Like a captain of a ship, I navigated through the storms of self-doubt and fear, steering my section towards the shores of excellence and unity.

When I first joined marching band in 2018, I witnessed the outstanding leadership that shown by the senior section leader. I was fascinated by their ability to lead the team and inspire others. Since then, it fueled a deep passion within me to undertake this crucial role, to contribute to the band's success, and to inspire my members through my musical ability.

In 2020, I got chosen as a section leader. I clearly remember that day. The day when I had been chosen as a section leader. The fear appeared with self doubt as I realized the weight of responsibility that awaited me. My desire do come true, I guess. Self-doubt overwhelmed me. I keep on questioning my self, “Why I got chosen?” “Why me?” “ Am I capable enough?.” The more I question myself, the harder it is to uncover the answers.

As I entered into the leadership realm, I was right, the path was not without its seatbacks. It is presenting greater difficulty than I expected. Self-doubt became a continuous companion as I battled with the fear of failure and the weight of responsibility that comes with being a section leader. Overcoming my insecurities and believing in my own capabilities required a great deal of introspection and self-reflection. I realized that leadership is not about being perfect yet it is about accepting and utilizing vulnerability as a catalyst for personal growth.

One of the biggest challenges I faced was maintaining the motivation of the group members. There was a time when our band had to prepare for a performance, and it turned out to be the most difficult practice session I had experienced. My section sounded off-key and lacked unity. Our coach became angry and publicly criticized my section as the worst in front of 150 players. He repeated his criticism multiple times that day. After the practice, I felt a deep sense of shame because I held myself responsible for the poor performance. Doubt crept in, and I questioned myself once again. However, I soon realized that dwelling on these negative feelings wouldn't change the situation. Instead, I focused on what I could control: improving my section's performance in the next practice. I continued to encourage my fellow members, assuring them that we could do better next time. I set specific targets and exercises for them to practice, emphasizing the areas that needed improvement. Additionally, I encouraged them to send me videos of themselves playing the song, so I could provide feedback on how to enhance their skills. During the next practice, we played the same song, and I couldn't help but feel nervous about the coach's reaction to my section's performance. However, at the end of the session, the coach expressed his gratitude because we had shown significant improvement. A smile appeared on the faces of all my fellow band members. I expressed my appreciation for their hard work and reminded them that, as a team, we could continue progressing together.

Another obstacle I had to overcome was balancing my roles and responsibilities as a section leader with my personal commitments. Daily practices, rehearsals, performances, academic responsibilities, and personal matters at the same time. Juggling all these responsibilities demanded strong time management and organizational skills. To overcome this challenge, I created a detailed plan that involved assigning dedicated time slots for each responsibility. This approach allowed me to prioritize effectively, gain a comprehensive view of my commitments, and ensure that I could allocate adequate time and attention to each one.

Despite the challenges, becoming a section leader has been a remarkable journey. I have come to realize that setbacks should be viewed as valuable lessons rather than defeats. I appreciate the challenges I faced that have shaped my journey, allowing me to to effect positive change within the band and inspire others to embrace their own leadership potential. In the end, it was not just about reaching the shores of excellence and unity, it was about the journey itself. Through the highs and lows, we grew together, learned together, and emerged as a crew bound by a common purpose.

**Feedbacks:**

Hi Gisella,

First of all, good job on providing the detailed list of the roles you’ve done as a leader! I was able to see how far you’re willing to help your teammates improve after the harsh criticism from your coach.

However, to make this essay a powerful narrative essay, you should improve on providing more details, especially your motivation and thought process.

Structure your essay using a clear and uncomplicated framework: provide the context, describe the obstacle, explain your reaction, and discuss the resulting outcome.

1. Create an outline/context that encompasses the circumstances preceding your leadership. Cover the fundamental aspects such as the individuals involved (you, your senior leader, prominent team members, etc), the nature of the what the position entails, and your underlying reasons. Additionally**, take into account your initial state or condition before the leadership occurred.**
2. Identify the factor that hindered your progress. If you list self-doubt and fear, give us details on why you felt that way.
3. Be real and vulnerable about your reactions. It's crucial to describe your emotional reaction as well. Share how you felt: were you hurt, sad, angry, surprised? Additionally, explain how you dealt with these emotions. Did you handle them in a mature manner? What was your initial emotional response? **Did your thoughts or feelings evolve over time?**
4. Talk about the extent to which you achieved your initial goal. Even if you didn't fully meet your original objective, reflect on the lessons you learned from the experience. It is crucial to explain how you are currently applying these insights in your life.

Look at the specific paragraphs that you can work on. Colleges seek individuals who demonstrate maturity, resilience, and thoughtfulness, as well as the capacity to navigate the independence and difficulties of college life. **Embrace vulnerability by openly expressing your insecurities, regrets, and fears.** Reflect on the lessons you have learned and the lasting impact of the experience.