

Please describe how you have prepared for your intended major, including your readiness to succeed in your upper-division courses once you enroll at the university.

As a math major, it's difficult to give a concrete list of my mathematical experience, because math permeates every part of my life. Calculus has given me the tools to describe complex musical forms, letting me excel in band, and statistics has greatly improved my media literacy.

I tutor students ranging from 2nd grade to college-level math, which requires a fluent knowledge of every level of curriculum. I also take the highest level math classes available to me, even though I often have to fight for them.

In senior year of high school, I took three AP math courses. Despite attending a school where most classes had 30 or more students, I was one of only eight enrolled in Calculus BC, and one of only two who took the Physics C exam. I often spent lunchtime in the calculus room, listening to more detailed lectures, and I often researched quantum mechanics when it was hinted at in lectures.

When my school shut down due to COVID, my math classes kept me motivated. Calculus practice problems were always fun puzzles, but now they were a welcome break from the news, and the thrill of seeing a solution to a frustrating problem, and working through it until it clicked, was more than enough to keep me attending non mandatory lectures. The tests were reformatted, but I adjusted, set my own schedules, made my own workspace in my garage, and ultimately got 5s on all of those AP tests.

I wasn't able to enroll in any math classes this fall, but I'm counting down the days until I'm once again in a calculus class in spring. In the meantime, I'm still doing what math I can. I still tutor, watch video lectures, read about math, and use calculus problems as a fun way to pass the time. Although I'm able to learn some things on my own, I am ecstatic to go to a college where I

can major in math, and ready for the opportunity to take as many classes as I crave, with teachers to guide me along the way.

Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.

Between the doorbell ringing, customers talking, ovens buzzing, coins clinking, and a never-ending stream of orders flowing in, working fast-food can be overwhelming for anyone. Luckily, I learned how to lead in the erratic atmosphere of the pandemic.

The first few days are the most difficult for employees, and I stumbled through them like everyone else. Now, I'm entrusted with the task of guiding new employees through our store policies as they learn to navigate their first job. It took perseverance to learn how to teach, but in the process, I became a better team member and a better leader.

After training many people, I have found a balance between easing the initial workload and giving them enough experience that the work becomes more habitual and relaxing. For example, when crew members freeze up, I prompt them with the exact lines they should say to customers, but ultimately let them do the talking.

I gradually release responsibilities to the new hires, carefully monitoring them and giving them more freedom as they prove they can manage it. My most vital task is deciding when to let them make their own mistakes and when to step in. I work with dangerous equipment, including deep fryers filled with boiling oil, so I always intervene in matters of safety. That means I have to be constantly alert to dangers, even while letting the new hires work on their own. I've become an expert at multitasking, as I can't afford to take my focus away from my customers, either.

I started as an overwhelmed newcomer, but as I learned more and became more comfortable, I've also become a voice of support and clarification for others. Now, instead of learning about cash registers and order numbers, I am learning about balance, patience, and what a leader is. Someday, I will use these leadership skills to share my knowledge of math and science in the same way.

Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.

Once upon a time, a fantasy heroine saved her realm.

She didn't ask for a hero's burden. She certainly didn't ask for the apocalyptic nightmare that unfurled. Alas, her world shifted, cursed by plagues and fire demons and suffering. She begrudgingly accepted a quest through thick fog and rapid twists, following a faint, often invisible trail.

She was terrified, lost, and demoralized. Still, she was the chosen one, so she took one more step, and then another.

She thought back to the early days of the apocalypse. As the world collapsed, the sky had been clear, and she had felt free. That was before she decided to care, and it became a responsibility dragging her down. She knew it was the right choice, though.

She squinted through the fog and took one more step, wishing she wasn't the main character.

However bored and pessimistic she felt, though, she was still fictional, part of a grand show for a reader to enjoy.

I've been telling stories since I was too small to write, but this quarantine made a huge impact on my writing. No matter what, I am the main character, the narrator, and the most avid reader of my own story. I didn't choose the apocalypse, but I can control how it's framed, what the symbols mean, and how to handle crossroads. When I sit down at my keyboard, let my creativity flow, and switch the pronouns from me to her, I can craft adventure and charm into every part of my life.

My flaws become hers. She's hesitant, terrified of the invisible future. Then, she grows like me. She assembles a team of heroes who talk through enchanted mirrors, allies though they cannot touch. She sees that the world, even with its monsters, is worth fighting for, and by the time she reaches the abyss, she's not conflicted or afraid.

Her bravest moment, however, happened in her bleakest hour. In taking that one step and accepting her responsibility, she became a true hero.

She is me. If she can be brave, so can I. So I am.

Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.

In my junior year of high school, I was nominated for Girls' State, a highly selective mock government camp, and received a letter informing me that I wasn't the chosen delegate, but had been the second choice. I was disappointed, but luck was on my side. The first choice had a scheduling conflict, so I was given the opportunity to attend.

At Girls' State, I was surrounded by overachieving, smart, and talented girls. I was out of my tiny pond, and the entire camp seemed like a gift given by luck, so I decided to cherish every moment.

Early on, I auditioned for the talent show, and literally fell off of the stage. Somewhere else, I would've been disheartened, but this was an amazing summer camp dream, and I felt giddy that I had gotten a chance to try something new.

Later, I ran for Lt. Governor of Girls' State. I worked diligently on a speech and practiced it with my fellow campers. I made new friends who helped sign forms and run my campaign in the different dorms. There was a strict time limit, and we raced to get my paperwork completed. In the end, I didn't get the position, but it didn't feel like a loss. I gained practical knowledge of the intricacies of elections, collected dozens of signatures from girls who supported me, and was helped along by fellow teens that I had never met before, in an unstoppable impromptu alliance.

There were moments of unquestionable success, too. Despite my disastrous talent show audition, I joined the choir, and performed. I turned my speech into an inspirational one, and used it to lift my fellow campers spirits.

In the end, the most valuable gift was perspective. Yes, the camp was amazing, but I realized that my mindset could be utilized anywhere. We had a gorgeous campus and amazing guest speakers, but my best moments came from me when I stepped out of my comfort zone and let go of my need to be the best. Sometimes, being number two has a way of working out.