**Essay #1**

**Prompt #1:** *Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.*

***Draft #4***

As I clicked on the Gmail tab to do my last email check for the day, my mind jolted as two new emails from underclassmen stared back at me. These were the seventeenth and eighteenth emails I received from people wanting to join my club. Every single time I got one of these emails, the excitement of getting to mentor these students to reach their fullest potential as debaters overwhelmed me.

Despite my enthusiasm, five years (and counting) of experience doesn’t make teaching beginners an easy task. What I initially thought was going to be a breeze ended up being full of surprises. As each session went on, I started realizing how difficult it was to teach certain skills because they could only be obtained through experience.

I found that setting up weekly practice debates was the best way to get my members to get into the rhythm of debating. This was especially helpful for a junior-high team who came to me to prepare for an international debate tournament they were going to join. They all had incredible potential; they were able to build and elaborate on their arguments, but were not confident as speakers and sounded timid in their presentation. Wanting to harvest that potential, I first improved their communication as a team. I did guided sessions on case-building, allowing for more productive team discussions and a better flow of argumentation, taught them to be more aggressive, to raise their voices more, and to be unafraid of their opponents in their rebuttals.

By their fifth practice or so, the team had become much more charismatic, with established speaking styles and much more convincing arguments. As a leader, seeing this improvement meant so much to me—even though debating is an experience unique to the individual, I could still guide my mentees to unlock their fullest potential as debaters. With more practice debates still to come, I am confident that they will make great strides and achieve a lot in their upcoming international tournament and their journey as debaters.

***Draft #3***

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**Essay #2**

**Prompt #2:** *Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.*

***Draft #4***

I felt like a witch from a fairytale as I mixed my strained strawberry juice with my almond milk. Pretending my bowl was a cauldron, I stirred in the juice, tablespoon by tablespoon. However, unlike some of the beautifully colored potions in fairytales, my cloudy strawberry-juice-and-almond-milk potion would probably fail to entice Snow White to take a sip.

Interning at a start-up called Potion Bar, I had set out to create a new, tropical flavor of Indonesian candle-shaped popsicles known as *es lilin*. I had to make sure my creation was up to par with the flavor, presentation, and texture standards. After freezing, I took my samples out and tasted them. Bite by bite, the small sliver of optimism slowly seeped out of me. They tasted bland, and the texture felt like that of an ice cube: rough and hard.

I knew drastic changes had to be made, so I set off to formulate a new recipe. I substituted the strawberries for mangoes, and used honey as a sweetener. To create the perfect, creamy texture, I researched the effects of certain ingredients, such as cornstarch. Observing all the different ingredients I used in my previous recipe led me to use oat milk instead of almond milk since the texture was thicker. I also added cornstarch into the mix to level up the creaminess.

The new potion was a vibrant yellow. Unfortunately, upon tasting the samples after freezing, they tasted starchy. While I had already gotten the texture and presentation right, the taste had to be improved. I eventually found that my samples tasted much better by mixing cornstarch with water, fulfilling all the previous requirements for a good product.

It was during this internship that I learned the amount of creativity needed to work in research and development, especially in the food industry. Conducting multiple trials allowed me to focus on certain issues and experiment new ways to improve my recipe. By closely scrutinizing every ingredient and repeating and improving trials, my cauldron and I were able to brew a potion as timeless as fairy tales.

***Draft #3***

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**Essay #3**

**Prompt #3:** *What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?*

***Draft #4***

The Mahjong scene in *Crazy Rich Asians* is one of the most intense scenes I have ever watched. The speed of the game, along with the conversation between the two main characters, heightened its suspense. The *click-clack* sound of the Mahjong tiles being moved around was music to my ears.

I got to experience the *click-clack* of Mahjong tiles firsthand during a family visit when my uncle decided to buy a complete Mahjong tile set and table. It would take an entirely different essay to explain Mahjong rules, but needless to say, I was beyond confused when I first started playing. The rules and scoring system were incredibly complex, but winning big always filled me with such exhilaration that I eventually bought my own Mahjong set and table and practiced at home.

Mahjong is not simply about luck—strategy is required to win. I have yet to unlock the perfect Mahjong strategy. However, with each game I played, I started noticing more details about the game. Prioritizing being the first to win, or getting the best set, was something I learned from watching tournaments online. I realized that the set I obtained at the end was dependent on other players. Each tile other players discarded was my “make it or break it” moment, so I learned to estimate the chances of getting better sets by observing the discard pile. Discarding my own tiles required strategy too; the next tile I discard could be someone else’s winning tile. Again, by looking at the discard pile, I was able to roughly predict the sets that other players are trying to obtain. This method, which I honed over several months of hours playing Mahjong every day, brought me many wins.

In an environment where games like Monopoly are huge, I find uniqueness in playing Mahjong. Not only does it hold significance in my heritage as a Chinese person, the countless hours of playing have allowed me to obtain and hone my risk-taking, adaptation, and observational skills.

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In an environment where games like Monopoly are huge, I find uniqueness in playing Mahjong. Not only does it hold significance in my heritage as a Chinese person, the countless hours of playing have allowed me to obtain and hone my risk-taking, adaptation, and observational skills. However, as Mahjong players in Indonesia are scarce, finding players internationally would add to my joy in playing Mahjong.