***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.* (350 words)**

As part of my school’s community service requirement, I chose to stay back after dismissals and help the staff members clean the school. Through this, I was able to befriend them and learn about their past. During breaks, we would all gather together as some would reminisce about their school years. As Maya, one of the janitors, spoke of her past, I surprisingly learned that she had never studied English. Hailing from a remote village, her school didn’t provide English courses. Many of the other staff members also had similar circumstances. As I listened to their stories, I realized that I seemed to have taken English for granted, not realizing that this was a privilege a lot of Indonesians still do not have.

Over the next few days, Maya and the other staff members occupied my mind. How could I help? Eventually, I came up with the idea of an English tutoring program taught by volunteers from our school. Wanting to share this privilege, it has become my goal.

For a year, my friends and I mentored the Janitors thrice a week. With every writing and oral test, I could see their gradual improvement but roadblocks were still present in their journey. One may be having trouble with their grammar, often mixing up Indonesian grammar in her English and the other may have trouble with conjunctions. As the leader of the mentorship team, I had to constantly adjust to their different needs and delegate specific tasks to the volunteers for specific students all while continuing class sessions. And as the students progressed further, I only allowed English to be spoken in the class to create a more immersive learning environment.

Being a leader meant more than just managing and delegating. I learned to put myself in my student's shoes and understand their thoughts, feelings, and motivation to effectively lead them. I found purpose in fostering change within others, even through something as simple as teaching English.

Three years later, I’m in an orphanage teaching English with Maya and the other staff members standing by my side, not as students, but as teachers.

Hi Joe,

You’ve chosen quite an interesting anecdote and connected your leadership experience with a volunteer one. Since your story has so much potential, I think that it can become more powerful with restructuring some parts of your essay. I have left some comments above to help you transform some parts. Also, here’s a sample outline:

1. CHALLENGE: by including more details into the thoughts and the background story of the janitors, your decision to teach them English would be more relevant. For instance, you can write about how they truly wanted to learn English so that they could improve their knowledge/financial condition/apply for new jobs, and so on. (1 paragraph)
2. ACTION: this is the part to highlight. As of now, the paragraphs are slightly incoherent, so provide more transitions in the story. What was their beginning? What was their progress? The end result?

For instance, at first they did not know tenses, but after the sessions, the janitors could converse in simple English. (2-3 paragraphs)

1. LESSON: what did you gain after teaching them? Try to be more creative with your definition of leadership. Since you experienced leadership from tutoring others, you can come up with a more creative meaning of a good leader. Also, include a short detail of how learning English helped the janitors as well. Did it help them to become more confident perhaps? (2-3 paragraphs)

Best of luck!

Melinda