**List any extra-curricular mathematics activities in which you have participated (e.g., math clubs and camps).**

Since entering high school, I’ve been highly involved in the school mathematics club, which organizes all sorts of math activities and interesting competitions.

Last summer, I attended the Canada/USA Mathcamp, where I gained exposure to a series of college-level mathematics courses, topics of which include but not limited to Cluster Algebra, Knot Theory, Non-Euclidean Geometry, Root System, Morse Theory.

Moreover, out of my interest and curiosity, I’ve participated in some mathematical research projects outside school. Listed as follows:

Collaborative project: proof on the unistructurality of quasi-cluster algebra; the number of triangulation on a Mobius stripe.

Individual projects: tensor calculus and Kaluza theory; mathematical modeling of local climate change.

**List all mathematics courses taken in the last two academic years, including the current term, and the grades you received in the courses completed.**

Since my schooling in UWC, Changshu China, I’ve kept an excellent performance in Pre-IB Mathematics (scoring 7/7 in all tests and final grade), which includes Statistics, Probability, and Number Theory.

Now, I’m attending the class of IB Further Math at a higher level with all second-years at Pearson College UWC. Course topics include Graph theory, Linear Algebra, Group Theory, Probability & Statistics, Calculus & Differential Equations, and Number theory. Since I’ve maintained a score of 7 in every examination and final semester grade, I’ll be privileged to take the final IB Further Math exam in May this year.

Moreover, most of my acquisition of mathematical knowledge comes from outside of my school curriculum. I still remember the first time I saw a video from 3Blue1Brown, where I ran into Linear Algebra and sensed the study of mathematics can not only be realized step by step in accordance with my school curriculum. After searching for mathematics courses from Coursera, edX, and Socratica Studios, I’ve decided to self-study mathematics at different levels.

Recently, I’ve enrolled in an online course of algebraic geometry instructed by Visiting Professor Sheshmani at Harvard University. Studying with a group of undergraduates, I’ve delved into some topics of advanced mathematics I’ve never touched before.

**List all math contests and competitions in which you have participated, giving your score and/or ranking if possible. Be sure to include your scores on the AMC10, AMC12, AIME, USAMO, or SAT 2 Math Subject Test, if you have taken any of these exams.**

1) Meritorious Award, 22nd Annual High School Mathematical Contest in Modeling (HiMCM), 02/2020;

2) Honor Roll in British Columbia, the Canadian Open Mathematics Challenge, qualified for attending Canadian Mathematical Olympiad (CMO), 11/2019;

3) Top 5%, Euclid Contest, The CENTER for EDUCATION in MATHEMATICS and COMPUTING, University of Waterloo, 05/2019;

4) First Prize (China), Math League, qualified for US Final (at Stanford) and its Math Camp (co-held by the Departments of Mathematics of Princeton University, Columbia University, and Williams College), 2018;

5) Second Prize, Jiangsu Junior High School Mathematics Competition, 2017;

6) Second Place (Global Final), The Berkeley Mini Math Tournament (BmMT), 2017;

7) SAT Subject Test - Math Level 2: 800, taken on 11/2019.

**What aspects of mathematics do you like the most?**

Though math looks abstract and messy on the surface, with a couple of axioms and definitions, I can work out a problem to deduct an elegant answer. At the same time, I can exercise my creativity when conjecturing, which is equally important as giving proof. That’s how I turn the unknown into the known. Such exploration is full of excitement in the sense that mathematics presents itself in a myriad of ways in our world: the similarity between the Fibonacci sequence and structure of pinecones, acceleration as the second derivative of distance when paddling in a kayak, and the differences in length-to-width ratios for various A paper sizes.

Nevertheless, mathematics can, admittedly, be challenging. There were times I sat at my chair hunched over a problem for an afternoon only to find my efforts fruitless. But that didn’t alter my affection toward math. With patience and accumulation of information, I’ll complete the mysterious puzzle piece by piece. Figuring out math problems in a confident and calm manner resembles how I face other situations in life. Witnessing how mathematics beautifully intertwines with our world also inspires me to analyze such connections and further integrate math and life by turning math into applicable, pragmatic solutions.

**What aspects of mathematics do you like the least?**

Mathematics pays great attention to simple, elegant problems with logical, well-reasoned solutions. “There are N people who have to use the restroom, and there are M cubicles in the restroom. It is stipulated that there is at most one person in each cubicle. How many ways of ‘restroom using’ can there possibly be?” While some people may be confused, I can imagine and is ready to tell a nice story.  
  
Statistics, as a part of mathematics, works its magic on large, complex questions where numerous factors seem so intertwined and convoluted that it would impossible to be clarified. How do video websites find out the type of movies you like most? Which strategy can make you a billionaire? Buying lottery tickets, gambling in a casino, or investing in stocks? These questions are so complex that if not for statistics I could not make any prediction at all. In this sense, I’ve found statistics powerful, however, there isn’t so much storytelling in statistics. It’s too shy to give me an exact answer. It only tells me a measured “confidence interval,” unsatisfying to my appetite.  
  
Humans have a hard time understanding uncertainty, but statistics is often counter-intuitive based on uncertainty. I prefer the aspect of math that contains more “humanities” and stories in it.

**Describe a positive experience that you have had with mathematics.**

“One, two, three, …” I was trying to draw out the complete exchange graph of Mobius stripe with marked points, wondering whether it was possible to calculate the number of all triangulations. Easy as I initially thought it would be, it turned out to be complicated and overwhelming. Frustrated, I turned to Cluster Algebra in the hope of viewing this intriguing problem from a different perspective. I drew their exchange graphs and cluster complexes and represented them in double cover, snake graph ...

I also tried to use brute force up to 4 marked points, but the result turned out to be not ideal. When I was nearly on the verge of emotional collapse, my mentor came up with an idea, “Maybe we can look at this from a combinatorics perspective, and it might have something to do with Catalan number.” I was suddenly enlightened. In every triangulation, each boundary edge is part of only one triangle. Inspired by this idea, we soon summarized three cases in which two arcs could divide the non-orientable surface. For the orientable part, the area without the crosscap, we directly apply the Catalan number to count the number of triangulations. For the non-orientable part, the area with the crosscap, we defined the number of triangulations recursively. By adding the three cases, we finally got a formula to solve our confusion.

However, the answer we got was recursively defined, and there was no simpler function to be found - even wolfram alpha cannot interpret a recursive formula with that complexity. I have to propose a new, simple formula, but its proof, either through the simplification of the recursive definition or by thinking from another angle, still awaits me to explore.

Logic and rigor have always been the inherent charm of mathematics, but what is more attractive to me is the unexpectedness in mathematics. It seems to be waiting for me right around the corner, guiding me to link everything together but think out of the box at the same time.

**What do you hope to gain by participating in SUMaC?**

“Students who want to learn about Algebraic Topology may head to the conference room. Professor Li will guide you to appreciate this subject.” Suddenly, I felt that this learning opportunity was a gift that had been lost but regained. At the beginning of the Mathcamp, I was so disappointed by the announcement that Professor Li would be unable to hold any lectures on Algebraic Topology this year because of his pneumonia infection.

Although I listened to the symposium for only three hours, it felt like an entire century had flowed through the lecture hall. I saw legendary mathematicians were making incessant exploration and progress on this relatively new-born area of math at an explosive speed. Algebraic topology opened a door for me to see the mysterious and wonderful world of math. In the rest of my Mathcamp experience, I took all courses of Topology and Graph Theory and tried my best to understand more advanced areas like Fundamental Groups and some basic Cohomology. After returning to my present school, I began to search for the most cutting-edge research papers in this field to decipher each topology mystery that captivates me. Then, I was thrilled to discover SUMaC, through which a course on Algebraic Topology is offered.

I’m eager to systematically study Algebraic Topology in SUMaC and to interact closely with scholars and professors in this field to address my accumulated questions regarding Cohomology, Lie groups and Knot Theory. Moreover, I’m looking forward to researching the relationship between topology and architectural design, especially the non-homeomorphic change of architectural form. I firmly believe I would have a fruitful summer at Stanford.

**What aspect of SUMaC appeals to you the most?**

I woke up with the howling of sea animals. It took a while before I realized being in an ecological reserve. It was still dark outside. I opened the door. The peculiar smell of coastal creatures hit me. Then, I walked out. Living on Race Rocks Islands for a week, I’d been used to a lot of things: no shower, frozen food, limited electricity… I only looked forward to the sunrise and sunset every day. “The demands of mankind are unlimited,” I started to reflect on what my economics teacher said in class. I’d like to get lost on the island, where I have little but lack nothing. Self-sufficiency is all I need, just like how it was since the dawn of mankind.

However, this time, I am greatly fascinated by the “pure mathematical enrichment” emphasized by SUMaC.

I’m so excited to plunge myself into the sea of mathematics. Working on a math problem for an hour or two at night has become a daily routine for me. There are times when I’m so fixated on a problem that I’ll think about it for most of the evening, even when I’m brushing my teeth or lying on my bed before falling asleep. However, with patience and accumulation of information, I will piece together the clues to find a solution. I am expecting to have one period of time when I can totally focus myself on mathematics to gain momentum, to enjoy the process, and to fully research and delve into mathematics.

Therefore, SUMaC is such a wonderful opportunity for me to enjoy the purity of mathematics. I will study with young math talents from all over the world, exchange new inspirations with teaching assistants and professors of strong math backgrounds, and work on piles of problem sets and intriguing research projects for the whole day without worrying about any external distraction.

**Tell us about some of your non-academic interests, or a fun fact about yourself. What do you do when you aren’t in school?**

In my leisure time, I would collect omnifarious flavors of instant noodles from all over the world to build up my food reserves. Though I have eaten plenty, I constantly save more than I consume. In the hope of making instant noodles more delicious, I started to try various kinds of cooking styles to test and find out my preferences. I firstly watched videos on YouTube and then attempted my culinary creations. *Practice makes perfect.* After being enough, I came up with my own fresh ideas - instant noodle soaked in hot whole-fat milk, instant noodle cakes, and fried noodles with marshmallow sauce. In terms of the fried flavor, I’ve also thought of different tricks. Boil the noodles, drain the water to make cold noodles, and stir-fry them with ingredients; or stir-fry the toppings first and then pour them on the cold fried noodles. I’ve mastered dozens of creative cooking methods of instant noodles.

As an amateur and 24/7 hungry gourmet, I see my pursuit of delicious cuisine as an indispensable part of my personality. When I encountered a Yunnan cuisine, which is called scrambled eggs with jasmine, I would purchase the raw materials and tried to revive the dish myself. Moreover, I am fond of studying to make toast in eight different ways, cook scrambled eggs with tomato in five flavors. I love inventing new recipes, especially the ones that combine East Asian and exotic food together. Steamed meat of litchi soaked with Korean chili sauce, ice cream topped with fermented bean curd, or Thai rice fried in squid ink are my specials. The exploration of uncertainty always excites me. Reinvigorating a traditional dish also satisfies my curiosity. Tasty? Unpleasant? Or mediocre? It doesn’t matter. On the long, long list of crossed-out experiments, I did find a unique delicacy. I just can’t stand that routines render our lives dull. Special recipes stimulate our taste buds and evoke our thoughts.

I have created and recorded many innovative ideas, and I would like to put them into practice. This is also a little fun in my ordinary life. At SUMaC, I look forward to coming up with more brilliant ideas in a truly diverse environment. I hope to make the transient summer community a more creative and fun place.

**Please list all other summer programs including other Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies programs to which you have applied or plan on applying to for this upcoming summer.**

1) Leadership Seminars at the University of Notre Dame

2) Architecture Summer Programs at Penn

3) Yale Summer Program at Astrophysics

**Which of the problems on the Admission Exam did you find the most interesting? Explain.**

The most interesting one was Problem 3. At first glance, the conclusion seemed to be fairly trivial - the product of (a+b√2) and (a-b√2) gives the irreducible polynomial, so every other polynomial with (a+b√2) as a root must contain that irreducible polynomial.

Intuitive as it seemed, when I tried to prove this, it started to become intriguing.

The first idea that came into my mind was Conjugate root theorem. There seem to be many similarities between them; however, root two doesn’t have the same desirable properties as complex conjugation. After several trials, I failed.

Then I tried Vieta’s theorem, arguing both the sum and the product of the two roots are rational. However, I soon realized that this won’t work because there are other roots that I needed to consider.

I decided to put this problem aside and worked on other problems. When I picked this problem up the next day and read the question again, I got inspired by the problem itself - it hinted that p(x)=0. That was how I came up with my final solution: to prove that (a-b√2) is a root of p(x), and all we need to do is to deduce p(a-b√2)=0 from p(a+b√2)=0!

**Which of the problems on the Admission Exam did you find the most difficult? Explain.**

Problem 6(b) is quite hard. I enumerated a lot of examples at first, but all examples seemed to show that k could only be 2. Then, I found it hard to prove it.

Nevertheless, when I tried more cases, I realized that k could also be 4. Even though I kept trying for more cases, it seemed that 2 and 4 are the only two possible values. Neither could I prove the statement right nor prove it wrong yet. Therefore, I gave a conjecture and several examples as support.

The pattern that leads to different values of k was still a mystery to me, and I’m determined to do some further exploration.

**Which of the problems on the Admission Exam did you find the easiest? Explain.**

All the problems beside 6 were not very hard, especially 1, 4, and 5.

Problem 1 was one about basic combinatorics. by using induction, the answers were fairly straightforward.

In Problem 2, I played a little trick; instead of solving for the solutions, I used some properties of modular. This almost intuitive thought saved me from wasting a lot of time in solving the equation and trying to find out the answer.

Problem 4 was probably the easiest one - using the property of prime could easily lead to the solution.

Complicated as problem 5 seemed to be, all the subquestions helped a lot along the way of answering the problem. Even though the problem itself was not hard, it did captivate me by exploring whether there is such an algorithm to find the smallest k for any sum-sequence. Although I haven’t found out that due to the impending application deadline, I’m very willing to explore deeper afterwards.

The subquestions in Problem 6 also helped me a lot. 7(c) almost immediately reminded me of equivalence relation and it turned out to be true! 7(d) also made me think of the inverse in a group. These little hints and guidance were of great help for me to solve these problems smoothly.

**On which of the problems on the Admission Exam did you spend the most time?**

I spent the most time in Problem 6(b), trying to list different possible examples and find a pattern; however, I could hardly find any pattern there, except that 2 and 4 seemed to be the only possible values of k.