



## Scholarship Program Responding to Essay Questions

The Essay section of the Waubonsee Community College Foundation scholarship application is broken down into six individual questions. When combined, these six pieces make up the components of a whole, complete scholarship essay. It is important that you answer each question completely and do not exceed the maximum word count indicated. This section is one of the most important components of your application, as this is how the selection committee members will get to know you and determine if you are the right person to receive a scholarship. The committee often looks for:

- Interest in and knowledge of chosen field
- Motivation, enthusiasm
- Ability to express thoughts clearly
- Ability to face challenges and/or overcome obstacles
- Desire to achieve, dedication to goals
- Attention to detail and carefulness of work in completing the scholarship application

Begin by spending some time reflecting on your strengths. When you write down all of the great things you have accomplished, it will be much easier for you to create responses that convey your strong points to the selection committee.

- Make a list of all your accomplishments – note the three of which you are most proud
- Develop a list of your extracurricular and volunteer activities
- Think of a problem/obstacle that you faced and write down how you were able to overcome it
- Put in writing your career goals or your reason for wanting to attend college
- Pretend that you had to write a letter of recommendation for yourself and write down the three most important things you would say

Follow these steps:

1. Your introduction will need a strong statement at the beginning in order to introduce the information that makes you a good candidate. Some possible beginnings:
  - ✓ An intriguing statement
  - ✓ A question
  - ✓ A relevant story or anecdote
  - ✓ A comparison or contrast
  - ✓ A personal experience
2. Begin each answer with a clear topic sentence containing key words to help direct the reader:
  - ✓ My family includes...
  - ✓ I have always chosen challenging courses, and I have a very good academic record...
  - ✓ My goal is to finish my Associate's degree at Waubonsee and then...
  - ✓ I have developed strong leadership skills and know how to interact with a wide variety of people through working several different jobs...
  - ✓ I was awarded a certificate of achievement for...
  - ✓ I have done a fair amount of community service including...
3. Stress the areas that make you a good candidate for a scholarship. For example, if financial need is a consideration for you, make a point of your financial need in a tactful way. Remember, the questions are for your overall application, not for any one particular scholarship, so provide this information in general.

4. To answer the closing question, provide a concluding statement that wraps up and summarizes key strengths. Some possible closing ideas include:
  - ✓ A restatement of the introduction and a summary of major points, stated in fresh terms
  - ✓ A story or quote that sums up the point of your answers
  - ✓ A statement of the importance of receiving a scholarship in achieving your educational and career goals
5. Choice of words is important. Achieve a balance between bragging and modesty. Avoid exaggerations and clichés but do not down play your worth. You need to answer the questions without exceeding the word limit indicated, so chose your words carefully.
6. Remember ***you are not sending a text!*** Make sure your essay is well written. **Proofread** your essay and make sure to use spellcheck. Consider grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Capitalize where necessary. Avoid wordiness. Be clear and concise. It is a good idea to have someone else double check your work. *Pay attention to the required word count* – the maximum length allowed for each response is included on the application.
7. Format your answers as an essay; do not submit a letter, provide bullet points or use incomplete sentences.

## Need help?

Waubonsee's Tutoring Centers are open to any enrolled student who needs academic help, no matter if you study at one of our four campus locations or online. For writing assistance, email **Tutoring@waubonsee.edu** or visit **waubonsee.edu/tutoring** for more information about tutoring services.

Free, online tutoring is available 24/7 to any Waubonsee student. There is live, on-demand tutoring; an online writing lab; a place to ask questions; and opportunities to make an appointment with a tutor.

If you have questions or need assistance, you may contact the Development Office at (630) 466-2316 or [foundation@waubonsee.edu](mailto:foundation@waubonsee.edu).