

5 Steps to a Great Scholarship Essay

TEXAS  NCOURSE

1. Read the directions and decide on a topic

Reading the directions and following instructions are the most important parts of planning for your essay. Be sure to choose a topic that is exciting and allows you to respond to all parts of the prompt. Think about something moving that has happened to you or something that you feel passionate about. Remember, the judges want to get to know you and learn why you deserve the scholarship. So let your personality shine through and write about something that is important to you!

2. Create an outline

It's a good idea to plan out your essay before you begin writing. Create an outline to organize your thoughts and stay on topic. Begin by writing down your topic, then break down your essay into these three sections: introduction, body, and conclusion. Each section should contain at least two or three sentences, bullet points, or ideas about the things you will cover.

3. Write your essay

Don't worry! Your essay should be a story about you, not the typical English paper. Begin your essay with a strong introduction. How will you hook your reader? Your introduction is your chance to set the scene and provide a strong thesis statement. Think of it as a movie trailer. It should give the reader an exciting look at what's to come, but it shouldn't answer all of their questions just yet. As you continue writing the body of your essay, focus on giving real-world examples and expressing your emotions. Pretend that you're telling your story to a trusted teacher or an older family member. What would you say? Lastly, finish with an interesting and concise conclusion. Make sure you've wrapped up any loose ends and that there is a clear ending to your story.

4. Proofread

One of the most important steps to any great essay is to proofread. You need to proofread more than once to make sure there are absolutely no mistakes left when you submit your essay. Look for misspelled words, grammatical mistakes, and anything that isn't clear. It can help to read the essay out loud or have a text-to-speech app read it to you.

5. Get help

After you have edited your essay, have someone else do it for you! Ask a teacher, counselor, or family member to read your essay and let you know what they think.

Scholarship Essay Checklist:

- Answers ALL parts of the prompt
- Falls within the allowed word count
- Has a thesis
- Is personal but avoids common clichés
- Has a strong introduction
- Shows emotion
- Includes real-life examples
- Has a conclusion
- Shows personality
- Has been proofread
- Has been edited by a teacher, family member, or counselor

Online resources:

Use these online resources for help with writing your essay:

US News: 5 Ways to Make Your Scholarship Essay Stand Out

txoc.link/usnews-essays

FastWeb: Winning Scholarship Essay Tips

txoc.link/fastweb-essays

Going Merry: 6 Awesome Scholarship Essays

txoc.link/goingmerry-essays