PiE Scholarship Workshop

What?

$2000 scholarship award

Who?

PiE students in their last year of high school, moving on to postsecondary education in 2027

When?

Applications Open!
Due on March 6th, 11:59pm
Interviews in April

Why?

1. To help PiE students pursue higher education.
2. To promote science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Promoting STEM



Promoting STEM



Where?

Application & this presentation can be found online:
https://pioneers.berkeley.edu/competition/RCScholarship

How?

- Application components
  - Short response questions (4 x 250 words)
  - Unofficial transcript
  - Recommendation letter (optional but recommended)
- A short list of finalists are interviewed to select a winner.

Questions?

Letter of Recommendation

What is it?

- A letter! (surprisingly)
- Have someone brag about you
  - They can speak about you from a different perspective
- Free form way to articulate your achievements
- Recommenders may choose to keep their letter confidential
  - No obligation to share their letter with you prior to submission
  - ***Pick someone who you trust will write a strong recommendation***

Who do I ask?

- Anyone who can vouch for your achievements
  - Teacher, Coach, Manager, etc.
- By asking them, you are trusting them to write about you in a good light, so they should be someone who you have interacted with a decent amount
- Ask your peers who they will be asking - it might inspire you!
- Have 2-3 options in case your first choice is unavailable to write a letter.

How do I ask?

- Ask whoever you have in mind as soon as you think of them.
  - The worst that can happen is that they ignore your email, so fire off some emails!
- Email template (Look for “Asking someone to be your recommender” header)

What if they forget?

- You should remind them at least two weeks in advance, or just check in with them periodically
- Email template (Look for the “Reminding your recommender” header)

How is the LOR completed?

On the web application, you'll specify whom you'd like to request a letter of recommendation from with their name, email, and phone.

Upon submitting that information, an email will go out to the recommender that contains a link where they can access a special form for submitting their recommendation.

If your recommender doesn't get an email, you can press the resend button within the application.

Questions?

Suggested Timeline

October - November:

- Brainstorm ideas for each prompt.
- Ask someone to be your recommender.

November - December:

- Draft outlines for at least 2 of the prompts and ask a friend for feedback.
- Write a first draft for one of the prompts and ask a friend for feedback.

Winter Break:

- Draft outlines and first drafts for your remaining prompts.
- Refine your drafts into versions close to a final draft and ask for feedback.
- Remind your recommender about the Letter of Recommendation (LoR).

Suggested Timeline

February - March:

- Ask someone to read through your application and provide feedback.
- Edit! Use feedback from peer reviewers to revise application drafts.

Early March:

- Remind your recommender about the LoR
- Near the scholarship **Deadline (3/6)**: finalize responses and confirm LoR submission.

(3/6): Application (including LoRs) Due!

Short Answer Responses

4 Prompts

≤250 words

What we want to learn about you

- Where do you come from?
- What has shaped you?
- Where do you want to go?
- What motivates you?
- What do you want to do?
- What do you understand about yourself?
- What will you do with that knowledge?

How do I write a short answer response?

Let’s take a look at the first prompt.

What is your biggest takeaway from PiE? Describe a moment from the season that sparked personal growth and what you learned.

Reword the prompt into something you can answer easily:

What is your favorite memory in PiE?

What did you learn?

Example of how to approach writing answers

Q: What is your favorite memory in PiE? What did you learn?

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Brainstorm Ideas:

- First final competition
- Debugging robot night before scrimmage
- When our robot was able to do the task autonomously

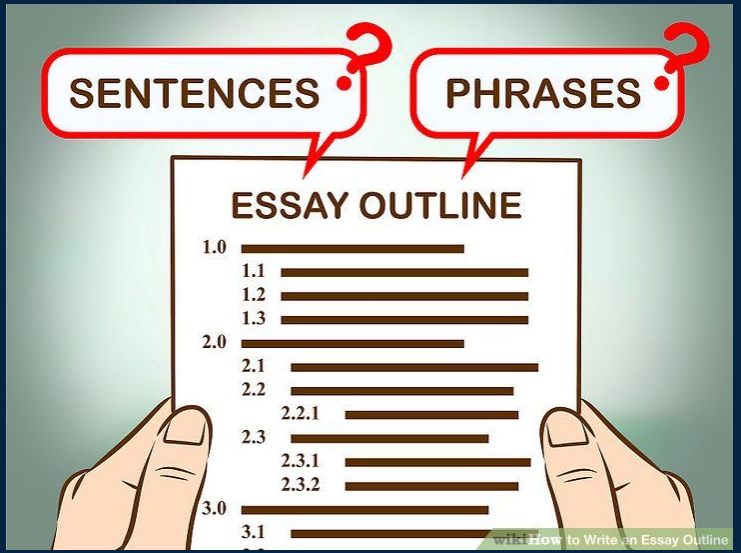
Q: What is your favorite memory in PiE? What did you learn?

Brainstorm Ideas:

- First final competition
- **Debugging robot night before scrimmage**
- When our robot was able to do the task autonomously

Planning and Outlining

- Example format:
  - **Topic Sentence**
  - **Concrete Detail/Example (CD)**
  - **Commentary (CM)**
  - Concrete Detail/Example
  - Commentary
  - . . .
  - **Conclusion**



Q: What is your favorite memory in PiE? What did you learn?

Outline:

TS - My favorite memory in PiE was the night right before Scrimmage during my third year.
CD - Robot hardware and software was not yet fully integrated
CM - Needed to get the full robot ready in one night
CD - Worked as a team to get it together
CM - Required a wide range of expertise
Conclusion - Managed to get the full robot working just in time for Scrimmage.

Rough Draft

- Use your outline to guide your draft
- Different approaches
  - Brain dump
  - (Sorta-)Popcorn style
- Can deviate from the outline, edit, clean up, cut down later
- Goal: Get story on paper regardless of word count and formatting

Sample Answer - Easier Question

Rough Draft:

A: My favorite memory in PiE was the night right before Scrimmage during my third year. A few other staff members and I wanted to make sure the game was working well, but much of the software and hardware was not integrated, so we spent many long hours through the night fixing bugs together. **It required a wide range of expertise and a whole lot of teamwork to get the parts to work smoothly, but after tons of code rewrites, measurements, cutting, and wire splicing, we got the game field to work the way we envisioned as the sun had begun rising.** (100 words)

Proofreading & Revising

- **Read it out loud**
  - Does it sound natural?
- Ask a friend to read it
  - Can they identify your message?
- Spell check! Google is smart but not as smart as you hope
- It’s more important to be clear than to sound smart

Rewording to answer the prompt

The night before Scrimmage, a few teammates and I were still wrangling with the game field, along with the myriad of hardware and software interfaces to actuate the field. I brought my expertise in electronics, while the others brought their expertise in software, game design, networking, and integration. With a broad goal to make the game flow smoothly in mind, we began to break this problem down so that each person could focus on their own part of the problem before we all reconvened to bring our solutions together. It was imperative that each person understood how their work fit in the big picture. This is because game pieces had to be designed such that electronics could be routed through them, and software had to be robustly made to communicate with both the field and robots. While working separately, we would often check in with each other about our work to briefly talk over how each of our pieces fit, making sure we wouldn't be blindsided when combining everything. **From the many long hours of cross checking, I learned how valuable effective communication strategies were; at times, we weren't entirely explicit with the assumptions we made or requirements we had, which led to our individual pieces being incompatible with one another. In the end, it was our collaboration and perseverance that helped us pull through and finish the field.** (227 words)

How does it compare to the original answer?

A: My favorite memory in PiE was the night right before Scrimmage during my third year. A few other staff members and I wanted to make sure the game was working well, but much of the software and hardware was not integrated, so we spent many long hours through the night fixing bugs together. **It required a wide range of expertise and a whole lot of teamwork to get the parts to work smoothly, but after tons of code rewrites, measurements, cutting, and wire splicing, we got the game field to work the way we envisioned** as the sun had begun rising. (100 words)

A: The night before Scrimmage, a few teammates and I were still wrangling with the game field, along with the myriad of hardware and software interfaces to actuate the field. I brought my expertise in electronics, while the others brought their expertise in software, game design, networking, and integration. With a broad goal to make the game flow smoothly in mind, we began to break this problem down so that each person could focus on their own part of the problem before we all reconvened to bring our solutions together. It was imperative that each person understood how their work fit in the big picture. This is because game pieces had to be designed such that electronics could be routed through them, and software had to be robustly made to communicate with both the field and robots. While working separately, we would often check in with each other about our work to briefly talk over how each of our pieces fit, making sure we wouldn't be blindsided when combining everything. **From the many long hours of cross checking, I learned how valuable effective communication strategies were; at times, we weren't entirely explicit with the assumptions we made or requirements we had, which led to our individual pieces being incompatible with one another.** In the end, it was our collaboration and perseverance that helped us pull through and finish the field. (227 words)

How to gauge your response

1. Did you answer the prompt?
2. Read your prompt aloud. Does it sound like you are telling a cohesive story?
3. Does your answer logically flow?
4. Is your word choice appropriate for a scholarship app?
5. Find your favorite sentence. Does it accurately convey your message?

The Prompts

1. What is your biggest takeaway from PiE? Describe a moment from the season that sparked personal growth and what you learned.
2. Tell us about a significant challenge you've faced or something important that didn't go according to plan. How did you manage the situation? This does not have to be about PiE.
3. What are some of your aspirations, and what inspires you to fulfill them? This does not have to be about PiE.
4. How has STEM impacted you and how will your future goals promote STEM?***** This does not have to be about PiE.

* You do not need to be pursuing STEM to *promote* STEM

Questions?

General Tips

- Start application early.
- Brainstorm, write, proofread, revise/re-write essays.
  - Draft in Google Docs (not directly on application form)
    - Word is okay too, but it's easy to share Google docs with recommenders and editors.
  - Ask people to proofread: friends, teachers, counselors, mentors
- Ask for recommendation letters early & follow up.
- Look around for other scholarships.

- No grammar or spelling mistakes
- Be as concise as possible
- Don’t thesaurus-ize your essay
- Show, don’t tell
- *Answer the questions*
- *Be genuine*

Questions?

Other Scholarships

Fiat Lux (Berkeley Only)

- Financial aid for all four years depending on financial need
- Access to a scholar association, special events, a faculty mentor, etc.
- Requirements - Get accepted to Cal and be one of the partner schools: Albany High School, El Cerrito High School, Encinal High School, Middle College High School, Pinole Valley High School, Skyline High School

Regents' and Chancellor's Scholarship (All UCs)

- Everyone who applies to the UC school is considered for this based on merit/application. Benefits similar to fiat lux, and more!

Middle Class Scholarship (All UCs or CSUs)

- Available for new admits, transfers, and returning students that have family incomes under $191,000 per year that also meet these other eligibility requirements. Covers between 10 and 40 percent of systemwide tuition and fee.
- Only need to fill out FAFSA (for every year you need financial aid).

Blue and Gold Promise (All UCs)

- Aid from FAFSA (Pell and Cal Grant) will be enough to cover your full tuition and fees if your household income < $80,000.
- Only need to do FAFSA (for every year you need financial aid) and go to a UC.
- Check full eligibility requirements here.

Resources

- https://financialaid.berkeley.edu/scholarships (UC Berkeley specific)
- Fastweb.com
- Scholarships.com
- https://www.thegatesscholarship.org/scholarship
- School clubs & local community organizations (key club, kiwanis, elk's lodge, etc.)
- Counseling and/or financial aid office at school

Questions?

Email: scholarship@pierobotics.org

Find this presentation:
https://pioneers.berkeley.edu/competition/RCScholarship