Writing Essays for National Fellowships

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Outline

Introductions

Structure:
1. Planning
2. Strategies
3. Prewriting
4. Drafting
5. Revising

General writing advice about fellowship writing

Raise your hand to ask questions
Planning

**TIMELINE**

- spring
- early summer
- August
- September
- October & November
Planning

THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. This is not your college admissions essay.

2. No outside feedback is allowed for Rhodes and Mitchell applications.
Planning

**YOUR GOAL**

To *persuade* your *audience* to award you the scholarship
YOUR GOAL

To persuade your audience to award you the scholarship

YOUR THESIS

My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.
1. **PLANNING YOUR DOCUMENTS**

   Note the structure of the application. What documents are you being asked to submit?

   Plan how you will tell your story across multiple documents (or perhaps only one).

   “My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
1. **Planning Your Documents**

- **Rhodes** – personal statement (1000 words)
- **Marshall** – personal statement (1000 words), proposed academic programme (500 words), ambassadorial reflection on “US-UK special relationship” (500 words)
- **Mitchell** – personal statement (1000 words)
- **Fulbright** – personal statement (one page), statement of grant purpose (two pages)
- **Gates** – personal statement (3000 characters, ~500 words)
- **Churchill** – personal statement (two pages), proposed program of study (one page)
- **Schwartzman** – personal statement (750 words), leadership essay (750 words), current affairs essay (500 words), video introduction (1 minute)
- **Beineke** – personal statement (1000 words)
- **Truman** – Policy Proposal (500 words), 14-question application (includes leadership statement [2000 characters], public service statement [1700 characters], & proposed academic program [2000 characters])

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
Strategies

1. **Planning Your Documents (Academic Program)**

   Motive – why the subject is worthy of study & why you want to study it.

   Description of program – program requirements; key faculty & their areas of expertise

   Your experience – how experience in this field has prepared your knowledge, your curiosity, your passion

   Program fit (and why UK) – why this is a logical next step given your experience & future goals

   2nd choice program – one short paragraph at the end

   “My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
1. **Planning Your Documents (Motivating Academic Program)**

“The National Highway Safety Administration estimates that 25 percent of all traffic accidents can be attributed to driver distraction. This testifies to the fact that of all of the information that enters our eyes at any given moment, only a fraction enters our awareness. What neural mechanisms underlie this phenomenon? I want to study how the brain creates subjective visual awareness . . .”

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
2. TAILORING TO THE SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarships look for different things in their candidates

**Rhodes:** “Candidates will also be required to show integrity of character, interest in and respect for their fellow beings, the ability to lead, and the energy to use their talents to the full. Applicants should be able to demonstrate the vigor which will enable Rhodes Scholars to make an effective contribution to the world around them.”

**Marshall:** “The Selectors will look for candidates who have the potential to excel as scholars, as leaders and as contributors to improved UK-US understanding. Assessment will be based on academic merit, leadership potential and ambassadorial potential.”
MISSION STATEMENT


As future leaders, with a lasting understanding of British society, Marshall Scholars will strengthen the enduring relationship between the British and American peoples, their governments and their institutions.

Marshall Scholars are talented, independent and wide-ranging, and their time as Scholars will enhance their intellectual and personal growth. Their direct engagement with Britain through its best academic programmes will contribute to their ultimate personal success.

The objectives of the Marshall Scholarships are:

- To enable intellectually distinguished young Americans, their country’s future leaders, to study in the UK.
- To help scholars gain an understanding and appreciation of contemporary Britain.
- To contribute to the advancement of knowledge in science, technology, the humanities and social sciences and the creative arts at Britain’s centres of academic excellence.
- To motivate scholars to act as ambassadors from America to the UK and vice versa throughout their lives thus strengthening British American understanding.
- To promote the personal and academic fulfillment of each scholar.

Marshall Scholars support the aims of General Marshall when, in 1947, he proposed the idea of American economic assistance for post-war Europe. He said “An essential part of any successful action on the part of the United States is an understanding on the part of the American people of the character of the problem and the remedies to be applied. Political passion and prejudice should have no part. With foresight and the willingness on the part of our people to face up to the vast responsibilities which history has clearly placed upon our country, the difficulties...can and will be overcome”. Successive British Prime ministers have endorsed these ideals.

Marshall Scholarships are special and distinguished in that:

- Scholars can come from any US university and are free to choose their course of study at any UK institution, thus offering them maximum freedom and independence.
- They are the only scholarships funded substantially by Her Majesty’s Government. This provides unique and
Frequently Asked Questions

Should I Apply?

A Q&A with the American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust

Download the FAQ.

2014 Frequently Asked Questions

The Rhodes Scholarships were established after the death of Cecil Rhodes, who dreamed of improving the world through the diffusion of leaders motivated to serve their contemporaries, trained in the contemplative life of the mind, and broadened by their acquaintance with one another and by their exposure to cultures different from their own. Mr. Rhodes hoped that his plan of bringing able students from throughout the English-speaking world and beyond to study at Oxford University would aid in the promotion of
Welcome Goldwater Faculty Representatives to the 2016–2017 Goldwater Scholarship Program online application!

Faculty Representative information and materials are now available for the 2016–2017 Barry Goldwater Scholarship Program. The online application is now available. All applicants will have to complete their application for the 2016–2017 competition online by selecting the Apply Now button on the Foundation's website. Please review the documents provided below. The applicant's essay will not be a part of the online application, but will need to be submitted by mail along with the applicant's other supporting documents. Further details regarding the essay are included in the Guidelines for the Nomination Process.

If you are the designated Faculty Representative at your institution, by mid September 2015, you will receive an email with login instructions. If you have any questions about the program, please contact us online.

The following materials are available:

- Program Press Release (PDF)
- Poster (PDF)
- Guidelines for the Nomination Process (PDF)
- Goldwater Sample Application (PDF)
- Goldwater Sample Recommendation (PDF)
Effective and Ineffective Responses

Effective and Ineffective Responses to Truman Questions

Question 7: An example of your leadership.

Question 8: A satisfying public service experience.

Question 9: A societal problem you want to address.

Question 11: The graduate school program you plan to pursue.

Question 14: Additional information you would like to share with the Truman Foundation.

Phone 202.395.4831
Address 712 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20006
3. **MAKING YOUR CASE**

Your experience is your evidence for the claims you make about yourself.

“At eight, I scoured the playgrounds of North Carolina for sharks’ teeth. At twenty-one, I pass my summers on archaeological sites in Europe hunting the traces people left over eight-thousand years ago. I do not remember ever consciously thinking that I wanted to be an archaeologist. Nevertheless, I have been absorbed into a field that lets me exercise my passions: for the written word, for teaching and exploring the world around me, as well as the world that once was.”

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
3. **Making Your Case**

Your experience is your evidence for the claims you make about yourself.

“Volunteer work cataloguing the Bab edh-Dra skeletal collection and independent research exploring metabolic diseases’ effects on the skull using CT imaging technology have taught me the reality of professional research.”

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
4. **CONSIDERING YOUR AUDIENCE**

**Rhodes Interview Panel**
- Paul Dodyk – lawyer at Cravath, Swaine, and Moore
- George David (Host/Chair) – recently retired CEO from United Tech
- Doug Eakeley (my lead interviewer) – lawyer at Lowenstein Sandler
- Murray Biggs – Professor (Drama/ Theater) at Yale University
- Peter Dawkins – retired, ran for NJ Senate, Heisman Trophy Winner
- Danielle Sered – lawyer at Common Justice
- Dr. Anna Wess – pediatrician at Philadelphia Children’s Hospital
- Charles Conn – Warden of Rhodes House

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
4. CONSIDERING YOUR AUDIENCE

Marshall Interview Panel

- Professor Brian E Roberts – Professor of Gov’t and Economics UT-Austin
- Professor David Alexander – Physics & Astronomy Department Rice U
- Professor Virginia Anderson – U of Colorado Department of History
- Andrew Millar – Consul General Houston
- Aurora Losada – Assistant Managing Editor Houston Chronicle
- Deisy Verdinez – Communications Officer British Consulate General Houston

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
5. **STANDING OUT**

Transcend cliché.

Prewriting exercise:
1. What are the clichés of a person who would apply to the program I am?
2. In what ways do I embody those clichés?
3. In what ways do I defy them?

Don’t stretch. The nuanced truth about you will always transcend the cliché.

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
5. **Standing Out**

“My first appreciation of the brain as an organ of awareness was so powerful to me because it gave me a way to approach, scientifically, the same problem with which Shakespeare was grappling: what does it mean to be a human being? The bookshelves in my childhood home are not full of neuroscience textbooks, but of plays, gathered over the years by my once-actor parents. This is what I was raised on; I come from humanities stock . . . It was not until my first year at Yale that I realized I could draw on my passion for science as well as culture to engage a broader public sphere.”

“My background, my character, and my future goals make me an excellent fit for the program I am proposing.”
Describe an academic program you might apply to.
(2 mins.)
# Prewriting

## Writing Exercise (Part 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your background</th>
<th>Your character</th>
<th>Your future goals</th>
<th>Things others can say about you</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drafting

Outline first! Choose the elements from your grid you’d like to include in your statement and how you want to arrange them.

Consider how the shape of your story affects the meaning of its parts.
Drafting

Read the first paragraph of the sample statement (pages 5-7 of your packet)

Label the paragraph as you write:

- **B**: background
- **C**: character
- **F**: future goals
## Drafting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your background</th>
<th>Your character</th>
<th>Your future goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• WGSS major</td>
<td>• Commitment to social justice</td>
<td>• Policymaker in US gov’t agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Roosevelt internship (anti-poverty think tank)</td>
<td>• Follows through on beliefs</td>
<td>• Challenge institutionalized inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work with New Orleans Public Defender’s Office</td>
<td>• Empathetic</td>
<td>• Welfare, education, and housing reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Real world understanding of poverty</td>
<td>• Optimistic</td>
<td>• Break cycles of poverty &amp; increase social mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work in electoral politics</td>
<td>• Good listener</td>
<td>• Increase autonomy and quality of life for poor Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social justice activism</td>
<td>• Learns from experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fellowship director for SNAP-PAC</td>
<td>• Willing to get her hands dirty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing tutor</td>
<td>• Public policy nerd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Online publications in <em>Salon</em> &amp; <em>The Nation</em></td>
<td>• Believes in the power of advocating for the needy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Heavy involvement in theater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commitment to social justice
- Follows through on beliefs
- Empathetic
- Optimistic
- Good listener
- Learns from experience
- Willing to get her hands dirty
- Public policy nerd
- Believes in the power of advocating for the needy
- Policymaker in US gov’t agency
- Challenge institutionalized inequality
- Welfare, education, and housing reforms
- Break cycles of poverty & increase social mobility
- Increase autonomy and quality of life for poor Americans
Revising

**Style Goal**

Be clear, vivid, and direct.

Don’t try to impress anyone with complex sentences or fancy vocabulary.

Don’t use disciplinary jargon.
Revising

**TEST THE STYLE YOURSELF**

1. Express actions with verbs
2. Limit “to be” verbs (is, are, was, were)
3. Limit use of adjectives and adverbs
4. Be concise
5. Proofread!
Final Motivation

**Applying is good for you!**

Practice talking about yourself.

A valuable opportunity to reflect on what makes you happiest.
Final Reflection

Please write one (or more) things you’re still wondering about on the last page of your packet.