

Hey all!

My name is Tom Lum and I'm excited to be applying to be a Staff Writer with y'all! While my most recent professional work has been in software development, all throughout school, and even to this day, outside of work, my passion has always been learning new things and sharing that knowledge with other people.

In 2013 I had chosen to go to Vassar College with the specific intention of majoring in English and Theatre. This plan held strong until I had two unbelievably intelligent and compassionate professors in my introductory Computer Science and Cognitive Science classes who took the time to make me realize I loved these two subjects I didn't even know about. Because I now knew firsthand how much a little extra help and guidance can mean to folks, I signed up to be a teaching assistant for both of my new majors the moment I was able to, and continued until I graduated. One of the best parts of being a teaching assistant at Vassar is the fact that any student can take just about any class. Nothing improved my ability to communicate and understand perspectives better than teaching sorting algorithms to senior dance majors and helping undecided freshmen write papers on robotic ants. I also started a game development club (something that wasn't covered in any classes at the time) to teach all the things I was learning outside of classes. Even after graduating, I've jumped at every opportunity to come back as an alumni to teach students about the professional world, even holding unofficial hacking sessions in the computer lab to teach the latest technologies I knew were sadly missing from the curriculum.

But just as important for me as teaching in school was teaching on the internet. 10 Years ago, one of the earliest videos I uploaded to youtube was a piano tutorial of the song "When You Were Young (Abbey Road Version)". I had grown so accustomed to finding tutorials on youtube that, when I couldn't find one and had to learn the song on my own, it wasn't even a question that I would try to fill the gap with a tutorial of my own. Since then, as my knowledge expanded past the piano, I've made videos explaining neural network experiments I've performed, essays on the nature of algorithms and art, explorable explanations for Nickey Case, and most recently, inadvertently become a TikToker when my first TikTok about bee time perception hit 5 million views in a handful of days.

I think the work y'all do is some of the most interesting, fun, and important work out there and I would be so genuinely honored to be able to work with y'all and help make even cooler things together.

- Tom Lum