

\$Scholarship essay\$

Here are some key factors that help your essay make a good impression:

- Correct grammar and punctuation.
- Positive tone; show that you worthy of receiving funds.
- Directly answering the question given.
- Using an interesting and fitting introduction and conclusion.
- Meeting length guidelines (not too long or too short).

Follow these additional pointers for writing scholarship essays:

You are 60 seconds away from the trash bin! Foundations and other sources read many essays. Don't put them off with incorrect grammar, spelling, or punctuation. First impressions are important.

On a more positive note, **the source has money to give away, and they want to give it away to worthy students!** Show them that you are one of those worthy recipients!

The theme of your essay is almost always determined by the goal of the award—in other words, why the organization is giving away money. Examples: Minority organization helping under-represented ethnic groups pursue higher education; a private foundation honoring the memory of a professor by helping others become teachers; a professional organization helping others enter their field.

The four common features of winning scholarship essays are:

- Originality—through a unique topic, or addressing an ordinary topic in a new and insightful way. Be original even if the essay question isn't!
- Addressing the underlying question—see “theme” above
- Sharing a slice of life—using specific illustrations and examples, not falling into generalizations like “I've always wanted to go to college, because education is important.”
- Passion—write about something that interests you, and hopefully your own life does!

Additional tips:

- **No sob stories:** Scholarships aren't given out on the basis of victimization; they're given to those who show that they can succeed despite the odds. If you must share hardships, show how you've overcome them. Keep the tone positive and forward-focused in all cases.
- **Edit:** Edit your work, have several other people read it, revise, rewrite!
- **Recycle and reuse:** Just as you might with a resume or cover letter, you can reuse sections of old essays if you are applying for a number of scholarships. Just be sure that your final product fits the question given for the particular scholarship at hand—don't stretch it too far.

Copied, adapted and paraphrased from: “How to Write a Winning Scholarship Essay” by Gen and Kelly Tanape, 2006.