

Tips for Writing a Great Scholarship Essay

1. **Be attentive to your audience.** As you consider what to write, keep the sponsor in mind and consider these questions:

- What qualifications are your readers looking for?
- What sort of person are they hoping to support and why?
- How will this money benefit you and does that align with the goals of the sponsors?

Often you can focus your writing on an aspect of your life that matters most to those making the award. For example, if a women's organization has a scholarship for single mothers, you might want to write your essay about a challenge you've overcome as a single mom, such as doing your homework before the children get up in the morning.

If you're applying for multiple scholarships, you can often use the same essay. Just be sure to read what each is looking for and modify any specifics as necessary.

2. **Be focused and specific.** Most scholarships ask a very general question, but providing a specific example from your life is much better than just telling the reader about you generally.
- Use your passion! What interests you will interest your readers as well.
 - Use your words to draw a picture of how this scholarship will matter in your life—keeping you in school, buying your books in a timely way, reducing your number of jobs, having reliable transportation, keeping food on the table.
 - Discuss your goals and how you reached this point in your life. Frequent types of examples come from: overcoming a challenge, specifics about how you decided on your career goal, a volunteer or work experience that taught you a life lesson.
3. **Have others read your essay.** Multiple sets of eyes are important not just for proofreading, but for giving you valuable insight into the content of your essay. What makes perfect sense to you might not make sense to someone who doesn't know you. Stop by the Writing Center at either Oceanside or San Elijo HUBs to have a consultant look over your writing for free.

For more advice about writing scholarship essays:

http://www.scholarshiphelp.org/scholarship_essay.htm

<http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/essays.phtml>

<http://www.k-state.edu/artsci/scholarship/essay.shtml>