



Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association (PICYA) 2017 Guidelines for Scholarship Applicants



The Worldwide Boaters Safety Group (WBSG) and the Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association have joined together to offer \$2,500 scholarships to students whose parents, grandparents, or guardians are members of a yacht club belonging to PICYA.

Applicants must be graduating high school seniors of the current year, or college students continuing to pursue their educational goals. Scholarships are not renewable. However, previous recipients are eligible to reapply provided they still meet all other qualifications.

All applicants for a Scholarship must submit the following six (6) items:

1. A filled-out **application** signed and submitted (received) by June 15th 2017.
2. An **Official Transcript** submitted by the High School or College you attend.
3. A **one-page Essay** (see guidelines below) on **One** of the following subjects:
 - a. **Mandatory Boater Education – Concerns and Solutions.**
 - b. **Improvements for the Bay and Delta Waterways.**
 - c. **The impact of the “California Water Fix” plan on the Bay & Delta.**
 - d. **Why Community Service or Volunteer Work is Important**
4. **One** page that lists your community **Volunteer Activities**. Do not list any sports or school extra-curricular activities on this page.
5. **One** page that lists your extra-curricular **School Activities** such as science or debate clubs, participation in team sports, on the school paper staff, etc.
6. One page that states your **Need** for a PICYA Scholarship.

Guidelines for your PICYA Essay

Your essay carries the most weight of any of the items above in judging your application. What the Scholarship Committee expects, and will look for in your essay are:

1. A Title for your essay and a length of about 300 words, preferably one page.
2. An introductory paragraph on why you chose the subject you did.
3. A statement of the positions you took.
4. Several paragraphs that support the positions you took in your essay; and
5. A concluding paragraph summarizing the reasoning behind the position and arguments you presented.

Your essay should be well written, have correct spelling, grammar and punctuation; and have one or more rational arguments that support the position(s) advanced in your essay.

What is an essay?

An essay is a piece of writing that methodically analyses and evaluates a topic or issue. Fundamentally, an essay is designed to get your *academic opinion* on a particular matter.

Many students get confused about the word 'opinion' in academic writing, and think that academic writing should just stick to reporting the facts and forget about opinion altogether. However, there are important differences between an academic opinion and a *personal opinion*, and it's important to grasp these when you are putting together an essay:

	Academic opinion OR argument, stance, position, thesis, claim	Personal opinion
Determined by:	Conducting research, examining evidence, even-handedly considering issues	Gut feelings, personal experiences, own worldview
Characterized by:	Objectivity - guided by logic and rational thinking	Subjectivity - guided by emotions, personal experiences and individual character
Is it defensible?	Yes - you can defend or support an academic argument by citing credible evidence and laying out a reasoned argument	Hmmm , it's hard to say that one person's 'gut feeling' or worldview is any more valid than another's, so personal opinions are very hard to defend and validate objectively

Writing a great essay is not about simply surveying and re-telling existing ideas. Instead, a good essay considers various opinions and points of view and puts forward an argument that reflects the writer's informed opinion. Before you begin planning any essay, then, it's crucial to have a clear idea of *what you think* about your topic; you need to have a *position, argument, or clear stance* on a topic, that you defend with evidence and argument. This is what's called your [thesis statement](#).

How NOT to write an essay:

Brace yourself: this may sound familiar.

Many students who are being introduced to a complex new area of study put together essays using the following method:

- 1. They sift through resources and locate interesting, pertinent ideas that relate to themes or keywords in the question*
- 2. They write these ideas out, mainly in quotation form, and then shuffle them around until they're in an order that seems to 'flow'*
- 3. They construct a 'story', 'narrative' or 'discussion' around these quotations*
- 4. They finally conclude with a paragraph about what they think.*

Unfortunately, this isn't a particularly effective way of achieving the aims of an essay. If you do this, then you'll find your paper simply 'wanders' between quotes without a clear purpose. The Harvard website calls these 'walk-through' essays, in which you act mainly like a tour guide walking your reader through the terrain of your topic, pointing out 'who said what'.

The result of this process is usually an essay that:

- does not directly **answer** the set question, but simply **"talks around"** its themes*
- is **not cohesive**, as it has no clear aim, argument, or thesis*
- is **poorly structured**, as quotes are grouped together simply according to theme, rather than grouped together strategically to make a series of specific arguments or points that respond directly to the set question*

How is an essay structured?

An essay is a very structured piece of writing with many conventions that distinguish it from other genres and styles, such as reports, creative writing pieces or reflective journal entries.

All essays should consist of three parts: the **introduction**, the **body**, and the **conclusion**. Together, the introduction and the conclusion act as a frame for the essay, while the real work is done in the body.

- The introduction is usually the first paragraph (in essays longer than 2000 words, it may include the second paragraph also). It informs the reader about the topic of the essay, explains why the discussion in the essay is an important one to have, and provides a 'map' of the essay's argument.
- The **body** of the essay consists of all the paragraphs between the introduction and the conclusion. The body is where the argument of the essay is actually laid out.
- The essay's **conclusion** is usually the final paragraph (again, in longer essays, it may be two paragraphs). It draws together and summarizes the essay's argument.

While some lecturers may specify changes to the typical essay format, all essays are generally bound by the following set of guidelines or rules:

1. Essays do not include sub-headings, unless they are very long, e.g. 5000+ words.
2. Essays do not include dot-points; they are made up entirely of prose.
3. Essays are made up of paragraphs, which should be clearly distinguished by either:
 - indenting the first line of each paragraph (press Tab when you begin a new paragraph), or
 - leaving an extra blank line between each paragraph.
4. Essays should adhere to the word count, however, a variation of $\pm 10\%$ is usually acceptable. For example, a 2000-word essay could be anywhere from 1800-2200 words.
5. Essays should be printed in black ink on white A4 paper on one side of the paper only. Essays should also be stapled in the top left-hand corner only – and should not be placed in plastic sleeves.
6. Essays should use a plain legible font of reasonable size (e.g. Times New Roman or Arial in 12 point). Do not be tempted to use fancy fonts as they are very tiring for lecturers' eyes.
7. Essays must have either 1.5 or double line spacing (your lecturer will usually specify). In MS Word, go to Format, then Paragraph, then Line Spacing, and select either '1.5' or 'Double'. This is for ease of reading and it also creates spaces for comments and corrections.
8. Essays should have a generous margin (at least 2.5 cm all round). This also creates room for comments.
9. Essay pages should be numbered consecutively (in MS Word, go to Insert, then Page Numbers).
10. Essays are argumentative, not pretty; don't use pictures (e.g. MS Clip Art) on your cover page or in the body of the essay with the aim of enhancing the appearance or presentation. Pictures should only be used if they will be referred to as part of your argument.
11. Essays do not use formatting to emphasize words, like italics, **bolding** or underlining. Your choice of suitable words, phrases and evidence should be enough to provide a clear and convincing argument.
12. Essays must include either a 'Reference List' or a 'Bibliography'.

There are 10 steps you can follow to write a strong essay:

1. Scrutinize the question
2. Brainstorm your ideas
3. Research your topic
4. Establish a thesis statement
5. Do the math
6. Outline before you write
7. Write paragraph by paragraph
8. Lastly, introductions and conclusions
9. Edit and polish
10. Review with a final checklist