**Scholarship Essays/Personal Statements**

Almost all scholarship applications will require that you submit an essay or personal statement which will be the most important part of your application. Each scholarship will request different information but generally there are 5 different areas or topics that are used for scholarship essays. They are:

1. A Personal Biography (Personal Statement)
2. Your Career Aspirations
3. Your Greatest Achievement
4. A Person You Admire
5. Solving a Pressing Issue
6. Growth Experiences
7. **A Personal Biography.** This is the most commonly requested essay and is often called a personal statement. In this essay you will include a description of yourself, your activities, and your goals. It will be important to convey your sense of responsibility, services to others, and your potential for growth. For this type of essay you may want to include the following:
* Information about your life and what is important to you
* Your dream, your career choice (see #2 below), who you are, what you care about
* Special circumstances about your life, obstacles you have overcome, events or people that have had an impact on your life, key experiences in your life that have helped shape you as a person. Include your perspectives, opinions, beliefs, and values that are shaped by them.
* Don’t just list your activities or experiences; write about how the activity or experience has changed your life, helped you establish a goal, developed your beliefs, impacted your values, or changed your attitude. Write about what has made the experience meaningful. Show the reader what you have done by using examples.
1. **Your Career Aspirations.** For this essay you will want to include the following information:
* Why you have chosen this career, what is your motivation, what triggered your interest in this field
* Activities you have participated in that demonstrate your interest in this career
* How you will reach your career goals
* Steps you have already taken to pursue this career
* How you have the potential to excel in this field, skills you have already begun to develop that will help you be successful
1. **Your Greatest Achievement.** Not only will you write about your achievement but you should include information about why you did what you did and the impact it had on your life.
2. **A Person You Admire.** This essay is actually about you, not the actual person you are writing about. This topic allows the reader to understand the qualities and characteristics you value most.
3. **Solve a Pressing Issue.** Writing about something you care about makes it much easier to complete this type of essay.
4. **Growth Experiences.** In this essay you write about an event that has had a significant impact on the person you have become. It does not need to be about a major event. The focus is not on the event, the focus in on the steps you took to overcome the obstacle or the positive things you learned from the situation, your values and your beliefs.

**Important points to keep in mind:**

* Show, don’t tell. Describe a situation or activity and give examples of what you did or how you did it.
* Demonstrate the educational value and benefit of your activities by including detailed descriptions of what was done, the lessons learned, the impact and outcome.
* Make each sentence count; don’t be redundant.
* Start with an interesting story to grab the reader’s attention. Use this story to support the theme of your essay.

**Some final tips:**

* Always have someone else read your essay.
* Make sure everything is spelled correctly, don’t rely on your computer.
* Make sure your essay is concise, organized, and not repetitive.

#### Carefully read the instructions and answer only the questions that are asked.

### Keep your essay personal! Keep in mind as you are writing your essay you want the reviewer to feel like they have met you and can see your vision for the future. If they cannot *see* you, it will be hard for them to fund you. Before they invest in you they need to get to know you and know that you are a good investment.

*Source: How to Go to College Almost for Free, Ben Kaplan*