

Writing an Autobiography for a Scholarship Application

The Writing Process

1. Visualize your audience.
 - a. Think about who will read your autobiography.
 - b. Put yourself in the reader's place.
2. Think about the purpose of the autobiography.
 - a. Why do members of the scholarship committee want to know something about you?
 - b. How would an autobiography help them decide which applicants deserve scholarships?
3. Generate ideas for your autobiography. See the section of this handout that lists brainstorming ideas.
4. Write a rough draft of your autobiography.
 - a. Select a format for your autobiography.
 - b. Don't worry at this point about grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.
5. Revise your autobiography after a cooling-off period.
 - a. Check the order of your paper. Is the information logically ordered?
 - b. Is all the information relevant to the purpose of the autobiography?
 - c. Have you been honest but positive about yourself?
 - d. Do you need to add more information?
 - e. Read the paper aloud to check sentence sense.
6. Type a clean copy of the autobiography and edit what you have written.

Characteristics That Will Improve Your Paper

1. Use language that is direct, clear, and sounds like you. However, avoid slang and overused expressions.
2. Create a tone that shows confidence, but not arrogance; sincerity, not stuffiness.
3. When appropriate, connect sentences with expressions like "then," "in addition," "finally," "in contrast," so that one idea seems to move logically into the next.

Brainstorming Questions

Write answers to these questions to get ideas for your autobiography.

1. What academic accomplishments are you proud of?
2. What other accomplishments are you proud of?

3. What are your personal strengths?
4. What positive changes have you made in your life?
5. Why did you come, or come back, to school?
6. What realistic goals have you set for yourself?
7. Where are you in reaching those goals?
8. What course of study have you set for yourself at LBCC?
9. Why do you need a scholarship?
10. What would you do with a scholarship?

Selecting a Format for your Autobiography

There is no one correct way to organize an autobiography. You might try the formats below just to get started and then use your common sense to order your information logically.

1. Past
 - a. Relevant background information
 - b. Reasons for returning to school
2. Present
 - a. LBCC progress
 - b. Accomplishments while at LBCC (they might be accomplishments other than academic successes)
3. Future
 - a. Plans and goals

You could also start with this format:

1. You, the person
 - a. Family
 - b. Personal values
 2. You, the student
 - a. Academic achievements (including grades)
 - b. Other achievements while in school (jobs, organizations, teams)
 3. You, the scholarship candidate
 - a. Why you should be awarded a scholarship
 - b. What you would do with the scholarship
 - c. What are your goals?
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1. What are your achievements in college (despite obstacles, if relevant)?
2. What are your goals?

3. How will a scholarship help you attain those goals?