



Writing Scholarship Essays

**How to score points, earn money, and
change the world . . . in about 500 words.**

Why are writing skills important?



- It is the most common form of communication in the workplace.
- Your overall job performance may be evaluated on your ability to communicate in writing.
- Several studies have concluded that the number one factor in determining whether an individual will be successful in an organization is whether he/she had effective written communication skills.

**“Writing is easy.
All you do is sit down
and open a vein.”**

- Red Barber



**The worst college or
scholarship essay ever
written is still better
than the one that
never was.**



“Experience tells you what to do; confidence allows you to do it.”

- Stan Smith

“You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them.”

- Michael Jordan

**“One important key to success is self-confidence.
An important key to self-confidence is preparation.”**

- Arthur Ashe

Scholarship Events



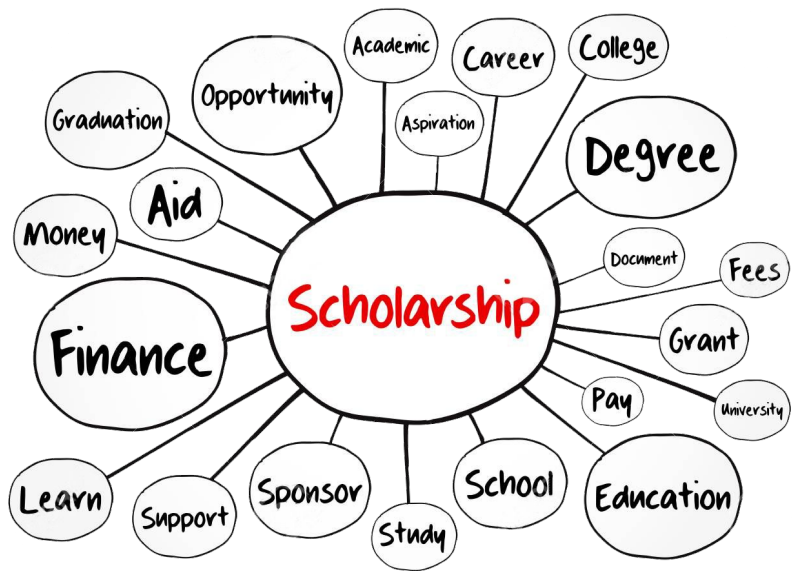
- **Essay Workshop**
(tonight)
- **Scholarship Fair**
Wednesday, December 1 from 6 pm – 9 pm
- **GIPS Foundation Application Opens**
Wednesday, December 1

The Night's Agenda



- **Writing scholarship essays (7 steps)**
- **Examples**
- **Ask us a question**
(please... don't leave with it)

Know where you are headed



Types of Scholarships:

- GIPS Foundation
- Colleges of your choice
- Organizations
- Other scholarships
- I haven't decided yet

**“Begin at the beginning,”
the King said gravely,
“and go on till you come to
the end: then stop.”**



From Alice in Wonderland
Lewis Carroll

1

Process ...sticking with the game plan

Read the directions carefully (you'll be way ahead of many)



- **Background - Audience - Directions**
- **Eligibility**
- **Essay**

[GIPS Foundation Guidelines](#)

Jeremy J. Buckner Memorial Scholarship



Essay question (Max 500 words):

Write a personal statement on why you are applying for this scholarship.

Dream Big, Work Hard, Stay Humble

Sam Foltz Memorial Scholarship



Essay question (Max 500 words):

Tell us about your dreams for the next 5 years. What is your plan for accomplishing these dreams. What does “stay humble” mean to you? Essay must show evidence that applicant has done research to become familiar with Sam’s character and accomplishments.

2

Reading is believing

**Read the prompt carefully,
then answer three key questions.**

- **What are they asking me to do?**
- **Who will be reading what I write?**
- **How will they assess my essay?**



Kaufmann-Cummings Trust Scholarship



Essay question (Max 500 words):

How have your years at Grand Island Senior High shaped your character and prepared you for college?

**“If writing didn’t require thinking,
then we’d all be doing it.”**

- Jeremiah Laabs



3

Make plans & know your stuff (research)



- Think about the question or prompt. Bounce it.



- Brainstorm and pitch.

- Make an outline, something that works for you.



- Follow the [GIPS Foundation writing rubric](#).

4

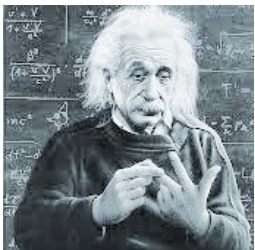
Be clear. Be concise. Be careful.



- **Slap them upside the head** (metaphorically, please.)



- **But don't fade at the finish.**
- **Get there before they leave.** (In other words, land it.)



- **Every word should have a reason for being there** (word limits.)

**“The difference between the
almost right word and the
right word is... the difference
between a lightning bug
and lightning.”**

- Mark Twain



“The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.”

- Thomas Jefferson



Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

1. This, that, these, and those need a partner.

I will take this with me. (this what?)

➡ I will take my **lunch** with me.

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

2. Don't be redundantly redundant or wordily wordy.

She will be home in a period of three months.

 **She will be home in three months.**

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

2. Don't be redundantly redundant or wordily wordy.

It has come to my attention that there is a vast proliferation of undesirable vegetation surrounding the periphery of this facility.

➡ **I have noticed many weeds growing around the building.**

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

2. Don't be redundantly redundant or wordily wordy.

She was a woman who knew what she wanted.

➡ She knew what she wanted.

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

2. Don't be redundantly redundant or wordily wordy.

Jose did not arrive on time due to the fact that the road was closed because of the fact that it flooded.

➡ **Jose was late because a flood had closed the road.**

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

3. Don't use inane phrases and words (pleonasms)

past history, final outcome, plan ahead, revert back,
unexpected surprise, same identical, possibly might,
10 a.m in the morning, frozen tundra, false pretense,
spell out in detail, free gift

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

4. Use active voice.

A decision to vote on the issue was made by the committee this week.

➡ **This week, the committee decided to vote on the issue.**

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

5. Expletive constructions (There are, It is, There is)

There are four officers who report to the captain.

→ **Four officers report to the captain.**

It is freezing this morning.

→ **The temperature is 28 degrees.**

Six ideas that will change the world.

Well, ok, your essay.

6. **Know the difference between denotation** (literal meaning) **and connotation** (emotional or understood meaning)

She was sneaky when it came to handing out compliments.

(malicious or tricky?)

5

Be real and be honest

- **Make it personal. Passion/emotion are fine** (logos, ethos, pathos) **within reason.**
- **Details and examples** (get real/be specific)
- **Perspective** (don't whine - stay positive)

**“Fill your paper with the
breathings of your heart.”**

- William Wadsworth





Sweat the small stuff (details), name names

- **Warm paint colors, like red or pink, can have a stimulating effect on a room's inhabitants.**
- **When going to a formal dinner, it is important to wear your best suit, tie, and shoes.** (Rather than: When going to a formal dinner, it is important to wear your best clothing.)
- **John threw down a thunderous dunk over Millard West's 6'7" center.** (John could jump high.)

Sweat the small stuff (details), name names

- **When you go camping, always make sure to pack first-aid supplies such as bandages, antiseptic cream, and pain medication.**
- **The students in Mr. Stockhurst's history class build models of Civil War battlegrounds with their own hands, and then reenact the battles in class. By acting out the events of history, they learn to see how those events fit together, and how some caused others.
(Learning is aided by hands-on experience.)**

The answers to yes and no questions are... yes and no. Full stop.

Should I begin with “In this essay...” or “In my opinion ...?” **NO**

Should I research the organization sponsoring the scholarship? **YES**

Should I trust only spellcheck and grammar check for proofing? **NO**

Should my focus be on asking for the money? **NO**

Should I use words from a thesaurus that are completely new to me? **NO**

Should I open with a quote? **NO** (with exceptions)

6

Slow cook, don't flash fry... and...

- **Give it (and you) a rest every once and awhile.**



6

... Edit in beast mode

Be a ruthless editor. One error can taint an entire essay. It's as easy as ABC.

- A. Insist on the essay being yours.** No one else is better qualified. If your essay doesn't sound like you, it isn't you. Check the rhythm, the language (word choices), and most of all the story.

6

... Edit in beast mode

**Be a ruthless editor. One error can taint an entire essay.
It's as easy as ABC.**

- B. Beast mode editing means... Proofread. Edit.
Have three others do the same.
Rewrite. Rinse. Repeat.
(Until it shines and hits all the right notes.)**

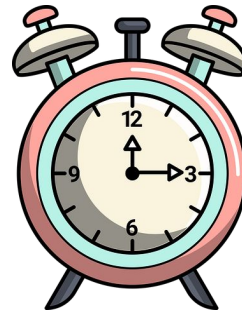
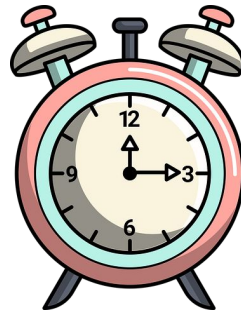
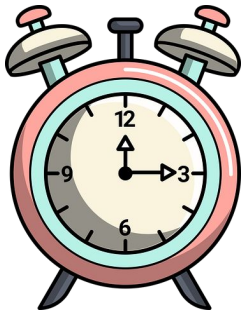


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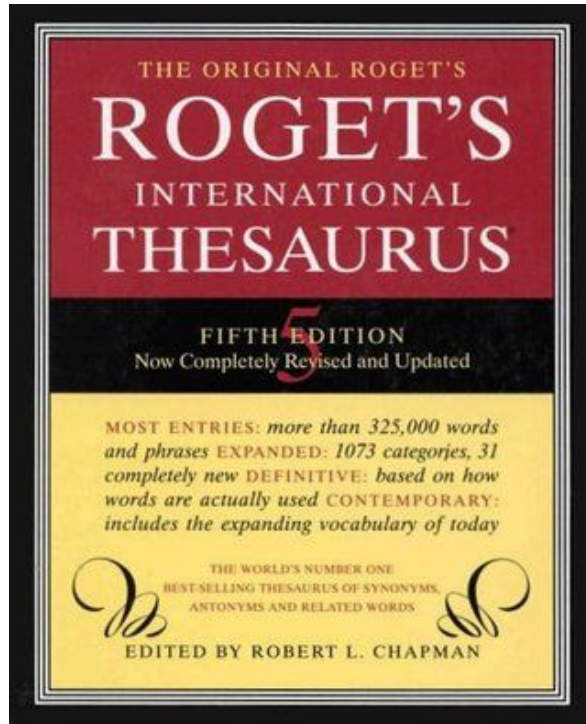
... Edit in beast mode

**Be a ruthless editor. One error can taint an entire essay.
It's as easy as ABC.**

C. Mind the clock: Give yourself the time to be good.



Stay in your verbal lane



Punctuation, etc... Oh, the humanity!



Let's eat Grandpa.

Let's eat, Grandpa.

Commas Save Lives

Dig you some rhythm

“This sentence has five words. Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. The sounds of it drones. It’s like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.

Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals – sounds that say listen to this, it is important.”

- Gary Provost

7

Don't try to be a hero flying solo

- **Assemble a good flight crew**

Parents, siblings,
trusted friends,
teachers,
word nerds

- **Soar**



Personal Narrative

Read Essay 1A

<https://gipsfoundation.org/what-we-do/essay-workshop.html>

Personal Narrative

Essay 1A

- **Personal**
- **Optimistic**
- **Connects life experiences well to career choices**

Personal Narrative

Read Essay 1B

<https://gipsfoundation.org/what-we-do/essay-workshop.html>

Personal Narrative

Essay 1B

- **Pays off the theme (perseverance) quite well**
- **Connects skills/skill details to theme**
- **Isn't afraid to be descriptive (shows rather than tells)**

Kaufmann-Cummings

Read Essay 2A

<https://gipsfoundation.org/what-we-do/essay-workshop.html>

Kaufmann-Cummings

Essay 2A

- **Structure** (says what he's going to tell you then does)
- **Clarity and economy**
- **Word choice** (*inoculation* and *chaos swirl*)

Kaufmann-Cummings

Read Essay 2B

<https://gipsfoundation.org/what-we-do/essay-workshop.html>

Kaufmann-Cummings

Essay 2B

- **Structure**
- **Organization**
- **Enthusiasms**

To Review...

1. **Process... sticking with the game plan.**
2. **Reading is believing.**
3. **Make plans & know your stuff (research).**
4. **Be clear. Be concise. Be careful.**
5. **Be real and be real honest.**
6. **Slow cook, don't flash fry... and... edit in beast mode.**
7. **Don't try to be a hero flying solo.**

Tips for GIPS Foundation Scholarships

- **Proofread for errors**
- **Do not use your name**
- **Start early**
- **Stick to the checklist**



[2022 Senior Checklist \(pdf\)](#)

[GIPS Foundation Essay Tips \(pdf\)](#)

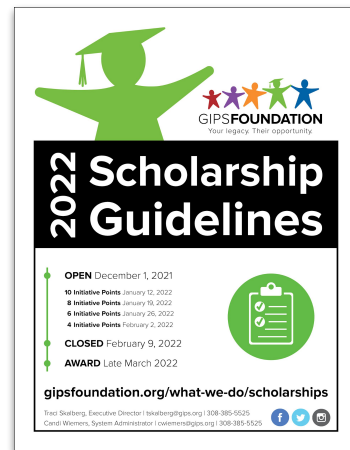
GIPS Foundation: Personal Statements

- 1. Tell us about you.** The best personal statements describe strengths and achievements in an intimate and unique way, capitalizing on life experiences which have molded you into a worthy candidate. Let the selection committee know who you are through your writing. (Max 500 words)
- 2. What are your personal and career goals? What is your plan for achieving these goals?** (Max 500 words)
- 3. Attending college can be expensive. What is your financial plan for achieving this goal?** (Max 500 words)

The road to perfect is paved with practice.

- Study the rubric
- Study other essays. What worked? What didn't?
- Connect with your scholarships.
- Stick to the checklist

[GIPS Foundation Scholarship Guidelines](#)

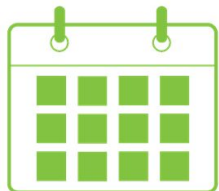




GIPS Foundation Online **Scholarship Application**

Traci Skalberg, Executive Director

Candi Wiemers, Programs & Marketing Coordinator



December 1 - February 9



GIPS Foundation Online Scholarship Application

Scholarship Guidelines

Each scholarship guideline has:

- Scholarship background
- Amount and Terms
- Number of Scholarships
- Eligibility requirements
- **Essay question** (if applicable)
- Terms of payment

Guidelines are found:

- GIPS Foundation website (printable pdfs available)
- Links embedded in application

Kaufmann-Cummings Trust Scholarship

The Directors of the Kaufmann-Cummings Foundation offer 6 four-year scholarships for \$1,000 per year to Grand Island Senior High students.

Amount and Terms

- \$1,000 x 4 years

Number of Scholarships

- 6

Eligibility

- Must be a graduate of Grand Island Senior High
- Must rank in the top 1/3 of class
- Must have attended Grand Island Senior High for three years
- Must have demonstrated regular attendance and good conduct

Essay Question

- How have your years at Grand Island Senior High shaped your character and prepared you for college? (Max 500 words)

To Apply

Complete the online application form at www.gipsfoundation.org/what-we-do/scholarships

Deadline

See scholarship application deadlines at www.gipsfoundation.org/what-we-do/scholarships

Selection Procedure

Applications will be reviewed by a scholarship selection committee appointed by the Grand Island Public Schools Foundation.

Terms of Payment

The scholarship will be paid through the Grand Island Public Schools Foundation to appropriate educational institution per scholarship eligibility defined above. Scholarships larger than \$500 will be split into equal semester payments. The student must provide proof of enrollment (class schedule) and student number to the Grand Island Public Schools Foundation for scholarship distribution. Proof of enrollment is needed for each semester covered by scholarship terms.

Send proof of enrollment to Karl Price via email to kprice@gips.org, in person at GIPS Administration Building (123 South Webb Road) or via mail to PO Box 4904, Grand Island, NE 68802.



Grand Island Public Schools Foundation



GIPS Foundation Essay Tips

Research the Scholarship

- Who is giving the scholarship? Why?

Eligibility

- Are you eligible for the scholarship?

Emilio DeLeon Memorial Scholarship

The family of Emilio DeLeon has established this scholarship as legacy to his life. Emilio was a 2010 graduate of Grand Island Senior High. He was involved in football, wrestling, and ROTC. Emilio was also a positive role model and took many opportunities to mentor those who were younger than himself. During his years in high school, Emilio had to overcome the adversity of a sports injury and subsequent surgeries. This journey helped shape his positive attitude and his subscription to the ideology of *"Planted not Buried."*

The scholarship is intended for students who work hard and need additional support to pursue their education.

Amount and Terms

- \$800/variates x 1 year

Number of Scholarships

- 1

Eligibility

- Must be a graduate of Grand Island Senior High
- A high school GPA of 3.0 or better
- Must be involved in athletics

Essay Question

- How have you overcome adversity and transformed this experience into a positive growth?
(Max 500 words)



GIPS Foundation Essay Tips

Read essay prompt

- Think about the question
- Max 500 words


Make it unique

- Be personal. Be YOU.
- Don't be tempted to use the same essay over, and over, and over...

Emilio DeLeon Memorial Scholarship

Eligibility:

- * Must be a graduate of Grand Island Senior High
- * A high school GPA of 3.0 or better
- * Must be involved in athletics

 Write a personal statement on how have you overcome adversity and transformed this experience into positive growth.
(Max 500 words)



One Application for 160+ Scholarships

- **\$460,000** scholarship money available
- Scholarships range from \$250 - \$220,000
- Scholarships available for **ALL degrees and majors**
- **63%** of 2021 GISH Seniors who completed an application were awarded scholarships



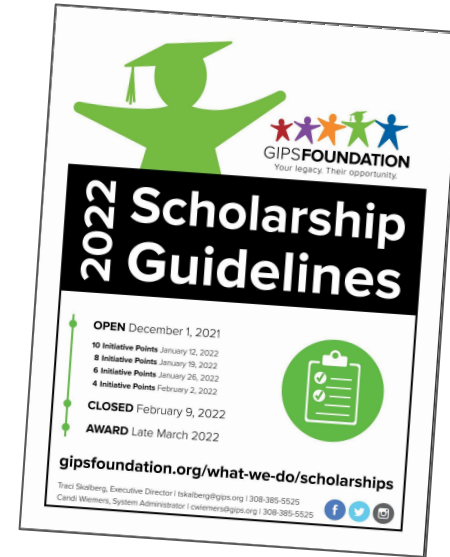


GIPS Foundation Online Scholarship Application

www.gipsfoundation.org/what-we-do/scholarships

- Application Link
- Important Dates
- Scholarship Guidelines
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Scholarship Events

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION





December 1 | 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Islander Annex (3025 College Street)

Scholarship Fair

- **Seniors** and their **parents/guardians** are invited to attend
- **Application Presentations** from the 2 largest local scholarship providers
- **Booths:** Nebraska colleges/universities, EducationQuest, GISH Counselors, GearUP, Greater Grand Island Community Foundation, GIPS Foundation
- **\$500 Scholarship Drawings**



February 22 & 23 | 10 am - 1 pm
GISH West Conference Room

Scholarship Photo

- **Pop up Photography Studio** with Tally Creative
- 5 minute **Professional Headshot session**
- **MUST** submit **GIPS Foundation Scholarship Application** to receive photo voucher
- **\$95 value** – student receives digital photo and rights to use

**What are your
questions?**

