

# Scholarship and College Essay Guide

## I Don't know What to Write About!

### Turn your achievements, goals and interests into essay topics:

- Personalize your experience. What makes the volunteer and/or community services you've performed unique?
- Do you still keep in touch with anyone you've helped?
- Talk about specific interactions you may have had with others. How did you influence their lives?
- How did your achievements reflect your values? Why are your achievements important to you?
- Remember that judges want to hear from you as a person, not your resume.

### Academic Plans & Possible Major

- Instead of saying, "Math is my favorite subject," discuss a specific assignment or project that you worked on that sparked your interest and why.
- Avoid saying that you selected a major/career path to "help people". What specific actions can you take to improve the lives of others? Discuss specific values or ideas you want to develop once you get to college.

### Background and Influences

- Is there a person who encouraged you to succeed? Focus on specific qualities or actions that the person has inspired in you.
- Pick specific people, incidents and learning experiences to write about that will let your personality come through.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

### College Application Process

- Research colleges-Junior year
- Letters of recommendation (teachers, counselors, employers)
- Apply for colleges of your choice online-Senior year
- Request transcripts through Parchment [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com)
- Acceptance letters
- Complete FAFSA (FREE Application for Federal Aid)
- Apply for scholarships
- Make final decision
- Request final transcripts through Parchment

## **APPLICATION TIPS**

- Is your name on it? Is all information accurate and legible?
- If you have requested letters of recommendation, let that person know what to do with it when they are finished. Do they put it in a sealed envelope? Do they return it to you or the counseling center? Also, let your counselor know if these need to be sent in with the transcript.
- Have you signed everything you need?
- Keep copies of everything.
- Don't run out of time! Be aware of deadlines. Make sure you give your counselor plenty of time to complete their portion.

## **ESSAY TIPS**

- Make your essay engaging and memorable. Give a reason to finish reading it.
- Be yourself. Choose a topic that is meaningful to you.
- Accentuate the positive. When writing about a personal experience, emphasize how the experience changed you for the better.
- Write in the active voice. This makes for a clearer, more concise essay.
- Don't overextend. This isn't a term paper. Stay focused on your topic.
- Ask for input. Whether it is a teacher, parent, counselor or friend, ask for feedback.
- Pursue perfection. Have someone else read it and look it over.

## **APPLICATIONS ACCEPTANCE**

Notice of acceptance or non-acceptance will take anywhere from one week to two months. Make sure you forward all deposits, etc. Before the deadline dates after you receive notice of acceptance.