

Writing the Essay

- Modify your essay content to fit each scholarship essay topic. DO NOT submit generic essays—one size won't fit all in this case! If you use a computer, it is easy to individualize the content of your essay.
- Use the following evaluation guidelines when writing your essay:

The **Best** essay:

- has a strong central idea (thesis) that is related to the assignment;
- has a clear, logical organization with well developed major points that are supported with concrete and specific evidence;
- uses effective transitions between ideas;
- uses appropriate words composing sophisticated sentences;
- expresses ideas freshly and vividly; and
- is free of mechanical, grammatical, and spelling errors.

The **Good** essay:

- has a strong central idea that is related to the assignment;
- has a clear, logical organization with developed major points, but the supporting evidence may not be especially vivid or thoughtful;
- uses appropriate words accurately, but seldom exhibits an admirable style while the sentences tend to be less sophisticated; and
- has few mechanical, grammatical, and spelling errors that do not distract from the overall message.

The **Ok** essay:

- has a central idea that is presented in such a way that the reader understands the writer's purpose;
- has an organization that reveals a plan, but the evidence tends to be general rather than specific or concrete;
- uses common words accurately, but sentences tend to be simplistic and unsophisticated; and
- one or two severe mechanical or grammatical errors.

The **Bad** essay will exhibit one or more of the following problems:

- lacks a central idea (no thesis);
- lacks clear organization;
- is not related to the assignment;
- fails to develop main points, or develops them in a repetitious or illogical way;
- fails to use common words accurately;
- uses a limited vocabulary in that chosen words fail to serve the writer's purpose; or
- has three or more mechanical or grammatical errors.