

NPC FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Empowering students and promoting lifelong learning through advocacy, volunteerism, fundraising, and awarding scholarships.

THE SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

Your essay is **the key** to your scholarship application. It is your chance to show the scholarship review committee that you are worthy of their **investment in you**, that you are **more than your GPA**, and that you are a good writer, which is a communication skill. Communication skills are critical in MULTIPLE life situations! Here are some general pointers about effective essays:

- Effective essays do not have to be long. **(If you are given a word limit, stick to it!)**
- An attention-grabbing hook immediately captures the reader's interest.
- Be sure to address all the prompts you are given in the application instructions thoroughly and do not deviate from what you should cover.

I. First Paragraph

- A. **Start with a story** about what led you to your degree and career path. Personal stories engage the reader and help them to feel that they know you! Revealing a little about yourself helps you connect with the reader. It is critical to make a connection because you will probably never meet the readers on the scholarship selection committee.
- B. Finish the paragraph with a statement that leads the reader to the next paragraph about what your educational plans are.

II. Second Paragraph

- A. Now, **talk specifically about your educational plans**. What is your degree plan? What classes have you taken? What do you still have to take? When will you graduate?
- B. Where will your educational plans take you? Will you get an advanced degree? What are your career goals? How will your NPC degree help you achieve them?

III. Third Paragraph

- A. **Tell about the resources you have**. *Scholarship committees like to help students who are helping themselves.* Do you have a job? Where do you work? How many hours per week? Do you qualify for financial aid? Do you have savings? Other scholarships? Family help?
- B. Tell about the challenges you face. Tell about challenges you have overcome!

IV. Fourth Paragraph

- A. Start this paragraph with a **specific statement** about how you will use the funds, if awarded. (Be **realistic** and honest! Gas money? Money for books or supplies? Child care?) Do NOT overstate. If the scholarship award is \$1,000 per semester, stick to what \$1,000 will provide.
- B. Tie it all up with a strong conclusion. A strong conclusion that reflects core values and personal philosophy shows emotional maturity and self-reflection.
- C. Always conclude with a statement of **thanks**. (Thank you for considering me for this opportunity....)

Here are some TIPS to give your application a winning edge:

- If you need references, send them a copy of your essay, and ask them NOW.
- **FOLLOW APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER!** If you are asked to write an essay about a specific theme, stick to the **theme**. **Address all the prompts directly.**
- Don't be shy about showing **passion** in your writing! Let the language you use convey your feelings. Remember, you're making a connection!
- **AVOID TELLING THE SOB STORY! Don't expect to win if the intent of your essay is to evoke pity.** Remember that *every applicant (and many a scholarship reviewer!) has faced difficulties*. What makes you different is how you've overcome difficulties! Scholarship committees are interested in how you've responded to the challenges you faced. This reveals character and shows you to be a **resilient, resourceful, and goal-oriented person**: A great candidate for their ***investment!***
- **HAVE A FEW GREAT EDITORS!** Have a trusted friend, teacher, family member, or colleague read your essay. Ask them to critique its general content by asking open-ended (rather than yes/no) questions:
DON'T ASK: Did I write a good essay? **DO ASK:** IN your own words, what did the essay tell you about me? (*You don't always convey what you think you are conveying!*) How might I improve the essay's content?
- Have your editors review the essay for technical content. **DO NOT RELY ON SPELL CHECK or GRAMMAR CHECK!!!** Are proper nouns capitalized? Is every word spelled correctly? Did you use correct grammar?
- **NO LYING. PERIOD.** If you didn't do it, don't say you did.
- **NO AI.** This is a PERSONAL essay. YOU have a great story that no AI app can compete with!

IN CONCLUSION: As with most things in life, the success of your scholarship search is directly proportional to the effort you put into it. **Don't give up! Apply, apply, apply, and FOLLOW UP!!!** And WRITE A THANK-YOU LETTER TO YOUR DONOR! They will remember you for it, and you may get help from them again!

Please contact NPCFF if you would like assistance with editing your scholarship essay. You can send your essay as a **Word document** to:

NPCFF@npc.edu

To avoid missing a deadline, send your essay for review well in advance of the application deadline date.

RESOURCES

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa> - A MUST for any student seeking a scholarship! Many applications require information from your FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS), and you may find out you qualify for a Federal Pell Grant, which is money you DON'T have to pay back!

www.npc.edu/ffscholarships - Where to go to learn about ALL the scholarships NPC Friends and Family has to offer, view a tutorial on how to develop a strong application, and SUBMIT A SINGLE, ONLINE APPLICATION TO BE CONSIDERED FOR OVER 40 NPCFF SCHOLARSHIPS!

MONITOR YOUR EMAIL! WHEN NPCFF HAS NEW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARISE BETWEEN CYCLES, WE SEND AN EMAIL TO ALL REGISTERED STUDENTS!

Best of luck to you as you continue your education! We are proud of your efforts. You are giving yourself a gift no one can ever take from you.