

Scholarship Essay Tips:

The hardest part is getting started. Everyone finds it hard to write about themselves, but this is where you have an opportunity to stand out from the other applicants. It is okay to use “I”, but keep in mind that examples of your accomplishments speak louder than general statements.

Good example: It has been a privilege to be on the honor roll at my high school for the past three years.

Bad example: I have always worked harder than all of my peers to maintain good grades.

Read the instructions! There may be a minimum and maximum word count.

The **ESSAY** is the most important element of your application. Ask for advice or help if necessary.

Write your essay in a text document and review it to make sure it is within the limits. Always have at least one proof-reader. Grammar counts! You will need to paste your final draft into the application. A text document can be edited and reused for additional applications. Always check the guidelines for each scholarship opportunity.

Grammar Tips:

- Create an outline, or at least have an idea of what you want to say.
- Do not be too informal (e.g. avoid using contractions).
- Once you have finished a draft, take a break, come back and read it aloud (does it sound right?).
- Use the active voice.
- Keep your tenses consistent.
- Check for subject and verb agreement.
- Avoid starting sentences with a preposition.

If you are targeting a specific scholarship, look closely at the “criteria.” The scholarship may be available only to students with a specific major or personal background, such as a single mother, accounting major, or interest in writing. You should make this obvious in your scholarship essay. There may be a computer algorithm that is looking for key words or phrases.

What scholarship donors like:

- They want to invest in students with clear goals.
- They want to see how you have overcome challenges in your pursuit of higher education.
- They like to support students who are involved in the community and who give back through volunteer or civic activities.
- They want to know that their support will have an impact on your education. Let them know how the money will help you.

Do not wait until the last minute to write your scholarship essay and submit your application.

Here are two examples of scholarship essays. Which one do you think will have the most impact on selection committee members?

Example Essay #1

I started tenth grade three years ago after my family moved to the United States from Mexico. I had to face the problems of not knowing the language or how the education system worked. I felt alone. Everything was different from my country. I could not express myself with the people around me. Often I felt frustrated. Many people told me that graduating would be hard for me because I did not know the language and was just starting to learn English.

Instead of being upset about this comment, it motivated me to study hard and to get good grades. My goal then was to graduate from high school with good grades and on time with the rest of the students my age. My counselor gave me credit for my transcript I brought from Mexico. She told me if I finished the requirements for graduation, I could graduate with other students my age.

Finally I did it. I graduated from high school on time. I was fifth place in my class and so happy to receive my diploma with high honors.

My family had a large part in my achievements in high school and continues to be a source of motivation in my achievements in college. I am the youngest in the family and the first one to graduate from high school and to attend college. My sister quit school and got married at an early age. This was another thing that motivates me to continue my education through college. I want very much to make my parents proud of me.

My family encourages me to be part of activities at school and in the community. Although I was involved in many activities in high school, here at San Diego State University, I find that it is harder for me to be involved in extracurricular activities, because my class schedule does not allow it and I have to take the bus 21 miles to get home. But I would like to join some organizations like Associated Students.

I like to work with people who are interested in developing the potential of students. I am also interested in the Native American Student Alliance student organization because I would like to know about their culture before I graduate.

In my community, I am involved in the youth group and in the choir of my church. I sing at mass every Sunday morning. In the church youth group I am the treasurer, and I am in charge of the group's activities once a month. These activities demand commitment, responsibility and time.

College education is very important for my future. College is my opportunity to improve my life by having more opportunities to get better jobs, and to encourage my family to go back to school. In college you look into different ethnic groups, their backgrounds, style of thinking and ways to solve problems in the world. I think because I want to be a journalist, I need to have an open mind to understand the people in the community and to know more about the world in which we live.

My goal is to become a journalist who would be in touch with the people, helping them to make this world a more pleasant place in which to live. (546 words)

Example Essay #2

A scholarship would help me to complete my degree soon. It would allow me to not have to pay so much for school out of pocket and would help pay my rent and elevate the stress of having to work many hours. I don't really know what my exact career goals are at this point. I don't know what I like to do, but i know I am looking at the Automotive or Business Education programs. I like working on cars and I also like dealing with people.

This scholarship would help to pay for my prerequisite classes and would allow me to work less hours during the week. In closing, the funds and hard earned money of the investors would be spent wisely in implementing the programs and ideas mentioned above in five years. As written by one of the greatest world and spiritual leaders to ever have graced us with his presence, knowledge, and great vision, Mahatma Ghandi said "The future depends on what we do in the present." Let you and I be the past generation sowing seeds in the present generation and building a stronger future civilization. (191 words)

Frequently Asked Questions:

How much is available in scholarship awards?

The CCC Foundation awards almost \$100,000 in scholarships to approximately 60 students each year. Most awards are \$1,000+ and are awarded directly to students accounts for fall and spring semesters as long as the student maintains criteria necessary to be eligible. (ex: GPA and number of credit hours)

When can I start my application?

The online application is available at www.coconino.edu/scholarships-information during the first week of January.

When is it due?

Access to the online application will officially close on **Friday, March 24, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.**

What will I need to have ready before I can apply?

1. Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online. You can begin your application in October at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>.
2. Have an essay ready to upload (max 1,000 words)
3. Prepare a list of volunteer activities, awards, employment history, etc. (Create a text document so you can copy and paste.)

Do I need to provide a response for every question?

Try to provide as much information as possible. Some donors are interested in where you went to high school, your involvement in the community, etc. Don't leave these blank!

What do I do if I am having trouble submitting?

Do not wait until the last minute. Computers know when you are in a hurry! The CCC ITS Help Desk is available to assist you with problems you may encounter when submitting online. They can be reached at (928) 226-4357 or ITS.HelpDesk@coconino.edu. Their hours of operation are Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and closed on Sunday.

When and how will I find out if I have been awarded a scholarship?

If you have been selected for an award, you will receive communication via email and USPS by the end of April. If you have any questions about your application, you may contact Rachel in the CCC Foundation Office at (928) 226-4384 or Rachel.edelstein@coconino.edu

What is required of me if I am selected?

In order for your award to be available for the fall semester, you must officially accept it in My CCC Web4. Also, all scholarship winners are encouraged to submit a "Thank You" letter to donors who have generously contributed to your award.

Anything else?

Each fall, the CCC Foundation hosts an Annual Meeting and Awards Breakfast where we honor all scholarship awardees. This is an excellent opportunity to meet donors and supporters in person.