

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND WRITE A SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

## Pre-Application Writing Stage

1. Do a Self-Assessment -- Many scholarships require resumes, experience profiles, and even essays. Before you start applying for scholarships, do some self-reflection.
  - Write down any job experience, interests, hobbies, skills, volunteer and travel experience that you have.
  - Write down any special experiences or programs you have been part of. Give a detailed account of your role and what benefits this program or organization brings to the community.
  - Brainstorm things you want to do in your lifetime.
  - Examine the two lists and look for a pattern. Based on your experience and desires, what types of things are important to you and why?
  - Write a one-page statement of your skills, experience, and interests and another one-page statement about your life goals.
  - Have a friend, parent or teacher help you edit your written pieces. Revise and rewrite your final copies. These pieces will help you when it's time to answer questions on applications.
2. Put together a Portfolio – A portfolio is a collection of all of your work and accomplishments, and can be used for scholarships, post-secondary entrance, and job searches. It helps you get organized and results in a specific place for you to keep all your most-cherished items.

What can you put in your portfolio?

- Evidence of progress towards a goal (report cards, certificates, journal entries).
- Items that tell about your experiences (scrapbook, photos of teams, clubs, social activities).
- Evidence of creativity (artwork, video, creative writing, essays).
- Items that show accomplishments (badges, certificates, photos of trophies or award ceremonies, letters of reference).

Try to have as many different examples of accomplishments as possible; include sections on academics, extra-curricular and summer activities, volunteer and community work, and jobs.

One way to organize your portfolio is chronologically by section; consider including a description and reflection on each item so that you can use this material for applications. Do this now, before you are overwhelmed by schoolwork.

3. Find Appropriate Scholarships -- Find and apply for scholarships and awards that are appropriate for you.
  - Read applications carefully and pay close attention to criteria.
  - Think carefully about they are looking for – key words, i.e. “volunteer” on their application form means you should highlight your volunteer experience.
  - Know the minimum academic requirements – don’t waste your time applying if you don’t meet the minimum criteria.
  - Explore the many local community-based scholarships that are available.

#### Application-Writing Stage

1. Read over the instructions carefully before you begin. Take careful note of the deadline date. For some scholarships that require a school nomination, there is also a school deadline date that you must meet.
2. Look at all the questions and make a note of ones you want to discuss with your coach.
3. Do a rough draft on a photocopy of the form, not the original.
4. Get your coach to proofread your rough draft. Everyone makes mistakes – you won’t get it right the first time. If you are unsure about any of the questions, you or your coach should contact the sponsor for clarification.
5. Type the revised form or handwrite it (in blue or black ink) onto the original application form. Make sure it is legible as forms are often photocopied during the selection process. Neatly secure all transcripts, letters of recommendation, forms, etc. in a folder of some type. Submit the application form to all necessary people. Mail the original to the appropriate place, submit a copy to Guidance, and keep a copy for your own files. You will find this copy helpful if you get called for an interview or if you have to prepare a similar application later on.

#### Post- Application Writing Stage

1. Keep a tracking system for the awards, scholarships, bursaries, etc. that you have applied for including the date by which you should receive a reply. This might spare you some anxious days of waiting and wondering.

Remember to send a thank you letter if you are awarded a scholarship to show your appreciation for the recognition and the money. Send thank you letters to people who write your letters of recommendation. It’s courtesy and you may need other letters from them in the future.