

## Scholarship Essay Examples Financial Need

### EXAMPLE NO.1

Fedora? Check. Apron? Check. Tires pumped? Check. Biking the thirty-five minutes each evening to the cafe and back to work a six-hour shift was exhausting, but my family's encouragement and gratitude for the extra income was worth it.

A few years earlier, my family of nine had been evicted from the home we had been living in for the past ten years. With nowhere else to go, we moved into our church's back room for three months, where I shamefully tried to hide our toothbrushes and extra shoes from other church members. Right then I made a commitment to my family to contribute financially in whatever way I could. My sacrifice translated to a closer bond with my siblings and deeper conversations with my parents, helping me understand the true meaning of a unified family and the valuable part I play in that.

With the financial stability that my part-time jobs provided my mother could stay home to raise seven children, my learning-disabled older sister could attend college, my younger sister could go on a mission trip to Korea, and my twin siblings could compete in national math competitions. I've seen that even as a high school student, I have so much potential to impact my family and beyond -- how one small act can go a long way.

Through the successes of my efforts, I also realized that poverty was just a societal limitation. I was low-income, not poor. I was still flourishing in school, leading faith-based activities and taking an active role in community service. My low-income status was not a barrier but a launching pad to motivate and propel my success.

To additionally earn more money as a young teen, I began flipping bicycles for profit on craigslist. Small adjustments in the brake and gears, plus a wash, could be the difference between a \$50 piece of trash and a \$200 steal. Seeing how a single inch could disarrange the lining of gears not only taught me the importance of detail but also sparked my fascination with fixing things.

When I was sixteen I moved on to a larger project: my clunker of a car. I had purchased my 2002 Elantra with my own savings, but it was long past its prime. With some instruction from a mechanic, I began to learn the components of an engine motor and the engineering behind it. I repaired my brake light, replaced my battery, and made adjustments to the power-steering hose. Engineering was no longer just a nerdy pursuit of robotics kids; it was a medium to a solution. It could be a way to a career, doing the things I love. I was inspired to learn more.

Last summer, to continue exploring my interest in engineering, I interned at Boeing. Although I spent long hours researching and working in the lab for the inertial navigation of submarines, I learned most from the little things.

From the way my mentors and I began working two hours earlier than required to meet deadlines, I learned that engineering is the commitment of long hours. From the respect and humility embodied within our team, I learned the value of unity at the workplace. Like my own family at home, our unity and communal commitment to working led to excellent results for everyone and a closer connection within the group.

What most intrigues me about engineering is not just the math or the technology, but the practical application. It is through engineering that I can fix up my car... and facilitate submarine navigation. Engineering, in fact, is a lifestyle -- instead of lingering over hardships, I work to solve them and learn from them. Whether the challenge is naval defense or family finances or even just a flat tire on my bike before another night shift, I will be solving these problems and will always be looking to keep rolling on.

Success is triumphing over hardships -- willing yourself over anything and everything to achieve the best for yourself and your family. With this scholarship, I will use it to continue focusing on my studies in math and engineering, instead of worrying about making money and sending more back home. It will be an investment into myself for my family.

#### EXAMPLE NO. 2

“If you can’t live off of it, it is useless.” My parents were talking about ice skating: my passion. I started skating as a ten-year-old in Spain, admiring how difficulty and grace intertwine to create beautiful programs, but no one imagined I would still be on the ice seven years and one country later. Even more unimaginable was the thought that ice skating might become one of the most useful parts of my life.

I was born in Mexico to two Spanish speakers; thus, Spanish was my first language. We then moved to Spain when I was six, before finally arriving in California around my thirteenth birthday. Each change introduced countless challenges, but the hardest part of moving to America, for me, was learning English. Laminated index cards, color-coded and full of vocabulary, became part of my daily life. As someone who loves to engage in a conversation, it was very hard to feel as if my tongue was cut off. Only at the ice rink could I be myself; the feeling of the cold rink breeze embracing me, the ripping sound of blades touching the ice, even the occasional ice burning my skin as I fell—these were my few constants. I did not need to worry about mispronouncing “axel” as “aksal.” Rather, I just needed to glide and deliver the jump.

From its good-natured bruise-counting competitions to its culture of hard work and perseverance, ice skating provided the nurturing environment that made my other challenges worthwhile. Knowing that each moment on the ice represented a financial sacrifice for my family, I cherished every second I got. Often this meant waking up every morning at 4 a.m. to practice what I had learned in my few precious minutes of coaching. It meant assisting in group lessons to earn extra skating time and taking my conditioning off-ice by joining my high school varsity running

teams. Even as I began to make friends and lose my fear of speaking, the rink was my sanctuary. Eventually, however, the only way to keep improving was to pay for more coaching, which my family could not afford. And so I started tutoring Spanish.

Now, the biggest passion of my life is supported by my most natural ability. I have had over thirty Spanish students, ranging in age from three to forty and spanning many ethnic backgrounds. I currently work with fifteen students each week, each with different needs and ways of learning. Drawing on my own experiences as both a second language-learner and a figure skater, I assign personal, interactive exercises, make jokes to keep my students' mindset positive, and never give away right answers. When I first started learning my axel jump, my coach told me I would have to fall at least 500 times (about a year of falls!) in order to land it. Likewise, I have my students embrace every detail of a mistake until they can begin to recognize new errors when they see them. I encourage them to expand their horizons and take pride in preparing them for new interactions and opportunities.

Although I agree that I will never live off of ice skating, the education and skills I have gained from it have opened countless doors. Ice skating has given me the resilience, work ethic, and inspiration to develop as a teacher and an English speaker. It has improved my academic performance by teaching me rhythm, health, and routine. It also reminds me that a passion does not have to produce money in order for it to hold immense value. Ceramics, for instance, challenges me to experiment with the messy and unexpected. While painting reminds me to be adventurous and patient with my forms of self-expression. I don't know yet what I will live off of from day to day as I mature; however, the skills my passions have provided me are life-long and irreplaceable.

### EXAMPLE NO. 3

As a child of immigrant parents, I learned to take responsibilities for my family and myself at a very young age. Although my parents spoke English, they constantly worked in order to financially support my little brother and I. Meanwhile, my grandparents barely knew English so I became their translator for medical appointments and in every single interaction with English speakers. Even until now, I still translate for them and I teach my grandparents conversational English. The more involved I became with my family, the more I knew what I wanted to be in the future.

Since I was five, my parents pushed me to value education because they were born in Vietnam and had limited education. Because of this disadvantage, I learned to take everything I do seriously and to put in all of my effort to complete tasks such as becoming the founder of my school's Badminton Club in my sophomore year and Red Cross Club this year. Before creating these clubs, I created a vision for these clubs so I can organize my responsibilities better as a leader. The more involved I became, the more I learned as a leader and as a person. As a leader, I carried the same behavior I portrayed towards my younger cousins and sibling. My family members stressed the importance of being a good influence; as I adapted this behavior, I utilized

this in my leadership positions. I learned to become a good role model by teaching my younger family members proper manners and guiding them in their academics so that they can do well. In school, I guide my peers in organizing team uniform designs and in networking with a nonprofit organization for service events.

Asides from my values, I'm truly passionate in the medical field. I always wanted to be a pediatrician since I was fourteen. My strong interest in the medical field allowed me to open up my shell in certain situations— when I became sociable to patients in the hospital as a volunteer, when I became friendly and approachable to children in my job at Kumon Math and Reading Center, and when I portrayed compassion and empathy towards my teammates in the badminton team. However, when I participated in the 2017 Kaiser Summer Volunteer Program at Richmond Medical Center, I realized that I didn't only want to be a pediatrician. This program opened my eye to numerous opportunities in different fields of medicine and in different approaches in working in the medicine industry. While I may have a strong love for the medical field, my interest in business immensely grew as I soon discovered that I didn't only have to take the practical approach in the medical field. With this interest, I plan to also become a part of a medical facility management team.

In the future, I hope to pursue my dream of becoming a doctor by attaining an MD, and to double major in Managerial Economics. I intend to study at UC Davis as a Biological Sciences major, where I anticipate to become extremely involved with the student community. After graduation, I plan to develop a strong network relationship with Kaiser Permanente as I've started last year in my internship. By developing a network with them, I hope to work in one of their facilities some day. Based on my values, interests, and planned future, I'm applying for the NCS Foundation scholarship because not only will it financially help me, but it can give motivation for me to academically push myself. I hope to use this scholarship in applying for a study abroad program, where I can learn about other cultures' customs while conducting research there.

#### EXAMPLE NO. 4

“Oh well look at that one,” my uncle leans over and says about my brother-in-law in the living room wearing a dress. “I'd always had my suspicions about him,” he jokes with a disapproving sneer and leans back in his chair, a plate of Southern-style Christmas dinner in his hand.

I was hurt. Why would my own uncle say that like it's such a terrible thing that my brother-in-law is wearing a dress? That it was the worst thing in the world if my brother-in-law were gay or effeminate.

“I think he looks beautiful,” my oldest brother Ethan chimes in. At that moment, I wish I could have hugged Ethan. No, not because he was defending my brother-in-law (who actually isn't gay, as my uncle was suggesting), but because Ethan was defending me. My uncle has no idea

that I recognized earlier this past year that heterosexuality wasn't meeting all of my needs for intimacy with other people and that I've come to define myself as queer. It all started when I took a hard look at how my upbringing in Miami had taught me that the only way that boys are supposed to connect with others is by having sex with "beautiful" girls – that intimacy with other guys or "ugly" girls isn't as meaningful.

After freeing up that block in my brain that told me that I shouldn't look at guys in a certain way, I could embrace the fact that I'm attracted to men (and people in general) in a lot of different, new ways. My growth as a person was exponential. I rewrote so many areas of my life where I didn't do things I wanted because of social conditioning. Within two months, my world expanded to include polyamory. I looked back on my past relationship with my girlfriend and realized that I wasn't jealous (angry, yes. hurt, yes. But not jealous) when she cheated on me. I realized that people's needs — whether they are for sex, someone to talk to, someone to engage intellectually — don't necessarily all have to be met with one person. It can be easier sometimes with one person, absolutely. But that's not the only way. As someone who is both polyamorous and queer, I feel like parts of my family and large parts of my community marginalize me for being different because society has told them to. I want to change that.

Since I will be studying for an entire year in Prague, I will have the opportunity to attend the annual Mezipatra, an international film festival in November that screens around a hundred top-ranking films on lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and queer themes. I feel really connected to going to this event because I crave being in an environment of like-minded people who strive to do that same thing I want to: balance the images of people typically portrayed through cliché and stereotype.

When I came out to my sister-in-law, she told me that people who are really set in their ways are more likely to be tolerant to different kinds of people after having relationships with these people. If my uncle can learn to love me, to learn to love one queer/poly person, he can learn to love them all. If I can be an example to my family, I can be an example to my classmates. If I can get the opportunity to travel abroad, I can be an example to the world. Not just through my relationships, but through my art. Give me a camera and a screen and I will carry the message of tolerance from the audiences of Mezipatra in Prague to my parent's living room.

Fade in: Two men with thick beards kiss – maybe for once they aren't wearing colorful flamboyant clothing. Fade in: A woman leaves her house to go to her male best friend's house and her husband honestly tells her to enjoy herself. Fade in: A college student wanting to study abroad tells his conservative parents the truth...