

MPC Scholarship Workshop:



Writing
Advice:
Crafting a
Winning
Scholarship
Essay.

Laura: lheadley@mpc.edu & Sunny: slemoine@mpc.edu

Faculty Co-Coordinator: Reading & Writing Center

2022-2023





First of all, **you**—whoever you are—**can do this**. There is scholarship money out there for MPC students, and you deserve a chance at it. You've got **your own, unique story**, and the scholarship committee will want to know it, and to understand how a scholarship would help you to reach your goals.

And secondly, you don't have to do it alone. We'll come back to this point later, but—whatever else you take away from this presentation, please remember this:

The Reading and Writing Center is Here to 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



Okay! let's get into it!



New MPC Scholarship Questions for 2022/2023

**The Good News: You only have to
respond to 2 prompts!
(No Bad News)**

You'll be writing two short essays
(up to 500 words each).



This is what
500 words
looks like.



You'll write
two of these.



Sample MPC Scholarship Essay: Prompt #1

Can you remember the first moment you knew—with absolute certainty—what you wanted to do with your life? I can. I was seven years old, and my Uncle Manny was visiting from Fresno. I loved my Uncle Manny, and it never seemed like we got to see him enough. He had come to Castroville where I was living with my Mother, Grandmother and sisters, and he was going to stay for two weeks to help us out while my Grandma was in the hospital. Mostly he was there to help watch us kids while my Mom was with Grandma. But he also fixed my Grandma's car and changed my life forever. Manny is a mechanic with his own successful business in Fresno, and when he heard that our family hadn't been able to use Grandma's car for months, he said "Hey buddy! That's something we can do together while I'm here! We'll fix Grandma's car!" I was blown away, thinking I could actually help with such an important job. It had been a real hardship for our family to have to do without that vehicle. What if I could help to fix that problem?

Since I knew from such an early age that I wanted to be an automotive mechanic when I grew up, I have always taken every opportunity I could find to work with cars. The Career Technical Education pathways program at my high school (North Monterey County High School) doesn't offer Automotive Repair classes, but one of our school counselors (Mrs. Leyva) helped me to find a volunteer job at the Concours d'Elegance in Pebble Beach during the summer of my sophomore year. I've been working there every year since, and have gotten some great jobs on the side from connections I've made there, too (mostly detailing and transporting cars). I've been able to work with some amazing cars: from one of the first Model-T Fords to a 2023 Maserati Quattroporte. This past summer, I even helped prepare the 1948 Ford DeLuxe, "Greased Lightning" from the movie Grease to be shown at the Concours.

Now that I'm here at Monterey Peninsula College, studying Automotive Repair, I feel more sure than ever that this is the field for me. I'm learning so much in all of my classes! We even get to do actual repairs in the shop here, and my classmates benefit every week from this hands-on experience. It's so empowering to be able to fix things—as I learned when my uncle and I repaired my grandmother's car all those years ago. Ultimately, as fun as it is to help people with their beautiful, one-of-a-kind show cars and antiques every summer in Pebble Beach, my dream is to be a top-notch local mechanic in my hometown of Castroville. I want to give back to my community and keep their cars on the road. I want to be like my Uncle Manny: the guy who can fix anything. If I am fortunate enough to be awarded this scholarship, I know I can reach that goal.



**So let's
have a look
at those
questions!**

The following question is **required**:

1. Please write a 500-word personal statement telling us about yourself and describing your educational journey and career aspirations. You may also wish to describe challenges and accomplishments along the way, how your past has influenced you, or how receiving a scholarship would help you reach your goals.

2. Please **choose one** of the following questions and write up to **500 words** in response.

- The lessons we take from the obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you in a positive manner?
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find particularly engaging or feel passionately about. Why does it captivate or inspire you? How do you plan to incorporate this into your future learning, career path, or life in general?



**Let's get a
closer look
at each
question
to see
what
they're
asking.**

The following question is required:



1. Please write a 500-word personal statement telling us about yourself and describing your educational journey and career aspirations. You may also wish to describe challenges and accomplishments along the way, how your past has influenced you, or how receiving a scholarship would help you reach your goals.

The focus of this question is **you**: Who are you? What brought you here? What are you studying and why? What are your hopes for the future, and how can a scholarship help you get there?

Here, the main parts of the question are highlighted in yellow, and the optional (but important) examples they'd like to see are highlighted in green

Remember—*real people read these essays*. They just want to know who you are and how you plan to make use of the scholarship you're hoping to receive.

2. Please **choose one** of the following questions and write up to 500 words in response.

First option:

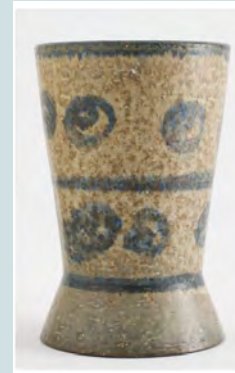
- The **lessons we take from the obstacles** we encounter can be fundamental to later **success**. **Recount a time** when you faced a **challenge, setback, or failure**. How did it affect you, and what did you **learn from the experience?**



You're still the main focus of this question, but this time the readers want to learn about a **major challenge** you faced and how it impacted you.

If you choose this question, be sure to write about something that has some relevance to your life now: something that helped you to realize what you wanted to study, or put you on the path you're on now.

2. Please **choose one** of the following questions and write up to 500 words in response.



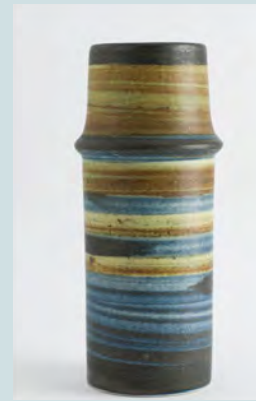
Second Option:

- Reflect on **something that someone has done for you** that has made you happy or thankful in a **surprising** way. How has this **gratitude** affected or motivated you in a **positive** manner?

This question is almost the reverse of the previous one. If you choose this one, you'll be writing about **something you're really grateful for**. (Be specific: who is or was responsible for this wonderful thing? How/why did it have such a positive impact on you?)

(Remember: the upper word limit on this essay is 500, but yours can be shorter.)

2. Please **choose one** of the following questions and write up to 500 words in response.



Third Option:

- Describe a **topic, idea, or concept** you find particularly **engaging** or feel **passionately** about. **Why** does it captivate or inspire you? **How** do you plan to incorporate this into your **future** learning, career path, or life in general?

This question might best be understood as an extension of Question #1. If you had a hard time keeping your answer to that first question under 500 words because you had so much to say about **what inspires you and what you want to do in your future career**, here's a chance to write more about that. What really gets you excited about your future? What motivates you when you think about the life you want to build for yourself?

(Remember: the upper word limit on this essay is 500, but yours can be shorter.)



Ready?
Let's get started!



Step One: Read the Prompts

Read the prompts *carefully* and *actively*: Print them out—or write them down by hand—and underline or highlight key words. This will help you focus and meet the requirements established by the prompt.

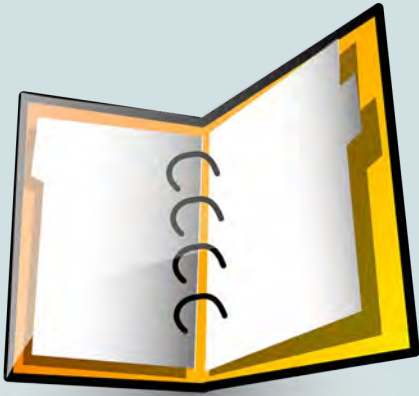
1. Please write a 500-word personal statement telling us about yourself and describing your educational journey and career aspirations. You may also wish to describe challenges and accomplishments along the way, how your past has influenced you, or how receiving a scholarship would help you reach your goals.



Step Two: Brainstorm

Start by jotting down some ideas related to the prompts (Start with #1). Don't limit yourself at this stage, and don't worry about grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.

1. **Your educational journey:** opportunities or special courses from high school, community college, summer camps or extracurricular classes, your plans for your future education.
2. **Career aspirations:** what's your ideal job?
3. **Challenges/accomplishments:** personal, professional, family-related, hobby/pursuit
4. **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 a 3 to 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 and descriptive details you can include to create pictures in your reader's mind
- A brief concluding paragraph that ties back to the thesis/main point of your introduction and focuses on a positive future

Example Outline



Option 3: Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find particularly engaging or feel passionately about. Why does it captivate or inspire you? How do you plan to incorporate this into your future learning, career path, or life in general?

1. I think the most important thing a person can do is to support their community.
2. I first discovered how important _____ was to me when _____.
3. Experience _____ made me realize that _____.
4. Experience _____ was my first big step toward a career in _____.

Tip: These examples are a great place for those vivid details readers need in order to be able to visualize your story.

5. This scholarship will allow me to pursue my goal of a career in _____ and continue to give back to my community.

Tip: It's not enough to state the experiences you've had; you'll also want to reflect on their meaning, and show how you've grown from them. This will show your character.

Step 4: Draft and Revise



From your outlines, start writing your essays.

- Remember, there is a 500 word limit for each of your two essays.
 - *Tip:* Compose in Google Docs so that you can use editing tools. Then copy and paste into the text boxes of the application. Remember—you can access and edit your essays until the deadline (March 5th).
- Make an appointment with the [Reading and Writing Center](#) or share with others who can provide advice and an outsider's perspective.
- Read your essays aloud. Take your time. That's the best way to find things to improve.
- Revise, Edit, and Proofread before you submit your essays.

Sample Paragraph



Can you remember the first moment you knew—with absolute certainty—what you wanted to do with your life? I can. I was seven years old, and my Uncle Manny was visiting from Fresno. I loved my Uncle Manny, and it never seemed like we got to see him enough. He had come to Castroville where I was living with my Mother, Grandmother and sisters, and he was going to stay for two weeks to help us out while my Grandma was in the hospital. Mostly he was there to help watch my sisters and me while my Mom was with Grandma. But he also fixed my Grandma’s car and changed my life forever. Manny is a mechanic with his own successful business in Fresno, and when he heard that our family hadn’t been able to use Grandma’s car for months, he said “Hey buddy! That’s something we can do together while I’m here! We’ll fix Grandma’s car!” I was blown away, thinking I could actually help with such an important job. It had been a real hardship for our family to have to do without that vehicle. What if I could help to fix that problem?

lots of information here about their background/childhood

here we see what inspired them to pursue this career choice and educational path

Tips for Bragging

1. **Don't hold back on your greatness.** It's good to be humble, but if you don't tell them what a good investment you would be, how will they know?
2. **Be specific.** You are painting a picture of yourself for the scholarship committee. The committee will get to know you through the details of your experiences and accomplishments.
3. **Proofread.** Read your essays aloud. Proofread them carefully. Then ask a friend or family member to read through it. Then share it with folks at the RWC. Don't let grammar or spelling mistakes distract the scholarship committee from how great you are.
4. **End on a happy note.** If you find yourself focusing on some dark or challenging experiences in your life, remember that 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.



And Remember: The Reading and Writing Center is Here to Help!

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