

## 10 Tips for Winning Scholarship Applications

**1. Meet with your counselor!** Counselors have important information about colleges, admissions and financial aid. Many colleges also require a counselor recommendation.

**2. Take a strong course schedule.** Your class record is a big part of your college application. Don't take courses that simply pad your GPA. Challenge yourself. Take AP, IB or honors courses. If your school doesn't offer them, see if your local community college or university does.

**3. Ace the entrance exams.** Familiarize yourself with the test by taking sample versions beforehand. Get plenty of sleep the night before and eat a well-balanced breakfast. Read the directions and test questions carefully. Pace yourself so you have time to review your work.

**4. Find the school that's right for you.** Develop your ideal college profile. Then find matches with the help of your guidance counselor and FastWeb's college search. Learn more about your schools of choice via their Web sites, campus visits and college fairs.

**5. Fill out the application accurately and well.** Approach each application as if it were the *only* one that you're filling out. Read the directions carefully and follow them precisely. Tell the truth. Complete a draft copy first, then revise and proofread. Avoid the common errors of college apps.

**6. Craft excellent application essays.** Start by brainstorming for an original topic and take some time to hone your unique point of view. When writing, be clear, concise and well organized. And don't forget to check grammar and spelling.

**7. Submit applications as early as possible.** Many colleges require applications to be in by early January. Online applications are a great way to get your forms in quickly.

**8. Get great letters of recommendation.** Choose adults who know you well such as teachers, employers, coaches, clergy and community leaders. Provide them with all the necessary materials and information well in advance. Find out if the due date is a postmark date or a receive date. For receive dates, send letters at least 10 days in advance.

**9. Follow up on your applications.** If a college hasn't sent you something that they should have, don't be afraid to check on your application. With thousands of applications being processed, mistakes do occasionally happen.

**10. Dazzle them at your college interview.** Stay calm. Prepare by practicing with friends and formulate a few questions to ask. Dress for the occasion. Follow up with a thank-you note.

## Top Ten Tips for Admissions

### Tip #1: Apply only if you are eligible.

Read all the scholarship requirements and directions carefully to make sure you're eligible before you send in your application

### Tip #2: Complete the application in full.

If a question doesn't apply, note that on the application. Don't just leave a blank. Supply all additional supporting material, such as transcripts, letters of recommendation and essays.

### Tip #3: Follow directions.

Provide everything that's required, but don't supply things that aren't requested—you could be disqualified.

### Tip #4: Neatness counts.

Always type your application, or if you must print, do so neatly and legibly. Make a couple of photocopies of all the forms before you fill them out. Use the copies as working drafts as you develop your application packet.

### Tip #5: Write an essay that makes a strong impression.

The key to writing a strong essay is to be personal and specific. Include concrete details to make your experience come alive: the who, what, where, and when of your topic. The simplest experience can be monumental if you present honestly how you were affected.

### Tip #6: Watch all deadlines.

To help keep yourself on track, impose your own deadline that is at least two weeks prior to the official deadline. Use the buffer time to make sure everything is ready on time. Don't rely on extensions—very few scholarship providers allow them at all.

### Tip #7: Make sure your application gets where it needs to go.

Put your name (and Social Security number, if applicable) on all pages of the application. Pieces of your application may get lost unless they are clearly identified.

### Tip #8: Keep a back-up file in case anything goes wrong.

Before sending the application, make a copy of the entire packet. If your application goes astray, you'll be able to reproduce it quickly.

### Tip #9: Give it a final "once-over."

Proofread the entire application carefully. Be on the lookout for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Ask a friend, teacher or parent to proofread it as well.

### Tip #10: Ask for help if you need it.

If you have problems with the application, don't hesitate to call the funding organization.