

Tips for Scholarship and School Applications

Filling out Applications:

1. Make at least one copy of the application before you write on it (unless you can easily access to another copy).
2. Make a copy of the application when you are done. This is to help you with other applications and for your records.
3. Keep track of which applications you have filled out.
4. Make sure your completed application is in ink (typed or hand-written). Ink is permanent and looks cleaner. Black ink is highly recommended.
5. If you do not have neat handwriting, try to type up the application or take your time filling it out. Sloppy handwriting gives a bad impression.
6. Follow the directions. Sometimes applications specify it be filled out with a black pen. Some applications want you to send your letter of recommendations with the application.
7. Make sure you have EVERYTHING together before you mail the application. There are exceptions such as transcripts or letters of recommendations. Uncompleted applications are disregarded.
8. Make sure you answer the essay question(s) completely and entirely. Do not leave a question out or unanswered. The reader will notice you did not answer the question. Make sure the essay is written in an essay-format unless indicated (“list,” “name.”)
9. Ask your references if you can use them. Let your references know what kind of applications you are using them for. This is polite and helps them be prepared for the phone call. If your reference does not know you very well, give them a resume or a list of activities you have been involved in. Make sure you thank your references (verbally or hand written) for letting you use them. If they were contacted and you did receive the scholarship/job/admitted to the school, let them know. After all, they did help you get it.
10. Do not wait the last minute. Fill out applications and mail them as soon as you can. For schools, this might actually increase your financial aid. For jobs, this can make the difference between who they interview and not. Late applications and those that arrive in the last minute tend to be looked down on (almost as if you were lazy or/and did not care). Timing does play a big role.
11. Check your spelling and grammar. If you are filling out an essay, write it on another sheet of paper a few times. Have someone proof read it; parents, teachers (especially English teachers) and school counselor.
12. If the application allows you to add additional information, feel free to add it. This is the chance for you to explain dips in grades due to a situation, let them know about situations you have been through. This is the time for them to know you more personal and let you stick out.
13. Fill out the application entirely. If it does not apply to you, then write (unless noted to leave it blank) “Not Applicable.”
14. If you have any questions, ask a school counselor or call the place you are applying to. If you make a good impression on the phone, it can give you a slight advantage.
15. Apply for all scholarship that you are eligible for.

Letters of Recommendation

1. Notify the person at least two weeks before you want to mail it. This will give them time to think about it and write you a good letter. This is to be polite and to help you get a better letter. Letters can make a difference.
2. If the application is focused on a particular field, you would want someone who has some experience or knows the field.
3. Ask people who know you and you have a good relationship with. This will make it easier for them and they will be able to give a more honest reference. Also, choose someone who can tie what they know about you to the application. If you do not have many people that meet these, then give it to a teacher you have had a few times or someone that has known you for a while, give them some extra time to write.
4. Have a list of mixed people: family friends, teachers, church-members, employers, adult co-workers, etc. This will help your application be better-rounded and allow the reader to see you for who you really are.
5. DO NOT use family members. Almost every time, the reference is asked or has to tell how they know you. Many applications will not allow you to use family members. This also includes boy/girl friend family members.
6. If the person does not know you quite well, give them a list of your accomplishments, activities, goals, etc. The "Activities Checklist" can be used for this.
7. Make sure you thank everyone who wrote you a letter of recommendation. Letters of recommendation do take time and these people do want to help you.