



Guide for Writing an Scholarship/Transfer Essay

Overview

Securing scholarships or transferring to a four-year institution is often an important part of a successful academic plan in the Japan Studies Program at LaGuardia Community College. This guide is designed to help you develop a focused scholarship or transfer essay that explains your interests, experiences, and goals with clarity and purpose.

1 Understanding the Purpose of the Essay

Before you begin writing, it's essential to understand what scholarship committees or transfer admissions officers are looking for. They want to learn about you beyond your grades and test scores.

Prompt Questions:

- (1) What motivates you to study Japan Studies?
- (2) How have your experiences at LaGuardia Community College shaped your academic interests?
- (3) What unique perspectives or experiences do you bring to the program?

2 Planning Your Essay

A well-structured essay begins with thoughtful planning.

Prompt Questions:

- (4) What are the key messages you want to convey?
- (5) Which experiences best illustrate your commitment and qualifications?
- (6) What are your academic and career goals? How can you link your personal story to your academic and career goals?

3 Crafting Your Narrative

Tell a story that is authentic and engaging. Use specific examples to illustrate your points.

Prompt Questions:

- (7) Can you recall a memorable moment or experience that sparked your interest in Japan?
- (8) How have you engaged with Japanese culture, language, society, religion, and/or history?
- (9) What has been the biggest challenge in your Japan Studies journey so far? What challenges have you overcome in pursuing your studies?

4 Showcasing Your Interest in Japan Studies

Demonstrate your passion for Japan Studies and how it aligns with your future plans.

Prompt Questions:

- (10) Which aspects of Japan Studies are you most passionate about (e.g., language, history, literature, politics, religion, pop culture, sociology)?
- (11) How have you pursued this interest outside the classroom (e.g., clubs, events, study abroad, travel, volunteer work)?
- (12) What projects or extracurricular activities at LaGuardia have been particularly meaningful to you?

5 Addressing Your Goals and Aspirations

Clearly articulate your academic and career objectives.

Prompt Questions:

- (13) How will receiving this scholarship or transferring to a four-year institution help you achieve your goals?
- (14) What are your plans after completing your Japan Studies program?
- (15) How do you envision contributing to the field of Japan Studies or the broader community?



6 Highlighting Your Strengths and Achievements

Emphasize your accomplishments and what sets you apart.

Prompt Questions:

- (16) What academic achievements are you most proud of?
- (17) Have you received any awards or recognition related to your studies?
- (18) What skills have you developed that are relevant to Japan Studies?

7 Concluding Your Essay

End with a strong conclusion that reinforces your enthusiasm and readiness.

Prompt Questions:






- (19) What makes you an excellent candidate for this opportunity?

8 Editing and Revising

Reviewing your essay is crucial for clarity and impact. Fix mechanical errors such as spelling and grammar, and then revise for structure, tone, and specificity. AI tools can be helpful for brainstorming and proofreading, but your final essay should still sound like you. Before you submit your essay, share your draft with your Japanese instructors and ask for feedback.

- Tips:
 - **Edit:** Use tools such as Grammarly or ChatGPT to catch grammar issues or unclear wording, but keep your own voice and verify every revision before you use it.
 - **Read Aloud:** This helps catch awkward phrasing and focus on the overall rhythm and tone of your essay.
 - **Seek Feedback:** Have mentors, professors, or peers review your essay.
 - **Check Requirements:** Ensure you have addressed all prompts and adhered to word or page limits. Use the word count tool (on MS Word etc) to count the number of your words.

Links

- Japanese Option webpage: <https://t-nagano.com/projects/JapaneseProgram/> 
- Japanese Option Blog: <https://chrysanthemum.commons.gc.cuny.edu> 
- Japanese Option Discord: Contact tnagano@lagcc.cuny.edu for the invitation link 
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