

# How to Write Your Scholarship Essay

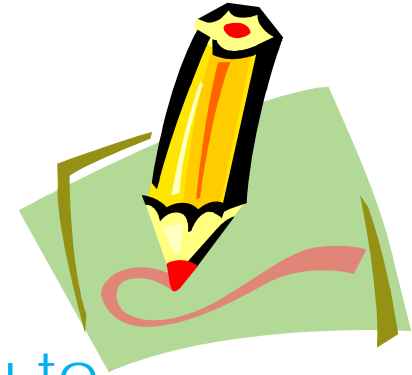
UAS Scholarship Writing  
Workshop

**UAS** UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA  
**S O U T H E A S T**

*learn • engage • change*



# Welcome!



- This workshop is to help prepare you to write a successful scholarship essay.
- The workshop will go over step by step the requirements to get you ready for writing your essay.



# Requirements

- Before you start: You should know the Eligibility requirements of each scholarship to know if you fit the requirements of the scholarship.
- You have to be applying or already enrolled at UAS to be considered for a UAS scholarship.
- It is expected that the recipients of the scholarships:
  - Carry 12 or more credits per semester (unless otherwise noted)
  - Maintain at least a 2.0 GPA, some awards require a higher GPA
  - Maintain satisfactory academic progress

# What you need to know

- The date the scholarships are due: For UAS scholarships- February 15, 2012
- Your UA ID number to login to UA Online
- The length Requirements for essays: The UA Online personal essay will not accept essays over 3000 characters, or about 500 words.
  - What does 500 words look like?

# Steps for Scholarship Applications

1. Write Essay/Cover Letter
2. Go to [www.uas.alaska.edu/financial\\_aid/](http://www.uas.alaska.edu/financial_aid/)
3. Scroll down the page, chose "Apply for Scholarships"
4. Choose "UAS Scholarship Application"
5. Follow Step 2 of Application Process: "Go to UA Online and complete the required online scholarship application."
  1. Log in to UA Online- You will need your UA ID
  2. Choose "Financial Aid " Link
  3. Choose "Scholarships" link
  4. Fill out the "Scholarship Application" (You can paste in your pre-written essay/cover letter in the box provided for your person essay.)
  5. Submit Scholarship
6. Return to "Applying for Scholarships" webpage
7. Now look through list of supplemental scholarships; choose the one(s) you wish to apply for
8. Fill out the correct boxes for each application
9. Submit!

Step by Step picture with Desktop Share

# Personal Profile under UA Online

- Please submit a short biographical profile of yourself in the space below. The text box will not accept more than 3000 characters (including spaces) or about 500 words. It is recommended that you compose your profile in a word processing program such as Microsoft Word, then copy and paste it into the box below.
- Your personal profile will be read by committee members and evaluated for scholarship selections. It will also be shared with donors of scholarships if you are selected as a recipient and accessed by the alumni office once you graduate. This is your opportunity to tell us about yourself: your educational goals, career aspirations, community involvement, leadership roles, etc. Please return and update this profile annually or as your plans evolve.

# Things to Consider

- The essay should provide a claim to why and how you are qualified for the scholarship
- 500 words is not that long, so be specific
- Make sure to know the specific scholarship you are applying for and the guidelines for that scholarship
- The content should be well organized and easy to read.
- Grab the attention of the reader from the beginning. More on this later.
- Let the reader know why and how you are highly qualified for this scholarship



# Ideas for Essay

- Tell the reader about yourself:
  - Educational goals
  - Career aspirations
  - Community involvement
  - Leadership roles
  - Obstacles you have overcome
  - The list goes on.....



# How to Begin?



- Brainstorm about yourself and the institution to which you're applying. Examples of what to brainstorm follow-
- Brainstorm on your individuality, such as:
  - Who am I?
  - What characteristics do I possess (honesty, loyalty..)
  - What skills do I have (communication, organizational, leadership)
  - What extracurricular activities have I participated in?
  - What topic to my essay can separate my essay from the pack?
  - How have I changed/grown over the years? What caused these changes and how have they affected me?
  - What makes me unique? How am I different from other applicants?
  - Why should the committee be interested in me?
  - Are there any obstacles that I had to overcome and how have I dealt with these difficulties from my past?
  - Are there any experiences from my past that have affected my life? Can I relate these experiences to my goals?
  - Who has influenced me over the years (parents, teachers, siblings, friends, public figure) and how have they influenced me?
  - What are my career goals?

# Before you Begin



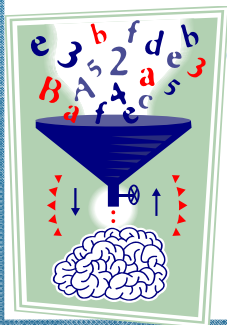
- Brainstorm on your field of study, such as:
  - When did I become fascinated by my field of study?
  - Why am I interested in my field of study?
  - What have I learned about my subject of interest?
  - How has my field of study shaped me?  
What has my field of study taught me about myself?

## Before you Begin (continued)

- Brainstorm on your academic record, such as:
  - Do I have any gaps or inconsistencies on my records (transcript and/or exam scores) that I can explain?
  - Are there any awards, recognition, or honors that I have received that are worth mentioning?

# Before you Begin (continued)

- Brainstorm about your non-academic experiences, such as:
  - What internships and/or jobs have I had in the past?
  - What I learned from my internship and/or job experiences? What skills have I acquired through my internship and/or job?
  - How are my internship and/or job experiences related to my field of interest/study? Have my internship and/or job experiences prepared me for my future career?
  - Have I been involved in any social services? How has the experience contributed to my growth and how is it related to my goals?
  - What extracurricular activities have I participated in and how do they contribute to my professional goals?



## Before you Begin (continued)

- Brainstorm questions about the readers and the institution, such as:
  - Who will be reading my personal statement?
  - How can I make my essay compelling to the readers?
  - Why am I applying to this program?
  - Why am I applying to this institution?
  - How will attending this school help me grow as an individual and prepare me for my future career?

## Before you Begin (continued)

- Answering these questions will help you find a theme and increase your content for your essay.
- As you can tell from the previous slides, there are many topics to consider. It is important to stay focused in your essay and not cover too much, making your essay vague.
- Don't get overwhelmed by all the possible topics, focus on what you can write about and what you are interested in. The previous slides are to help inspire for your writing- not to overwhelm or confuse you.



## Before you Begin (continued)

- To Consider: Your personal statement can have an impact on your acceptance or rejection, so it is important that you write an essay that leaves a valuable impression on the committee. Evaluating these questions can help you prepare an essay that is compelling and attention grabbing. Your job is to let the reader know why you should be the one that is accepted. After answering the suggested questions, your next step is to use this information and create an organized and structured essay.



# Tips for the Essay

- Read the directions: If there are specific directions for a scholarship follow the given instructions.
- During the scholarship application- Do not skip questions: If a question does not apply to you, write "Not Applicable." Do not leave any question blank, an incomplete application will be rejected.
- \*Don't Forget- Write an essay that interests you: an essay that you are interested in will create a more engaging essay for your reader.

# More Tips



1. Create a hook in the beginning
2. Surprise the reader- Separate your essay from others
3. Create a strong thesis/main idea
4. Focus on your thesis- do not stray far from your main point
5. Care about what you are writing
6. Do not repeat or restate yourself in the essay
7. ALWAYS PROOFREAD!- Have a friend/colleague/teacher/tutor read through your essay



## Even More Tips for Writing an Effective Scholarship Essay

- Create an outline for your brainstorming
- Organize your thoughts before you start writing
- Your outline and thoughts should touch all the required instructions
- Use clear, concise, and simple language
- Mention your accomplishments not just your abilities

# Examples of outlines

Ben  
Clark

Education

College

Teaching

Tutor

Career

Non-Profit

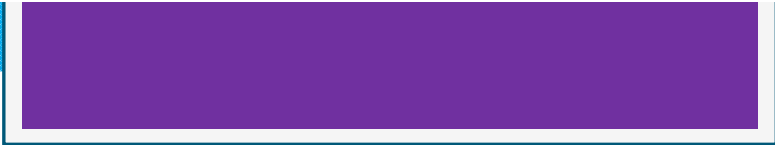
High School Teaching

University tutor

Dedication  
to service

Commission

Board Work



Education

Service to the  
Community

Ben  
Clark

Career Path

Personal  
Achievements

# Form of Scholarship Essay

- Date, Address
- Institution/Committee Name that was evaluating essay
- Dear .....
- Introductory Paragraph
- Body
- Closing
- Sincerely, Name....

\*Provide Handout of Format

## Form for Scholarship Essay/Letter

Date

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Institution/Committee Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (specific person's name or institution/committee name) :

### **Introductory Paragraph:**

- Grab reader's attention with interesting opening
- Explanation of why you're writing
- Explanation of what you want

### **Body Paragraph:**

- How you are qualified for scholarship
- What your talents are: activities, accomplishments
- What your educational goals are
- How you will use scholarship to reach above-mentioned educational goals
- What your long-term plans are for your education (what you plan to use your education for after you're done with college)

### **Closing:**

- Always thank person/committee for time
- Refer to hope to hear back from person/committee soon
- Close in unique way so as to, like in the opening paragraph, grab your reader's attention again

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)

Your Name Typed

Tuesday January 24, 2012

112 Sitka Highway  
Sitka, AK 99835

University of Alaska Southeast Scholarship Committee  
1132 Seward Avenue  
Sitka, AK 99835

Dear University Scholarship Committee;

The first paragraph is the introductory paragraph. It is important that this paragraph grabs your reader's attention. In the opening paragraph you should identify who you are and what you are applying for. This paragraph can explain why you're writing and what you want from this letter. This can be the most important part of the essay. It can set the tone for the rest of the essay. You want the reader to be provoked to continue to read. It is important to brainstorm before starting your essay, create an outline to work off of. This is your opportunity to tell us about yourself: your educational goals, career aspirations, community involvement, leadership roles, or organizational skills. Remember that chances are there are many people applying for the same scholarship you are, so you want your personal essay to stand out.

This second paragraph is the body of the essay. This paragraph will allow you to elaborate in more depth on your qualifications for the scholarship. Here you should give appropriate detail to your statements in the introductory paragraph. Explain what your talents are. Give the reader insight into your activities and accomplishments that separate you from other applicants. You can write about your professional, personal, and educational goals; how will this scholarship help you reach those goals. You could tell the reader your long-term plans for the future and how this scholarship will intertwine and assist you in achieving those ambitions. You could break the body into separate paragraphs and focus on three points that support your claim. Each paragraph should flow by appropriately using transitions and resolutions. The paper should stay focused on the task at hand- being accepted for the desired scholarship. Make sure to show your reader how you are qualified for this scholarship rather than telling the reader why. Give examples and provide specific accomplishments rather than stating your abilities. It is important to let the reader know your recognitions from your past experiences. Once again, make sure to organize your thoughts before writing. This will allow you to write a clear and concise essay that is focused.

The final paragraph is for the conclusion. Always thank the person or committee for the time they have dedicated to reading and analyzing your essay. Also, acknowledge that you look forward to hearing back from the reader soon. Summarize your essay without simply repeating what you have already written in a brief and conclusive manner. Just like in the opening paragraph, grab the attention of the reader or committee leaving a lasting impression. This will help keep your essay in the minds of the committee members when deciding on the recipient of the scholarship. Try to end on a positive note. End with enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

Signature

Ben Clark

# Writing Your Scholarship Essay

1. The Introduction: First Things First- Grab Your Reader's Attention!
2. The Body: Prove Yourself!- Cover the basics
3. The Conclusion: End with Enthusiasm!



# 1. The Introduction: Grab Your Reader's Attention

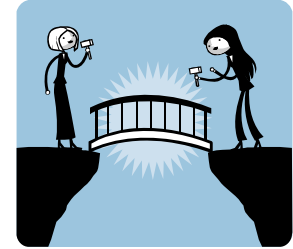


- Your opening paragraph should not only *identify who you are* and *what you're applying for*, but it should also catch your reader's attention. Remember: many people will be applying for the same scholarship, so you want your personal essay to stand out a bit.
- The first sentence grabs the reader and can give insight on the format of your essay.

## 2. The Body: Prove Yourself- Cover the Basics

- Describe for your reader why you're the best applicant for the scholarship. The reader wants to know.
- Experiences, accomplishments, future goals, or any other evidence that can support your claims should be included in the body.
- Remember the slides before on suggested topics and ideas.

# The Body: Transitions and Resolutions



- The paragraph should flow by using appropriate transitions and resolutions. A good paragraph will start with a transition, which starts each paragraph with a topic statement that will be the theme of that paragraph. This allows the reader to be aware of the direction the essay is heading. Transitions also connect paragraphs throughout the essay- think of transitions as 'bridges.'
- Along with transitions, each paragraph should have a resolution, which ends each paragraph with a meaningful sentence that provides a transition to the next paragraph.

# Transitional words: A road map to guide readers



- Examples of transitions:
  - Additional Signal: One, first of all, second, finally, last of all
  - Time Signals: First, then, next, after, now
  - Space Signals: Next to, across, above, below, near
  - Change-of-direction signals: But, however, yet, although, still
  - Illustration signals: For examples, for instance, specifically, such as
  - Conclusion signals: Therefore, thus, as a result, finally, last of all

### 3. The Conclusion: Ending With Enthusiasm

- The last paragraph of the personal statement
- State the key points mentioned in the body of the essay in a conclusive and brief manner.
- Try to end on a positive note with one or two attention-grabbing sentences.

# The Conclusion

- Thank you reader for her or his time, and also acknowledge that you look forward to hearing back from him or her. Always sign your name if possible, but be sure to type it as well, so the reader can decipher your name.
- Close in a unique way so as to, like in the opening paragraph, grab your reader's attention again and leave a lasting impression.



# Essay Do's and Don'ts

- The Do's:

- Prepare an outline and create a draft
- Answer all the questions being asked
- Make sure your essay has a theme or a thesis
- Make your essay/introduction unique
- Write clearly and make sure it is easy to read
- Be honest, confident, and be yourself
- Make sure your essay is organized, coherent, and concise
- Be specific with details
- Use a consistent point of view

# Essay Do's continued

- Write about yourself and use examples from your own life experiences
- Discuss your future goals
- Mention any hobbies, past jobs, community service, or research experience
- Speak in first person (I...)
- Mention weaknesses without making excuses
- Discuss why you are interested in the school and/or program
- Show, don't tell your reader
- Ask for help
- Proofread and revise- at least 3 times
- Have others proofread your essay

# Showing versus Telling

- Telling is....
  - When you tell the reader what you can do and make a list without giving examples. This is less informative and less exciting.
- Showing is....
  - When you show the reader your accomplishments, not just your abilities. Letting the reader see how your abilities have helped you achieved your accomplishments.

# Essay Don'ts

- The Don'ts:

- Have any grammar or spelling errors.  
(Proofread!!!)
- Be wordy or use jargon, slang, or include clichés
- Digress or be repetitive
- Use gimmicks
- Be defensive or arrogant
- Complain

# Essay Don'ts continued

- Have your essay focus too much on other individuals- it is about you
- Give excuses for a low GPA
- Make lists- show don't tell (Sorry to be repetitive but it is important)
- Write a term paper or an autobiography
- Summarize your resume
- Include information already cited on the application
- Forget to proofread- I think that this has been mentioned before!!! (Hint, hint)

# Available Scholarships

- UAS and UA Foundation
- UAS Scholarships
- View both online under [www.uas.alaska.edu/financial\\_aid/](http://www.uas.alaska.edu/financial_aid/)





## Websites for Extra Help

- [www.uas.alaska.edu/sitka/](http://www.uas.alaska.edu/sitka/)
- Click on the Learning Center tab followed by the Writing Assistant tab

# Dates

- All steps in completing the requirements for UAS foundation scholarships are due by Wednesday February 15, 2012.
- Ask your UAS advisors for clarification on your scholarship requirements



# Want Extra Eyes?

- Have a friend proof read your essay
- Have a Class Mate
- A previous teacher or professor who has time
- Or me, Ben Clark, at the UAS Sitka learning center:
  - Email: [bclark34@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:bclark34@uas.alaska.edu)
  - Phone: 747-7765
  - At the Learning Center: Tuesdays 2-8, Wednesday 10-4, Saturdays 10-1.



# Thank You

- Thanks for joining this workshop
- Please feel free to contact me, Ben Clark, the UAS Sitka Writing Assistant for any follow up questions or clarifications. I am happy to assist.
- Good luck with your scholarships and your educational path!!!

