

Scholarship Tips

Your application is the interview.

Selection committee members do not know you and likely, will not meet you before the award decision is made. Your application must sufficiently represent your interests, values, achievements, and future plans. Make a good impression!

View your complete application as the entire package.

Everything you want people to know about you should be found in the application.

Start early and make sure it is complete.

Submit your completed application as early as possible and make sure all required documents are included. If there is missing information, this gives time for it to be caught and remedied before the deadline.

Don't leave any area of the application blank.

It might be appropriate to use the term "Does not Apply" but think about why the question was asked. Questions on applications are used to learn something about you.

Brainstorm.

Write down all your accomplishments, interests, and activities. Outside of school - what do you do? Include community, church, and family activities. Include a diverse group of items in your application, stressing those most important to you.

Review the application more than once.

Read all directions thoroughly and make sure all parts of the application are complete. Do not forget attachments.

Use Microsoft Word or Grammarly to spell check.

Online applications might not spell check for you. Type the information in Microsoft Word, Grammarly, or another word processing system, and then cut and paste into the application.

Spelling and grammar matter.

Do not abbreviate words and do not use "texting" lingo. Capitalize when needed.

Proofread – Proofread – Proofread!

Proofread your work multiple times and have a friend, parent, or school official read your application. An English teacher is a valuable resource!

Show that you can thrive at a college level.

Scholarships are competitive. Show that you deserve a scholarship and will utilize it to succeed in college. Do this by presenting a professional, thorough, and thoughtful application.

Think about the final appearance of the application and delivery.

Some applications may require handwritten answers. If so, make sure the form is legible. If you have the option, type the information. Deliver the application neat and clean. Think about how you want it to look to the person opening the envelope for the first time.

Thoughtfully consider the information you share.

Information about unlawful activities may be detrimental to your application.

Consider your audience.

Tailor the application to the audience. Think about what you are sharing and how it will be perceived. Are some things too personal to be appropriate?

Write a personal and specific essay.

Allow committee members to get to know you through a personal and compelling essay. Do not simply restate accomplishments mentioned elsewhere in the application. Write passionately in your essay and share with the committee something about you that will help them develop a connection to you. A simple experience can be powerful if you explain its impact on your life. Make sure your essay answers the question asked and it is written specifically for that scholarship application.

Take the SAT or ACT.

The SAT or ACT is another indicator of classroom achievement and helps compare your test results with other students from other school districts. If you do not have to take the entrance exams, explain why. Do not leave the section blank.

Request letters of reference from people who know you well.

Ask people who are able to share about your values, traits, or qualities that you consider worthwhile, such as your compassion, drive, leadership, honesty, independence, etc. A well-written letter from a teacher or supervisor who knows you well is more important than a letter from someone with an impressive title. Ask them to provide examples in the letter that tell a story about you - how you overcame a specific obstacle, your compassion for fellow students, the difference you made in the life of another, etc. It is not advised to ask a family member or peer for a letter, this may result in disqualification.

Submit current letters of reference that are dated.

A dated letter shows you have been in recent contact with the letter writer and the information they have shared is current. In some instances, an outdated letter is cause for disqualification.

The letter of reference writer's affiliation to you is clearly stated.

Make sure it is clear who the letter writer is and their connection to you. Are they your teacher, coach, employer/supervisor, etc.?

Ask questions.

If a phone number or email address is provided on the application, take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions. This is especially valuable if you are unsure if you meet the application qualifications.