

A decorative border at the top of the page featuring various study-related icons in blue, orange, and green line art. The icons include an open book, a graduation cap, a laptop with a padlock, a vase with a rose, a closed book with 'ESSAY' on the cover, a lit candle, a hand writing on a notepad, and a hand holding a coffee cup.

A Guide to

Scholarship Writing

A decorative border at the bottom of the page featuring various study-related icons in red, blue, and orange line art. The icons include a vase with a rose, a closed book with 'ESSAY' on the cover, a hand holding a coffee cup, a stack of papers, a lit candle, a hand writing on a notepad, and a graduation cap.

Dr. Endicott

Agenda

1

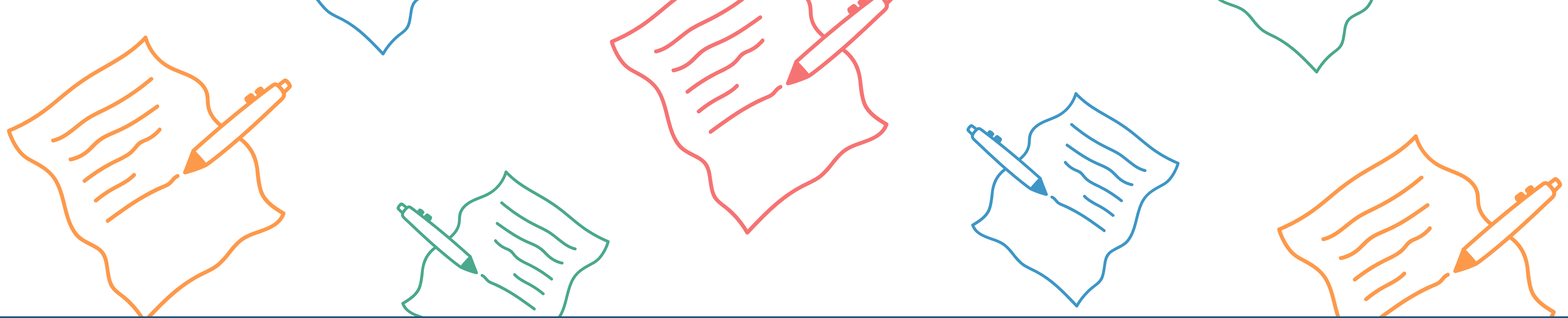
Introduce the topic
of writing scholarship
essays.

2

Identify best
practices for writing
scholarship essays.

3

Share writing
resources and
conclude.



Why apply for a scholarship?

Applying for a scholarship can save you money on schooling **AND** it's great information to include on a resume/CV because it:

- shows you took initiative, which is a leadership skill
- demonstrates writing competency
- indicates your value and what you can offer to employers

Stages of Writing Scholarship Essays

Plan ahead/Begin early

Start thinking about scholarships in advance of when they are due. Consider how much funding you need.

Research

Locate scholarships and their deadlines.

Genre

Consider the genre conventions of scholarship essays (what features & writing moves are common in successful scholarship essays?).

Drafting

Make a writing timeline based on the deadline and your schedule and start writing.

Editing

Review your work. Enlist others, like the GWC, to give you feedback before you submit your application.

Plan Ahead/Begin Early

Avoid the stress of applying last minute by starting the process early.

Start by doing the following:

- **assess your financial situation** (how much funding you will need?)
- **consider your writing process**
- **reflect on your lifestyle and daily demands** (how much time can I really invest in scholarship applications?)

Once you have a clear understanding about how you plan to approach applying for scholarships, it's time to begin!

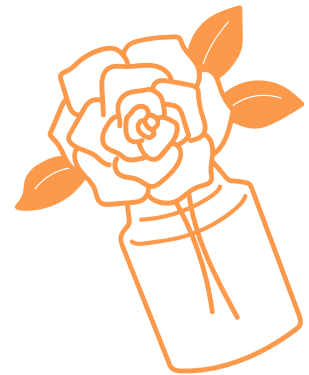
Research

Before you start writing, some research is required. Beware, this may be more time-consuming than you think, so start researching scholarship opportunities as a preliminary step in your application process.

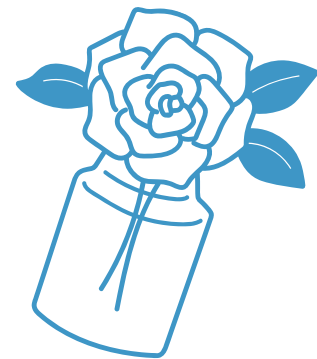
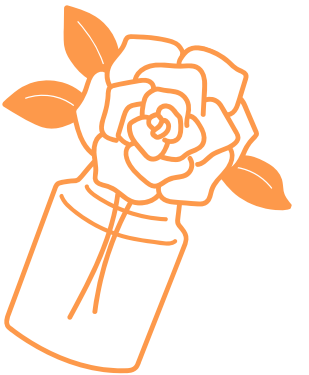
Start by doing the following:

- know **where to look for scholarships**, and if you don't know--ask someone who does!
 - your adviser
 - your classmates
 - your employer
 - UMES (financial aid, school of Graduate Studies, Office of Research)
 - gov't agencies related to your major/discipline (NSF)
 - scholarship websites (listed on the "Scholarship Resources" slide)
 - local organizations
- **gather information on available scholarships** that are a best fit for you
 - deadline to apply
 - amount of funding offered
 - learn more about the scholarship provider
 - identify the application materials necessary to apply

Genre Conventions

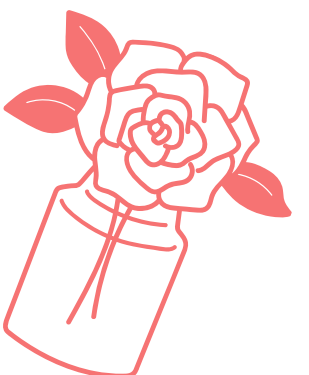
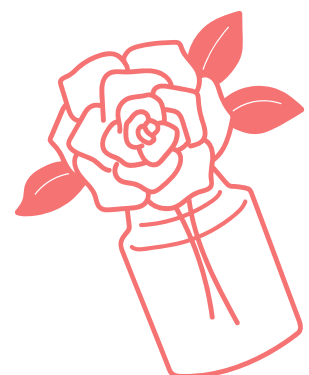
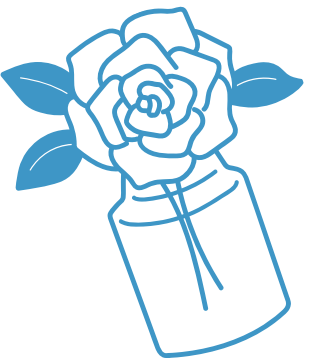


Now it's time to consider the actual type of writing (genre) that is the scholarship essay. Knowing the genre conventions (features) of this type of text will help you to more confidently and effectively write it. .



Common features (conventions) of scholarship essays are as follows:

- **Structure**: 3-5 paragraphs (introduction, 2-3 body paragraphs, concluding paragraph)
- **Content** (personal): reveals information about yourself, has a narrative or story-like quality, uses the personal pronoun "I"
- **Tone** (professional): maintains somewhat formal language, not overly casual/conversational
- **Style** (persuasive): you are telling a committee why you deserve a scholarship, so you are curating/representing the best parts of yourself in order to win the scholarship



Drafting

"Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere."
–Anne Lamott, American writer

OUTLINE

This is optional. If you don't like outlining, then make yourself notes of important points you plan to write about.

Outlines can be simple or detailed, but should serve as a guide.

INTRODUCTION

This is a brief paragraph that contains introductory/contextual information like "who"; "what"; "where"; "when"; "why"; and "how."

Include a greeting and a hook.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

These paragraphs are your opportunity to talk about yourself, your experiences, and why you deserve the scholarship.

Use these paragraphs to tell a story--do more showing and less telling.

CONCLUSION

Conclude by restating your interest in the scholarship and how the information you've shared qualifies you for the award.

End on a positive note and imagine a bright future together.

Pre-writing

“My working habits are simple: long periods of thinking, short periods of writing.”

– Ernest Hemingway, Nobel Prize-winning novelist

- Before you begin writing, **make sure you read the prompt and directions closely!** Re-read it multiple times if you need to. You could write something beautiful, but if it doesn't address the prompt, then you won't get the scholarship.
- **Brainstorm.** To get started, you might consider the following:
 - identify experiences you could discuss that demonstrate growth and/or resilience, excellence
 - look for connections between these experiences and the prompt
 - show how your aspirations and experiences align with the person or organization funding the scholarship
 - think about how getting the scholarship would help you accomplish your personal and professional goals
- **Make a writing plan.** This can be as simple as writing your weekly writing goals or as detailed as writing every action needed related to writing the scholarship from your start date to the deadline.



Drafting the Introduction

*Every introductory paragraph should contain a **greeting** and a **hook**.*

1

Prompt: Who is (or what makes) a good doctor?

2

Dear Giva Scholarship Committee,

Had you asked me the same question one year ago, my answer would have been vastly different to the one I will give today. In the summer of 2012, with my first year of medical school completed, I embarked upon my last official summer vacation with two things in mind: a basketball tournament in Dallas and one in Atlanta. My closest friends and I had been playing in tournaments for the past 10 summers, and it was a sacred bond forged together in the name of competition. However, two weeks before our first tournament, I became instantly and overwhelmingly short of breath. Having been born to Korean immigrant parents, I was raised to utilize the hospital in emergency cases only, and I knew this was such a case. A few scans later, doctors discovered numerous pulmonary emboli (PE), caused by a subclavian deep vein thrombosis (DVT), and just like that, I was lying in a bed of a major hospital for a life threatening condition.

Drafting body paragraphs

Body paragraphs should tell a cohesive story about you in connection to the prompt. Showing your life experiences rather than telling them is preferred.

1

Prompt: Who is (or what makes) a good doctor?

3

Fast forward a few months, and I am lying in a similar bed to treat the underlying cause of the subclavian DVT: a first rib removal. There is little that can adequately prepare someone physically, emotionally or spiritually to undergo surgery; and my thoughts continued to race in the days following. In addition to the expected physical pain, isolation, fear and frustration were a few of the emotions I experienced in the four day ordeal. **The procedure went according to plan thanks to a skilled surgeon and his team, but the attributes that made the doctor "good" went far beyond his ability to operate.**

Drafting body paragraphs

Body paragraphs should tell a cohesive story about you in connection to the prompt. Showing your life experiences rather than telling them is preferred.

1

Prompt: Who is (or what makes) a good doctor?

4

"Wow. I'm glad you are feeling better" and "I can't believe you went through that" are common reactions people have when they see the scars on my upper chest. Quite frankly, the past nine months have been difficult, literally full of blood, sweat and tears. But through it all, I have been able to maintain my positivity and gratitude knowing that I have gained the invaluable experience of being a patient and **discovering the vulnerability and trust that patients give their doctors.** Patients indulge information to doctors that they may have never told anyone in their life and in doing so, place a great deal of trust and responsibility in the hands of a doctor. Many patients will not understand the mechanism of disease behind their condition and anticipate that the doctor will explain to them and their family why it is that they are feeling the way they are and ultimately heal them. And that is precisely what my surgeon understood: the privilege of being able to care for patients and the intimacy of the doctor-patient relationship. And as I awoke to the care of my worried parents, the first thing they wanted to discuss was the details of the procedure that was methodically and patiently explained to them by my "good" doctor.

Drafting body paragraphs

Body paragraphs should tell a cohesive story about you in connection to the prompt. Showing your life experiences rather than telling them is preferred.

1

Prompt: Who is (or what makes) a good doctor?

5

In study after study, patients have reported dissatisfaction with their medical care, not because of lack of knowledge or health outcome, but because their doctors did not show enough warmth in the encounter or listen to the patient's questions and concerns. There are few times where a patient and their loved ones are more vulnerable and in need of compassion than when dealing with a hospitalization. And for some doctors, a patient may be another item on a checklist, but that patient is someone's mother or father, son or daughter, sister or brother. My "good" doctor understood this and would often say "If you were my son..." when discussing treatment options, reflecting on the type of care he would want for his family and treating me similarly. Such ideals are rooted in love and compassion for patients, not as clients in the health care system, but as fellow human beings striving to make something of themselves and the world around them (I).

Drafting body paragraphs

Body paragraphs should tell a cohesive story about you in connection to the prompt. Showing your life experiences rather than telling them is preferred.

1

Prompt: Who is (or what makes) a good doctor?

6

Lastly, the "good" doctor understands that as our patients are human, so are we. This means we will make mistakes, some of which can result in life-threatening consequences. With that said, the "good" doctor practices humility and honesty, apologizing and sharing as much information with patients as possible. Although no one strives to make mistakes, they will happen, and how one reacts to them is a distinguishing feature of the "good" doctor (II).

Drafting the conclusion

Conclusions affirm that you are an excellent candidate for the scholarship and convey positivity and a bright future because of your qualifications.

1

Prompt: Who is (or what makes) a good doctor?

7

Of all the qualities I tried to explain in what makes a "good" doctor, there was no emphasis on skill and knowledge. **And while being able to fulfill the duties of making the correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment plans is expected, the intangibles of love, compassion, foresight and honesty is what makes a doctor, "good".** I learned such lessons in the purest manner possible, by being a patient myself, and will use them to guide me in all future patient encounters, as I strive to be a "good" doctor.

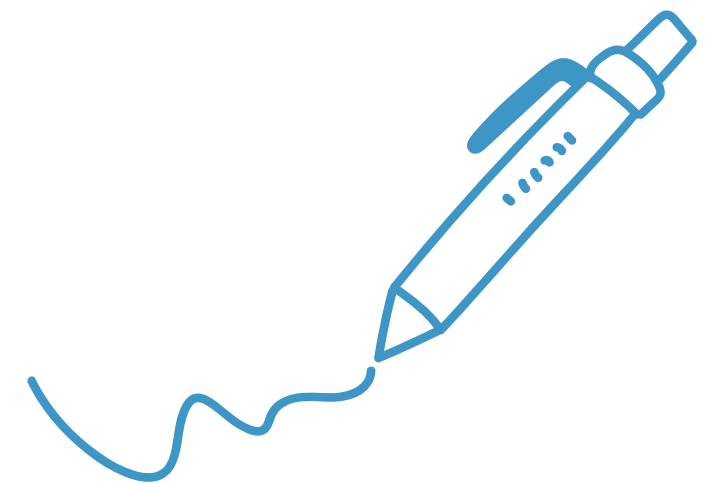
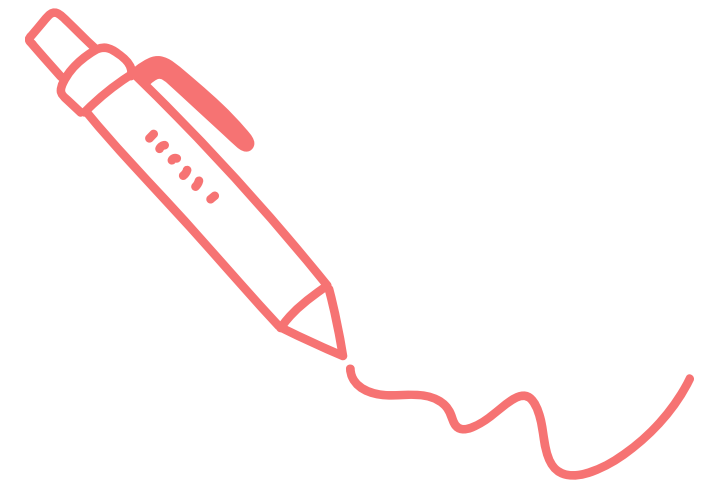
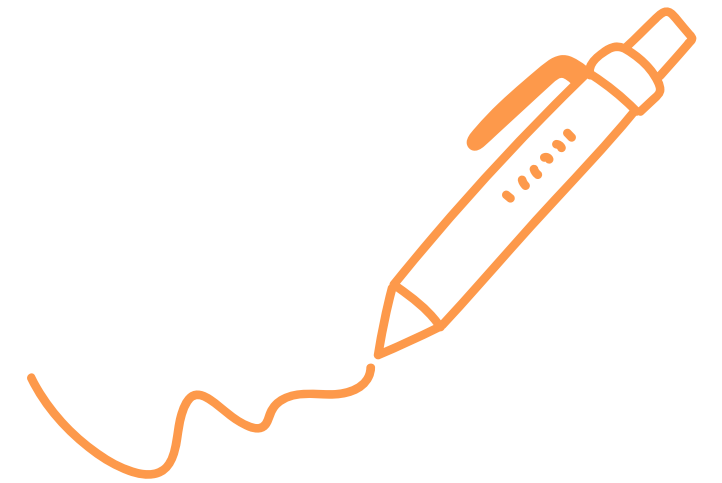
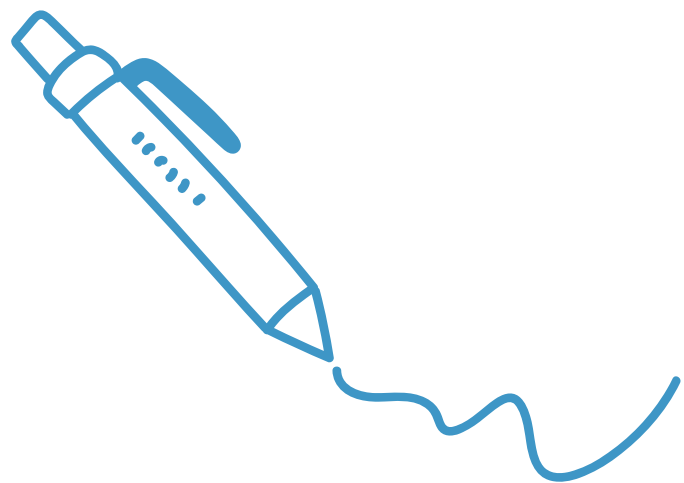
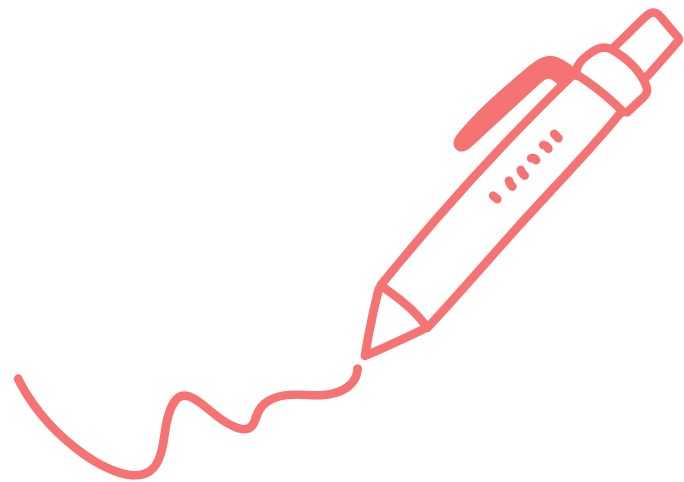
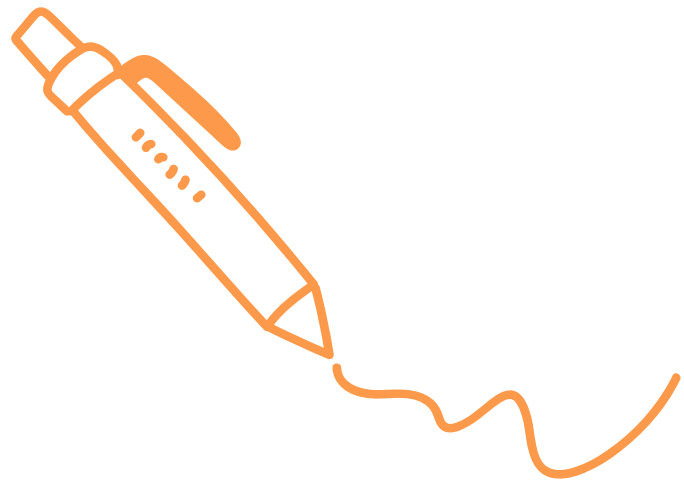
Editing

Be sure to review your work before you submit it!

Reading it aloud helps with concerns of flow and to help you catch small typos. If you don't want to read your work aloud, then have someone else read it (aloud).

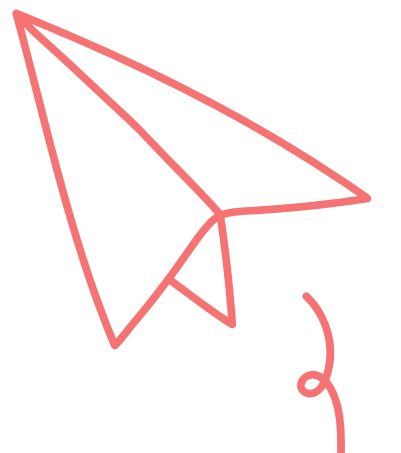
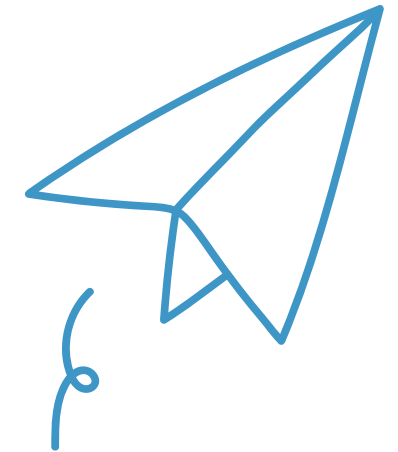
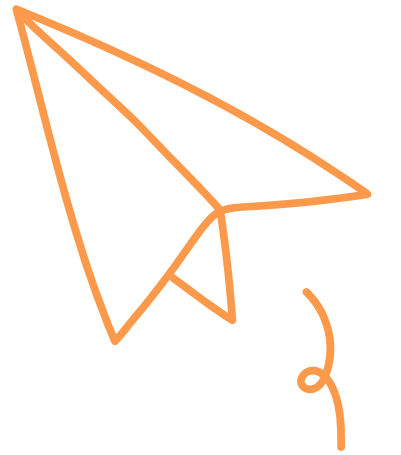
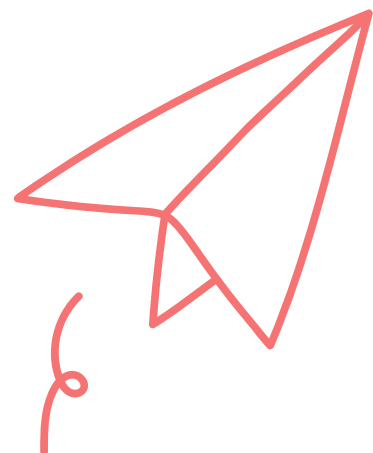
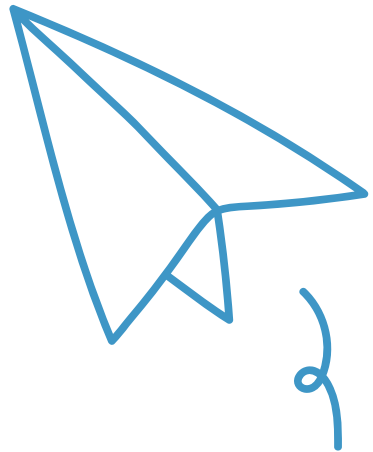
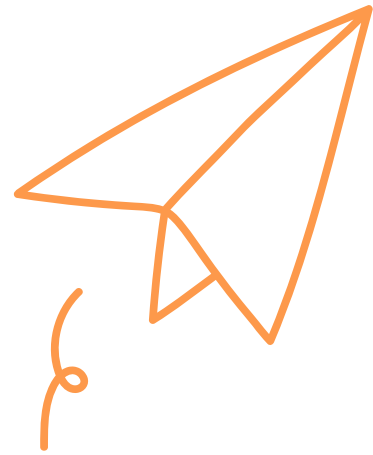
If you don't want to read your work aloud, then have someone else read it (aloud). They will see things you aren't able to because you are too close to your work.

Make an appointment with the Graduate Writing Center!
<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/grad/graduate-writing-center/>



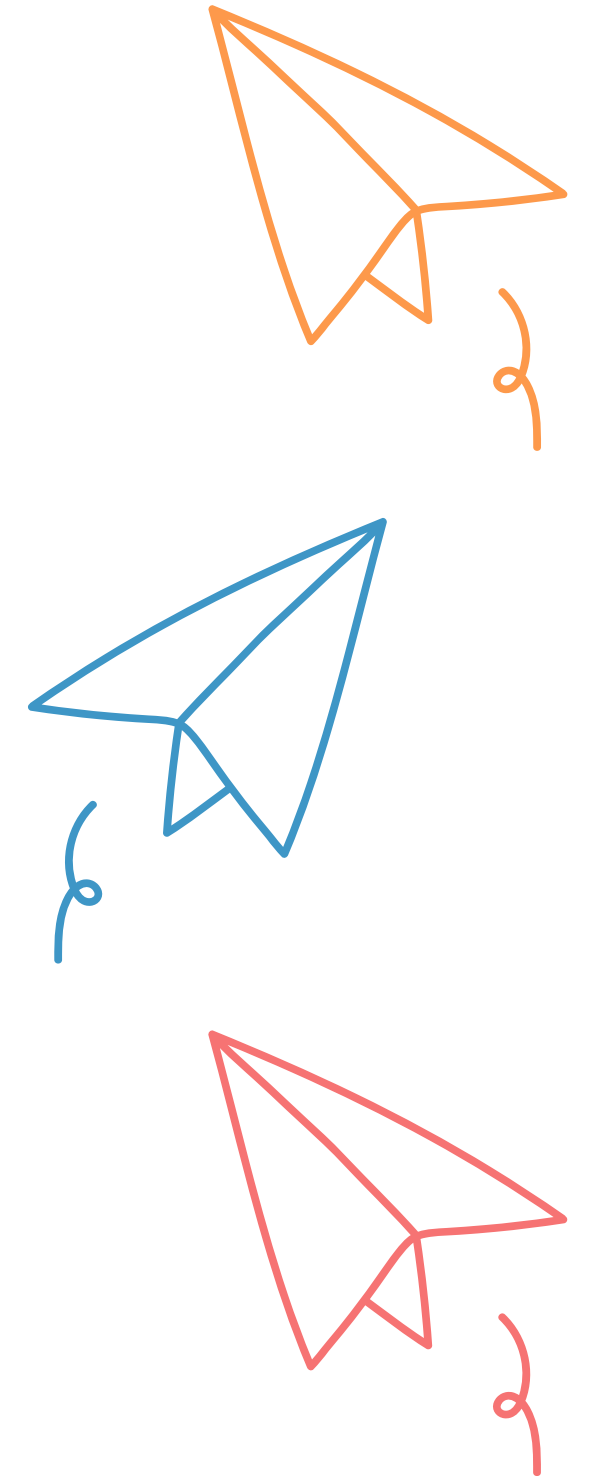
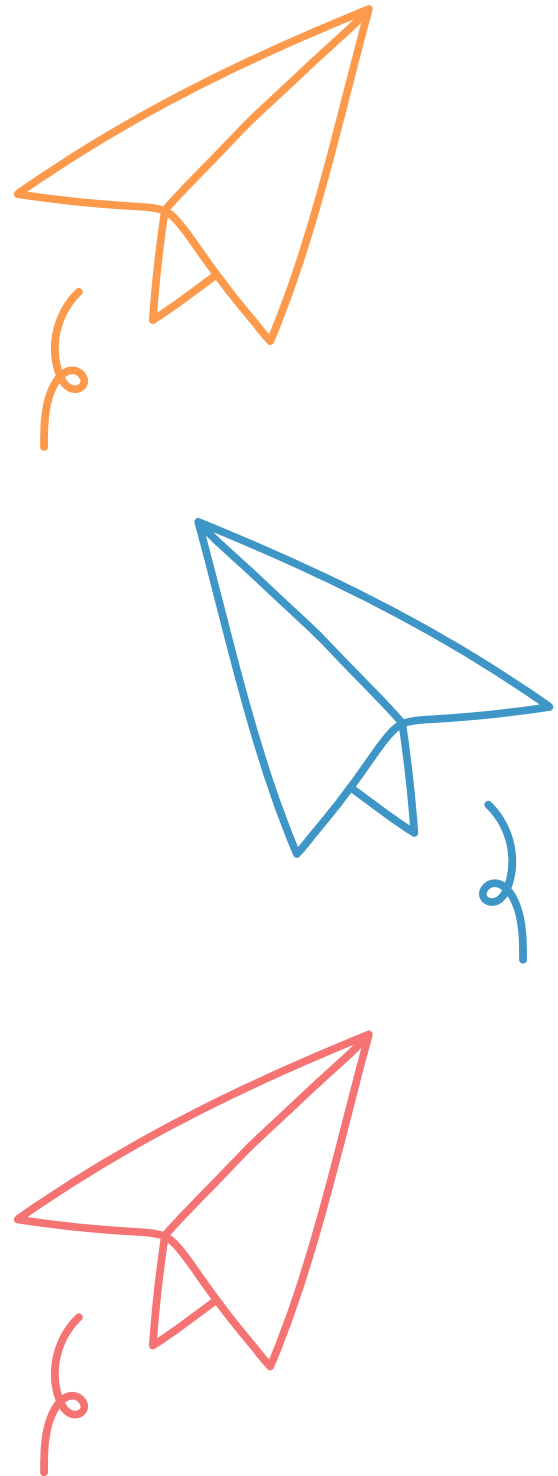
Tips for Writing a Scholarship Essay

- Start early
- Familiarize yourself with the essay prompt and stick to it
- Do research on the scholarship provider
- Know the word/character limit
- Appeal to ethos, logos, pathos
- Be honest
- Show, don't tell
 - Instead of saying "In middle school, I tore my ACL playing ice hockey," you can be more vivid.
 - Try something like: "It was like an anvil had smashed down on my knee. In searing pain, I laid on the ice as the crowd fell silent. Something was very wrong."
- Be specific and concise
 - **Don't** write something like: "I love nature because nature is beautiful. Honestly, I can't think of a single thing I don't like to do in nature. Really, it's been my favorite place to be since a young age and any activity that involves being outside is just good for my soul."
 - "Whether I'm hiking, wading in the ocean, or planting seasonal flowers in the garden, I am rejuvenated by being in nature."



Tips for Writing a Scholarship Essay

- Use exclamation points sparingly (or not at all)
- Emphasize your resilience
- Be professional, but also be yourself
- Sell yourself, but also be humble
 - **Don't** do this: "As a straight-A student who is always the first to get the answers in my classes, the captain of my debate team, and a proud volunteer at the homeless shelter, I truly believe I deserve this scholarship."
 - Instead, you can simply say something like, "The discipline I bring to my academics and volunteer work reflects how hard I intend to work in my college courses, and I would be grateful for the financial assistance to attend."
- Be brief with your "thank you"
 - "Thank you for this opportunity and for taking the time to read this essay."
- Revise

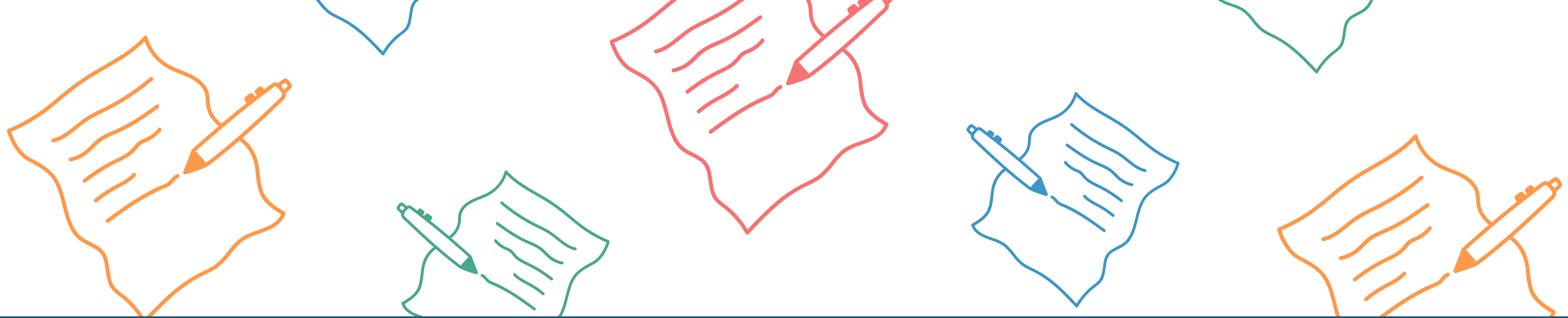


Things to Avoid When Writing a Scholarship Essay

Refrain from doing any of the following:

- Use famous/inspirational quotes
- Use platitudes (ex: "Winning this scholarship would be life-changing.")
- Be a cliché
- Use profanity
- Use "text speak"
- Discuss unrelated controversial topics
- Use funky fonts
- Make extreme or fatalistic declarations
- Speak unkindly about anyone
- Write a complete autobiography of your life





Writing Resources

- **The Graduate Writing Center:** <https://wwwcp.umes.edu/grad/graduate-writing-center/>
- **UMES's scholarship website:** <https://wwwcp.umes.edu/financialaid/scholarships/>
- **General scholarship websites:** <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/student-loans/best-scholarship-websites/>
- **Another example of an excellent scholarship essay:**
<https://www.womensworldbanking.org/insights/essay-rosaisha-ozoria-founders-scholarship-winner/>



Questions? Comments?

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