

ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Tell me a little about yourself (500 words max):**

Write an elevator speech (what you would tell someone you are riding an elevator with for two minutes) - this is your "pitch". Highlight your life in one paragraph. You may want to include your upbringing, strengths, things you overcame, and how you got here. It may list your adversity or your challenges in the extreme, but it should retain a "positive view" overall. But write this under the topic "your journey of how you got here (e.g. overcoming adversity) and how you're going to college to build your future career." Also, highlight personal achievements, things that you are passionate about, or how you help others or our community. Tell the story of "what brought you here to college and who you are." Tell a convincing, grabbing story. Start with a hook line in the first two sentences so I can't put it down.

2. **Describe your educational goals (short-term & long-term) (300 words max):**

Write about each stage of your education. Short-term example: "This semester, I plan to..." Medium-term example: "When I am finished with my AA degree, I plan to..." Long-term "When I am finished with school, I plan to..." Tell the story of where you are now, where you're going next, the career you want when you're done, and how you will make a difference in our community (local, state, national, or global). If you don't know what career or program you want, talk in generalities. Example: "I want to finish my associates degree and go on to earn a bachelor's degree."

3. **Tell me why you are a good fit for this scholarship (why you need \$) (300 words max):**

Here, touch on inspiring things from your past from paragraph # 1- those parts that hooked the reader, like what you overcame to get here. Next, talk about your current struggles (financial, family, children, child care, etc.). Next, tell how you need help in order to finish (how these issues may prevent you from succeeding). Lastly, tell how you'll use that help to go out into our community and give back by helping others in need (those parts at the end of paragraph 2). Explain that their gift will have lasting effects in your life as well as our community. End by thanking them for listening and for considering your request.

IMPORTANT: Save this PERMANENTLY!! (Word or Google Doc on your hard drive, thumb drive) for editing and reuse. Email your drafts to yourself in case your thumb drive or computer crashes!

SUPPORTS: Your best option is to use the NIC Writing Center. You can also watch YouTube videos. Search for "writing a winning scholarship essay." Spend an hour organizing your essay. If you are struggling with getting started, Google the problem you're having (e.g. "how to answer "tell me a little bit about yourself" in one paragraph" or "how do I write a convincing elevator speech" or "how do I write professionally about being homeless," etc.).

PROOFING: Have AT LEAST 3 sets of eyes read and proof this letter. Use the writing center, your English teacher, that one student who always writes beautifully, your boss at work, or other professionals (not just your friends or family).

LAST WORDS: Treat this like your dream job interview! Delve in deep and do the best job you can. Remember, this letter can determine your path to success. Do it right, do it well, and good luck!