



A Portfolio Celebration!

We know that you learn best by orally sharing your new knowledge and experiences with others. After completion of each grade, you will gain understanding of your own artifacts and your selections by celebrating your portfolio with someone who will offer you the accolades you so deserve for all your special achievements and opportunities explored. Your RTAM relative who will be sponsoring you for the scholarship when you complete your Grade 12 will be a great mentor and support. You may also want to share it with a friend, a family member, a teacher or any number of individuals you feel comfortable with who will acknowledge your special talents and accomplishments. Portfolios are meant to be shared. Sharing your portfolio information which you will use as your source of information for your scholarship and bursary applications supports your submissions.

Your portfolio displays your unique experiences and portrays the person you were when you started Grade 11 and the leader you have become when you graduate. All the best in creating your portfolio and making the best use of it to promote your many achievements and accomplishments you have experienced during Grade 11 and 12! Congratulations!

Making Your Portfolio Work for YOU!

Congratulations! The Retired Teachers Association of Manitoba (RTAM) is pleased that you have agreed to participate in our Portfolio Project! This project is designed to support students applying for one of the RTAM Student Awards upon graduation. We have included some guidelines and suggestions to help you make this portfolio a productive tool in applying for scholarships, university applications, job applications and other uses you may discover upon graduation.

Why Develop a Portfolio?

Portfolios are a means to an end.

- They provide you with a **method of tracking** your change and growth throughout your high school experience. The artifacts you collect in your portfolio will probably amaze you as the year progresses and as you build the collection over the upcoming 4 years. Portfolios capture what you have done and the stories you have to tell about your journey in learning and maturing in your teenage years.
- They **save you time** in the end. Often you do not have the time or energy to stop and take stock of all the personal and scholarly activities and events you have participated in, and learned from, during your high school journey. Students who have compiled portfolios are thankful that they have this collection of their achievements to review for job or scholarship applications rather than having to recall or create something on the spur of the moment. You lose sight of the new programs you have attended and skills you have developed.
- Portfolios are a **means of becoming aware of your own learning history**. Over the years, you may discover that you have changed your approaches to dealing with challenges as you learned new skills, changed your attitudes as you understood the world from a different perspective, challenged yourself to try new activities as you evolved into a high school graduate. Portfolios provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your many learning experiences and self-assess what you would like to do with your life in the future. Some students do an annual review at the end of each grade/year to determine where they have weak areas they wish to develop in the upcoming year. They set concrete goals to spark their exploration of more exciting opportunities in the upcoming year. You become an informed decision maker with regards to your personal and professional opportunity selections. You become

selective learners and made efforts to implement new strategies and improve your own life skills.

- Portfolios provide the **framework for building your resume and completing your applications** when you apply for scholarships and bursaries. They act as a concrete record of your growth, learning history and accomplishments.
- Portfolios serve as a **means of demonstrating your diversified skills and abilities** to an interview team. They reflect your commitment to learning new skills and to initiating innovative ways to challenge the changes in your life which you successfully confronted over the years. Some students may be given the opportunity to physically present a variety of portfolio selections to demonstrate the many unique opportunities they experienced in applying to a university or job interview.

There are many different benefits to keeping a portfolio. The benefits are as individualized as the types of portfolios kept. Once you start the process, you will discover what makes your portfolio beneficial for you. The key is to get started and to make it as individualized as you desire in order to best meet your needs upon your high school graduation. Enjoy!

Ready, Set, Start!

There are three main processes in developing your portfolio:

1. Collection
2. Reflection
3. Selection

1. Collection

The first and most important stage in developing your portfolio is the **collection** of the artifacts reflecting your learning and growth activities. These items can be as varied as the number of students in your high school. Your portfolio is **your** portfolio and is comprised of all, and only, the items you consider to be important contributions to your personal and professional growth. There is also an endless number of portfolio ‘containers’ which you can use to store your collection. Containers can vary from a special cardboard box to a portfolio planner from a stationery store. The choice is yours.

RTAM is very pleased to have provided you with a Portfolio planner. Depending on how you use your planner and the number and size of your artifacts, this may work to collect your artifacts for one year at a time or for your complete high school experience. The portfolio planner has many sections, 4 of which you can designate in accordance with the criteria for the RTAM scholarship application – transcripts, letters of reference, school related involvement and community involvement. These are frequently the types of information requested by all scholarship applications, job interviews and other future career uses. You may want to designate one for information on different award, bursary and scholarship opportunities you can access when you are graduating. The other sections could be considered for other artifacts of your choice such as quotes, thank you notes, souvenirs, or other items which have a special meaning for you.

2. Reflection

At the end of each year, you may wish to reflect upon your artifacts and marvel at all you have done and collected. Self-reflection occurs when you review what you have done in completing their portfolio entries. It involves not only verbalizing what you have done but also what actions were used in the learning. Four basic self-reflection questions are:

1. What did I do?
2. How did I do it?
3. How can I use what I did again?
4. How can I improve on what I did?

At the end of your high school experience as you prepare to use your portfolio information in your scholarship application, this stage of portfolio development is key. Below are four questions that will guide you in the **reflection** stage of the portfolio process. These four questions will offer you some support in making your decisions for the upcoming year and/or your selections to report upon in your scholarship application:

1. What is this portfolio entry/artifact about?
2. Why did you choose this entry?
3. What did you learn from the event/activity surrounding the creation of this entry?
4. How did you grow? What would you do the same or differently the next time?

Ongoing reflection as you add artifacts to your portfolio supports you in moving to the final stage of selection.

3. Selection

The **selection** stage involves making some choices as to which artifacts or portfolio entries you will reference in your specific applications and/or interviews. Will it be an exciting sample of one of your projects, a thoughtful thank you card from an organization for your role in supporting their mission, a certificate received when you attended a leadership seminar, a video of you performing a special event or an email you received from a student you were coaching? Sometimes this is the most difficult stage as it involves soul searching in order to select the most relevant and meaningful items you have collected. Narrow the entries down to a manageable number and be selective in the process. It is generally recommended that you select entries that reflect varied aspects of your high school experience in contrast to demonstrating growth in only one specialized area unless that is the focus of a job posting or the university faculty you hope to enter. Your portfolio is a reflection of your choice of entries. The interview team or selection committee will simply review your application based upon your entry selections which you can proudly document based upon your artifacts within your portfolio. If you have any questions, never be afraid to contact the selection committee for guidance in best meeting their expectations.

Portfolio Artifacts

Below is a listing of potential portfolio artifacts. Your artifacts will be a unique collection of items which are meaningful for you in the areas of community involvement and school related involvement. These are suggested artifacts but feel free to include whatever sparks your memory in the spring prior to your graduation when you are applying for scholarships and bursaries.

Community Involvement Artifacts:

photos	emails from organizations
awards	Newspaper/magazine articles
advertisements	interviews held with local newspaper reporters
displays	cards/notes sent from coaches
musical performances	TV or radio productions
posters	PowerPoint slides
involvement/leadership with local/provincial organizations	

School related Involvement Artifacts – all of the above as well as these others:

special assignments	project photos
pamphlets	drama production advertisements
sports awards	awards for your grades
leadership	peer coaching with other students
contests entered	artwork of which you are proud
essays	oral reports/debate team

Letters of Recommendation:

The third major component of the RTAM portfolio is the requirement for one letter of recommendation for the scholarship. This one letter may come from any number of different individuals who know you well, have seen your growth and can comment on your participation in school and/or community activities.



Individuals who may make a good reference include your teachers, your principal, your coach, your leader from any community organization in which you have been participating, your religious leader (minister, pastor, priest, rabbi, etc.) or anyone else who can comment on your positive influence on your school and community demonstrated during your high school experience.

When you approach the individual to write the letter of reference, you should explain about the criteria for the scholarship. You can suggest that they write about your experiences in whatever endeavour they have worked with you. You could talk with them about your community and school related activities to spark their memory of all the different avenues you have participated in which demonstrated your leadership over the past 4 years.