

Application Essay

APSU Writing Center Handout

Application essays vary depending on the opportunity. This handout provides general guidance that can be adapted to different types of application essays.

Types of Application Essays

Personal Statement: Explains how your life experiences have shaped who you are and how they have prepared you for the opportunity.

Letter of Intent: Emphasizes your academic or professional goals and explains why you are a strong fit for a specific program or opportunity.

Scholarship Essay: Highlights your achievements and explains why you deserve financial support and how it would help you succeed.

Before You Write

1. Understand the Prompt

Review the essay instructions for format, length, and requirements.

2. Answer Key Questions

Why are you applying? How will it benefit you?

Why this program? How will it help your career?

What makes you stand out? Do you have leadership skills or unique experiences?

What motivates or interests you?

While Writing

1. Brainstorm (10–15 minutes)

Write freely about the topic.

Highlight ideas or stories that stand out.

- **Examples:** leadership roles, personal growth, and challenges you've overcome

2. Give Details

Focus on specific examples.

Stick to a theme or topic for clarity.

Be creative, but professional.

3. Capture the Audience

Start with a story from your experience.

Show your passion, motivation, and drive.

Make the reader see the value you bring to the program.

After Writing

1. Take a Break

Take a break from your essay before proofreading to read it with a fresh perspective.

2. Proofread and Edit

Read your essay aloud to check for errors.

Cut or revise anything that doesn't strengthen your essay.

3. Peer Review

Get feedback from a tutor at the APSU Writing Center or a trusted peer.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Ignoring the prompt and going off topic.

Repeating your résumé instead of adding depth and personal insight.

Trying to cover everything rather than developing one or two strong themes.

Submitting without proofreading for grammar, clarity, and organization.

Sample Scholarship Essay Questions & Tips

Use the questions below to guide your writing.

Give specific examples and show what makes you stand out from other applicants.

1. What are your career goals, and how will earning a degree or certificate from APSU help you achieve them?

Briefly introduce your career goals.

Expand on your short and long-term goals.

Connect your goals back to APSU by explaining how the programs, resources, and opportunities will help you succeed.

2. What is the most challenging aspect of attending college for you? What have you done to overcome it?

Clearly state your biggest challenge.

Describe how it affects your college experience.

Explain the steps you've taken to address and overcome it.

3. Why should you be selected for this scholarship?

Highlight your personal qualities and strengths.

Include academic achievements and accomplishments.

Explain how you will contribute to the APSU community.

4. Please describe any academic achievements, community service, leadership, or other personal characteristics that make you deserve this scholarship.

List key academic accomplishments.

Detail community involvement and leadership roles.

Highlight personal traits that make you stand out.

References

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