

**Final Scholarship  
December Activity  
Due December 20, 2008**

*You should have received feedback from your advisor on your scholarship essay rough draft. If you have been looking at scholarships, you may have an essay that you need to write for the application. It is recommended that you use this assignment to finalize that essay. If you need to change topics from the October assignment, that is fine. If you are still searching for scholarships, than use the essay from October. For this assignment, you are to go back and revise your essay. Let's review some ways to improve your essay:*

**Show, don't tell.**

Go back through your essay. In every sentence where you have told the judges something, is there a way to show by example?

**Present Tense, if Possible**

The present tense allows people to live the information with you. It's not always possible, but it's a great strategy when it can work. The above paragraph could have been written in past tense, e.g., "Dad drove me both ways." It's still a powerful sentence but it's already over. When Dad "drives", we're right there in the car.

**Kill the Adjectives and Adverbs**

In his marvelous book about writing, *The First Five Pages*, by Noah Lukeman, he suggests that you go through your first page of writing (your whole essay, in this case) and circle every adjective and adverb. Then see if you can use a more descriptive noun or verb to make your writing crisper. He uses examples like substituting "he was a tyrant" for "he was a brutal man" or "he was sprinting" for "he was running quickly". Try it. Your writing will be immediately refreshed by using fewer words to do the job efficiently.

**Make the Introduction Inviting**

The introduction invites your reader to keep going. This is not the place to summarize – why read the rest if you get the picture in the first paragraph? Instead, tantalize and encourage the next step. How? Use emotion, raise a question, create surprise with a surprising fact.

**Create Workable Transitions**

Transitions are hard whether you are writing a speech, composing an essay or trying to get your little brother to go to bed. The trick is to show your reader where they are going next and why it's a logical next step. Try not to use standard transitional phrases like, "Secondly" or "As a consequence". Try repeating the prior thought and connecting to the next task. For example, "Once I learned how to scale rocks on the artificial rock face, I needed to try out my skills on a real mountain."

**A Compelling Conclusion**

As in the introduction, don't summarize. Essays are too short to need a review at the conclusion. Instead, re-emphasize the main point or circle back to the beginning and tie the loop.

*You will receive credit for this assignment when you have turned in your revised essay. Now that you have an essay, find scholarships to use it for! It would be a waste to have an essay and have it sit there.*