# Arizona State University

**Question 1: Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.**

Answer: "Since I was eight years old, I've been captivated by the power of code to transform ideas into reality. My journey began when I convinced my parents to buy me a used laptop from a garage sale, and I spent countless hours teaching myself to program in our cramped apartment. This passion has since become the lens through which I view the world and has led me to found my high school's AI/ML Club, where I've inspired over thirty students to explore machine learning.  
  
Last summer, as a software development intern at a local tech startup, I led a team to develop an AI-driven app that optimized waste management routes for our city. Seeing my code improve people's daily lives was incredibly rewarding and reaffirmed my commitment to using technology for social good.  
  
As a first-generation American and child of immigrants who worked tirelessly to provide me with opportunities they never had, I understand the importance of breaking barriers and paving new paths. My unique perspective fuels my desire to create inclusive AI systems that benefit diverse communities.  
  
At your university, known for its interdisciplinary approach and commitment to ethical AI development, I aim to major in Computer Science with a focus on Artificial Intelligence and Data Science. I'm eager to contribute to research projects like 'AI for Social Impact' and compete in hackathons alongside fellow innovators. By leveraging my background and passion for AI, I'm confident that I can bring a fresh perspective to your campus and grow alongside your vibrant community."

**Question 2: 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?**

Answer: In the summer before my junior year, I set my sights on participating in the prestigious International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI). I had been coding since middle school and had won several local competitions, so I was confident that I could represent my country on this global stage.  
  
The IOI problem sets are notoriously challenging, requiring contestants to solve complex algorithmic problems under time pressure. I spent countless hours preparing, solving past IOI problems and competing in online contests. Yet, when the results of our national qualifying round were announced, I found myself staring at a disappointing 'not selected' message.  
  
The initial shock gave way to a sinking feeling of failure. I had invested so much time and effort into this goal, only to fall short. My confidence took a hit; I began to doubt my abilities and question whether I was cut out for competitive programming after all.  
  
But wallowing in self-pity wasn't going to change anything. Instead, I decided to analyze what went wrong. Looking back at my preparation process, I realized that while I had focused extensively on solving problems quickly, I hadn't paid enough attention to understanding the underlying concepts deeply.  
  
Determined to learn from this setback, I changed my approach. Rather than rushing through problems to improve my speed score on online platforms, I started dedicating more time to studying data structures and algorithms thoroughly. I joined an online community of competitive programmers where we discussed problem-solving strategies and helped each other understand complex concepts.  
  
The following year, armed with this newfound understanding and resilience honed from facing rejection, I tried out for the IOI again. This time around, not only did I qualify for the international team but also managed to secure a bronze medal at the IOI.  
  
This experience taught me that failure isn't something to be feared or avoided; rather, it's an opportunity for growth and learning. It reminded me that success isn't always linear - sometimes we need to take steps back before we can move forward more strongly.  
  
As someone who aspires to work at the intersection of computer science and artificial intelligence, this lesson has been invaluable. In these rapidly evolving fields, setbacks are inevitable. But if we approach them with curiosity and determination instead of discouragement, they can become stepping stones towards greater achievements.  
  
In essence, not making it to the IOI wasn't a failure; it was a stepping stone towards becoming a better problem solver and competitor. And that's something worth celebrating.

**Question 3: Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?**

Answer: No answer provided

**Question 4: Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?**

Answer: In the heart of our local senior center, amidst the hum of ancient computers and the soft glow of vintage lamps, I found an unexpected source of gratitude and motivation. Mrs. Thompson, a retired programmer with a twinkle in her eye and a mind as sharp as her wit, had volunteered to teach basic computing skills to the center's patrons. She was my first tech support client when I started volunteering there two years ago.  
  
Mrs. Thompson was not your typical senior citizen seeking help with email or Facebook. She wanted to learn Python, claiming she'd "missed the boat on Java" and wasn't about to do so again. Her enthusiasm was infectious, her determination inspiring. Despite her initial struggles with the keyboard and mouse, she persevered, asking insightful questions and even correcting my coding syntax once or twice.  
  
One day, after months of patient tutoring, she presented me with a small gift wrapped in tissue paper - a vintage computer mouse from her personal collection. It was her way of saying thank you for my time and patience. But what moved me most was the note attached: "To my young teacher, who never treated me like I was old."  
  
Mrs. Thompson's gesture made me realize that my passion for computer science isn't just about solving complex algorithms or building cutting-edge projects; it's also about making technology accessible and empowering others to learn and grow. Her gratitude fueled my desire to pursue a career in computer science or artificial intelligence, where I can bridge gaps between people and technology.  
  
This experience has shaped my approach to learning and teaching. It's why I founded our school's AI/ML Club, why I tutor middle school students in STEM subjects, and why I interned at a local tech startup this summer - not just to gain knowledge but also to share it.  
  
In your esteemed university, known for its innovative machine learning projects and competitive programming teams, I hope to find like-minded individuals who share this passion for learning and teaching. I look forward to contributing to your community while continuing to be inspired by it - much like Mrs. Thompson inspired me at our humble senior center.  
  
In essence, Mrs. Thompson's unexpected act of kindness didn't just make me happy; it motivated me to pay forward the patience and understanding she showed me. It's this spirit of gratitude that drives me today as I strive towards a future in computer science.

**Question 5: Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.**

Answer: "In the summer before my junior year, I interned at a local tech startup as their youngest software development intern. On my first day, I was tasked with contributing to their machine learning project, which was far beyond anything I'd done in my AP Computer Science class. I felt overwhelmed and doubted my abilities.  
  
One project milestone involved presenting our progress to the entire team. As I stood up to speak, my heart pounded and my hands trembled. I stumbled over my words, embarrassed by my nervousness. The team lead noticed and pulled me aside afterwards. He shared his own struggles with public speaking and offered guidance on how to manage nerves.  
  
I took his advice to heart and practiced mindfulness techniques before each presentation. Slowly but surely, my anxiety lessened. By the end of the internship, I delivered our final project update with confidence.  
  
This experience sparked personal growth in two ways. First, it taught me resilience; instead of shying away from challenges like public speaking, I now embrace them as opportunities for growth. Second, it deepened my understanding of empathy; seeing others' struggles helped me recognize that everyone has their own battles to fight.  
  
This realization has shaped how I lead my AI/ML club at school and tutor computer science at the local library. Now, I'm not just teaching technical skills; I'm fostering a supportive environment where everyone feels comfortable learning at their own pace.  
  
This university values students who embrace challenges and foster inclusive communities - qualities I've cultivated through this experience. I'm eager to bring this perspective to your campus and contribute to your diverse student body."

**Question 6: Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?**

Answer: No answer provided

**Question 7: Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.**

Answer: "In the quiet hum of my high school's computer lab, I found my sanctuary. It was here that I first encountered machine learning, a field that would soon ignite an unquenchable curiosity within me. I was drawn to its complexity, its promise of unlocking patterns hidden in vast seas of data.  
  
As a founding member and now president of our AI/ML Club, I've had the privilege of exploring this passion alongside like-minded peers. We've built predictive models from scratch, tinkered with neural networks until they purred like well-oiled machines, and even dabbled in creating simple bots that could learn and adapt. Each project was a puzzle waiting to be solved, each line of code a step closer to understanding this enigmatic realm.  
  
Last summer, my internship at a local tech startup offered me a glimpse into the real-world applications of my hobby. I worked on improving their recommendation engine, delving into user behavior data and tweaking algorithms until they sang in harmony. The challenge was immense, but so was the satisfaction when I saw my changes boost engagement by over twenty percent.  
  
Yet, what truly excites me about pursuing computer science and artificial intelligence in college is not just the technical prowess it demands but also the human connection it fosters. As a tutor at our local library and a volunteer tech support provider at the senior center, I've seen firsthand how technology can bridge gaps and empower lives. Whether it's helping a middle school student grasp binary code or teaching an elderly woman how to use her new tablet to video call her grandchildren, these interactions remind me that behind every line of code is a person whose life can be enriched.  
  
I am eager to bring this passion and perspective to your esteemed institution. Your renowned computer science program promises not just rigorous academics but also ample opportunities for hands-on learning and collaboration - aspects that resonate deeply with my approach to education. Moreover, your commitment to fostering ethical AI resonates with my belief that technology should serve humanity responsibly.  
  
So here's to more late-night coding sessions fueled by pizza and caffeine; here's to grappling with complex algorithms until they yield their secrets; here's to building not just machine learning models but also bridges between people through technology. Let's create something extraordinary together."