**What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time? (250-350 words) edit 3**

Though widely unrecognized and often underrated, communication is a vital human skill. I believe that through my journey as a member of a debate team to a committee head, my communication skills have become my greatest talent.

In my earlier school years, I was considered to be a very quiet, awkward, and unsociable kid. I didn’t really know how to talk to someone about their interests, or get along over a common activity. This lead to me being very shy and anxious when meeting new people.

In middle school, I moved to a new school. To capitalize on my new opportunity, I became determined to make new friends by gaining more confidence in public speaking. Realizing that waiting for others to come talk to me was a waste of time, and wanting to perform better in presentations, I decided to join the school’s debate club. There, after constant feedback from teachers and seniors, I found myself flourishing and picked up many skills, including how to organize my thoughts into words and how to effectively use non-verbal communication like hand gestures.

As I proceeded to enter high school, my communication skills have significantly improved. I was no longer anxious about presentations, and was able to make many new friends by implementing good listening and response skills. Due to my active participation in debate competitions and youth conventions, I took up a position as the head of the logistics committee for a regional youth convention, responsible for more than 15 members. Initially, I doubted my capabilities because I had never headed a committee before. But through exercising my communication and active listening skills to use, I was able to successfully relay information from my superiors to my subordinates, which lead to the event being successful.

Overall, communication turned from my worst liability to my greatest asset, and I am proud to have gone through such a journey to achieve what I have today.

**Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement? (250-350 words) edit 3**

During my junior year, I was fixated on entering into a Business-Economics stream, with a dream of becoming a risk management consultant. Being raised in a school system dominated with debate competitions and inter-school conferences, opportunities to receive exposure to other careers were scarce.

In a week-long internship at a local cafe that I took over the winter break, I realized that I enjoyed making coffee and learning from the head barista about the chemical factors affecting its taste. Discovering my passion at last, I was determined to pursue it through changing my academic course to suit a science stream, by switching Economics for Chemistry.

At first, I felt extremely overwhelmed by the immense workload I had to catch up with. My classmates were already 5 chapters ahead, while I was left behind. In addition, I had to balance schoolwork from my other subjects, so most of my free time was spent self-studying the topics that I had missed. However, because I was passionate about natural sciences and the science of coffee (and food), I persevered and tried my best to keep up.

Eventually, as my knowledge in Chemistry grew, I started to enjoy learning it in depth. At the same time, I began to seek out extracurriculars that I could attend to further my knowledge about chemistry outside the classroom. I started to visit the prep lab more often to discuss with the lab assistants, often asking them about the chemicals available at the lab and what they were used for, and occasionally helped them out with preparation of chemicals for middle school experiments. They were very helpful in giving me insight about the more technical side of science, such as practical skills like dilution and titration, as well as theories not included in the high school curriculum. This experience allows me to feel more comfortable in Chemistry and to apply my theoretical knowledge in real life.

In the end, my Chemistry score went from barely a C+ to an A+. Looking back, I knew that I made the right choice in following my dreams, because I believe that hard work and perseverance will let me overcome any challenge in life.