

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

1) SCHOLARSHIP MYTHS

Myth

You must be an “A” student to win a scholarship.

Truth:

Having an “A” average alone will not guarantee you a scholarship. The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation conducts one of the largest corporate-sponsored scholarship programs in the United States. Although a good academic record is a contributing factor, having an “A” average exclusively will not qualify a student as a Coca-Cola Scholar. Coca-Cola Scholars are well-rounded, unique, and independent individuals.

Myth

Billions of scholarship dollars go unused every year.

Truth:

Although some scholarship money is unclaimed each year, this money is often earmarked for students with very specific qualifications such as a particular last name or some unusual characteristic. For instance, students who are Catholic and have the last name of Zolp may be eligible for a full-tuition four-year scholarship at Loyola University.

Myth

B or C students have little opportunity to win scholarships.

Truth:

B or C students still have opportunities for scholarships. If you are a B or C student and you have a history of participation and growth in extracurricular activities as well as involvement in your community, you have an excellent chance of winning scholarships. Highlighting your participation and involvement in a student résumé and an essay will help you be successful.

Myths

You cannot win a scholarship if you do not have financial need. Or, middle class students cannot get money for college.

Truth:

Middle class students can win money for college. Although they may not be eligible for some need-based scholarship programs, they still have numerous opportunities to win merit scholarships.

Myth

Grades and SAT scores are the only factors you need to worry about for winning scholarships.

Truth:

Having good grades and high SAT scores are definitely important. However, you still need to have a history of participation and growth in extracurricular activities as well as involvement in your community to win scholarships. Also showcasing your participation and involvement in a student résumé and an essay will help.

2) What Makes a Highly Successful Scholarship Winner?

- Successful students always remember the five P's – **Prior preparation prevents poor performance**. Prepare for the scholarship search early.
- Successful students do not rely on their parents to do all the work.
- Successful students vigorously avoid mistakes on their essays and applications. They always spell-check, proofread, and allow one other person to proofread their applications and essay for errors.
- Successful students do not ignore scholarships that may be local or those for small amounts. Scholarship amounts, even as small as \$50, can add up.
- Successful students do not rely on only one source such as the Internet for their scholarship search. They use many resources. Many scholarships on the Internet or in the free scholarship searches that you find on the World Wide Web are nationally known and are harder to win due to greater competition. Local and regional scholarships are not found as easily through an Internet search, although they may be easier to win because the applicant pool is smaller. You have to use a combination of resources to find as many scholarships to apply for as possible.
- Successful students market themselves well. In their applications, they highlight positive aspects about their lives, especially community involvement. (*How are you different because of the activity? Personal growth? Show, don't tell!*)
- Successful students do not apply to one or two scholarships and hope for the best. They apply for all scholarships they are eligible to win. They keep applying until the total they have won exceeds what they need to pay for the college they want to attend or until they graduate with a degree.
- Successful students are organized. They keep track of deadlines and materials required to complete an application. (*Develop a resume & essays that can be reused or tweaked*).
- Successful students are well rounded. They participate in extracurricular and community activities. They write about these activities in scholarship and college essays in a descriptive and detailed manner. They try to benefit others as well as themselves with the extracurricular and community activities in which they are involved.
- Successful students understand that SAT scores and grades alone do not win most scholarships. Scholarship programs look at many factors such as community activities, leadership, presentation of your application package, special or unusual talents or skills. (*Identify the organization's motivation for sponsoring the scholarship & show how you have similar values*).
- Successful students do not look for the easy way out. It is harder for them to believe in a scholarship scam that promises to do all the work for them. They understand that those things for which we work hardest often bring the greatest rewards. Hard work in the scholarship process as a high school student could result in an easy college life without having to work, or a loan-free life after college.

3) Avoid These Most Common Mistakes Scholarship Applications

1. Not following directions
2. Missing the deadline
3. Not typing your application or sending in a sloppy application
4. Forgetting to spell check and to proofread after you spell check
5. Not including information such as a transcript or recommendation
6. Not answering the essay question or another question asked.

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4) Using the Internet

www.studentaid.ed.gov This site will help you get started on the FAFSA + create a profile for a scholarship match process. You can also compare financial aid awards & much more!

Large databases of scholarships, both local and national:

www.collegeincolorado.org
www.militaryscholar.org
www.ScholarshipExperts.com
www.finaid.com
www.collegeanswer.com
www.scholarships.com

Using GOOGLE to search for more Scholarships

- Search using specific area of interest + one or more of the words listed below:

Scholarship(s)	Financial Aid
Application(s)	Deadline
Grant(s)	Trust
Endowment*	Honorarium*
Fellowship*	*May be more useful as a graduate student or upperclassman

Examples:

Business scholarship	Business scholarships
Business scholarship grant	Business scholarship application
Business scholarship deadline	