

# Scholarship Application Tips



1. Remember: Your scholarship application represents YOU!
2. Give your application the time, attention, and preparation that it deserves.
3. Complete all sections.
4. If you're asked, don't be afraid to highlight your strengths and talk about yourself.
5. Make certain the people you ask to prepare letters of recommendation know you well.
6. WATCH DEADLINES! Financial aid offices and scholarship personnel adhere to them!
7. You are responsible for making sure that ALL parts of the application arrive on time. If letters of recommendation or transcripts are required, give the people who will provide these documents generous lead-time. Also give them a stamped, addressed envelope if the recommendation is to be mailed separately.
8. PRINT A COPY OF THE APPLICATION FOR YOUR FILE.
9. Keep a written record of scholarships for which you've applied. Make a note of the deadlines, requirements, and responses.
10. Finally, ASK FOR HELP if you need it.

## Writing Your Application Essay

The personal essay may be the hardest part of your application. However, it's also where you can stand out from the crowd! The key to writing a strong essay is to be personal and specific. Include details about yourself so the reader can get to know who "you" are and what you stand for. Be truthful and honest.

Scholarship selection committees may have hundreds of essays to review. It's YOUR job to get their attention. Here are some tips that may help you:

- **Think before you write.** Brainstorm to generate some ideas, create an outline to help get you going, and make sure to address specific questions clearly.
- **Create a portrait of a winner.** Create a vivid portrait that will depict the person behind the grades, activities, and awards. If a judge feels like he or she knows you, you've done your job and created a powerful, emotional connection that elevates your application and makes it stand out from others!
- **Write your essay.** Be original and creative in your answers. Show, don't tell. Use examples to individualize your essay. Demonstrate the point you want to make. Avoid vagueness to make a strong impression. A good essay contains these basic elements:
  1. *Introduction*—Catch your readers attention. State your reason and purpose for writing and offer a preview of the next sections.
  2. *The Body of an Essay*—Three to four paragraphs each dealing with one topic. Each paragraph should include a topic sentence supporting the main idea of the essay. The following sentences contain main points about the topic. Other sentences support those main points with explanations. (who, what, where, when, how, etc.)
  3. *Conclusion*—Restate the purpose of the essay and key points. End with a statement that leaves an impression on the reader or makes them think.
- **Proofread.** This is very important! You don't want to have a typo on your essay. Check spelling and grammar. Ask a parent, friend, or teacher to proofread your completed application. Another pair of eyes can catch errors you might miss!

Think you're not eligible for a scholarship? You may be surprised! Check out JCF's website and find the scholarships for which you are eligible.

The Jackson Community Foundation web-based application program allows you the opportunity to apply for more than one scholarship with the submission of only **one** application!



**Jackson**

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