Successful application to Princeton University

G.T.

Planned Major

Computer Science

Admission

Regular Decision

Application Year

2020

5

Honors & Awards

10

Extracurriculars

Academics

SAT:

- Reading (770)
- Math (800)
- Essay (19)

AP Subjects:

- Biology (5)
- Calculus BC (5)
- English Language & Composition (5)

Honors & Awards

5th Place, Computer Programming Competition	State/Regional
Computer Science Award	School
Academic Award	School
Performing Arts Award	School
High Honor Roll	School

Extracurriculars

Software developer, Course Information App

Computer/Technology | 5 hr/wk

Utilized Javascript to create a centralized mobile/web app to share course info between teachers & 800+ students that replaced antiquated paper system

Co-President, School Music Council

Music: Vocal | 3 hr/wk

Led team of 20 students to organize & promote 20+ events all across campus; vocal & jazz concerts, musical showcases; coordinated with music faculty

Team Captain and Starting Pitcher, Softball

Athletics: JV/Varsity | 12 hr/wk

Starting pitcher; elected team captain in Junior year; planned and led practices with coaches; learned a brand new sport

Member, Computer Programming Club

Computer/Technology | 4 hr/wk

Taught 10+ members languages such as Python, Javascript, CSS/HTML; competed in local competitions; placed 5th in university competition

Co-President, Acapella Group

Music: Vocal | 2 hr/wk

Led team of 17 all girls performers; arranged all pieces; arranged performance opportunities within school: revisit days, fundraisers, concerts

Alto Singer, Choir

Music: Vocal | 4 hr/wk

Weekly practices; 6 performances a year, including during revisit days, choral concerts, and Christmas gatherings

Cast Member, Various School Musicals

Theater/Drama | 12 hr/wk

Played lead role of Tobias in Sweeney Todd '19; ensemble member in Guys & Dolls '17; featured role in Urinetown '18; designed all posters

Managing Editor, Literary Magazine

Journalism/Publication | 5 hr/wk

Managed publishing and submission schedules; coordinated writers, editors, and artists; personally contributed to every single issue (7+)

VP of Community Service, Int. Student Association

Other Club/Activity | 2 hr/wk

Hosted orientation events for 100+ students; organized fundraisers for international social issues; raised money for Save the Children

Team Manager, JV Girls Basketball

Athletics: JV/Varsity | 12 hr/wk

Organized game schedule with opposing teams; managed scorebook during games; assisted coaches with managing practices

Essay

Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma-anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

The moment I laid eyes on the cube, it was as if nothing else mattered. I remember my uncle explaining something about top row corners, but I was already turning the Rubik's cube in my hands around, wondering how its variegated faces could be aligned to create uniform color blocks. Every night for the next week, I would just spin the cube around, hoping that a solution would pop into my head. I started by attempting to align three cubes of one color - but the more I twisted the faces around, the more the colors seemed to scramble. I even tried randomly flicking the rows and columns back and forth, hoping to stumble upon a pattern, but nothing came to mind.

I begged my classmates to solve the cube hoping to memorize their tactics, and spent my breaks watching other people solve cubes online, transfixed by the many versions of this puzzle I found. This was to no avail, as the cube remained unsolved. But it wasn't until I realized that I needed to figure out a strategy that worked for me and focus on one face at a time, rather than everything all at once, that I began to make some progress on the cube. By the end of the month, I was able to align 7 out of 9 cubes on one face. I had taught myself a new technique, and while it had not led to a complete success, it was a breakthrough all the same.

It's been nine years since the day I was gifted the Rubik's cube, and I still have not been able to solve it. I suspect I never will. But I always come back to this problem not because of a relentless desire to solve or prove anything, but because I love the process of problem-solving. There is something special about being in a situation where I am not expected to immediately find a solution, and have time to examine a task from different angles and attempt to complete it in a multitude of ways. It is not the need to reach the final solution that drives me, but rather the knowledge that every bit of progress I make gives me a better understanding of the puzzle and contributes to my learning. When I approach daunting tasks, I ground myself by breaking down the problem and trying different approaches. Getting stuck is not a failure - rather, it is an opportunity to retrace my steps and figure out what went wrong.

Success is not defined by how many problems I am able to solve, or how good I am at things, but rather how resilient I am and how willing I am to learn. There is a sense of contentment that accompanies the wonder I feel whenever I open up the educational digital program I have been working on for the past year. There is wonder in my uncertainty about how things are going to turn out, the fact that I don't know if I will achieve the ideal result this time - if today will finally be the day I crack the code. I have tried many programming languages and platforms to recreate the designs and prototypes I have created, although I have not yet been successful in my attempts. But before when I would have shied away from the uncertainty of my success, I now embrace it.

I still find myself fiddling with my Rubik's cube during my free time because there is something to be said by finding those silver linings, those invaluable lessons in my relentless attempts to figure it out. Every so often I find delight in a breakthrough I've made, a technique I've finally learned or a piece that slotted in exactly where it needed to be. These small victories are meaningless in the larger scope of the world, but to me, they mean everything.