

College and Scholarship Essays that Get Noticed



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Top 2 Questions about College Admissions and Scholarship Applications

1. What do colleges & scholarship committees look for in application essays?
2. Where do I find Scholarships?

College and Scholarship Essays

“I look for beautiful, clear writing that comes to life on the page and offers insight into the character and personality of the student. The essay and short-answer prompts give the student the opportunity to put meat on the bone of transcripts and test scores and to introduce themselves to the admissions committee.” - Admissions Counselor

EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL - Share the REAL YOU

- This is the opportunity you have for them to get to know you
- Share your dreams/goals
- Tell them your story - beyond the student & what your activities resume tells them
- What are your passions?
- What makes you stand out?

HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS

- **Spending time on your ESSAY is worth it!** It is often the ESSAY that determines one student's selection over another!
- **Time is Money!** Related to scholarships...Look at this process as the best paid job you will ever have!

Important Elements to Include in an Essay

6 Paragraphs that you can use AGAIN and AGAIN in your College and Scholarship Essays

1. Introduction
2. Family - Background and personal context
3. Overcoming Obstacle and Character Qualities
4. Community Service/Significant event and/or Leadership Roles
5. Life Purpose Statement/Career Goals
6. Conclusion

INTRODUCTION



WAIT!!!

We'll Come Back...

FAMILY - Paragraph 2

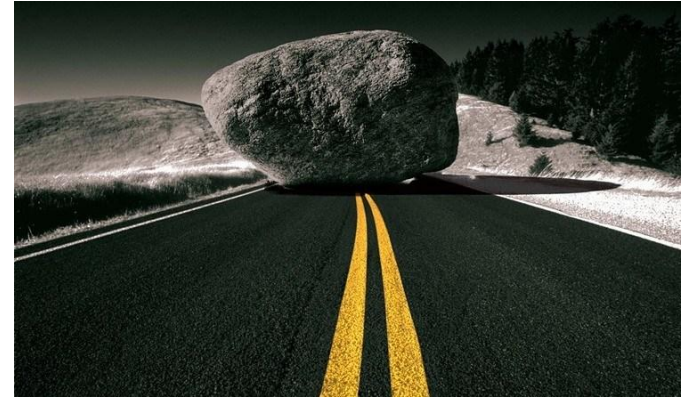


Describe your family, being very specific: ethnic background, country origins, gender, number of brothers and sisters.

Include parents' educational background and occupation

Share any special family and/or personal circumstances such as : single parent home, illness, death, disability of a family member, incarceration, necessary to watch siblings/work, etc.

OBSTACLE - Paragraph 3



Describe your most challenging obstacle

What character qualities have you learned, or are you presently learning, or need to learn from your obstacle?

How has this obstacle made you a stronger, better person and more determined in the direction, purpose and plan for your life?

How will this obstacle help you to be the successful person you want to become in the future?

What did you learn from your obstacles?

- Pick an obstacle to focus on - make it personal & unique
- Choose at least 3 “Qualities for Success” to focus on.

“In spite of the circumstances, disappointments, obstacles and experiences (NAME AND EXPLAIN THEM) I have built character. I am better, stronger and more determined in the direction purpose and plan for my life!”

OBSTACLE EXAMPLES:

Adopted, anxiety, birth order, bullying, caregiving, death, divorce, eating disorder, fear, financial, first gen, health problems, large family, incarceration, large family, mental health issues, military family, moved a lot, pressure, stress...and many more...

QUALITIES FOR SUCCESS:

Boldness, compassion, confidence, contentment, dependability, determination, diligence, discernment, discretion, endurance, forgiveness, generosity, honor, humility, joyfulness, inclusivity, justice, patience, resourcefulness, responsibility, sensitivity, wisdom...and many more...

Community Service - Paragraph 4



Choose two or three community service activities OR experiences in your life to describe

- Relate a personal experience or story. How did you make a difference?
- What was your commitment/leadership role?
- Did you find purpose through your service activities?
- Service should match your career goals if possible

Life Purpose and Career Goal - Paragraph 5

- How and where will you prepare to serve through your life interest and/or career?
- How can you serve and make a difference in the lives of others through your life goals?



Conclusion

Why do you need the scholarship (money)?

Describe in detail any special family/and/or personal circumstances that will affect your ability to go to college

The last sentence should contain a clincher, a strong statement showing determination and strength



Back to the Introduction - Create a Hook Sentence: Stand out! Shock!

Bold, blunt statement:

“Everyone in my family works at Dairy Queen.”

“I have been working a job, without pay, since the day I could speak English.”

“I am a competitive state swimmer, and I am allergic to chlorine.”

“When I was 18 years old I witnessed a bad belly flop into shallow water that changed a person’s life forever; a man suffered a traumatic spinal cord injury.”

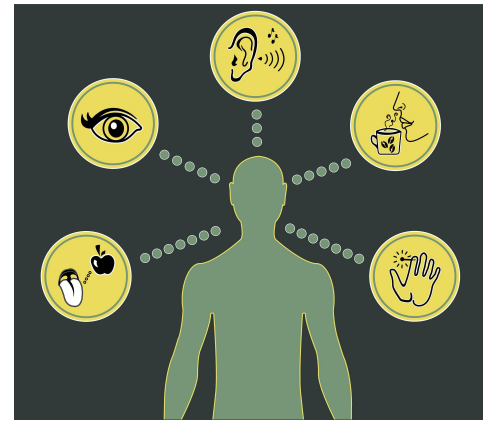
Back to the Introduction

Another option: Use at least two of the five senses.

It can be a description of an engaging scene; it can ask a question, state a fact, or be a quote that has been emphasized by a family member. It can be positive - or related to your obstacle

It must be unique, personal and stand out...make the reader want to continue reading!

Introduction: Using the senses



Smell: *The smell of stale beer hung in the air.*

Taste: *I could taste the peppermint in the chocolate birthday cake.*

Hear: *“Winners never quit!” was what my parents said to me when I was told by the doctors I would never walk again.*

Touch/Feel: *The caress of the wind reached us; it was like a consolation and embrace in our treacherous day as I fought off the mosquitoes and my hands ached from blisters.*

SEE: *The bright yellow conviction notice was the only thing that stood out on the small dirty, white wooden house.*

Where to look for Scholarships

Institutional Scholarships:

Colleges and Universities you apply

Additional scholarship applications

- Merit
- Talent
- Sports
- Departmental

Where to look for Scholarships

Scholarship Search Engines: FAST WEB, UNIGO, CAPPEX, BIG FUTURE & more...

[McNary Website](#) - McNary College and Career Center Page

RESOURCES PAGE:

- SCHOLARSHIP GUIDE - Links to the top 17 Scholarship Search Databases. A great guide that breaks down the the best scholarship platforms and instructs users how to use them effectively to find as many opportunities as possible.
- OSAC Scholarship
- Search Engines

SCHOLARSHIP PAGE:

- Local
- State
- US National Scholarships

Scholarships you don't want to miss

Seniors apply for the OSAC Scholarship

One Application

600

SCHOLARSHIPS

(18 Million worth to be specific)

Open NOW
Due: March 1

Larry K Sharpf Scholarship
DUE: APRIL 1



\$20,000 Renewable Scholarship Award
(other smaller scholarships will also be awarded)

Eligible Students: Students pursuing an undergraduate degree college/university in the state of Oregon (full-time), must have HS GPA over 2.75, Family household income must be \$75,000 or less

See application in the CCC or on Scholarship page for other requirements

Open NOW
Due: April 1

Research scholarships – start at the **McNary CCC Website – Scholarship Tab**

1. **Local/State/US National Scholarship List** (spreadsheet on CCC page)
 - i. Larry K Sharpf Scholarship
 - ii. Kaiser Permanente Health Care Scholarship
 - iii. Dell Scholarship – Senior AVID Students
 - iv. Edwin C Goodenough Scholarship
 - v. Jiffy Lube Scholarship (all grade levels)
 - vi. TheDream Scholarship (undocumented/DACA)
2. **OSAC Scholarship** – www.oregonstudentaid.gov
3. [HUGE LIST OF SCHOLARSHIPS from JLV Counseling](#) (my favorite national site)
4. [Ultimate List of Scholarships for Women and Girls](#)
5. [Scholarship Guide](#)
6. **FAFSA/ORSAA** – www.fafsa.ed.gov or www.oregonstudentaid.gov (ORSAA)
7. **Oregon Promise** – www.oregonstudentaid.gov

McNary Website

Guidance Tab

College & Career Center

Scholarship Tab