

## Resources for scholarship applicants

# Preparing your scholarship essays

## Guidelines

1. Give yourself plenty of time to work on your scholarship applications
  - a. Start by looking for awards for which you meet the eligibility criteria
  - b. Mark down the deadlines for each applicable award
  - c. Note down the application requirements for each award
  - d. Do your research and prepare to write
    - i. Collect the required information or documents
    - ii. Identify the purpose of each award - this is usually stated in the instructions or in the form
    - iii. Learn about who is giving out the scholarship - check “about us” on website
  - e. Prepare a draft application and essay (see “tips”#2-5)
2. Brainstorm
  - a. Find relatable stories from your own life that help to answer the question(s)
  - b. Match up your stories with the essay questions
  - c. Develop a narrative that lets readers get to know you
  - d. Build an outline using these stories
3. Prepare a draft essay
  - a. Identify one main point that wraps up the story that you want to tell. This is your thesis statement.
  - b. Develop three statements that support your main point
  - c. Identify distinct examples to support your statements
  - d. Use these examples within each paragraph to support your claims or statements
  - e. Format appropriately - according to instructions provided. If none are provided, then use single spacing, 1” margins all around, 12 point font in Times New Roman as this is standard.
  - f. Check your grammar and spelling using helpful tools if needed. E.g. Grammarly
4. Review
  - a. Ask someone that you trust to help you by reviewing your work. Be open to their questions. If something doesn’t make sense to them or if you have to explain it, this means that it is not clear. Make the effort to simplify your writing.
5. Submit
  - a. When preparing to submit your application, ensure that you have collected all required materials. Use a checklist.
  - b. Make sure to submit your materials before the deadline and request a confirmation of receipt, when possible
  - c. Ensure that you have saved your work in the format requested (e.g. printed, scanned to PDF, etc.)

- d. Use the appropriate or preferred method to make your submission (e.g. direct online, by email, by post, in-person.) If submitting in-person, make the effort to leave a good impression.
6. Follow-up if and when you have not heard back within the stated time for decision-making.

## Tips

1. Follow instructions - failure to do can disqualify you from consideration
2. Essays are your personal introduction. Build a strong opening statement that intrigues the reader.
3. Be specific in your writing rather than making generalized statements. To do this, provide examples.
4. Focus on describing meaning and lessons from your own life that allow readers to get to know you.
5. Be bold in shining a spotlight on your personal experiences, lessons and achievements. This is what readers and adjudicators expect to see.
6. Do your best to use no more or less than the maximum words permitted. Edit until you have made the most of the space offered.
7. Avoid quoting other people within your own essay. If you feel the need to do so, describe the context or meaning to you within the essay.
8. Do not use the essay to repeat information found elsewhere in your application.
9. Limiting your sentences to 8-12 words will improve reader comprehension.
10. Avoid using jargon as this makes your essay less accessible and enjoyable.

## Resources

### A. Guidelines, steps and tips:

- [“Writing a winning scholarship essay”](#)
  - Eight steps with suggestions, no examples
- [“Ten tips for writing effective scholarship essays”](#)
  - 10 basic steps, no examples
- [“How to write an essay for a school scholarship”](#)
  - 10 steps with suggestions, encourages originality, no examples
- [“Eight steps toward better scholarship essays”](#)
  - Eight detailed steps with helpful questions
- [“How to write a winning scholarship essay”](#)
  - Five lessons from an award winner, including essays focusing on leadership and community service

### B. Sample essays

- [“Write a fabulous “Why I deserve this scholarship” essay”](#)
  - Ten suggestions for building a strong essay, including three sample essays

- [“Fourteen Scholarship essay examples that won thousands in 2018”](#)
  - Shows questions (essay prompts) and full written responses
- [“Sample scholarship essays”](#)
  - Discusses formatting, shows do’s and don’ts

## C. Locating funding opportunities (provided by Regional Connections)

- **Government of Manitoba**
  - [Manitoba Student Aid](#)
  - [Industry, Training and Employment Services](#)
- **Scholarship Search Tools (databases)**
  - [www.yconic.ca](http://www.yconic.ca)
  - [www.scholarshipscanada.com](http://www.scholarshipscanada.com)
  - [www.disabilityawards.ca](http://www.disabilityawards.ca)
  - [Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada \(AUCC\)](#)
  - [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - [www.manitobascholarships.ca](http://www.manitobascholarships.ca)
  - [www.scholartree.ca](http://www.scholartree.ca)
  - [Equals6](#)
  - [Canadian Subsidy Directory](#)
  - [Export Development Canada \(EDC\) International Business Scholarships](#)
- **Scholarships**
  - [RBC Royal Bank Scholarships](#)
  - [TD Canada Trust Canadian Scholarships for Community Leadership](#)
  - [Scotiabank Scholarships](#)
  - [Winkler Community Foundation](#)