



SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

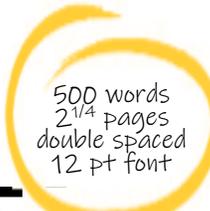
OVERVIEW

Whether the scholarship is for \$500 or \$10,000 the essay prompts for most of them revolve around some commonly asked questions. Some scholarship applications are moving towards use of the [College Common Application](#) © essay prompts, but these remain few and far between.

Most essay lengths range from 150 to 1,000 words. The larger the potential scholarship, the lengthier the essay requirements and/or they will ask for two to three brief essays. Be patient with yourself and give yourself the gift of time. We also recommend not *overthinking* each application. Do your best and go for it!



150 words
3/4 of a page
double spaced
12 pt font



500 words
2 1/4 pages
double spaced
12 pt font



Some scholarships may also ask for in-person or virtual interviews with a scholarship committee member or even a panel – this isn't meant to scare you, it's just meant to prepare you for potential outcomes of applying for a scholarship.

BE *you.*
TRUST *yourself*
GO FOR IT!

A BRIEF GUIDE TO SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

VISIT ► [OAKLANDTECH.COM/STAFF/SCHOLARSHIPS](https://oaklandtech.com/staff/scholarships)

IN THIS DOCUMENT YOU WILL FIND...

- 10 Most Common Scholarship Essay Topics (p [2](#))
- Best Practices for Successful Applications (p [3](#))
- Useful Resource Links to Help You (p [3](#))
- Should I Apply? How to Consider *If it's Worth It* (p [4](#))
- Additional Scholarship Essay Topics (by Theme, p [5+](#))



10 MOST COMMON ESSAY TOPICS

Website | [Expanded Version](#) , [Abbreviated Version](#)

90%
These 10 prompts
account for
90% of all scholarship
essay prompts

How will this scholarship help you?

How have you contributed to your community?

Tell us about yourself.

Tell us about a time you failed and what you learned from it.

What are your academic and/or career goals?

What impact has sports had on your life?

Why do you deserve this scholarship?

Tell us about a time when you had a belief or idea challenged.

How are you unique? (Discuss your background, identity, interest, or talent).

Why do you want to study/pursue [X]?



BEST PRACTICES

DEFINITELY DO

- ✓ Tell your truth, share who you are with selection members; always be yourself
- ✓ Carefully review all the eligibility requirements prior to starting an application
- ✓ Be sure you confirm and calendar the deadlines for submission
- ✓ Seek out recommendation writers no later than 1 month prior to application deadline
- ✓ Enlist the help of a proof reader prior to submission of your application
- ✓ Using the commonly asked questions, brainstorm specific examples ahead of time
- ✓ Respond to specific prompts, especially if there is a theme (ie. STEAM, LGBTQIA+, SPIRITUALITY)
- ✓ Collect necessary paperwork in advance (ie. transcripts, financial documents, school or personal profile)
- ✓ Write down the log-in information for online application portals including username and password
- ✓ Regularly save and back-up your draft essays and application to the cloud and/or hard drive
- ✓ Talk to past recipients (if you can) for advice or encouragement
- ✓ If you become a semi- / finalist, let your counselor know so that they can assist you in following rounds

RESOURCE LINKS

Writing & Interviewing Tips

The College Essay

[McDonald's Resource Library for Students](#)

Speaking from Personal Experience with Worksheets

[QuestBridge](#)

How to Write an Autobiographical Essay

[Papers Owl](#)

Interviewing Tips with McKenna, Peer Advice

[You Tube](#)

An Example, Winning Essays

Audio Files of [VFW 2019 State Winners](#)

Additional Scholarship Search Engines

[Fastweb](#) • [College Board Student Search](#) • [Niche](#) •
[Student Scholarship Search](#) • [Unigo](#) • [Oak Tech CMC](#) •

DON'T

- ☒ Plagiarize
- ☒ Wait until the last week before working on time consuming scholarship applications
- ☒ Submit an application without proofreading for clarity, spelling, and flow
- ☒ Reveal personal information (ie. last names) about people other than yourself
- ☒ Pretend to be someone you aren't, to try to get a scholarship



THINGS TO CONSIDER

Should I apply? Is it worth it?

Only you and your family can answer this – it is a very personal decision. “Nothing beats a try...” is a good guide stick because, if selected, you’ve been paid to write about your life’s experience of which you are *the* expert. Scholarship committees want to recognize and award hard working, creative, and thoughtful young people to help you continue your academic and vocational goals.

Eligibility

Carefully review all eligibility requirements and confirm you meet the basics before putting in a lot of time and effort. There is nothing worse than submitting a scholarship application only to realize you are ineligible. Be aware of: gender, ethnic, racial, age, class year, religious affiliation criteria.

Length

With all being said, the length, effort, and difficulty completing a scholarship application usually mirrors the size of the award. For example, a scholarship for 1 year and \$500 or less should not take you more than 1 – 2 hours to complete. It might not be worth it to you if there are numerous steps for a “relatively” small scholarship. Conversely, a single or multi-year \$10,000 scholarship award may take a significant amount of time to complete (3 days – 1 week).

Number of Recipients

It is also helpful to know how many recipients will be selected and if recipients are from local, national, or international pools. Smaller scholarships may have multiple recipients and larger scholarships may draw from a broader pool of applicants nationwide, have multiple rounds, and be highly selective / competitive.

Hint

Scholarships can be applied for as early as your freshman year in high school. Visit various search engines (p [3](#)) to find opportunities you are eligible for.

Start applying early.

Every writer complete writing prompts at different speeds. Give yourself time to brainstorm, complete a first draft, edit, finalize and do one last proof reading before you submit.

Hint

You can compete for college-specific scholarships. Stay in touch with the Admissions Office to understand what you can be doing to be considered for scholarship(s) as an admitted incoming student. Be an advocate for yourself without burdening the admissions officer.

Build a relationship.



Additional ESSAY TOPICS (Grouped by Theme)

Academic & Career Goals

- What are your educational or career goals?
- What's your dream job, company, or industry? And why?
- Tell us about yourself, including your academic and career goals, hopes and dreams for the future.
- Describe an experience or person related to your academic and/or career goals that inspired you.
- How will your education help you meet your personal & educational goals?

Overcoming Adversity

- Describe a challenging family or personal circumstance that has affected your achievement or participation in school, work, or community activities.
- How did you overcome this challenge and what did you learn from the experience above?
- What are the most significant challenges you expect to face in successfully completing college?
- How will you overcome these challenges?
- Describe how challenges and adversity you've faced have influenced your actions and goals, focusing on your decision to attend college.
- Is there anything else you would like us to know, including any unusual family or personal circumstances? Tell us about a situation where your persistence paid off.

Financial Need

- How will winning this scholarship help you attain your goals?
- Demonstrate your financial need for this scholarship.
- Comment on your higher education goals & the college financial needs that this scholarship may help with.
- Discuss the importance of establishing and maintaining good financial credit during your college years.

Exploration & Journey to College and Beyond

- When you look back on your life in 30 years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful?
- What impact will following your passion have on your local community or the world?
- What are you passionate about and how do you demonstrate that passion every day?
- What relationships or accomplishments will be important on this journey?
- Is it more about money or happiness? Or both?

Leadership

- How would you define leadership in your own words? Share a specific example of a time you demonstrated this kind of leadership.
- Choose the one activity you listed as most important and tell us why it is significant.
- How do you lead in your community? What is your biggest accomplishment as a leader?
- What matters most to you and why?

Community Engagement & Volunteerism

- Describe a significant experience you have had participating in community service and the impact it has left on you.
- Describe your experience with community service and volunteering.
- How has community service and volunteering affected you and your outlook?
- There are many ways to give; how do you give to your teammates, family, and community?
- How do you give back to the community? Cite jobs, volunteer work and non-school extra-curricular activities
- Include any relevant volunteer experiences and community involvement activities relating to advancing the cause of civil rights.



Additional ESSAY TOPICS (Cont'd.)

Diversity & Equity

- What makes you stand out as a student, citizen, candidate?
 - * Describe your background and how you ended up in the U.S.
 - * How does the U.S. compare to your home country? Feel free to discuss what you like about both places.
 - * Why are you optimistic about living and working in the U.S.?
- How did this activity advance racial equity and/or promote respect / understanding within your school or community.
 - * Demonstrate your efforts and achievements in furthering the values of the civil rights movement.
- In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge that the LGBTQ community is currently facing today?
 - * What steps have you taken or wish to take to mitigate the challenge?
 - * How have you connected with the LGBTQ identity at school and/or in your community (broadly defined)? How are you serving as an ambassador of the LGBTQ community?
- Please describe why XXX Faith is important to you and your plans for the future.

The average grant received by an undergraduate student is \$7,400.

Source: 2015–16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study

Scholarship Theme Specific (ie. STEM, Government / Democracy)

- Describe how you plan to engage in the technology industry in your future career.
- How is science or engineering making life better for people across the globe right now? Cite specific examples.
- What do you think the next big scientific or engineering advancement will be, and how will it affect society globally? Please be as specific as possible.
- Who are your heroes in science or engineering? Please describe their contributions and explain their importance.
- Please talk about your connection to the world of STEM. Write about how you developed your interest in STEM, what experiences in STEM have been most meaningful or interesting to you both in and out of school, what your plans are to pursue an education in STEM, and what your goals and plans are for the future after college.
- Why do you think Democracy is important? How has democracy affected you? How would you change democracy and why?
- Submit an essay detailing your volunteer efforts to help animals in need, describing how that involvement has changed their lives and community or shaped their perceptions on the importance of animal welfare.

18.8% of students received enough to cover 50% of their cost of college attendance.

Source: 2015–16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study