UC Essay Prompts (RD: 11/30)

You will have 8 questions to choose from. You must respond to only 4 of the 8 questions.

Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words.

Which questions you choose to answer is entirely up to you: But you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances.

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.

Growing up in my family, I had to learn sign language because both my grandfather and grandmother are deaf, and I became aware of the problems that deaf people commonly face. For example, deaf people face discrimination in society and the workplace. They do not have the same educational opportunities as people who are not deaf. Furthermore, over half of the teenage rape and sex-trafficking victims are deaf. This shocking fact was the catalyst for my decision to help educate deaf teenagers in my community. Because I am a big enthusiast in Cinematography and photography. I decided to make a sex-education video in sign language to address this problem. There has never been a similar type of video where it teaches deaf people sex-education. Even for YouTube, I only found two very old and brief videos talking that merely talked about sex education in sign language. With the help of my grandparents' network of friends, I contacted a sign language school, and worked with a sign language specialist to help translate the video script and perform it in front of the camera. During the editing phase, I decided to rescale and put the screen where the person talks, usually at the center of the video, to the bottom left corner where the sign language translations used to be at. I wanted to use this change to let the people who can hear sounds to experience how the deaf people feel when they are trying to watch a video. A few weeks later, we published the video online. The video I made has received countless comments telling me that the video has helped either them or their deaf kids. I was very happy that I could use my skills to help my community. There are still many marginalized groups in China, and I hope that I could help them with my creative insights on cinematography. I wish that in my four years of college life, I could extend my creative side through new insights, and use them to contribute to all the disabled people community in the world.

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

I played a game called Pokémon when I was seven years old. For the first time, I got to fly over mountains on the back of a dragon and fight against poisonous butterflies with a group of gophers. I was amazed by what this hand-held device could do. I later learned that the magic behind the game and device was computer science. Thus, I began to self-study computer science from the internet.

The first programming language I learned was Python, and I used it to solve a real-life problem in high school. Frustrated by the inconvenience of obtaining my calculated GPA at school, I made a GPA calculator app and shared it with my class. I was overwhelmed by the positive feedback from my classmates and teachers. For the first time, I was able to do something useful with programming and that made me happy. I decided to improve my programming skills and continue to turn my ideas into realities.

In 11th grade, I participated in an artificial intelligence course taught by a local professor in Shanghai. Through this course, I learned how computers identify colors and different types of animals through a series of statistical and calculus formulas. I also got to conduct field experiments and work on a project that uses artificial intelligence to make recommendations. The course helped me solidify my understanding of important computer science concepts and gave me valuable real-life experience.

I continue to learn more about computer science outside of the classroom. I interned at an education technology company called Axiom Lab in Shanghai. My tasks included supporting my colleagues and developing a coding software for kids. I have learned industry related knowledge such as Redux and React-Native. Having this work experience helps me avoid making common mistakes during software development in the future.

Currently, I am working on a free programming learning website aiming to give everyone equal chances to learn programming. Although I am learning something new each day about computer science, there are aspects of the project that I cannot do on my own or learn on my own. I wish to extend this project and my interest in computer science in my next four years of college, and I believed that California, where silicon-valley is located, will be the best place for me to obtain this knowledge!

7) What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

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