**Scholarship Essays**

Colleges, universities, scholarship giving agencies, etc. require you write college essays for these reasons:

**1. Your Ability.** Pure and simple, they need to see that you can write. If you are honest, and you should be, you will write the essay yourself. Whether or not you have some editing help, you should still come up with the basic idea for your essay. Turning in an essay shows that you have some capability of completing the course of study you have chosen.

**2. The essay represents you.** By writing a personal essay, you present yourself to the college or scholarship committee. Basically, you want to write up a little piece of who you are or what you have experienced in your college essays.

### Steps to a Great College Essay

**Step 1: Look at the essay topic carefully and be sure you understand what is being asked of you.**

**Step 2: Brainstorm ideas/experiences for your essay.**

When you are brainstorming, all ideas are good. Here are some questions to help with ideas:

1. What activities have you participated in that would help you succeed in college? (These can be extra-curricular or community activities – they do not necessarily need to be school activities)

2. Write down a list of your goals related to college/career.

3. Where have you worked? Babysitting, mowing the lawn, window washing and cleaning house can all count.

4. What strengths do you have? How did you acquire them?

5. What talents do you have in general? Do you have evidence of those talents? (For example, every Mom in the neighborhood wants to hire you as a babysitter)

6. Where have you achieved success? How?

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**3. Write a draft of your essay,** just to practice. Don’t fret over it, don’t worry, just write one to see what it feels like. Compare it to the samples of good essays, and make a few revisions if necessary. **Be sure to write it yourself**. Don’t use some college scholarship essay book; original is better and uniquely yours.

**4. Show it to other people** to get their opinions and get some great pointers on how to improve it.

**5. Rewrite your essay** making the changes that work best. You want an essay that represents you and reads well. Your essay presents your best characteristics and qualifications to the people giving out the scholarship.

You may need to rewrite several times. That's fine - lots of people rewrite several times. Just be sure you save your rewrites and that you meet the submission deadline.

**3. Standard Format**

A standard scholarship essay format consists of three or more paragraphs, with one as intro and one as conclusion or wrap up. The first paragraph should have a thesis statement telling the reader why you are a great fit for the college/university. The middle paragraphs will fill out this information. The last paragraph will pull your ideas together. You will want to conclude and show yourself to be the best candidate.

**Important Tip: Don’t Ever Plagiarize Essay or Statement of Purpose Samples**

Unfortunately, some applicants seek out sample admission essays simply so they can build their own essays in the exact same way, or worse, to outright copy them. This is a terrible thing to do and will probably ruin your chance of admission. Admissions committees have gotten very good at catching plagiarism in application essays and personal statements, and if they find it in yours, they’ll probably just throw your entire application out.

*Compiled by Amy Kilbridge, Ingham Intermediate School District – adapted from information on from Beat-Tuition.com*