

WRITING A SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

Applying for scholarships would be easy if it wasn't for the personal essay, which often forces us to reflect on ourselves, who we are as people, and what we've accomplished so far in life. While writing about ourselves can be the most difficult part of the application, it's also the most important part.

The scholarship essay is your tool to make a case that shows the committee why you deserve money to further your education. It gives you the chance to show your personality and what you're most proud of in life. Your scholarship application should inform, but your scholarship essay should also persuade. Scholarship committees read hundreds, or even thousands, of essays, so making your application stand out from the rest is crucial.

SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY TIPS:

- Plan ahead – Give yourself plenty of time for brainstorming and proofreading
- Follow the instructions completely – Know the word count and make sure you understand the prompt
- Analyze the audience – Know what a scholarship committee is looking for. Read the instructions to understand who the ideal candidate is and how you fit that picture
- Don't sacrifice your voice – Take a look at your strengths and determine how you can craft them into a narrative of the ideal candidate
- Make an outline (see the Writing Center handout on Outlines) – a solid outline will help you organize your thoughts logically
- Structure the essay (see the Writing Center handout on Organizing an Essay) – Make sure that your reader can follow along with your essay without too much effort

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Additional online resources can be found at www.madonna.edu/owl**

- Create a strong introduction (see the Writing Center handout on Introductions) – Draw the reader into the essay and convince them to continue reading
- Show emotion – Many college essays require distance and objectivity. The Scholarship essay, however, allows you to create a vivid connection between you (the writer) and the audience (the scholarship committee)
- Use real-life examples – Don't tell the readers that you volunteer at church. Show them a story about your volunteer efforts. Real-life examples move you from an abstract applicant to a real person
- Stay positive – Even if you're writing about difficult or sad events in your life, try and keep the tone positive
- Proofread – DO NOT be afraid to ask for help from professors, friends, and the Writing Center