



## 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.*