

How to Write a Scholarship Essay

As you know, applying for college is a lot of work. You must complete [university applications](#), [financial aid](#) applications, [college admissions essays](#) and even an essay for a scholarship.

That's right! Scholarship applications often require an essay, too.

Don't worry: Follow these 10 steps on how to write a scholarship essay that could help pay for [your college costs](#).

1. Grab the Reader.

Never underestimate the power of a strong introduction. Look at these two examples of introductory lines. Can you spot the difference?

- **Example #1:** Strong leadership skills are important for many reasons.
 - **Example #2:** November 12, 2004, was the day I lost everything.
- Example #1 is vague, impersonal and boring. But example #2 is personal, specific and intriguing. It leaves the reader interested and wanting more.

Hit the ground running in your first paragraph. This will help your scholarship essay stand out from the pack.

2. Re-adjust and Re-use Your Scholarship Essays.

Don't waste hours writing a different essay for all the [scholarship competitions](#) you enter. There are many scholarships out there, and essay topics tend to overlap. With a bit of tweaking, one scholarship essay can fit the needs of several different contests. Recycle as much as you can!

3. Always Surprise.

Imagine that the question is "Who in your life has had the biggest influence on you and why?" Don't automatically write about your mother or father. Chances are everyone else probably will do that too.

Maybe someone like Gloria Steinem or Superman has had the biggest influence in your life. It may not be 100% traditional, but at least it's more personalized and, therefore, more interesting.

4. Follow the Essay Instructions.

Nothing turns a scholarship essay reader off faster than an essay that *almost* applies to the contest guidelines. Don't write under the limit. Don't write over the limit. Big money is at stake, so make sure you give them what they want!

5. Stay Focused on the Scholarship Essay Topic.

Judges are looking at hundreds, sometimes thousands, of scholarship essays. They don't have time to read tangents about your pet hamster Phil (unless Phil helps illustrate your main point!). Which leads us to our next topic ...

6. Have a Point!

Make sure your essay for the scholarship has one unified statement, or thesis, behind it.

You can look at your thesis as your one-sentence answer to the essay question.

Let's say the essay question is, "What is a time in your life when you demonstrated courage?" Your thesis could be, "A time in my life when I demonstrated courage was when I helped save my neighbor's dog from a tornado." Your essay for the scholarship would support and elaborate upon this statement