

The Freedom From Religion Foundation's 2012 College Essay Competition

For College Students Under Age 25

First Place: Michael Hakeem Memorial Award — \$3,000

Second Place — \$2,000

Third Place — \$1,000

Fourth Place — \$500

Fifth Place — \$300

Honorable Mention(s) — \$200



“Why I Am an Out of the Closet Atheist (Freethinker)”

Eligibility: Currently-enrolled college student under age 25, currently attending a North American college or university at least through December 2012. (Undergraduates over age 25: please enter the FFRF Graduate/Mature Student Essay Competition. College-bound high school seniors enter FFRF High School Contest.)

Topic: “Why I Am an Out of the Closet Atheist (Freethinker).” In honor of FFRF’s “Out of the Closet” campaign write an essay on why you are “out” as a nonbeliever, and think others should be too. Use a personal (first-person) approach. Include experiences with being an ‘out of the closet’ unbeliever in a religion-drenched society, and why you encourage others to come ‘out of the closet.’ You may wish to include your best arguments for rejecting religious belief. Also visit: <http://ffrf.org/get-involved/come-out-of-the-closet/>.

Length: 750 to 900 words. Include word count. Submit typed, double-spaced essay with standard margins.

Other Requirements: Choose your own title. Do not include a resume. Please staple. Place your name and essay title on each page. Include a separate paragraph biography identifying your age and birthdate, hometown, college or university, year in school or degree being earned, major and interests. Include your name, mailing address, contact phone number(s), and email address. Winners may be asked to send verification of student enrollment. Essay must be submitted both by mail and e-mail by deadline (see below).

By entering contest, students agree to have winning essays printed in full or in part in Freethought Today, FFRF’s newspaper, and later posted online at FFRF’s website. Winners agree to provide a photograph suitable for reproduction with their essay. Winners will receive a school-year subscription to Freethought Today. All eligible non-winning students will be offered a subscription or a freethought book. Note: FFRF monitors for plagiarism.

Deadline: June 15, 2012. Winners will be announced by September.

Mailing specifications: Send both by email (see below) and mail. Mail postmarked no later than June 15, 2012, to:

**College Essay Competition
FFRF
PO Box 750
Madison WI 53701**



Email: Also email your essay no later than midnight, June 15, 2012, to: collegeessay@ffrf.org. Use the word “essay” and your first and last name in the subject heading. Example: Essay: (Your full name). Please include a copy of everything indicated in requirements. **Guidelines are also posted at: ffrf.org/outreach/student-essay-contests/**

About Michael Hakeem: Prof. Hakeem, a sociologist, was an FFRF officer and active atheist known by generations of University of Wisconsin – Madison students for fine-tuning their reasoning abilities.