FastWeb!

Student Bulletin

April/May 2006
High School Edition

Visit www.fastweb.com to search over $3 billion in scholarships!

Scholarship Essay Guide

Master the Basics

Pay attention to details for a high quality essay.

Get organized. Brainstorm to generate some good ideas and then create an outline to help you get started.

Demonstrate originality and creativity. To catch the attention of a panel of scholarship judges, find a hook that will get the reader interested right away.

Show, don't tell. For example, if you're describing an activity you participated in, don't describe it in general terms. Be specific! What duties did you perform? What affect did it have on your life or the lives of others?

Develop a theme that fits the scholarship. What sort of student is the sponsor looking for? Include elements in your essay that complement the sponsor's expectations (without pretending to be someone you aren't).

Turn in a professional-looking essay. Write a second draft to catch mistakes and better organize your thoughts. If possible, type and doublespace your essay. Check spelling and grammar. Also, share your essay with friends, family or teachers for another proofread.

What Do Judges Look For?

Make it past the first round by following these simple rules:

- **Do you qualify?** Sounds simple, but students every year waste time by applying for awards they aren't eligible to win. If you don't qualify, don't enter the contest.

- **Is your application presented well?** Type your essay. Messy handwriting and excessive scratch-outs could land your application in the trash.

- **Did you include all required documents?** Required docs frequently left out of an application include: transcripts, references and a letter of recommendation.

- **Did you answer all of the questions?** Double-check that you haven't forgotten any required information.

FastTip: Remember that scholarship and financial aid information should be free! Search for FREE scholarships at: **www.fastweb.com**.

I Don't Know What to Write About!

Take the intimidation out of writing essays by turning your achievements, goals and interests into essay topics:

Personal Achievements

- Remember to personalize your experience. For example, what makes the volunteer and community service you've performed unique?
- Do you still keep in touch with anyone you've helped?
- Talk about specific interactions you may have had with others. How did you influence their lives?
- How did your achievements reflect your values? Why are your achievements important to you?
- Remember that judges want to hear from you as a person, not your resume.

Academic Plans and Possible Major

- Instead of saying, "Math is my favorite subject," discuss a specific assignment or project that you worked on that sparked your interest and why.
- Avoid saying that you selected a major or career path to "help people." What specific actions can you take to improve the lives of others? Discuss specific values or ideas you want to develop once you get to college.

Background and Influences

- Is there a person you wish to emulate with your chosen major or career path? Someone who encouraged you to succeed? Focus on specific qualities or actions that the person has inspired in you.
- Think about your friends and family, community, and the things you've learned outside of the classroom. Pick specific people, incidents and learning experiences to write about that will let your personality come through.

Current Events and Social Issues

- Think about current issues or events in the news that you feel strongly about.
- Do you know a lot about a controversial topic?
- Do you know of someone who is directly involved in an issue who might be able to provide insight?

Need money for college? Find your dream school for FREE!

www.fastweb.com