**Hello, please help edit this essay. This essay was previously used for Carin’s Georgetown application essay (which I attached below – it was edited by Christopher Matthew). And for the common app, it was previously proofread by Matahari. I also attached Matahari’s comment below.**

**Prompt:**

The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

**Setback/Challenge:**

Mental breakdown half-way in mastering an axel jump (figure skating) due to a combination of difficulty, time management, peer pressure.

**How to solve:**

Refocus myself to my original goal when I decided to start figure skating

Think about how I fell in love with figure skating

And how that activity has shaped me as a person – never give up attitude

**Lesson learned:**

If u commit to do something, and do it wholeheartedly, pasti ada buahnya. And slowly but surely, you’ll see progress.

**Essay:**

“GET UP CARIN! FOCUS! Land that axel jump or you’re not going home tonight! How are you going to win at Qingdao?!” My coach, Alberto screamed at me. It’s been 10 months since the first time I started practicing the full one and a half in the air rotation called the axel jump – figure skating’s oldest and most difficult jump. One time I had to be lifted by a stretcher as I couldn’t walk, nor even sit having injured my tailbone. Fractures, torn ligaments, hamstring injuries, all so familiar they don’t faze me anymore. Despite all that, my coach always tells us to get back up and persevere.

Except this time, I wasn’t sure if I can get back up and continue figure skating. Not only was I competing with athletes who dedicate their lives to skating, practicing 5 hours a day, and was I attending arguably the best all-girl school in Indonesia with exams every week, I also had parents who began strongly opposing my choice to continue competing. “You might get handicapped,”they argued. I couldn’t sleep, all I did was ponder why couldn’t I land this jump? Should I stop skating? Is skating my real passion? Deep down, I know that there’s great ambition but it’s clouded by greater fear.

It’s my dream to pass freestyle level 10 and win the Winter Olympics one day. Above all the uncertainties, one thing is certain: my dream. I’ve gone this far, how can I quit now? My whole life, summer holidays, weekends, were spent breathing in cold air, sweating, and hearing the grind of my skates on ice. Deep down, I know I can do the axel jump if I believe in myself. For 6 years, I maintained to keep up with the other skaters who practice every day when I only practiced 3 times a week. That thought lifted my spirit. I promised myself that I would practice harder so one day, my dream would become a reality.

And so, I picked up my skates and got up. I searched for references so I could land this jump properly. I watched slow-motion techniques and practiced it off the ice in my bedroom. I spent extra time in the rink on weekdays and weekends. I couldn’t sleep properly because my anxiety was off the roof. Day and night, my mind was occupied with the axel jump.

A few months later, I arrived at Qingdao with my costume ready, ponytail tied, and skates tightened. The euphoria inside the arena was crazy, it was filled with thousands of people, they were cheering and whistling but all I could hear was the sound of my heartbeat racing fast. Lub dub. Lub dub. This is the moment that I’ve been waiting for. The Skate Asia Qingdao, the biggest figure skating competition in Asia. I’m here. I’m ready.

I started gliding, but I slipped into my toe pick and fell on my knees. “Get up, Carin!” Alberto screamed as I froze on the floor. “The music hasn’t started so your fall doesn’t count!” He shook my shoulders. Catching my breath, I nodded. I started to glide and fly through the ice, it felt like I had the rink all to myself. I passed through 4 elements of my program smoothly. The time came for me to do the axel jump. I turned my back, stretched my hand, jumped into the air, turned one and a half rotation, and landed smoothly. I stopped, facing the judges with a very big smile, and posed.

That night, I stood on top of the podium and won gold for the technical and artistic categories of Skate Asia Qingdao 2015. I’m glad that I persevere even when I doubted myself. Most of all, I’m glad that I finished what I started. The same mentality that I keep close to my heart has brought me more trophies in 2017. Day by day, I’m getting closer to Freestyle 10. Year by year, I’m becoming more prepared for the Winter Olympics. And it’s because when I fall seven times, I stand up eight.

**EDITORS COMMENT**

Hi Carin,

First of all, I’d like to say how talented you are. Figure skating is cool and I know that it is a hard sport because my little sister was also a skater. I like the fact that you chose figure skating as your topic because it shows how tenacious and talented you are.

Some notes on the essay that I feel could be improved so it will be better flowing:

1. It’s really good that you covered the basic 5W1H (who, what, where, when, why, how), you gave enough context so that the reader understands what is happening. I do feel that you could elaborate more on the “what did you learn from the experience?” part of the prompt. Besides defining the obstacle in your essay, I think it’s also important to talk about how you applied the lessons that you have learned (during the tough times) to your life right now.
2. If I remember correctly, when submitting your common app essay you need to copy and paste the text to a box and not upload a word document or pdf file. I don’t think the bold and italics would carry out into the console so I would suggest for you to narrate it differently. You could use quotation marks for the conversational parts and could integrate the "The Skate Asia Qingdao 2015" into your paragraph (like you did in your “second” essay. An example could be:

“Costume ready, ponytail tied, skates tightened. The euphoria inside of the arena was crazy, my parents were somewhere in the crowd holding up a banner with my name and photo. It was filled with thousands of people, they were cheering and whistling but all I could hear was the sound of my heartbeat racing fast. Lub dub. Lub dub. This is the moment that I’ve been waiting for. The Skate Asia Qingdao, the biggest figure skating competition in Asia. I’m here. I’m ready.

….”

1. The paragraph I highlighted in blue is a flashback to when you practiced for the competition right? If it is, I suggest that you add a clarifying sentence in the beginning because I was kind of confused about the narration when I first read through the essay. You want to be as clear as possible because sometimes the admission committee only have 3-5 minutes to read through your essay (and sometimes they only read it once). Also, remember to make it clear when you jump back the narrative to the competition.

This is a really good draft. Don’t worry about the word limit for the next draft, the more ideas you have, the easier it’ll be to see what works and what doesn’t. Looking forward to your next draft!

Best,

**Matahari Kinanti H**

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Georgetown’s version:

As Georgetown is a diverse community, the Admissions Committee would like to know more about you in your own words. Please submit a brief essay, either personal or creative, which you feel best describes you.

“GET UP CARIN! FOCUS! Land that axel jump or you’re not going home tonight! How are you going to win at Qingdao?!” My coach, Alberto, screamed at me.

It had been over ten months since I first started practicing for the one-and-a-half, in-the-air rotation called the ‘axel jump’ – figure skating’s oldest and most difficult jump. One time, I had to be lifted off the ice on a stretcher after a missed landing. I couldn’t even sit as I injured my tail bone. Fractures, torn ligaments and hamstring injuries had become the norm for me. Nevertheless, my coach’s constructive feedbacks always made me get back up on my feet.

A stream of consciousness ran through the back of my head. Firstly, my competition were athletes who basically dedicated their lives to skating full-time. I, however, had to strike a balance between the rigor of arguably the best all-girl Catholic school in Indonesia and this. Thirdly, my parents started signaling their reservations towards my decision to compete in tournaments.

“You might end up handicapped,”they argued.

I couldn’t sleep, hesitation flooding my mind. Should I stop skating? Was it my real passion? And ultimately, would I be able to nail the jump – even if it was going to be my last?

It had always been a dream of mine to pass Freestyle Level 10 and win in the Winter Olympics one day. Above all the uncertainties, one thing was certain – my dream. With all the hard work and grit I’d put into my craft – breathing the cold air and feeling the sweat dripping as I glided through the rink – I knew that deep down I could do the axel jump if I believed in myself. For over six years now, I had managed to keep up with the other skaters who would practice daily when I only had the luxury of three slots a week.

It was the season to be focused and to commit to my schedule. During every practice, I would stay in the rink longer than other skaters did. At home, I would watch the slow-motion technique online and practiced it off-ice in my bedroom. At times, I would feel like the pressure was too great to bear; having to maintain my academic excellence as well. As I lay down on my bed, all I could do was close my eyes and direct laser-focused attention on the goal: landing that axel jump not only with precision but also with grace.

Fast forward a few months and I arrived at Qingdao. Costume ready, ponytail tied, skates tightened. The euphoria inside the arena was crazy, filled with thousands of people cheering and whistling. All I could hear, though, was the sound of my heartbeat racing fast. Lub dub. Lub dub. Time to shine at the biggest figure skating competition in all of Asia. I was here. And I was ready.

“Carina Angel Natanael from Indonesia,” the spokesperson sounded off.

I started gliding onto the humongous rink and took in the intensity of the limelight, only to slip into my toe pick as I fell on my knees. Lub dub, lub dub, lub dub, my heart beating faster as I see a blurred vision of Alberto signaling me to quickly get up before the music started and the judges started scoring. I smiled and nodded, gliding through four of five elements smoothly. The time then came for the final installment: the axel jump. I curved my back, stretched my arms to my sides, jumped into the air, turned one-and-a-half rotations, and landed with what I felt was finesse. I halted, faced the judges with the smile of an ice queen and curtsied with my last pose.

That night, I stood on top of the podium and received the gold medal for taking home both the technical and artistic aspects of Skate Asia Qingdao 2015. Yet what I cherished the most to date was not the recognition nor the trophies that I won ever since. It was the community I got to be a part of throughout the process. It was to my family, my coach, my practice mates and even my school and teachers that I owed this victory to.