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PATTI GRACE SMITH FELLOWSHIP'S GUIDE TO
**CREATING
ESSAYS: A STEP BY
STEP GUIDE**

EST. **PATTI** 2020
GRACE SMITH
FELLOWSHIP

Patti Grace Smith Fellowship

A GUIDE TO....

CRAFTING AN OUTSTANDING ORIGINAL ESSAY

When applying to become a Patti Grace Smith Fellow, one of the most exciting aspects is being given the opportunity to write an essay showcasing yourself! Although this is true, we understand that with this excitement there can also be stress and nerves that can get in the way of this. We want to see you succeed and this guide is to help you with the completion of your essay.

We understand that writing an essay all about yourself in any context can feel uncomfortable. In most cases we are told to be humble and quietly proud of our accomplishments, but in this essay we are asking you to really tell us all about yourself. This is a chance for you to show our selection committee and your potential future colleagues in aerospace what you can do by showcasing your skills to organize your thoughts, ability to be clear and concise, and your authenticity among other things. Your essay provides a glimpse into your personality, aspirations, and why you're a great fit for the fellowship.

This guide will give you practical steps on how to go about crafting an original essay—whether it's for our program or for anything else, and whether you consider yourself a novice or an expert. **We are not requiring you to follow these exact steps, but provide them as guidance in completing your original essay.**

Before diving into these, we will provide a few tips and tricks on crafting an original essay.

TIPS AND TRICKS



These tips are meant to provide guidance towards the completion of these steps. The first tip is to:

Be Authentic. Writing in your own voice and bringing authenticity to your writing helps the selection committee in getting to know who you are. The selection committee is looking for genuine individuals who are passionate about what they love. In the case of this fellowship, we are looking for individuals with a true passion for aerospace and a commitment to the fellowship's values. Be true to yourself and how you feel about whatever the essay is being asked, because the entire point of this essay piece is to get to know who you are as a person, outside of a resume and transcript.

The second tip is to:

Show, Don't Just Tell. Telling us who you are provides us insight on how you see yourself, but without context to anything specific you are dishonoring yourself in allowing us to really see what kind of person you are. When being asked about yourself, instead of simply stating your qualifications, use specific examples and anecdotes to illustrate your points. Share stories that highlight your experiences and contributions. This helps us better see your personality and better understand you.

Be sure to keep these tips in mind while traveling this journey in completing your original essay. Now let's get into the essay process!

STEP ONE: UNDERSTAND THE ESSAY PROMPTS

Understanding the prompt is the foundation of your essay. Before anything else, you must first understand what each essay prompt is asking. The application for the Patti Grace Smith Fellowship asks to write an original essay of between 500 and 750 words directly answering one of the following prompts:

1. If you have ever applied to the Patti Grace Fellowship before, what do you think is the biggest way you have changed or grown since your last application?
2. Please tell us about a project you started on your own. Why did you start it, and what did you learn?



3. It takes everyone time to get fully up to speed at any new job. What is something unique to you that you would add to a team or a project in your first weeks on the job at an aerospace company?
4. Ask ChatGPT, Bard, or a similar tool to write a short (<500) word essay about the balance between process and innovation in aerospace. Analyze the tool's output and submit (via screenshots or via a PDF with changes tracked) your analysis of the write-up, identifying logical flaws and missed points.
5. Ask ChatGPT, Bard, or a similar tool to write a short (<500) word essay about whether internship and mentorship programs that focus on underserved groups are a net benefit for the aerospace industry as a whole. Analyze the tool's output and submit (via screenshots or via a PDF with changes tracked) your analysis of the write-up, identifying logical flaws and missed points.

Although all of these tell us about your ability to make a point clearly and concisely and how you organize your thoughts, your choice in essay will show us more. Whether that may be about how you have grown through experience, your passion about aerospace, or anything else that can help you tell us more about you.

It is important to take your time in analyzing what each essay prompt is asking, and ask questions if you don't fully understand. Each prompt is unique in its own way, and allows you to showcase more about yourself. Rereading it as you begin to brainstorm different ideas can help you in finding the best prompt for you!

STEP TWO: BRAINSTORM IDEAS

The next step is to build on your understanding of the provided prompts.

Brainstorming is the creative process that fuels your essay. Ask yourself questions like *What inspires me? How is your perspective unique? What am I trying to show about myself? How can I push the boundaries of my creativity while staying true to my core values?* This can be done in the form of a mind map, a list, or outline of potential ideas related to prompts of your interest. You don't need to commit to a prompt just yet, but start to think to yourself what you would write for each.





STEP THREE: BEGIN WRITING THE ESSAY

Now that you have identified possible essays to write, the next step is to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboards nowadays!) And start writing!

Writing your essay is where your ideas take shape and come to life. Begin to gather your written ideas and articulate them into clear and concise sentences and paragraphs. If the creative essay you chose involves editing a piece from an AI tool, be sure to start articulating the previously brainstormed analyses you have performed into full and complete sentences. The ability to clearly portray your thoughts is a category by which we evaluate and select fellows. **Remember to include your chosen essay prompt at the top of the essay.** This is needed in order to be considered as an applicant.

Remember to be creative in your own way that brings your authentic self to our attention. Don't let imposter syndrome creep up on developing the perfect piece; we just want a further glimpse into who you are outside of your resume. What we are looking for in these submissions is some insight into you as a person: how you think, what matters most to you, and what your passions are (including passions well outside of aerospace!). We want you to root for yourself the same way we root for you. A way to accomplish this is to acknowledge your accomplishments and be proud of who you are. We understand that you may be uncomfortable writing an essay about yourself, but we want to hear all about it!

If the creative essay you chose involves editing a piece from an AI tool, be sure to stay conscious of whether or not your analysis serves justice to telling us more about yourself. Although we are asking you to identify logical flaws and missed points, our evaluation is not being made based on your accuracy to what is currently going on in industry, or how politically accurate your prompt is. We want you to be creative and think for yourself, so be sure to provide some creativity in your answers that serves justice to how you think.

STEP FOUR: EDIT AND PROOFREAD

The next stop along this journey is to revisit your original work.

Editing is essential for clarity and coherence. The first draft provides an outline and framework of your final work, but without revision you might miss out on providing the message you are intending to send. For any prompt, before this point you may have started to develop an amazing original essay but if we are unable to understand the message or story you're trying to tell us, then we cannot receive further needed insight on who you are as a person. Your ability to clearly and concisely provide this information will be a key contributor in our ability to better understand more about you, outside of your resume.

We don't expect you to treat this as a literature course, but we ask you to check for errors in spelling and grammar. Review structure and clarity, and check for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Using online tools that check for these errors can help you save time and energy in this process. These errors can interfere with the overall essay and make it difficult to understand. We want you to know that no matter your background, you can submit an excellent essay even if you aren't an English major (or even a native English speaker). Taking these steps to review your essay, as well as reading your essay



aloud to either yourself or to others, can identify phrasing or rhythm issues, so we highly encourage it.

HEAVILY CONSIDERING REMOVAL OF STEP 5

STEP FIVE: PROOFREAD

You're nearing the finish line! After reflecting on your work, now is the time to seek feedback from others.

Seek feedback on clarity, flow, and emotional impact, rather than the writing topic.

Although you can seek feedback in any way, shape, or form, it's important not to lose sight on the topic or message you are portraying in your essay. If you are passionate about what you're writing about, the error may be in your previous ability to clearly write in a easy and understandable way for the reader and not an error in choice of writing topic. If suggestions are made about your chosen topic or prompt, be sure to **consider these suggestions offered but also trust your creative instincts.**

Share your essay with friends, family, or peers for their input. Really anyone you consider as close to you. There's typically no better person to review an essay that's meant to tell us more about you as a person than these people. Without having the opportunity to meet you personally before the application process, having someone that can shed light on your strengths can help in making sure we are seeing what they see in you everyday.

Lastly, **Don't be discouraged by criticism; use it as an opportunity to improve.** These people want to see you succeed and are hoping they can help you in any way possible. Feedback previous to submission gives you an opportunity to ensure that you are providing clarity, flow, and all other skills you are looking to showcase before final submission.

STEP SIX: FINALIZE AND SUBMIT!

Prepare for Launch in T minus 5..4..3..2..1...You did it! It's now time to complete your final quality checks before submission

Review the essay at least one final time, paying attention to all pervious details. At this stage, you should start by referring to the requirements given by the prompt; *Am I answering the question being asked? Am I meeting the essay's word or character limits?*All of



it. The next step is to check for any missed grammar or spelling errors. This may have been those made by yourself, or provided to you from someone who reviewed your essay.

After making your final edits, the last step is to thoroughly read your complete essay for final checks on clarity, flow and authenticity. **Don't forget to include the prompt you are responding to -- don't assume that every person who sees your submission will know exactly what "Prompt #3" (or whatever you choose) means.** All there's left to do is save the final version and submit your essay by the deadline!

WE WISH YOU THE BEST OF LUCK!

