

The following are high-scoring essays from previous years and their corresponding prompts. We are providing these to show an example of the high writing level that we are looking for; and inspire you to meet or exceed these expectations.

Note: the rubric and prompts for these essays are different from this year's. Carefully review the 2025 rubric and prompts before writing your response. We are looking forward to reading your unique voice and writing style in your essays. Plagiarism of another's work or using AI assistance will result in disqualification.

Think of a moment when you felt proud of yourself. In 500 words or fewer, describe what steps you took to get there, lessons you learned, and how you will apply them in your future life.

Early morning rays fall upon a classroom rife with bodies tensely huddled around a flashing computer. Our group all watched in anticipation as I pressed the various keys. The character progressed through the various levels, until it finally hit the end, telling us, "Game over!" All three of us sighed out a breath of relief. Our labor at long last had led to my most profound achievement: a finished video game. I discovered the video game design competition in my junior year of high school, a way for me to challenge myself and confront my limits. One might say, "A video game? What use is that?" but there are so many components to a video game that are often overlooked, and it taught me so much as a student. Beyond coding, one needs to be creative, adaptable, and to think outside of the box.

My team was clueless on how to even start; from choosing a game engine to coding asset functions, we carefully researched over many sleepless nights. It was something so far out of my comfort zone; I felt simply overwhelmed by the task before me, like I was jumping into the deep side of the ocean. Yet I reveled in the experience, learning different techniques from various trials and errors in the coding of the game. Every failure was just another step towards success, and I took pride in knowing that I was constantly learning and applying my expertise in experimental ways.

Instead of letting the stress get to my head, I learned to manage it and use my frustration towards productivity rather than needless conniption. In another sense, finishing this video game was a testament to myself of my endurance and perseverance in strenuous situations. Through the struggle, I sharpened my attention to detail and overcame constant setbacks. I needed to think outside of the box and push myself into new and unfamiliar territory, both creatively and technically.

As I pushed through each day of work until the finishing touches, I developed my endurance and preservation. Furthermore, my leadership and communication skills were shaped to lead others in future projects, whether that be in school or in my future career. Despite not reaching our final goal of getting 1st at the state-level competition, I was still content with myself. The experience has led to epiphanies in my coding education and career. These kinds of skills have helped me become a more resilient person, which has helped to prepare me for other aspects of my life. This was one of the most profound foundational steps into the world of computer science, a field I want to pursue in the future; whether it was developing an educational game for learners or a groundbreaking app to benefit those in need, I strive to make a difference in the future. This experience continues to be one of the most significant achievements in my life: it has broadened my horizons and let myself grow in areas that I discovered myself lacking.

Review the values of the SEBS Scholarship Foundation listed below.

Choose one of these values and describe a time when you learned the importance of this value.

Response must be 500 words or fewer.

Values:

- Persist in the face of challenges, both academic and personal.
- Desire to improve the world around them.
- Maintain an uncompromising character that demonstrates strength, respect, and honesty.
- Demonstrate leadership potential and emotional maturity.
- Shows enthusiasm in learning and takes initiative in one's own education.

Though many of the SEBS values are extremely relatable, the value of maintaining an uncompromising character that demonstrates strength, respect, and honesty relates especially to me in a particularly difficult situation.

This situation has taken place for six years, following me throughout my life. This situation is caused by a specific person. I had done studio dance for 16 years of my life when I was forced to quit due to an adult figure's actions. These actions had turned many people against me, taking away many impactful role models and friends. She began by starting rumors and then sabotaging my routines to the point where there were no other effective solutions than leaving the place I used to call my second home.

Looking past these specific scenarios, I decided to enroll in her class to continue my love for my sport, letting go of any feelings that had arisen from prior events. In this class, I was forced to face all odds put against me by this adult from falsifying grades to singling me out. I maintained composure to finish out this class, avoiding all conflict.

But, after completing all necessary requirements to earn a letter, it was denied. This specific issue was communicated to higher-power officials, where she had made up false accusations of me lying about meeting the requirements. This issue was ignored until a year later when documentation proof was presented. Despite having documentation and signed evidence, I was continually faced with this accusation. After higher officials investigated this, it was proved that I earned a letter, which I received later on.

As a result, this scenario has impacted my life and the person I am in many different ways. It has taught me to demonstrate strength, respect, and honesty. I have represented strength by looking past all odds to complete the sport I love. Even though I faced numerous difficult situations I did not let my accomplishments be stripped away. I maintained showing respect to this adult throughout our times together, avoiding any confrontation. Though faced with inaccurate allegations, my honesty helped me to obtain my letter.

Overall, this scenario has taught me to follow core beliefs and that no matter the situation, they can help you overcome and better yourself. Being yourself can make any situation, despite the odds, conquerable. I am thankful for facing this situation early on, so I can use what I learned in college and in life.