**Essay 4**

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

DRAFT 1:

Who knew that randomly playing with a calculator would greatly impact my life?

It all started with a perplexing problem in my primary school math club’s entrance test. What looked like an easy addition problem turned out a difficult feat: I had to add all numbers from 1 to 100. Luckily, I remembered the number that popped up after randomly adding all 1-100 when I was bored: 5050! Being accepted to this highly selective math club marked the beginning of my math journey.

Through this club, I realized that being good at math was more than just calculating accurately. Logical reasoning and efficiency are also crucial. Hoping to master all aspects of math, I decided to take extra math lessons to train my deductive reasoning skill. The more challenging the problem, the more passionate I became.

I started training and joining math competitions. After multiple participation awards, I finally won a bronze medal in the 2015 American Mathematics Olympiad. Solving logical problems was now a hobby. Day and night, I would solve questions from the Math Olympiad Problems book that I bought from a local bookstore. At school, I explored different formulas than what was taught in my classroom. As I grew older, I discovered that math could be applied in variety of fields: finance, engineering, and computer science. Among the three, computer science instantly captivated me.

The baffling algorithms found in this field quenches my thirst for logical challenges. Coding started to excite me. In addition to simplifying the algorithm in a code taught by my computer science teacher, I started exploring coding in my free time. My interest culminated in the successful development of my first ever website that allowed users to calculate their BMI and giving them a list of recommended foods. I got to experience first hand what developers feel when they’re coding, starting from planning, designing, coding, up to debugging. Although it gets stressful, the satisfaction I felt when my code works is what kept me going.

Seeing my devotion for coding and taking into account the fact that I wanted to get more exposure to coding, Brian Sumali, Garuda Hacks’ managing director, decided to put me in-charge of Komodo Hacks’ (the highschool version) web development team where I lead a group of 4 into developing Komodo Hacks’ website.

Exploring more fields related to math and coding, I discovered data science. Despite the fact that my high school experience didn’t expose me to the data science field much yet, I can’t wait to focus and pursue my interest further in the University of California’s data science program.

Hi Rebekah,

First of all, good job on creating an interesting hook in your first draft! Since the hook would work better on its own, I separated it from the rest of your story.

To help you understand the prompt better, the first thing you need to note is to come up with **ONE** academic subject that inspires you. In your essay though, you mentioned three subjects: math, computer science, and data science. Although all three may be interconnected, you still need to decide on one you are most interested in.

Despite providing a transition from math to computer science, you’ve divided equal attention to both subjects, which may distract the admissions from seeing the one subject you love the most.

Since you used math as your hook and the majority of your content, I suggest sticking with math to answer this prompt. By pivoting on math, you can revise the computer programming part (5th and 6th paragraphs). Surely, the algorithms in computer science require a lot of mathematical formulas, so you can tell the admissions how working with codes help you rediscover another faucet of math that you enjoy. You realize that algorithms can become the foundation of a complex project used in real life: your website! This way, computer programming becomes an interdisciplinary way of how you further your interest outside the classroom.

If you’ve mentioned data science elsewhere in your other essays, I suggest you omit the data science here as your essay has word limit, and there might not be enough space to elaborate on the connection from math to data science.

(*Alternatively, you can talk about how data science is another interdisciplinary way in applying your math knowledge, and how you are interested in pursuing this major at UC – using this as your ending*).

Good luck!

Melinda