Cal Poly Honors Program Essays

**Essay Prompt #1:** Please introduce yourself to us. In your statement, please consider addressing one or more of the following questions: Why are you interested in being part of the University Honors Program? What will your participation in the program add to your education at Cal Poly? What will you contribute to the program? *Note: Response must be between* ***500 and 1500 characters***

Hi, I’m Ashley, and I’m a nerd. I enjoy learning deeply, and broadly. Ever since I was little I’ve been fascinated with learning new things. I get excited by these opportunities and always try to make the most of them.

My love of learning has inspired me to read many books, to try activities like Robotics, surfing, skateboarding, Drama, and Computer Science, and to learn about the world and the humans that live in it.

I want to join this program to spend time with other students who are curious and passionate about learning new things! I love having discussions with people who get as excited as I do about math, speaking in Spanish, coding, or the semantics of words.

I will contribute my unique interests, experiences and perspective to this group, and excitedly soak up other people’s ideas. I hope to join your program and share my nerdiness with everyone.

**Essay Prompt #2:** Describe an obstacle, challenge, or conflict you've experienced in your life. How did you address the problem(s) you were facing? What did you learn from the experience? *Note: Response must be between* ***500 and 1500 characters***

When I took AP Physics last year, it was an especially stimulating and challenging experience for me. It was a huge jump from the difficulty level of Physics Honors and it took me a while to adjust. In addition, the tests had such tight time restraints that I was often unable to finish, and I did not think about choosing which problems I could solve the fastest. I was worried that I would not be able to ever understand that level of material and succeed in the class. It was a huge source of stress and worry in my life. I had to change my mindset and my approach to the class. I started looking at the "Pretty Problems" that illustrated homework questions I did not understand, I looked up videos online to explain concepts that I struggled with, and I went in to tutorial to get help. I practiced my composure and test-taking skills so that I could show the maximum level of my ability on a test and not be fazed by the time limits. I adjusted to the level of learning and was able to become ready to learn in a challenging, college-level course. After that I reveled in the experience of learning fascinating new topics that were very relevant to real life, while still involving a lot of math, which I liked. This was a remarkable experience for me because I learned to take things in stride and be willing to work hard, and maybe even fail from time to time, and keep learning. I decided that instead of stressing about the result, I needed to focus on learning the most that I could.

**School and Community Leadership:** Briefly list and/or describe your most recent high school and community leadership activities and/or experiences. *Note: Response must be* ***less than 1000 characters***

Sophomore year I was talking to my friend Hannah about books, and our voices rose as we became enthusiastic and invested. I loved the conversation and wondered why there wasn’t an opportunity to have this kind of excited discussion with other avid readers at Homestead. Thus began my idea for the Homestead Book Club. Getting the club approved and started over the next year was a challenging process at times, but rewarding. It has been a great experience to get recommendations for books that I might never have chosen for myself from other club members. I have used this experience to unite the reading community of Homestead and connect to the rest of the school, through book discussions as well as charitable actions such as the Book Drive we organized. We are able to make time to read more by having suggested books, and talk about what excites us about them. Our common experience of being book lovers in high school connects us.