

Searching the Web for Scholarships

Search engines such as Google are the best tools available to you for finding scholarships. However, there are a lot of secrets in terms of getting the best results out of the search engines.

For example, if you just searched for “scholarships” on Google, you’ll get about 31,700,000 results! Thirty-one million Web pages would obviously take too long to read and sort through, so you’ll need to develop a strategy for being more specific about the scholarships you’re looking for.

Refining your searches in Google can be done in a few steps. Pick a characteristic about yourself that you’d want to find a scholarship about. What do you want to study? What are your passions? What are your hobbies? By narrowing down what you are searching for, you’ll find pages of scholarships that you can apply for.

■ Scholarship Search Secret: Use *magic* words

There are good words, bad words, and then there are magic words. What are magic words? Magic words are words you use in your Web searches that are used less conversationally, and so when you search for scholarships with those terms, you’ll probably get better results.

For example, one of the most powerful words in scholarship search is the word foundation. Scholarships are most often administered by foundations, but rarely do people ever bring up the sponsoring foundation conversationally in a Web page, so when you search for scholarships with the word “foundation” in your search, you’ll be more likely to find the awarding foundation.

Magic words become very important when you have relatively broad topics you’re searching for. What are some of the most magic words you can use in your scholarship search?

- Scholarship/scholarships – yes, they are different, singular and plural – you should assume from here on that any term which appears in singular should also be tried plural, and vice versa.
- Grant
- Financial aid
- Endowment
- Foundation
- Fellowship
- Honorarium
- Trust
- Application
- Deadline
- Pdf

For example, if you are searching for a music scholarship, these searches would give you different, but possibly equally useful results:

- Music scholarship
- Music scholarships
- Music scholarship application
- Music scholarship deadline
- Music scholarship grant

Take your scholarship search terms from the previous steps and try variations on themes to find additional, possibly more targeted scholarships. You can also combine geographical words into your searches to make them even more targeted, such as:

- Southern California music scholarship
- Southern California music scholarships
- Inland Empire music scholarship
- Inland Empire music scholarships
- Northern California music scholarship
- Northern California music scholarships

The more refined and detailed you can make your searches, the higher quality your results will likely be. You can even add multiple terms together:

- California music scholarship application deadline filetype:pdf
- California music scholarship application deadline filetype:doc

*All the above information was taken from Scholarship Search Secrets, sixth edition: A publication of the Student Loan Network. For more information on scholarship searches, visit www.studentscholarshipsearch.com.

