

On Writing Competitive Essays and
congress2000legacy Applications
Zoroastrian Association of Houston
November 7, 2015



Topics covered today

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1. What do I need to do before I start writing my essay?
2. Salient features of a Statement of Purpose for college applications.
3. Salient features for writing an essay for scholarships in general and the congress2000legacy scholarship in particular.
4. Resources available.

Seminar for College Bound Kids and Their Parents

LECTURE 2 – Writing Competitive Essays and congress2000legacy Application

Farrokh Mistree [farrokh.mistree@OU.edu]

Writing an Essay

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1. Read the prompt for the essay.
2. Write the prompt for the essay in a word document or sheet of paper.
3. Reflect with a view to understanding the prompt.
4. Do a mind dump of what you could include in your essay. Could be sentences or bullet points.
5. Organize these ideas into categories that will morph into paragraphs.
6. Reality check - check if what you have in Point 5 is in agreement with your understanding of what is required (Point 3).
7. Modify where necessary.
8. Now you can start "writing" the essay by connecting the material you have put together in Point 7.
9. Review for connectivity and revise.
10. Put through grammar and spell checker. Read carefully / tweak.

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Salient Features - Statement of Purpose

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1. Typically one to one and a half pages, that is, 400 to 600 words.
2. Para 1 - What you want and why. What you have to offer.
3. Para 2 - Your academic preparation for what you wish to study and your accomplishments.
4. Para 3 - Your extracurricular activities and how these have shaped who you are.
5. Para 4 - Summary statement as to what you plan to do professionally. Prompt: What is your role as a college educated person in society?

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ZAH Legacy Awards Coordinating Committee (2015): Homi Davier (Chair), Percy Behramsha, Vispi Sagar and Farrokh Mistree

Judges Panel ZAH Legacy Awards (2014) - Farrokh Mistree (Chair), Poras Balsara (Professor, UT Dallas), Pearline Collector (ZAH representative), Tinaz Pavri (Professor, Spelman), Beheruz Sethna (President, U West Georgia), Farah Shroff (Professor, U of British Columbia)

1. Boiler plate information
2. Quantitative Scores. Examples: GPA, AP, SAT/ACT.
3. Essays - two from a set of three or four
Some examples:
 - a. What does your Zarathushti religion mean to you?
 - b. How have you explained your religion to others when asked?
 - c. What does living a Zarathushti life mean to you?
 - d. What are the challenges facing the Zarathushti community in Houston?
 - e. What is special about the ZAH Zarathushti Heritage and Community Center?
 - f. How do you plan to give back to the Zarathushti community?
 - g. How will you bring up your kids as Zarathushtis so that the faith is perpetuated?
 - h. There are several revealed religions in the world. Zoroastrianism is one of them. Compare and contrast the doctrine embodied in Zoroastrianism and one other religion.

Salient Features - congress2000legacy - 3/6

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1. Typed, typically one to one and a half pages, that is, 400 to 600 words.
2. What we look for ...
 - a. Your understanding of the prompt and age-appropriate depth of ideas embodied in the response to the prompt.
 - b. Your ability to reflect on experiences, learn and articulate information.
 - c. Your desire / willingness to learn about Zoroastrianism and the Zarathushti community.
 - d. Your ability to learn and grow as a member of the Zarathushti community.
 - e. Your potential to being a contributing member of the Zarathushti community in North America.
3. We pay attention to grammar, punctuation and spelling.

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Salient Features - congress2000legacy - 4/6

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4. Community service: Divided between Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti. What you did and its impact on community and your own learning.
5. Extra curricular: Must be clearly documented in application. Should include period of participation, role played and awards / recognition (if any)

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6. Recommendations

From teachers: Speak to the academic ability of the applicant, the potential for success at a university, things that make this candidate stand out from others. Effective letters are supported by examples.

From community mentors: Speak to how well the candidate has participated and contributed to the well being of the community, the impact that the candidate through his or her actions has made in the community, etc. Effective letters are supported by examples.

Note: Awards may NOT be made if the applications do not measure up.

1. This application is to be prepared by the student under parental supervision. Do seek advice from Youth Group and Sunday School mentors, and ZAH Legacy Awards Coordinating Committee members except Pearline Collector who will be judging the applications.
2. Start early. Make a list of what is required. Plan. Communicate what is required to people writing recommendations. Ensure that you get everything in on time.
3. Essays - this requires thought and effort. Cannot be written overnight. Pick a theme. Do a mind dump of ideas. Write sentences. Then connect to convey a cogent message. Revise. Put away. Reread. Revise. Put through spell and grammar checker before submitting. In addition to content, development of theme, grammar, punctuation and presentation make a difference.

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/8-tips-for-crafting-your-best-college-essay>

http://www.getcollegefunding.org/lp/planner/?utm_source=AdGrants&utm_medium=CPC&utm_campaign=Admissions

<http://www.apstudynotes.org/essays/>

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Professor Farrokh Mistree's design experience spans mechanical, aeronautical, structural, and industrial engineering. His teaching experience spans courses in engineering design, naval architecture, solid mechanics, operations research and computer science. The key research question he is investigating is *what are the principles underlying rapid and robust concept exploration when the analysis models are incomplete and possibly inaccurate?* His current education focus is on creating and implementing, in partnership with industry, a curriculum for educating Strategic Engineers - those who have developed the competencies to create value through the realization of complex engineered systems for changing markets in a collaborative, globally distributed environment. It is in this context that he enjoys experimenting with ways in which design can be learned and taught.

Professor Mistree has co-authored two text-books, one research monograph, over 450 technical publications. Farrokh was recognized for his research and teaching in 1999 and 2011, respectively: ASME Design Automation Committee's 1999 Design Automation Award and 2011 ASME Ruth and Joel Spira Outstanding Educator Award. He is the recipient of two (1998 and 2003) ASME DAC Distinguished Service Awards. In 2012 he was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and received the Life Time Achievement Award from the International Society of Agile Manufacturing. He is a Fellow of ASME, an Associate Fellow of the AIAA, a Member of ASEE and the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers.

And what does Farrokh Mistree want to do in the future? Farrokh's *passion* is to have fun in providing an opportunity for highly motivated and talented people to learn how to define and achieve their dreams.

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