**Scholarship Essay Writing Guide**

**Common Scholarship Essay Prompts & How to Approach Them**

**General Scholarship Essay Tips**

* Start early—don’t wait until the last minute!
* Read the prompt carefully and fully address it.
* Use a clear structure: Introduction, Body, Conclusion.
* Be authentic—share your unique story and voice.
* Proofread for grammar, spelling, and clarity.

**1. Why did you choose your career field?**

**How to Approach:**

* Start with a personal story that led to your interest in the field.
	+ Share your passion, research, and future goals.
* Explain your passion and long-term goals.
* Show how your skills and experiences align with your career choice.

**Example:** *"From a young age, I was fascinated by how things work. When my father’s truck broke down, I eagerly watched the mechanic fix it, asking countless questions. That moment sparked my interest in diesel mechanics. Now, I am determined to pursue a career that allows me to problem-solve and contribute to my community by keeping essential vehicles running."*

**2. Describe a challenge you have faced and how you overcame it.**

**How to Approach:**

* Choose a challenge that shows growth and resilience.
* Describe the problem, the steps you took to overcome it, and the lessons learned.
	+ Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to tell a compelling story.
* Show how this experience has prepared you for the future.

**Example:** *"Balancing school and a part-time job was challenging, especially when my mother fell ill. I had to manage my time efficiently while staying focused on my studies. Through careful planning and perseverance, I maintained my grades and supported my family. This experience taught me resilience and the importance of time management—skills I will apply in my career."*

**3. Why did you choose Western Dakota Technical College and this career field?**

**How to Approach:**

* Research and mention specific programs or opportunities at WDT that attracted you.
* Explain how WDT aligns with your career goals.
* Show enthusiasm and commitment to your field.

**Example:** *"I chose WDT because of its strong hands-on training in the Electrical Trades program. The small class sizes and industry-experienced instructors ensure I get the best education. I am excited to gain practical experience that will prepare me for a successful career as an electrician."*

**4. How have your experiences prepared you for this career?**

**How to Approach:**

* Highlight relevant extracurricular activities, work experience, or personal projects.
* Show how these experiences developed your skills and passion for the field.

**Example:** *"My high school robotics club and summer job at a repair shop helped shape my passion for engineering. Through these experiences, I developed problem-solving skills, teamwork, and hands-on technical knowledge. These skills will be essential in my studies and career."*

**5. Why are you the best candidate for the Build Dakota Scholarship?**

**How to Approach:**

* Showcase your commitment to your career and willingness to work in South Dakota.
* Highlight your strengths, work ethic, and determination.
* Explain how the scholarship will help you achieve your goals.

**Example:** *"I am dedicated to becoming a skilled welder and contributing to South Dakota’s workforce. My hands-on experience in high school welding classes and strong work ethic make me a great candidate. Receiving the Build Dakota Scholarship will allow me to focus entirely on my training and give back to my community."*

**Tips for Writing a Strong Essay**

* **Be Specific:** Avoid generic statements. Use concrete examples.
* **Show Passion:** Let your enthusiasm for your field shine through.
* **Use Storytelling:** Engage the reader with a compelling personal experience.
* **Follow a Clear Structure:** Introduction (hook), body (examples), and conclusion (strong takeaway).
* **Proofread:** Check for grammar, clarity, and conciseness.

**Final Reminders**

* Apply before **March 31** for WDT Foundation & Build Dakota Scholarships.
	+ The scholarship applications are available at <https://my.wdt.edu/ICS/Scholarship/>.
* Seek feedback on your essay from teachers or mentors.
* Reuse essays when possible but tailor them to each scholarship.

For questions, contact: **WDTScholarship@wdt.edu** **or 605-718-3064**