

## **Essay-writing tips for students**

Scholarship applications typically feature student essay portions. Review Committees read lists of student activities and clubs, academic information such as report cards, and financial information from a FAFSA, but they provide only basic background. The student essay gives the Review Committee a more complete picture of the student as a learner, as a seeker of higher-education, and as a person who may require financial assistance. Take the time to write a strong essay that offers an insight as to why you deserve a scholarship.

### **Identify the assignment**

Essay assignments for our scholarships cover a wide scope from personal essays to papers on historical events to precis on particular texts. Before students can write an effective, engrossing essay, they must first identify what's being asked of them. Does the essay prompt want students to argue a point? Is the idea to examine a meaningful personal experience? Is the essay similar to a book report? Once the writing begins, it's easy to lose track of the assignment. But an effective essay must follow the guidelines set forth in the assignment. Students should reread the assignment prompt more than once and follow the instructions.

### **Identify the point of the essay**

Once students gain a firm grasp of what is being asked, they can then identify what their point of view or argument will be. This can require some research and should conclude with writing a thesis statement that will determine the rest of the essay.

### **Write an outline**

Outlines can help frame the essay and keep writers on track. An outline also serves as a time for writers to determine what to keep and what to omit from an essay. Writing an outline provides a chance to narrow the scope of the essay and cut it down, which should prove useful when sitting down to begin writing the composition.

### **Engage readers early**

An engaging question or assertion at the beginning of an essay will entice readers to want to continue reading. The question should be one the writer will answer, while an assertion should be supported throughout the rest of the essay. Some engaging prose in the opening paragraphs can draw readers in and set the stage for a well-written essay.

### **Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence**

Topic sentences are similar to outlines because they establish the structure of a paragraph. *Each new paragraph should include its own topic sentence.* If a new topic needs to be addressed, then do so in a new paragraph. Paragraphs should flow into each other, but writers should avoid introducing more than one topic in a single paragraph.

### **Write a strong conclusion**

The thesis statement will help to define the introductory paragraph, and it also can be utilized to establish the conclusion. Revisit the thesis in the conclusion and show how the points made throughout the body of the essay support that thesis. Conclude the essay with a statement that highlights the significance of the point the essay attempted to make.

These tips can make your essay stand apart from the hundreds of others read by the Review Committee. If you expect to receive a scholarship from Four County Community Foundation, you will take the time to write a compelling essay.