

Scholarship Guide

Five Scholarship Myths

Think you don't qualify for a scholarship? Think again. Here are five common myths that discourage students from applying for scholarships:

“Only students with high academic achievement win merit scholarships.”

While grades may be important in selecting scholarship winners, your academic performance is not the end-all and be-all. Schools understand that your grades are not all there is to you.

“Scholarship applicants should seek to compile the longest list of extracurricular activities.”

What good is having a long list of activities if all you did was attend a bunch of meetings? You can better distinguish yourself by concentrating on a few activities and taking a leadership role, rather than trying to compile a long list.

“Scholarship contests are conducted on a level playing field.”

Each scholarship sponsor has its own idea of who would make the ideal candidate. Try to find the right match between you and the kind of student a school or sponsor wants.

“Applying for scholarships is just like applying to college.”

Most colleges will compare you to a standard, whereas most scholarships are simply measuring applicants against one another. If you creatively stand out, you already have an advantage, regardless of your other achievements.

“The track record you've already accumulated determines whether you'll win scholarships.”

What you do after you decide to apply for awards is just as important as what you've already done. It's never too late to improve on your academic record and your involvement in extracurricular activities.

Obtaining Letters of Recommendation

When it comes time to write a letter of recommendation, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Provide lots of time for your teachers (or others) to write the letters.
- Make a formal request.
- Supply the person who will be writing the recommendation with as much info as possible, including your contact info and any materials they may need to complete it (transcripts, essays, etc.).
- Don't forget to send a thank-you letter to the person writing the recommendation for you!

Top 10 Tips for a Winning Scholarship Application

1. **Apply only if you are eligible.** Read the requirements carefully and make sure you're eligible before you send in your application.
2. **Complete the application in full.** If a question doesn't apply, note that on the application. Make sure you sign the application, if necessary.
3. **Follow directions.** Provide everything that's required. But don't supply things that aren't requested—you could be disqualified.
4. **Neatness counts.** Always type your application. If you must print, do so neatly and legibly.
5. **Write an essay that makes a strong impression.** Be personal and specific. Include concrete details to make your experience come alive.
6. **Watch all deadlines.** Complete the application at least two weeks prior to the official deadline. Use the time to double-check your application.
7. **Make sure your application gets where it needs to go.** Put your name and social security number on all pages of the application to avoid confusion.
8. **Keep a back-up file in case anything goes wrong.** Make a copy of the entire packet you submit. If your application is lost, you'll be able to reproduce it. Obtain a certificate of mailing from your post office.
9. **Give it a final 'once-over.'** Proofread for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Ask a friend, teacher or parent to proofread it as well.
10. **Ask for help if you need it.** If you have problems with the application, don't hesitate to call the

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Summer Planning Handbook

Making the Most of Your Summer

Summer usually means fun, sun, vacations and summer jobs. However, summer can also mean scholastic as well as scholarship and professional opportunities.

1. Don't take just any summer job.

Look for a job that interests you AND will help with your college applications. Then phone some related professionals or organizations in your community and inquire about any opportunities. If at first you don't succeed, volunteer as an intern. Some internships lead to a paid position.

2. Turn travel into research.

Your summer vacation can be used for extra credit, independent study, college essays and more. Possible projects: a research project, a photo essay, a newspaper article. Remember to meet with a counselor or teacher to get guidelines and their approval ahead of time.

3. Summer service.

Community service is a great way to become active in the causes that interest you. From coaching a Little League team to volunteering for a national park, there are plenty of opportunities to make a difference while enjoying your summer. These websites can point you in the right direction:

- Idealist – <http://www.idealists.org>
- Impact Online – <http://www.impactonline.org>
- SERVENet – <http://www.servenet.org>

4. Get a head start.

Use the summer to research and visit colleges, start your scholarship hunt, develop application essays and prepare for the future. Explore summer programs that can give you a jump on your college credits.

Get a Jump on the SAT and ACT

Studying for exams may not be the most appealing activity, but the summer can be a great time to start reviewing. The following options are available during the summer:

- **Online prep courses** – Available for the PSAT, SAT and ACT, and cheaper than its offline counterpart. A good introduction to the exams.
- **Review courses** – Several well-known companies – such as Kaplan – offer summer courses for the PSAT, SAT and ACT.
- **CD-ROM software** – Creates a personalized course of study that works into your schedule.
- **Books** – These manuals offer test-taking strategies, expert advice and practice tests.

Summer Programs

Get a jump on college with these summer programs. Contact local school and organizations to find summer programs in your area.

Bentley College

www.bentley.edu/camp/index.html

Offers three one-week residential summer programs for students entering the 10th and 11th grades. Programs focus on business and technology.

Cornell University Summer College

www.sce.cornell.edu/SC/index.html

High school students take Cornell courses for credit, live on campus, explore academic and career opportunities and learn what college is all about.

New York Film Academy

www.nyfa.com

In four- and six-week total immersion workshops, students write, direct, shoot and edit short films.

Concordia Language Villages

www.cord.edu/dept/clv

Offers language and culture education programs. Students choose from 12 world language programs.

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