



Personal Essay

Here are some suggestions to help you prepare your essay. Before you start:

- Be sure to check if your scholarship application requires you to answer specific questions as part of your statement.
- Check if there is a word limit. (If none is specified, the minimum should be: one page with 250 words, double-spaced. The maximum: 500 words, double-spaced on two pages. The reviewers will have a lot to read so try to keep it short!)
- Use Times New Roman font in 12-font size.
- Don't worry if you aren't 100% sure what you want to do! Most colleges (except for one year vocational training programs) don't require you to declare your major or know your career plans in your first year. Some students change their minds a bunch of times before they finish college. Most scholarship givers just want to see that you will give college your best shot because you are motivated to succeed in other ways.

Opening Paragraph: Explain in 1-3 sentences why you want to go to college, why it's something you're excited about doing, and how it fits into bigger dreams/goals you have. Make your reader want to read more. Dream big, but more importantly, be true to yourself!

Example: My career ambition is to open up my own auto repair shop which has the best mechanics, best service, and best facilities, including a stylish and soundproof lounge where customers could enjoy good food and Internet access. In order to make it happen, I plan to study Automotive Technology and Business Management at Honolulu Community College.

Middle Paragraphs: Tell your reader more. Answer any 2 or 3 of the following questions to fill up 2 or more paragraphs:

- What got you interested in the college subject or future job you're aiming for?
- What have you already done which shows that you have been wanting this for a while?
- What will make you unique or special in the career you are seeking out?

- What have you done which indicates that what you plan is a good fit for you?
- In what ways do you expect your chosen academic subject or career to be satisfying?
- If you have a professional role model, explain: how did they inspire you?

Example: I have always been interested in cars. My father taught himself how to fix a lot of minor problems with cars, and I learned a lot from watching him. I have also learned from my work experience at a couple of service stations about how to work with customers. A lot of people do not think fixing cars is a great profession, but I have seen that a well-run shop can be satisfying and profitable for the owners.

So many service stations have waiting rooms, which are small, noisy and uncomfortable, with only coffee and a vending machine. Customers get impatient when they feel stuck waiting in a place like that. I would like to start a service station with a waiting area, which was like a good café, and serve espresso drinks, smoothies and good food. There would be lots of car and racing magazines for people to look at, and customers could just relax and enjoy themselves while waiting.

In order to make this dream come true, I need to develop my automotive technology knowledge and learn how to start and run a successful business. This is why I am enrolling...

Closing paragraph: Be positive, upbeat, and tell ‘em “I’m going to make it!” Just three sentences will do.

Example: I am really looking forward to going to college. A lot of people doubted I would make it into college, but I know I will prove myself by going even further. I want to be a good role model so my younger brothers and sisters will pursue college, too. As long as I keep succeeding, I can tell them that they better keep their grades, up too!

After you have a draft:

- Proofread! Try to re-read your essay after a couple of days or at least a few hours later so you can read it with a fresh eye.
- Read it out loud in front of someone you feel comfortable around. This will help you correct sentences that are too long, repeat things, or don’t fit together.
- If you can, run a “Grammarcheck” and “Spellcheck” to get your computer to help catch some of your mistakes.

If possible, ask a teacher or someone who is a strong writer to proofread it for you. (Try to give your proofreader a little time to get back to you, since he or she might not be able to drop everything else to help you, right then and there! Be sure to thank anyone who helps you, especially if you seek them out more than once