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**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.**

The satisfaction I felt after closing five of my Google Docs tabs after the night of homework I suffered through was overwhelming. Even though I would only get five hours or so of sleep, I still felt relieved after finishing all that homework. There was one tab left to close: my Gmail tab.

As I clicked on the tab to do my last email check, my mind was jolted as ~~the~~ two new notifications from underclassmen wanting to join my debate club stared back at me. Those were the seventeenth and eighteenth emails I received from people wanting to join my club. Every single time I got one of these emails, I stopped feeling like I wanted to sleep. Rather, the excitement of getting to mentor these students to reach their fullest potentials as debaters washed over me.

Mentoring these students has been fun and full of surprises, to say the least. As someone who has done debate for five years (and counting) now, it did not occur to me how incredibly difficult it would be to teach someone how to debate, as it took multiple years and competitions for me to mold the unique way in which I spoke and argued.

Teaching this concept to my club members was a tedious task that took lots of patience. From years of experience, I learned that debate is not something one can learn in the span of two weeks, for example. Debate is an individual experience; by joining competitions and doing regular practices, each student gets to develop and mold their own unique debating style. Because of this, the most I could do as a leader was to give speaking structures, set practices, and give as much detailed feedback as I could.

However, as time passed, I noticed that a lot of my members had gotten into the flow of debating, crafting their own speaking styles. As a leader, this meant so much to me; even though debating is an experience unique to the individual, I was still able to guide my members to unlock their fullest potential as debaters.

Hi Evangeline!

In the first prompt, your work ethic and passion for helping your juniors truly shines through. You’ve also taken charge as a leader in your debate team to help fellow members practice through visible means. The intro is also engaging and unique ☺

One way that you can elevate your essay is to focus more on the highlighted parts in the last two paragraphs. Try to be more descriptive in the ways how your set practices, speaking structures, and detailed feedbacks improved your teammates’ debate skills. For example, you can include a short anecdote about how you helped unveil your juniors’ potential. They had good ideas but had troubles delivering their thoughts. Through your practices, they were able to.. (insert end results)

25 minutes

**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.**

I felt like a witch from a fairytale as I mixed in my strained strawberry juice with my almond milk. Pretending like my bowl was a cauldron, I stirred in the strawberry juice, tablespoon by tablespoon. However, unlike some of the beautifully colored potions in fairytales, my strawberry-juice-and-almond-milk potion did not turn out as vivid.

This task, which was for an internship at a start-up called Potion Bar, required me to create a new, tropical flavor of Indonesian candle-shaped popsicles known as *es lilin*. I also had to make sure my creation was up to par with the standards for flavor, presentation, and texture. After freezing, I took my samples out and tasted them. Bite by bite, that 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 that changes had to be made, and I set off to formulate a new recipe. I substituted strawberries for mangoes, and used honey as a sweetener. To create the perfect and creamy texture, I did research on the effects of certain ingredients, such as cornstarch. Observing all the different ingredients I used in my previous recipe led me to using oat milk instead of almond milk since oat milk was thicker. I also added cornstarch into the mix so the final product would be creamier. This new potion was a bright 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 by adding a mixture of cornstarch and water instead, my samples tasted much better, completely fulfilling all requirements.

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 deduce ways to improve my recipe. The devil is in the details; by looking at every single component I had, I was able to innovate and create something spectacular.

Your second prompt is nicely written. Through your multiple attempts at perfecting your popsicle recipe, you’ve explained and illustrated how creativity was essential in a R&D setting.

One aspect of your essay that could be improved is the use of language. Try to incorporate slightly more colorful language to keep in tone with the wonderfully written introduction. To make your essay more exciting, it would help to reduce the use of “I was/ I had/ I found…” In the ending, you can circle back to the fairytale-like intro to make your essay more enticing. ☺

20 minutes

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

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 Rachel and Mrs. Young, heightened its suspense. The *click-clack* sound of the Mahjong tiles being moved around was music to my ears.

I ~~fortunately~~ 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. Each set of Mahjong tiles that could be made scored differently; some sets scored higher than others, and even though my goal during the first few games I played was getting the simplest sets to finish the game, the times where I did obtain high-scoring sets filled me with intense satisfaction. I eventually bought my own Mahjong set and table and practiced at home.

Mahjong is not simply about luck; much strategy is required to win. I have yet to unlock the perfect Mahjong strategy, but with each game I played, I started noticing more details about the game. 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 thinking; 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 ages of playing Mahjong, brought many wins for me.

Mahjong is a huge part of my cultural heritage, and the risks and rewards during the gameplay have motivated me to continue playing, even though Mahjong is not widely known in Indonesia. The genuine joy I experience while playing Mahjong has continued to make it extremely meaningful to my identity.

The largest strength in this essay is your pacing. From the beginning, you have shared clearly when your affinity toward *mahjong* began. I truly enjoyed reading the steps you’ve taken to develop this passion. Overall, this is a strong essay ☺

One part that you can improve on is clarification on some parts in the ending. To make your talent appear more significant and unique, do mention how *mahjong* enriches your cultural identity (read the comments above).

20 minutes

**6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.**

“Biology would only be fun if I actually had a good memory!” At this point, I had already started to lose count of the amount of times people have said that about biology whenever the subject was brought up. There was some truth to that, of course, but biology also required a great deal of conceptual understanding. Being able to understand the small details within organisms, and then applying that knowledge to broader and complex situations, such as those involving interactions between organisms, is understandably tedious and daunting for many. However, that was what I enjoyed the best while studying biology. Simple questions like ”why do I have black eyes?”, or “how can plants grow upwards?” had such complicated answers that I would go on Google for long periods of time ~~attempting~~ to understand the answers to those questions.

Having learned science throughout my elementary and junior high years, and then taking the IBDP’s higher-level biology course, there is no doubt that biology is my favorite subject. Unfortunately, high school biology could only go so far. There was not much room to move around since my teachers had to strictly follow what had already been set for them. In order to explore more topics outside the school curriculum, I co-founded an organization with two friends focused on educating younger generations about the life sciences. One big project that I established during my time ~~there~~ was a podcast, named the “Life-in-a-Lab Podcast”. Although podcasting was something extremely new to me, I was able to explore so much outside of what I learned at school. Writing episode prompts caused me to go down internet rabbit holes for hours to look for and verify sources. A memorable episode I did about forensic science taught me about the extremely complicated process of fingerprinting after two hours of research. Being able to do this exploration out of school with such a huge passion in my life showed me how truly huge of a field biology is. Each aspect had its own little complexities, but doing research on them is something I will never stop enjoying.

Your content regarding the podcast episodes showcased your curiosity and passion for biology, and it is a good thing you mentioned one specific episode that was memorable to you.

However, since the prompt explicitly asks about how you further your interest in this subject, it is a good idea to show *why* doing the podcast cemented your interest in biology.

To make your essay more coherent and cohesive, you can split the answers into three paragraphs.

1. Write about how you first got interested in biology when nobody else did. What particular field draws you in? Genetics? Or something else?
2. The anecdote about your podcast can be elaborated in greater depth (the forensic science one). What did you enjoy the most while doing the podcast? What did your listeners gain from these podcasts?
3. Show off the unique aspects about yourself as many other candidates might enjoy the same subject. Why is your passion in this field different from many others? Is your future aspirations related to biology? If so, which one? (genetic, forensic etc)

Since your interest in biology is enduring, rearranging your essay this way and exploring your anecdote while doing the podcast will make your essay more memorable and likable.

30 minutes