



A Brookie Guide to:

CREATING YOUR ESSAYS

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When it comes right down to it, the people applying to the Brooke Owens Fellowship and the folks who volunteer their time as members of our Selection Committee are working together, like teammates taking on the same nearly impossible task. The challenge they are trying to overcome together is: *how can one person learn as much as possible about another person in a short time?*

How can we make sure that one person stands out and is quickly and clearly seen and remembered among all of the hundreds or even thousands of other applications?

For us, the three original works each applicant creates are the answer. Yes, résumés are important, and you should absolutely invest time in making yours shine with your skills and experience. But a résumé can never capture the complete character of a person; and even if they could, by the time a reviewer has read their twentieth résumé, all twenty have started to blend together. But the **original works** — the essays, videos, songs, poems, drawings, and so much more? Now those stand out. Those allow the applicant to share more of themselves, and help the Selection Committee member learn and retain more knowledge about the candidate. Those are how we can apply such a personal touch to each candidate.

GET FAMILIAR WITH THE PROMPT.

As you already know, we ask each applicant to create three different things. We tell you upfront what we hope to learn from them. Let's revisit the prompts below.

We ask you to address three different parts of yourself: 1) your professional and academic interests, 2) your fundamental character and personal interests, and 3) your service and community mindset. These three themes align entirely with three main categories by which we evaluate and select Brookies.

We ask you to address those topics in three different formats: a short essay, a long essay, and a multimedia essay. At a practical level, these formats teach us about your communications skills: **can you make a point clearly and concisely; can you organize your thoughts to best convey your ideas; can you write persuasively?**

Furthermore, your choices--and particularly your choices about the multimedia essay--tell us something about your priorities and your creativity, which are the other main categories by which we evaluate and select Brookies.

Your original works should be, well, original. They should be entirely a reflection of you, and no one else. As such, there

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is no formula to follow and no set of steps that can guarantee success. But in order to help ensure everyone is on the same page and has the resources they need to take their best shot, here are some general tips created by the members of our executive team.

IT'S ABOUT YOU--NOT ABOUT YOUR TOOLS.

If you choose to submit a video, we will focus on getting to know who you are through the screen, no matter what kind of screen you're filming with. We won't be judging you on your video editing skills or your camerawork -- and certainly not on the quality of the camera you are using. Work with the tools you have at hand as any Brookie would do, whether that is the built-in mic of an old smartphone or a professional studio. We'll treat them equally, while focusing on your performance.

If you like to nerd out and obsess about video production, audio mixing, or whatever else: by all means, **go for it!** We love to see people following their passion. But if that's not you -- or if that is you but you simply don't have the access or the financial means to pursue that nerdery or obsession--

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fear not! **Be creative in your own way that brings your authentic self to our attention.** Don't let imposter syndrome creep up about developing the perfect piece; we just want a further glimpse into who you are outside of your resume.

Your submissions should be clear. If the quality of the audio, the video, the photograph, the scan, or whatever else is such that the Selection Committee can't properly take it in, well, that would impact our review. But beyond that threshold, there's nothing that would be held against you.

MIXED MEDIA IS OKAY. OFTEN, IT'S BETTER THAN OKAY.

If you've chosen to submit a painting, that's awesome -- we love paintings! But don't forget, we're not really evaluating you as a painter. Nor are we selecting Brookies to work as poets, video editors, comedians, illustrators, or whatever else. 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!).

So, you may want to consider a mixed media submission. To stick with that painting example, you might submit a PDF or a slide deck that includes not only the painting but also some information on how you created it, or what the symbolism means to you, or why you selected a painting for that particular prompt. You could even include a brief video or audio clip alongside the video, if you'd like!

So, don't feel the need to constrain yourself to just one facet of creativity. Really, the only limit that you should follow is that the people reviewing your application should be able to review each of your submissions in **five minutes or less** -- so please don't submit a painting, a song, and telenovela script all wrapped into one file.

DON'T FORGET THE PROMPTS.

We're not just looking for any old writing sample. We're looking to **learn what you think about a few specific and relevant topics** that will help us to evaluate you as a candidate and, if you are selected as a finalist, make the best possible matches between you and one of our Host Institutions. Feel free to take whatever path you wish to get to your thoughts about the topic posed -- but don't lose sight of the destination entirely.

Also, keep in mind that, if you are selected as a finalist, your submissions will be going to one or more of our Host Institutions. Although those companies, non-profits, and federal facilities all know our Fellowship well, a number of them are pretty big places, and your application may end up in the hands of a hiring manager who is encountering the Brooke Owens Fellowship for the first time. In each of your submissions, be sure 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.

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We encourage our applicants to bring their full selves to the fellowship, but also when developing content consider if there is any information that you may not want the host company to know. We realize that some experiences shared in content are sensitive and want to make sure we are being transparent with our process.

BE YOURSELF. THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF.

We're repeating ourselves... but in this case, it's worth it. These original submissions are the best way for us to get to know you, to transform you from a two-dimensional collection of words on a screen into a real human being. If you keep your real self tucked away and hidden, the submissions won't really help you or us. We'll mention impostor syndrome again: **don't let impostor syndrome hold you back from showing us what is you** -- what you spend your time on, what you're nerdy about, what you're passionate about, what you're most proud of.

Now, these essays are being used to evaluate you for a job, among other things -- so they shouldn't get so weird that they lose all connection to aerospace or to your own talent... but there are definitely ways to convey the magic that is

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you without losing sight of the professional aspects. If you are funny, be funny! If your love of engineering is matched only by your love of business (or vice versa, or any other combo), well, talk about both things. If you love music, you can definitely find a way to work that in. **Don't be afraid to get creative, and even a bit funky and weird.** It's worked for Brookies in the past, and it can definitely work for you!

We are looking to receive all parts of your application by the deadline, and excited to see your fully authentic and awesome self!



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