



ACING YOUR SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

by the student editors of ***GETTING THROUGH COLLEGE WITHOUT GOING BROKE***,
a *Students Helping Students*™ book

Scholarships are the best kind of financial aid you can get because you don't need to pay them back. You should apply to as many scholarships as humanly possible during your junior and senior year, and continue to look for scholarships even after you start college. Most scholarships ask you to fill out an application and write an essay on a particular topic. Here are some suggestions based on our own experiences for how to ace your scholarship essay.

- Make sure that each essay is customized to the particular scholarship and organization where you're sending it. General essays don't work.
- Get to know the organization sponsoring each scholarship—what it does, what are its goals and mission. Then tailor your essay to touch on those themes, and describe what role they play in your life. For example, if you're applying for a scholarship from a non-profit organization that supports literacy, talk about why literacy is important and what you've done and will continue to do to promote it. Every organization has an agenda—find out what it is and target your essay appropriately.
- Whining doesn't help. Don't spend your essay talking about how poor you are, how college is too expensive, how you're desperate to find any money, and so on. If you talk about difficulties in your life or your parents' lives, make sure that it's in the context of what you've learned from them.
- Try to sound human. Whoever is reading tons of these scholarship applications needs to find something in your essay that sticks out, that sounds personable and that the reader can relate to. Be honest with what you write and with your writing.
- Talk about what you plan to do with your education. Give the scholarship committee a sense that you have a longer-term vision than just getting this scholarship and getting into college. Write about things you care about and what you want to contribute to the world.
- Proofread. You've heard this before, and for a good reason. And don't trust the spellchecker—it can't tell the difference between "their" and "there."

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For more helpful tips and proven strategies from students and recent grads on applying for financial aid, acing your scholarship applications, managing your money at college, staying out of credit card debt, and much more, visit www.StudentsHelpingStudents.com and buy the *Students Helping Students*™ guide titled **GETTING THROUGH COLLEGE WITHOUT GOING BROKE**, available at bookstores and online stores, such as Amazon.com.