
5 Tips to Writing a Convincing Scholarship Essay

By [Sarah Valdivia](#) December 16, 2013

Writing a scholarship essay can put a lot of pressure on you as a student. Rather than receiving a grade in class, you are writing to potentially receive money to help pay for your college education. When starting down this path, it is important to keep your cool, write your essay well before the deadline, and follow these five suggestions for the layout of your essay:

1. Introduce Yourself

Be sure to mention your name and for which scholarship you are writing your essay. Some organizations you apply to will offer multiple opportunities, so identifying which scholarship you are seeking can be especially important. Then, briefly tell the scholarship committee what your educational goals are, and what career you plan to pursue. This helps to paint a picture of who you are to the committee.

2. Provide a Brief Background

Let me highlight the word “brief” one more time. This is not a place to overshare about past events in your life. Jerry Springer material is not welcome here. Feel free to share lessons learned, but try to connect how these lessons have helped you grow as a person. Think about connecting your background with where you are today in your educational goals.

3. Highlight Accomplishments

Try not to toot your own horn too much, but feel free to demonstrate your strengths and what sets you apart from other candidates. This part of your essay can include volunteer work, extracurricular activities, and any other efforts you feel tie in well with the goals of the organization offering the scholarship. Making the connection between your accomplishments and the donor’s efforts will help to show why you are an excellent candidate.

4. Express Need

This goes beyond telling the committee you do not have the money to pay for school. That would put you into a large group of most college students these days. Describing unique challenges that have happened in your life to make paying for school more difficult will help the committee recognize your need for the scholarship.

5. Conclude Your Story

Every story needs a good ending, and the story of your journey to a scholarship application is no different. Ensure that the committee remembers what makes you unique, and why you would be a good representative for their organization. Manners go a long way too, so be sure to thank the committee for their time and consideration.

These general tips will help get you started. If the scholarship you are applying to has specific questions you must answer, be sure to follow those closely. Many times, you can use the tips above and adapt them to the questions being asked for a scholarship essay. Lastly, always have someone else read your essay before you turn it in, and take a deep breath. Write your story one paragraph at a time, and you cannot go wrong.