

Scholarship Application Essay Guidance



Submit an essay answering **ONE** of the following questions. The essay must be typed, no more than **2 pages**, and will be scored on: your **passion** for your goals, **tangible steps** you have taken or will take to reach those goals, **grammar** and **originality**. Please refer to the **guiding questions** below to write your essay.

1. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.

Things to consider: An educational opportunity can be anything that has added value to your educational experience and better prepared you for college. For example, participation in an honors or academic enrichment program, or enrollment in an academy that's geared toward an occupation or a major, or taking advanced courses that interest you — just to name a few.

If you choose to write about educational barriers you've faced, how did you overcome or strive to overcome them? What personal characteristics or skills did you call on to overcome this challenge? How did overcoming this barrier help shape who you are today?

2. Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge.

Things to consider: A challenge could be personal, or something you have faced in your community or school. Why was the challenge significant to you? This is a good opportunity to talk about any obstacles you've faced and what you've learned from the experience. Did you have support from someone else or did you handle it alone?

If you're currently working your way through a challenge, what are you doing now, and in what ways does that affect different aspects of your life? For example, ask yourself, "How has my life changed at home, at my school, with my friends or with my family?"

3. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

Things to consider: Think of community as a term that can encompass a group, team or a place — like your high school, hometown or home. You can define *community* as you see fit, just make sure you talk about your role in that community. Was there a problem that you wanted to fix in your community?

Why were you inspired to act? What did you learn from your effort? How did your actions benefit others, the wider community or both? Did you work alone or with others to initiate change in your community?

Additional Scholarships (OPTIONAL):

ALA is proud to offer two additional scholarships for students interested in the arts. These scholarships define the arts broadly as performance (music, dance, theater), literary efforts (writing fiction, nonfiction, poetry, podcasts) and the visual (painting, sculpture, video, film). *Applicants do **not** have to have plans to pursue careers in the arts.* ALA is also proud to offer a Career Tech Scholarship for students interested in a technical career. This scholarship defines technical career trades as (including but not limited to) electrical, plumbing, welding, and carpentry. *Applicants **are** required to have plans to pursue a technical trades career.*

ARTS ESSAY: In a one-page essay, describe your involvement in the arts and how those experiences have shaped your life and/or work as a student.

Things to consider: Have the arts taught you anything about discipline or how to achieve success or handle failure?

CAREER TECH ESSAY: In a one-page essay, describe your interest in pursuing a career in technical trades and how it would allow you to contribute to your community.

Things to consider: Share about a technical project you have worked on and what did it teach you about achieving success or handling challenges?