

TIPS FOR OSAC ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Read the instructions in the OSAC application carefully at <http://www.getcollegefunds.org/>.
2. Use standard type sizes and line spacing—don't crowd your paper. Times New Roman size 12 is the easiest font to read. One inch margins are standard. Double-space if you have room, but single-spaced is ok.
3. Answer each question directly and limit the essays required to a maximum 150 words per essay.
4. The readers will be reading hundreds of essays. Try to use an original or interesting opening sentence.
5. Use efficient and technically perfect writing. Have more than one person proofread your paper.
6. Type essays in a word processing program and copy and paste them to the OSAC eApp.
7. **“Explain your career aspirations and your educational plan to meet these goals.”**
 - Outline what you plan to do for your career and how you plan to get there (your plan for schooling). Show that you have a knowledge of what it takes to get to your goal.
 - It is okay to include additional items like internships, work opportunities, and volunteer work you are doing or plan to do to help you meet your career goals.
 - If you don't know what you want to do, provide a plan that you think will help you figure that out—things such as internships, career exploration classes, etc.
 - Address why your goals are what they are—what sparked your interest, what skills or qualities do you possess that will make you successful.
8. **“Describe a challenge or obstacle you faced in the last ten years. What did you learn about yourself from this experience?”**
 - This needs to be something unique. The more personal your story, the more unique to you it will be. (I.e., Everyone applying for the Ford Opportunity Scholarship raised their children as a single parent and has at least a 3.0 GPA.)
 - DON'T talk about what you did not do, for example “My greatest challenge was not taking drugs”. (You've probably never murdered anyone either, but no one is going to give you a scholarship because of it).
 - Don't forget the second half of the question. Talk about what you learned as a result of overcoming the obstacle. How did you grow or change? What did you find out about your strengths and abilities?
9. **“Describe a personal accomplishment and the strengths and skills you used to achieve it.”**
 - Describe something you thought you couldn't do that you achieved or a personal goal that you met.

- This may be something small that has great significance to you. Show how it is significant in your life.
- Describe the skills and personal strengths that you used to accomplish your task. These can be personal qualities or specific things you learned to do.
- Try to tie your skills and strengths to your goals.

10. "Explain how you have helped your family or made your community a better place to live. Please provide specific examples."

- Use your activity chart to go into detail about a few specific examples around a theme *OR* group like experiences together. How did those things help others? What did you learn?
- How did you contribute to supporting or making life easier for others? Did you provide leadership, direct service, or help to change a system?
- Include a contribution to society and personal values--SHOW PASSION.

11. Make sure you have answered all parts of the questions and completed any additional essays that may be required for specific scholarships. *Note: Page length requirements may differ for additional essays.*

12. *Double-check everything!* (See www.getcollegefunds.org/checklist.html)

GOOD LUCK!