

SCHOLARSHIP EXAMPLES

Example of a scholarship that sounds good but won't win:

I am 17 years old and a senior at Grand Haven High School. I am a hard worker who has managed to participate in team sports, keep my grades up, work two jobs, volunteer, and maintain an active social life with many friends. My 4 years on the high school's cross country team has given me a lot of opportunity to positively influence my team mates, and my senior year as captain of the team allowed me to show my leadership skills. My hobbies are running, playing basketball, football, baseball, and snowboarding. I have volunteered at St. Patrick's Church handing out food to people who need it and have volunteered at the nursing home helping an elderly lady plant and maintain her garden. I chose GVSU as my first choice for college because it has a great physical therapy program, and I would like to pursue a career in that field to be able to use my leadership and people skills to help others. My long term personal goals would be to obtain a position as a physical therapist, support a family, and be active in my community.

Excerpts of winning scholarships:

Introduction paragraph #1:

Running through stands filled with bright cotton and silk, I glance happily at my sister who hides behind the stand nearest to me. This was a common sight when I was little. Though running through the walls of fabric is a long-gone pastime of mine, I still hold fabric in high esteem. My biggest goal in the coming years is to double major in apparel design and either a business, fiber science, environmental, or English major. When I leave college, I would like to design outerwear so that more people are able to experience the world comfortably. I would like to create new, environmentally friendly material or create an article of clothing that helps people. This could be as simple as creating a piece of clothing for children afflicted with ADHD that puts pressure on certain areas of their body to help them calm down, and at the same time, refrain from being bulging and uncomfortable. I would also like to start my own business that is slightly charity based on my part, where I would give a portion of what I created to someone in need, or go into costume design.

Introduction paragraph #2:

On one hot late-summer day when I was in high school, my parents came back from a shopping trip with a surprise present for me: the legendary board game, Diplomacy. At first I scoffed at such an old-fashioned game. Who would want to waste glorious sunny days moving armies around a map of pre-World War I Europe, pretending to be Bismarck or Disraeli? But after playing the game once, I became absolutely riveted by the nuances of statecraft, and soon began losing sleep as I tried to craft clever diplomatic gambits, hatch devious schemes, and better understand the game's ever-changing dynamics. As my friends and I spent the second half of the summer absorbed by the game, my parents grinned knowingly. How could I resist being fascinated with Diplomacy, they asked me, when I incessantly read about international affairs, and liked nothing more than debating politics over dinner? How could I resist being fascinated, when I had spent most of my summers in Greece (and, much more briefly, France and England), witnessing first-hand the ways in which countries differ socially, culturally, and politically?

Introduction paragraph #3:

I grew up in Oakland County, a predominantly white suburb of Detroit, Michigan. It and a handful of other counties circling Detroit are largely the result of the white flight spurred by the city's 1960s race riots. Whenever my father and I visited the city, he casually pressed the automatic lock button as we crossed Eight Mile Road, the dividing line between the suburbs and the city. He grew up in Detroit and remembered a vibrant, diverse city—drastically different from the dilapidated, primarily African American city I saw. My mother worked as an advocate for urban teens in the city for years, and my father drew up building proposals in an attempt to rebuild the city. The daughter of a community-minded architect and teacher, I was raised to think of myself as a catalyst for social improvement through creativity.

Introduction paragraph #4:

While at West High School, I focused on performance art, a discipline in which the human body becomes the artistic medium. My dance instructor had this as part of our class community projects. We collaborated with a female juvenile facility, local farmers, and the Humane Society. In each of these outreach projects, we used art to reach out to different members of our community. During my senior year, I performed a monologue in front of large-scale paintings I created about my city's namesake. I created puppet shows and paintings about the towns we visited and staged re-enactments of significant local events. From my experiences I formed a belief that it is critical that people engage with the history of the place they live to understand its present social, cultural, and economic dynamics.