii. Is every single sentence critical to the essay? (This is especially important for essays with low word count limits!)
 - f. Edit/proofread
 - i. Have I used the "I" voice (first person point of view)?
 - ii. Is my essay free of comma splices and/or run-on sentences?
 - iii. Do I have sentence variety?
 - iv. Is my verb tense consistent?
 - v. Am I using proper punctuation?
 - vi. Are proper nouns capitalized?
 - vii. Have I relied on something more than spellcheck?
 - viii. Have I read my essay aloud? (You will be amazed at the amount of errors you'll find while reading aloud.)
 - ix. Have I given my essay to someone else for proofreading?
- 3. Begin the writing process by writing an outline.**
- a. Your essay should be structured so it contains the following:
 - i. Introduction paragraph: Your essay needs to grab the reader from the get-go; therefore, the introduction paragraph is very important. Don't summarize. Create a sense of suspense/mystery/intrigue. Give a "hook".
 - ii. Body paragraph(s): Ideas should be organized and connected using strong transitions. Writing should be clear and specific. Use imagery whenever possible.

- iii. Conclusion paragraph: The conclusion paragraph is the last chance you have to leave a strong impression on your reader. Like the introduction, avoid summarizing.

4. Make sure your outline touches on every aspect required per the instructions.

a. Key points:

- i. Community service
- ii. Leadership experience
- iii. Overcoming adversity
- iv. Special talents/abilities
- v. Diversity experiences
- vi. Future goals

1. Goals not promises. They want to know you have a plan.

5. Write your essay by elaborating on each of the points in your outline.

- a. Essays have greater depth when statements are supported with specific examples: leadership experience, community involvement, academic interests, extracurricular activities, interest in the topic, overcoming adversity.
- b. Don't downplay your accomplishments!
- c. Don't make apologies for areas you lack experience in. Address what you do know.

6. Use clear, concise and simple language throughout the essay.

7. State your accomplishments without coming across as if you are bragging.

8. Make sure your grammar and spelling are impeccable.

9. Read the instructions again and be certain that the essay addresses every point.

10. Have someone with strong writing and editing skills proofread the essay before you submit it.

Example Essay Prompt: “Provide a 1000 word personal statement essay”

The following components for Inclusion...

- Who am I?
- What do I care about?
- Who do I want to be? Why?
- What kind of contribution do I want to make and how?
- Why is this scholarship right for me? (aka: why should I win?)

Brainstorming Prompts:

- Accomplishments, skills, personality, difficult time, other
- Struggle/fail, struggle/succeed
- Success to you
- Extracurricular/community activities, accomplishments outside the world of academics
- (pulls together ideas from the above prompts and is also combined with financial need)

What should be included in my personal statement?

Outline: (Remember: insert action/physicality into one of the paragraphs!)

1. Introduction paragraph: dramatic snippet from childhood: when I knew I wanted to become a nurse
2. Body Paragraph 1: (who am I?) – the “scene” when I realized I wanted to be a nurse (vivid action)
3. Body Paragraph 2: (What do I care about?) – I struggled with a class and failed, but I took the class again
4. Body Paragraph 3: (Contribution) – volunteer experience at the hospital; how this experience inspires me to do more
5. Body Paragraph 4: (Right for me) – financial need combined with elements from body paragraph 1
6. Conclusion Paragraph: - serving the larger “world” as a nurse