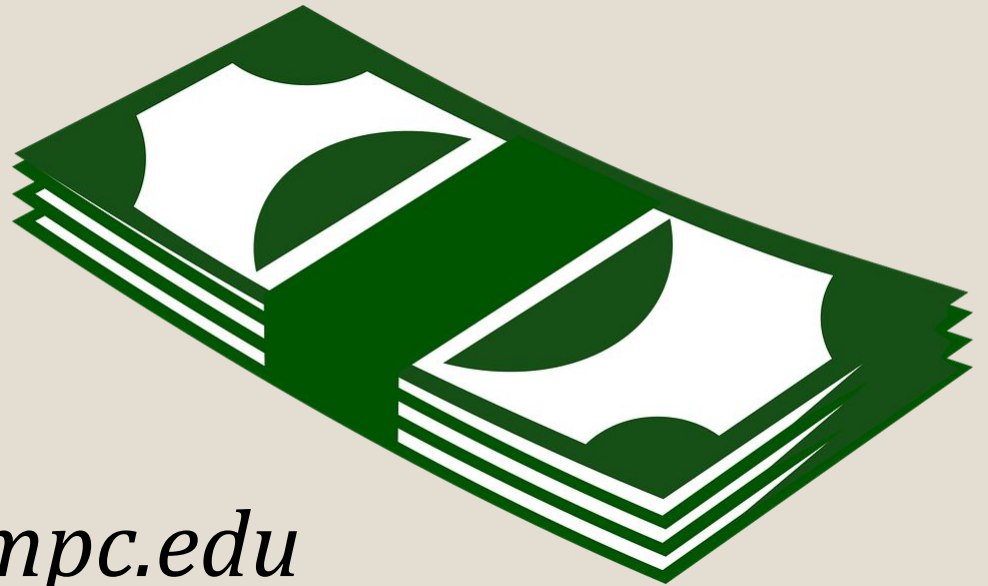
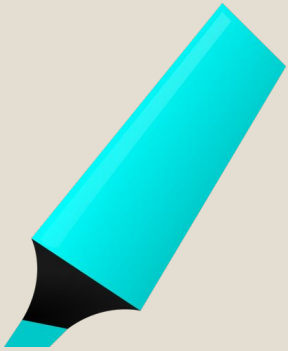


Scholarship Workshop: *Writing Advice*



Adria: agerard@mpc.edu

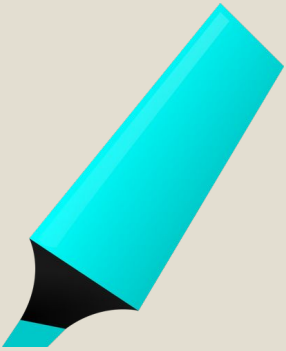
Reading and Writing Center Director



Step One: Read the Personal Statement Prompts

Read the prompts *carefully* and *actively*: Print out and underline or highlight keywords. This will help you focus and meet the requirements established by the prompt.

1. Describe your short-and long term academic/career goals.
2. Pick an experience from your life (whether positive or negative) and explain how it has influenced you.
3. Describe your most meaningful achievement/s.
4. What are you most passionate about?
5. From a financial standpoint, what impact would a scholarship have on your education?

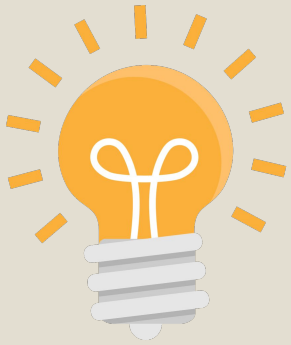


Read Any Additional Prompts Required for Your Scholarship

Again, read the prompts *carefully* and *actively*: Underline or highlight keywords. This will help you focus and meet the requirements established by the prompt.

- Each applicant will have to respond to the 5 questions within the “Personal Statements” tab.
- Some scholarships may require you to respond to one or more additional prompts, specific to those scholarships.

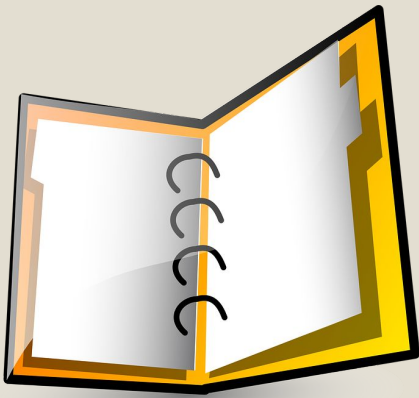
**In every case, please note the required word count. For all essays in the “Personal Statements” tab, the word limit is 500.*



Step Two: Brainstorm

Informally, write down ideas related to the prompts. Don't limit yourself at this stage:

1. **Short and long-term academic/career goals:** community college, degree/certificate/transfer, university, career
2. **An experience and its influence:** childhood, adolescence, or adulthood
3. **Most meaningful achievement/s:** personal, professional, family-related, hobby/pursuit
4. **Most passionate about:** educating or helping others, social justice, environmentalism, a hobby, a talent
5. **Financial impact of scholarship:** tuition, books, living expenses, internships, studying abroad



Step 3: Outline

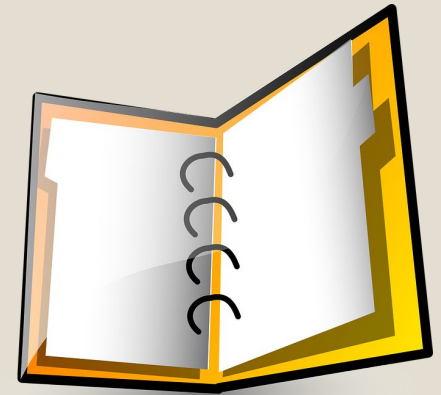
Once you've gathered ideas, it's time to start organizing those ideas...

Consider 4 or 5 Paragraph Structure:

- An introductory paragraph with a 1-sentence main point (also called a thesis) that is a clear response to the prompt
- 1-3 body paragraphs that illustrate and support the main idea expressed in your introduction
 - *Tip:* Start thinking about vivid, sensory, and descriptive details you can include to create a picture in your reader's mind.
- A brief concluding paragraph that reiterates the thesis/main point of your introduction and focuses on a positive future

Example Outline

Q2: Pick an experience from your life (positive or negative) and explain how it has influenced you.



1. Introduction: *Main Point*
 - a. Lead-in statement or background information
 - b. Main point: *My father's alcoholism taught me three important lessons.*

2. Body Paragraph: *Experience from life—Father's alcoholism*
 - a. Hints in childhood
 - b. Parents' divorce
 - c. Situation today } → organized chronologically

3. Body Paragraph: *Influence on me—Three important lessons*
 - a. Compassion
 - b. Self-care
 - c. Breaking the cycle } → organized by example

4. Conclusion:
 - a. Reiterate main point
 - b. Focus on positive future

Step 4: Draft and Revise



From your outlines, start writing your essays.

- Remember, there is a 500 word limit for each question in the “Personal Statements” tab
 - *Tip:* Compose in Word or Google Docs so that you can use editing tools. Then copy and paste into the personal statement tab text boxes.
- Make an appointment with the Reading and Writing Center or share with others who can provide advice and an outsider’s perspective.
- Revise, revise, revise.

Sample Paragraph



Experience & Influence

While art has always held an important part in my life, it wasn't until *my mother was diagnosed with leukemia* that I realized the *transformational power art holds*. What was once a hobby was now my solace. My mom and dad would spend days in the hospital, and I would spend the nights with my Aunt Melissa so that I could still go to school. After school, my aunt would bring me to the hospital to visit my mom, and I remember how the room smelled like disinfectant. As a twelve year old, the hospital was terrifying with its beeping machines, needles, and cords, but I had to show my mom I could handle it. I didn't want her to feel more stressed out from my anxiety, so every time I went to the hospital, I drew a picture of her. Sometimes, I drew a portrait of her on her hospital bed. Other times, I drew a picture of her on the beach or in a bookstore. I would tell her how to pose and focused on the paper and pencils I brought with me. It gave me courage to draw her, and she was able to tape the pictures on the wall. Her room was no longer bare and boring; now, it featured her daughter's art. By the time my mom was in remission and able to return home, she had saved over thirty of my pictures of her.

Tips for Bragging



1. **Don't hold back on your greatness.** Society may value humbleness, but modesty never paid the bills!
2. **Be specific.** You are painting a picture of yourself for the scholarship committee. The committee will fall in love with you through the details of your experiences and accomplishments.
3. **Proofread.** Then proofread again. Then ask a family member to read through it. Then share it with folks at the RWC. Then proofread it again. Don't let grammar or spelling mistakes distract the scholarship committees from how great you are.
4. **End on a happy note.** Even if your responses focus on some dark or challenging experiences in your life, scholarship readers want to see how you have overcome adversity, have risen above the challenges you've faced, and have become a better person in spite of the difficulties. Overcoming adversity shows you are a good return on their investment.

The Reading and Writing Center Can Help!

1-1 Appointments

Essay Drop-Off

Drop-in Hours

- *online and in-person support available*



Find us in your Lobo Apps dashboard...

Click here

