PROMPT 1

**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.**

Since my freshman year, I have been a part of the backstage team, the tech team, and the set and design team creating much of the props and sets. This year, I became the leader of the set and design team.

My background experiences have helped me to provide effective insight for my teammates: solving problems and creating ideas from tech to design to set movements during the performance. For example, I helped the tech team decide which color lighting to use for different scenes based on my prior knowledge of how the lights affected the ambiance and the look of the set and costumes. Furthermore, I also guided the set and prop on how to create and decide the types of materials, tools, and colors to use for the set.

As a leader, I also leveraged my past setbacks to become more adept in anticipating potential problems and resolving conflicts that arise. For instance, there were some minor conflicts between the costume and set team as there were miscommunications between members. Realizing that being objective was crucial, I always paid attention to the chronology from both sides. During the mediation, I helped clarify ideas and intentions that each team had come up with and pointed out several aspects where they diverged. I then reminded both teams about the vision of the project, using it as a framework to discuss their disagreements. Together, we clarified how we could better combine costumes, lighting, and set together in a way that worked harmoniously so that everyone had a clearer direction.

As a leader, I have been able to resolve disputes between members by improving communication and contributing to group efforts by providing direction and vision, sharing input and advice, and assisting my team in the creation process of all the sets and props needed for the production.

Hi Steffi,

The montage structure that you’ve used for your essay is indeed informative. The admission officers can clearly see your contributions to the team. It is visible that you’ve maintained a good work ethic as a leader.

However, this essay slightly feels as if it’s written for an interview prompt since you are laser-focused on your successful contributions. Usually, the officers appreciate seeing a more humane side of their candidates. Thus, I suggest that your ending be re-written to include your self reflection after your leadership experience. It is also a good idea to write your unique definition of what makes someone a good leader (see comments for details).

Also, what’s missing from this essay is your drive as a leader:

* What motivated you to become a leader for the set and design team? Have you always been passionate about being backstage?
* You’ve also mentioned your background experiences and past setbacks. However, no backstory or elaboration is given yet. How did you gain this knowledge? What were the past setbacks that allowed you to mediate conflict easily now?

PROMPT 8

**8. Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?**

In my community, I am known as an intelligent girl who is resilient and articulate. However, this is not how they would have described me in the past: I was known as the quiet and aloof girl.

During high school, I took many outside-of-school courses offered by universities. These courses all included one thing in common: discussion and critique sessions. I was timid and reticent, especially when it came to big group discussions. However, determined to overcome my struggle to speak confidently, I pushed myself to speak up. Every session, I listened, watched, and participated attentively to the lesson and discussion session to ensure that I was expanding my knowledge and improving my lacking capabilities. After carefully observing and participating, not only had I developed various art skills, but I had also come head-on with my weakness – communication –  and found a confident voice, both in my art and in every aspect of my life.

It was an unimaginable butterfly effect arising from one summer camp that turned me, a timid girl, into an outspoken girl who can converse comfortably and confidently. Ultimately, after much persistence and pushing, I was able to speak comfortably even in unfamiliar situations and big crowds, even becoming a leader of multiple extracurriculars. For instance, I often provided effective critiques during yearbook in journalism or drama classes to help my fellow classmates perfect their creations from page designs to sets and props. I also provided suggestions on how they can improve their creation, be it composition, color, or even sizing.

These experiences showed me the power of communication that can mobilize and influence positive changes in individual and group efforts. In the future, I wish to establish a community of artists that encourages creative expression and constructive critiques to create a well-designed, impactful product for our community.

This essay is consistent: It is clear that you want the officers to perceive you as an articulate and outspoken candidate. To exemplify this image, you’ve also pointed out the classes you joined to overcome your timidity.

To make this essay more relatable and sympathetic, I suggest that you include an anecdote during one of the big group sessions (see comment for the sample). Also, I hope that the summer camp experience that transformed you is already written in another essay. If not, it is better to just delete the sentence highlighted in yellow to ensure coherence with the paragraph before.

**OR**

You can use the summer camp anecdote to talk about how you changed into a confident and outspoken girl since the green highlight gives some examples that you’ve talked about in your leadership prompt (prompt 1).

This is my suggested outline:

1. Intro
2. University classes: include anecdote about how you participated more actively vs the you before. Talk about how this made you feel and how the others appreciated your candor.
3. Summer camp transformation that cemented your outspoken personality

OR

Elaborate more about the other aspect of your life other than the drama club mentioned in your prompt 1. You can instead write about how being outspoken has helped you get closer to your family/teacher etc

1. Ending

Best wishes,

Melinda