

# Writing an effective scholarship essay

---

- **Consider the rhetorical situation.**
  - It may feel awkward: you have to talk about yourself and ask for money!
  - Remember your purpose: asking for funding for your education.
  - Remember your audience: a scholarship committee consisting of faculty, staff, and WSF members (often business leaders and retired teachers).
  - Striking the right tone can be tricky business: demonstrate “humble confidence” and avoid drama.
- **How do I start this thing? (ideas for invention)**
  - You have to get in to get out!
  - Brainstorm/freewrite about each of the bullet points found on the [Tips for Writing Your Scholarship Essay web page](#). Then look for themes and recurring elements.
  - Tell a story. Don't give the committee a laundry list from your resume.
  - Share your intellectual and educational history: What were the transformative moments in your education? What was your inspiration for your field of study?
  - What have you done with the opportunities you've had? How would the scholarship impact your studies and career plans?
  - What are your dreams for the future? What kind of person, professional, and citizen do you wish to become?
- **Take advantage of the “flowers of afterthought” (revision).**
  - There's no shortcutting the process: a good essay will require multiple drafts.
  - Give yourself the gift of time between drafts so you might truly see your work with fresh eyes (re-vision).
- **Writers need readers.**
  - Have a trusted friend or family member read a draft and share their impressions.
  - Use the WSU resources available to you. The [Writing Center](#) consultants and honors directors are happy to help with any phase of the process.
- **Proofread!**
  - Spellcheck can be helpful, but you should also print out your essay and proofread the old-fashioned way. Read the essay aloud so you use different parts of your brain. Ask a friend to proofread for you as well.
  - Turn off grammar check. Leave it off.
  - Good writing is not about the avoidance of error, however, typos and grammatical errors distract your readers and detract from your credibility (ethos).