



UCLA Scholarship Resource Center STRATEGIES

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Prewriting Ideas and Activities for the Scholarship Essay

By Hannah Nahm, SRC Staff

Students often ask, “What are my chances of winning a scholarship?” The answer is: your shot at winning is exponentially better if you apply. While this may sound simple enough, for many students, one of the biggest roadblocks to applying for scholarships is writing the scholarship essay. Many of us get petrified just thinking about starting the essay (*What do I write? How do I begin?*) and end up giving up on applying for scholarships altogether.

This article offers tips about how to get your ideas on the page and how to make the essay prewriting stage as stress-free as possible, and perhaps make writing fun and engaging (or at least meaningful). If you take the time to complete the following prewriting exercise, not only will you have a preliminary blueprint to tackle future essay prompts that come your way, but you will have gained some insight about yourself and your character traits.



“Adjectivize Yourself”

1. Time yourself at two to five minutes, and come up with as many adjectives as you can that describe you. At this stage in the prewriting exercise, jot down any adjectives that come to mind, whether they are positive or negative. The key is to keep the writing flowing without censoring yourself. Keep in mind that your adjectives can be both self-evident facts (such as, “female” or “male”; “Asian American” or “Latino/a); and opinion-based, open-ended, and subjective descriptions (such as “hardworking,” intellectually-driven,” “innovative,” “compassionate,” “community-oriented,” and so forth).
2. Read through your self-characterization list. At this point, cross out any negative descriptors, understanding that, much like in a job interview, your goal is to highlight your strengths and not your weaknesses. Look for overlapping descriptors and combine them (e.g., if you wrote “persistent” and “persevering,” you can combine the two as they are essentially identical).

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Have you won a scholarship with the help of the SRC?

Let us know!

src@college.ucla.edu

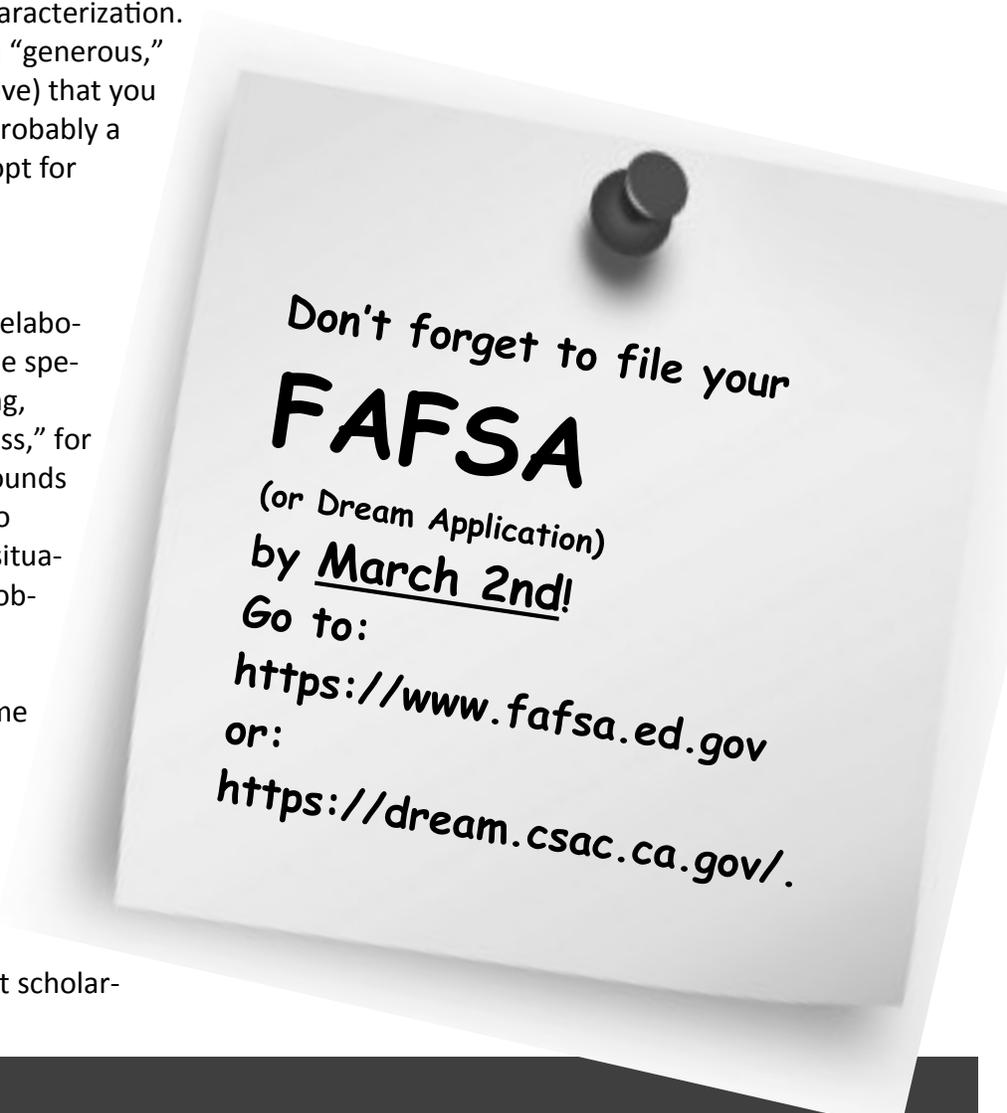
Prewriting Ideas and Activities (cont. from page 1)

From your list, choose up to six adjectives or character traits.

3. For each of your chosen self-descriptions, list as many examples as possible in support of that self-characterization. Be specific in your examples. Rather than writing, "I have overcome hardships, which have built my character," think of a specific point in your life when you encountered and overcame challenges and how that experience (or those experiences) impacted your life, perspective, or character.
4. Review what you have written above, and from the six self-characterizations, narrow your choice down to three. Base your choice on how much you were able to say in support of your self-characterization. For instance, if under the description "generous," you realize (by doing exercise #3 above) that you have scanty or shaky examples, it's probably a good idea to forego this choice and opt for something else.
5. For each of your three chosen self-characterizations, write a paragraph elaborating on this quality. Again, aim to be specific and personal. Rather than writing, "higher education is the key to success," for example (which is too general and sounds too "preachy" and impersonal), try to think anecdotally about the time or situation in your life (or in lives you have observed) that can illustrate this point (e.g., "My faith in the life-changing power of higher education inspired me to maintain a 3.5 GPA while working two jobs").

Having completed this prewriting exercise, you are now in a better position to tackle any future scholarship essay prompts. While different scholar-

ships have their own sets of essay guidelines and prompts, scholarship essay prompts are more alike than not: they generally want to see how your past experiences have shaped who you are today (thus the three self-characterizations you wrote about in this exercise!) and how who you are today (again, your positive traits) can help you in future endeavors. For more prewriting exercises, writing tips, and strategies, come by the Scholarship Resource Center. We will help you "write" away!

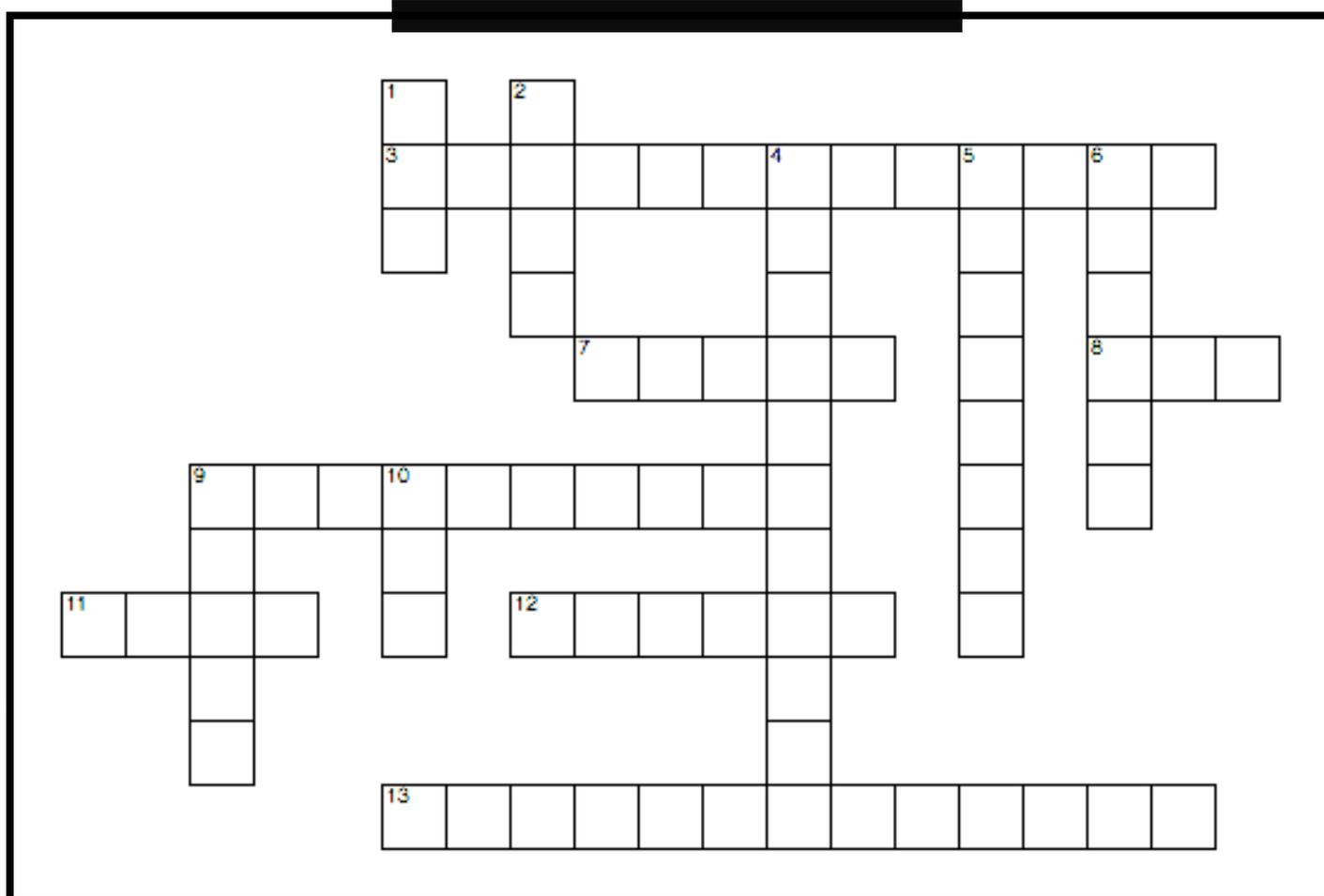


Don't forget to file your
FAFSA
 (or Dream Application)
 by March 2nd!
 Go to:
<https://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
 or:
<https://dream.csac.ca.gov/>.

Join our fan page on [facebook.com/uclasrc](https://www.facebook.com/uclasrc) to
 get alerts about upcoming scholarships!

A Scholarship Puzzle

By the SRC Quizmaster



THE QUIZMASTER'S CLUES

ACROSS

- 3 Before beginning a scholarship essay, make sure to ___ ___ ___ carefully.
 7 Adjective describing scholarships with no financial need component
 8 Oldest academic honors organization for liberal arts and sciences in US
 9 Pair of months when most SRC Donor Scholarship applications are due
 11 Number of dollars needed to use legitimate online scholarship search services
 12 UCLA program designed to encourage high academic achievement, with scholarships
 13 Nerdy sitcom with its own UCLA scholarship

DOWN

- 1 Office to visit for writing assistance with scholarship essays
 2 NYC hip-hop artist who sponsors a major scholarship
 4 One of five Schools at UCLA (in addition to the College of Letters & Science) with a large scholarship program
 5 Amount of time before deadline to contact a professor or TA for a letter of recommendation
 6 1978 Amendment to CA Constitution that made funding public schools more difficult
 9 Month of UCLA priority deadline for filing the FAFSA each year
 10 UCLA program designed to provide support for underrepresented students, with scholarships

<<SEE PAGE 5 FOR THE ANSWERS >>

Getting **STRONG** Letters of Recommendation

(And Keeping Your Recommenders Happy!)

By Grant Rosson, SRC Staff

So, you need letters of recommendation. Now what?

1. Find a Good Recommender

Consider making a “wish list” of recommenders. Whose recommendation would you be pleased and grateful to have? Professors, employers, community leaders—think broadly! Any of these would be a fine voice of support to include in your application.

Think about the *kind* of support you need for the application you are submitting. Some scholarships do not specify the need for a recommendation from an instructor. In fact, it may even be more fitting to ask someone else! For example, if you are applying for a community service award, why not ask the volunteer coordinator for a letter?

Having a list of potential recommenders can help prevent panic and missed opportunities. If your first-choice recommender is out of town, too busy, or not able to respond to you quickly enough, you’ll already know who else you could contact.

2. Be a Good “Recommendee”

If you want a strong letter of recommendation, give your recommenders something positive to say about you! Visit your professors’ office hours in the first few weeks of class. Tell them why you are taking their course and how it supports your long-term goals. Ask for clarification about a topic from lecture or seek help with a problem set. Demonstrate that you are pro-active, engaged, and interested. When it comes time to ask them for a strong letter, you will be confident that they can provide the support you are looking for.

3. Ask Early

It is best to ask for a letter as early as possible, to give your recommenders enough time to write a strong, thoughtful letter. Try to ask for a letter at least one month before the application is due—but the earlier the better. A recommender with plenty of time is a happy recommender indeed!

4. Ask Well, And Then Listen Carefully

You don’t want just any letter, you want a *strong* letter—so ask for it! “Do you think you would be able to write a strong letter of recommendation for me?” If your recommenders hesitate or seem unsure, you might think twice about choosing them to write a letter for you. If you sense some hesitation, give your recommenders an “out” and thank them for considering it: “If you don’t feel comfortable writing a letter for me, I understand. Thank you for considering it, in any case.”

5. Stay in Touch

Once you have secured your recommenders, you will need to give them the details. Forward any helpful information you have about the scholarship and your application, for example: a brief description of the awarding organization, the scholarship guidelines, and the deadline. You might also consider forwarding a draft of any essays or personal statements you plan to submit with your application.

HOW'S THIS FOR A
SCHOLARSHIP?

The Donald A. Strauss
Scholarship Foundation For Public Service



will pay you **\$10,000**
(yes, \$10,000) to make your
Public Service Project A Reality

UCLA deadline: February 2, 2017

Visit the SRC for more information.

If the deadline is approaching and your recommenders have not yet submitted a letter, don't panic! Consider sending a brief, polite reminder email a week before the deadline, a short message asking your recommenders if any further information would be helpful as they write your letter. This can serve as both a reminder and a gentle nudge so that your letter is sure to get submitted on time!

6. Give Thanks

A handwritten thank you note on simple stationery is a guaranteed way to let your recommenders know how grateful you are to have their support. Sending your thanks in an email is nice, but a handwritten note will stand out. Within a week of the deadline, send your thank you note by mail, drop it off at their office, or place it in their department mailbox.

Even a short note of thanks will do the job, so don't feel like you need to write a full, detailed letter. If you want advice on what to say, search online for some samples or visit us at the SRC—we are happy to help!

INTERESTED IN A CAREER IN SPORTS JOURNALISM?

Are you looking for **\$5,000** to help pay your way through school?
 Are you a sophomore or junior in good standing (with a GPA of 3.0 or above)?
 Then what are you waiting for? You are eligible for:

THE JIM MURRAY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

For more information or an application, drop by the UCLA Scholarship Resource Center, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., M-F, or call us at (310) 206-2875.



A Scholarship Puzzle: Answers

Don't Miss the *PHI BETA KAPPA* Opportunity

By: Mac Harris, SRC Staff

Although Phi Beta Kappa is not a scholarship opportunity (in fact it requires a membership fee), we at the Scholarship Resource Center strongly recommend that UCLA's; high-GPA students (above 3.67 for seniors; 3.85 for juniors) consider joining this prestigious organization if you are elected. Phi Beta Kappa (PBK) is the most prestigious and most venerable honor society in the United States (Founded in 1776). It carries true weight on a resume and can unlock doors for you in the future when you apply for scholarships and fellowships, admission to graduate and professional schools, and jobs. Awareness of Phi Beta Kappa has not always been high at UCLA, but at Harvard, for example, the student newspaper gives an in-depth report each year on the "Junior 24," the latest Harvard elects to Phi Beta Kappa.



Yet PBK is not simply about receiving recognition for attaining a high GPA. A panel of distinguished UCLA faculty chooses high-GPA students for election to PBK (no need to apply – they know who you are) based on the breadth of the student's curricular interests and achievements across the humanities and sciences, the depth of understanding demonstrated by the student's course selections (how well and logically they complement each other), and intellectual honesty and tolerance (course selections that demonstrate the student's willingness to be challenged by unfamiliar ideas). PBK also highly values the study of foreign languages and of the classic liberal arts, courses that touch on the ancient priorities of grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. That doesn't mean that every high-GPA student at UCLA should rush into an astron-

omy or music course as soon as possible, but a spread of courses that touches on, say, four of those seven areas (not necessarily as a primary focus) would nicely communicate to the selection panel that the student values a connection to the Greco-Roman, Arabic, and Judeo-Christian roots of the last 2000 years of Western education.

Ultimately, PBK wants to foster an intellectual community in the United States of the highest ethical quality, not just a list of students who can now put another gold star on the resume. Phi Beta Kappa wants a community of scholars and thought leaders willing to confront and evaluate opposing ideas and to detect and reject intellectual dishonesty not only in others, but in ourselves. For those reasons, Phi Beta Kappa encourages its inductees above all to socialize with each other and exchange ideas. Thus, the many local alumni chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, including the Southern California chapter, sponsor intellectual and cultural events that bring members together to provide fellowship and stimulation, as well as to advocate for the importance of a liberal arts and sciences education and community in the United States, ultimately in the hope of securing a more just and peaceful world.

So, to UCLA juniors and seniors elected in the Spring, by all means join Phi Beta Kappa in part for the well-earned recognition of your academic efforts and achievements to date. Yet most of all, you should join for the opportunity to participate in an intellectual and ethical community that can help shape a future for this country and the world that will prioritize free inquiry and expression, diversity of opinion and perspective, and intellectual rigor. If you have questions about Phi Beta Kappa, please direct those to the PBK division of the Scholarship Resource Center at (310) 825-4112, pbk@college.ucla.edu, or online at www.scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu.

TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE:

Managing Your Schedule for Scholarship Applications

By Helga Zambrano, SRC Staff

Did you find a scholarship you will apply for? Great. So when will you have time to actually work on your scholarship application?

Like most UCLA students, you probably have a busy schedule filled with classes, study time, campus activities, and maybe a part-time job. Let's not forget that you also need time for sleeping, eating, and socializing. So when will you squeeze in time for your scholarship application?

This article will give you tips on time management, prioritizing tasks, and scheduling for the scholarship application process. With these tips, you can apply for and even win multiple scholarships without the time-crunch headaches and procrastination that could otherwise come with it.

Time Management: Make a time inventory of your typical school week. Google Calendar is a great tool for this. Schedule in every activity you do: classes, studying, sleeping, socializing, work, activities. Then, figure out where you can add two to three hours per week to work on your scholarship application. You can break up these two to three hours over multiple days. Then, try in general to stick to this weekly plan. Consistency is key!

Prioritizing Application Tasks: Take a look at the application requirements: 1,000-word personal statement, one letter of recommendation, and an official transcript. Prioritize these tasks based on level of difficulty. The more difficult it is, the more time you need to prioritize for this task. You can

attain a copy of your transcript in one day. But you need to dedicate more time for writing the personal statement and requesting the letter of recommendation. Prioritize time for drafting the statement, but also prioritize time for going to the UCLA Scholarship Resource Center or the UCLA Writing Center to help you write the statement. You will also need time to meet with or email your letter recommender, whether her or she is your professor, TA, supervisor, or employer.

Scheduling Your Deadlines: Now that you have set time aside each week and set your priorities, create a table for **multiple target deadlines**.

Look at the submission deadline and work backwards. Generally, you need at least three or four weeks prior to the deadline to ask for letters. You need one month for writing and revising multiple drafts into a polished personal statement. Google Calendar is also a great tool to schedule in alerts and reminders of your set deadlines.

Treat yourself each week:

One way to keep on track is to reward yourself. Go out to the movies or buy yourself an ice cream. You deserve to celebrate your small, yet effective, accomplishments each week!

With these tips, you'll grow confident enough to tackle strategically, and not stressfully, the scholarship application process. Create bite-size weekly tasks for yourself, which will add up to a coherent and complete application!



Sample Time-Management Chart

| Scholarship Name | Award | My Deadlines | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------------------|--|--|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | | Submission Deadline | Transcript Request from UCLA Registrar | Letter of Rec Email Request to Professor | Letter of Rec Email Reminder to Professor | Essay Draft #1 | Writing Appointment | Essay Draft #2 |
| Strauss Foundation Scholarship | \$10,000 | February 2, 2017 | 1/15/2017 | 1/10/2017 | 1/25/2017 | 1/15/2017 | 1/20/2017 | 1/28/2017 |

Scholarship Resource Center Winter 2017 Workshop Schedule

*All workshops are held in Covell 229 and include a personalized follow-up counseling session.
Sign up for a workshop through MY.UCLA.EDU.*

Take advantage of these FREE resources and more!

Wide-Ranging Library

Workshops Every Quarter

Extensive Scholarship Website

One-on-one Counseling

Writing Assistance

It's all waiting for you at the

UCLASRC

Scholarship Resource Center

*guiding UCLA students through
the scholarship process*

233 Covell Commons

(310) 206-2875

Open Monday to Friday

11 am—6 pm

src@college.ucla.edu

www.scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu

Secrets to Winning College Cash

TUES Jan 10 5-5:30 PM

THUR Jan 19 5-5:30 PM

MON Jan 23 4-4:30 PM

WED Feb 8 5-5:30 PM

THUR Feb 16 4:30-5 PM

TUES Feb 21 5-5:30 PM

How to Win Scholarships

WED Jan 11 5-5:30 PM

FRI Feb 3 5-5:30 PM

How to Find Scholarships

TUES Jan 17 5-5:30 PM

THUR Feb 2 5:30-6 PM

How to Write Personal Statements

THUR Jan 26 5-6 PM

TUES Jan 31 5-6 PM

How to Get Letters of Recommendation

THUR Feb 9 4:30-5 PM

WED Feb 15 5-5:30 PM

**Join our fanpage
on Facebook to get
alerts on upcoming
scholarships!**

SCHOLARSHIP EVENT WITH ORL

WHEN: Wednesday, January 18, 7:00 pm

WHERE: Grand Horizon Room in Covell

WHAT: Secrets to Winning College Cash,
Student Speakers, & Break-Out Sessions

** bring a friend and your laptop!*