

# TIPS FOR COMPLETING A SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

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The following are some guidelines to use when filling out a scholarship application packet.

1. Community Service & Extracurricular Activities (in lieu of submitting a resume):
  - a. List activities that demonstrate your commitment and professionalism.
  - b. Be specific on time spent and the quality of your work – what you actually did.
  - c. Remember to highlight leadership positions! They stand out more so than just being on the team or in the club.
  - d. Add your work experience to your extracurricular activities. This could balance out the lack of activities for some students due to time constraints of working, which is still valuable in showing your commitment and professionalism.
  
2. Letters of Recommendation:
  - a. When you ask someone to write you a letter of recommendation, first let them know what it is for (avoid generic letters).
  - b. The letters should be from a source of professional or personal responsibility. For scholarships, the best examples would be: teachers, school administrators, coaches, academic or club advisors, work supervisors, and church / civic organization leaders.
  - c. The writer should account for the student's (1) character, (2) academic aptitude/ potential, and (3) leadership skills (make sure all three are accounted for)! The letters should talk to how you meet these qualities.
  - d. Always get a minimum of two letters of recommendation. Three is better!
  
3. Essays:
  - a. Your essay should be written as if it is going to be graded for class!
  - b. Although an English professor will most likely not read the essay, a well-written essay stands out from a poorly written one when people are reviewing multiple applications to award scholarships.
  - c. Research grading rubrics for essays and tailor your essay, no matter how long or short, to something that will meet the criteria of a well-written essay.
  - d. On the next page is an example guideline to follow. Re-read your essay and ensure all the points are met.
  - e. Have someone proofread your essay before turning in your application – preferably someone who could grade your essay as a teacher would.

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## ESSAY WRITING GUIDELINE

Be sure to cover the following in your essay.

- Content & Format
  - Content ties to the main argument you are making
  - Sufficient evidence is provided to support your statements
  - Each item raised is completely discussed
  - Paraphrases are done according to MLA format (Google this!)
  
- Local Organization
  - Your objective is clearly stated
  - The paragraphs are unified and coherent
  - Sentences are connected logically
  - The idea development shows clear thought
  - The conclusions follow logically from the content presented
  - The tone of the writing is credible (don't exaggerate)
  - The essay avoids generalizations and other serious fallacies
  
- Sentence Clarity and Structure
  - The essay avoids "confusing" sentences
  - The essay avoids a pattern of sentence structure errors (ex: subject/verb agreement errors, pronoun/noun errors, verb time errors)
  - The essay avoids frequent errors in spelling, wrong words, punctuation, or language usage
  
- Writing Style
  - The style of the essay is appropriate for the assignment
  - The style is appropriate for the audience
  - Your introduction and context are interesting and thought provoking
  - The vocabulary is college level and appropriate for a college audience
  - The point of view helps the purpose
  
- Insight
  - The organization and execution of the essay shows reflection and analysis
  - The essay's purpose, claim, and presentation demonstrate insight