

Your Scholarship Essay

The Basics

- Keep it simple
 - Don't use three words when one will do
 - Don't over write
 - Don't brag or over market
 - Do tell about your accomplishments
 - Be clear

Keep it neat

- Type your application
- Word process or type your essay
- Spell check, spell check, spell check
- Eye-ball for correct usage of words, i.e. two, to, too, it's
- Do state your need
- Organize your thoughts
- Write as though you're talking to the selection committee

Sit down quietly and think about:

- Who are you?
- Why are you who you are?
- What are you doing?
- What have you done?
- Where are you now?
- Where are you going?
- How are you going to get there?
- Why do you need a scholarship?
- How will it make a difference?

Jot down notes.

The Outline

- The Introductory Sentence (stand alone paragraph)
- Educational Objective and Career Goals
 - Your major
 - Why did you choose this major?
 - What will you do with it?
 - What career path have you chosen?

*insert anecdote as to why you have chosen this career.

- Brief Background

- Family
- Where you went to high school
- Challenges you've faced in your life
- Personal story
- What is important to you?

*Insert extra-curricular interests, volunteer work, awards... things that make you stand out or are unusual.

*Academic accomplishments: GPA, workload, etc.

Examples: *During my free time, I volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club in Beaverton as a Big Sister.*

Much of my free time is spent with my children, teaching them by example that education is important.

*I am taking 16 hours of school and I work three part-time jobs while maintaining a cumulative above 3.0 GPA
(This is an accomplishment!)*

- Need

Why do you need a scholarship?
(Financial reasons, excellent student, award for your hard work, etc)

Examples: *Even though I work two part time jobs, I find it difficult to meet the financial demands of supporting myself and paying for an education. A scholarship will allow me to continue with school in the fall.*

My parents provide room and board but, because I have younger brothers and sisters, cannot help me with my school. The money I earn at the car wash part time is just enough to cover my books. A scholarship would help a great deal.

- Conclusion

Wrap it up with a simple sentence or two. You can include how your education to date has made a difference in you. End with a “thank you for allowing me the opportunity to apply.”

Writing your ESSAY:

First Sentence

- Who, What, Where, When, why?
Always preface your first sentence around the question so that your statement can stand alone with context and meaning.

Example: My name is John Doe and I am (applying, seeking, asking) for the Clackamas Community College foundation scholarships for the 2007-2008 academic year.

All my life I have always wanted to help people. Now I know exactly how I want to fulfill this goal. I am going to become a Pharmacist.

- Now go back and look what you've written. Read it for form and content. At this point, it is probably too long. What can you cut; what can you incorporate? Make some notes, have a cup of coffee, take a nap, take a walk. Do something different, and leave it alone for a while. Overnight is good.
- Rewrite and tighten it up.
Spell check.
Is it redundant? Are you too brief?
Go back and look at the outline.
Does this paper represent YOU?
- Now have a friend read it.
Is it you? What do you think?
Spell check.

Caution: Don't over edit so that the paper does not sound like you anymore.

- Are you done? Do you like it?
Let it sit again overnight. Re-read it (spell check).
Do you like it? Is it you?