

In the first step of the essay editing process, the student brings a draft of the application essay for review. The college admission counselor's responsibility is to shape this initial attempt into a well-written essay that impresses admissions officers. Below is a sample essay that the student brought for editing.

Carnegie Mellon University: Prompt – Original Draft

Prompt: Please submit a one page, single-spaced essay that explains why you have chosen Carnegie Mellon and your particular major(s), department(s) or program(s). This essay should include the reasons why you've chosen the major(s), any goals or relevant work plans and any other information you would like us to know. For freshmen applying to more than one college or program, please mention each college or program to which you are applying. Because our admission committees review applicants by college and program, your essay can impact our final decision.

I love computer science. I have always wondered how computer work. My mother is a majored in computer science in college. She showed me a world of programming, logic and algorithms. I was instantly hooked. I started experimenting with coding and scripts on my own. My first experience of programming was during elementary school. I programmed Lego Robotics with three different languages (RoboLab, Mindstorms RCX, Mindstorms NXT). Later I moved to game programming. Scratch was the first engine I used. It was too easy, so I lost interest quickly. In the 2011, my interest for computer science was revitalized and changed for the better.

In the summer of 2011, my friends and I heard of a computer science (specifically for game and animation) workshop at Oracle. Oracle wasn't far from where we lived, so we went to the workshop all three days. There, I learned my friend (Eric Gan) was going to Carnegie Mellon for college. At that time I knew very little about the school, but Eric told me how great the school was for computer science and how they have the best programs in the world. We arrived at Oracle and sat down for class it came.

Alice (the software) was something that changed my perspective on computer science. I programmed with it for the two days and I was really into the way it organized commands. It was easy to understand and yet it was a powerful engine. But I wanted something more. I had a vision of a 3d game, browser based, free and fun. I needed something more powerful. I started with Unreal Development Kit (UDK), but the engine did not seem to fit what I needed. Then I used Unity. Unity's engine appealed to me the most, its licensing, the power and layout was just what I needed. I learned some basics on the engine, but I still missing something that could help me create the game in the vision. It was coding.

All software needs coding. My first step into the real world of computer science was the summer of 2012, in which I look a quarter of Java coding. The class opened my eyes to a bigger world of computer science and where it could take me. With the combination of my love for gaming, my vision, and coding, I decided I want make games for a living. I have taken a few steps into the field but I wanted to know more. I wanted to take Unity programming classes or any other game development class. I tried ROP, but I didn't qualify for the class. Other summer programs (such as ID Tech) were too expensive for me. The only class I was able to attend was the Java coarse held online my a local community college.

I needed more; I wanted to continue my education in computer science. College was the next step. I researched for many months on which college was best for me in learning computer science. Carnegie Mellon was always on the top of my list. They have one of the best, if not, the best program for computer science majors like me. I also learned that Alice was also being

developed by Carnegie Mellon. I want to be part of the team that inspired me to continue pursuing computer science. I want to achieve my vision of making computer science easy and available to everyone. With Alice, I can achieve more and make my vision a reality.

Right now, my friends and I are planning to create an application for the iPhone during the second semester of high school. We plan on using Unity to accomplish it and plan on taking a semester of C++ online through a community college as well. Hopefully, I will be able to apply the computer science skills I learned over the years in the application.

(forgot to add I did a game during elementary school as san jose tech museum)

In the second step, the college admissions counselor will provide feedback on the essay's content, organization and structure, and style. The counselor will advise the student on areas for improvement and work with the student to address those concerns. The comments provided here (in blue balloons) are examples of the type of commentary given to the student.

Carnegie Mellon University: Prompt – Original Draft with Comments

Prompt: Please submit a one page, single-spaced essay that explains why you have chosen Carnegie Mellon and your particular major(s), department(s) or program(s). This essay should include the reasons why you've chosen the major(s), any goals or relevant work plans and any other information you would like us to know. For freshmen applying to more than one college or program, please mention each college or program to which you are applying. Because our admission committees review applicants by college and program, your essay can impact our final decision.

I love computer science. I have always wondered how computer work. My mother is a majored in computer science in college. She showed me a world of programming, logic and algorithms. I was instantly hooked. I started experimenting with coding and scripts on my own. My first experience of programming was during elementary school. I programmed Lego Robotics with three different languages (RoboLab, Mindstorms RCX, Mindstorms NXT). Later I moved to game programming. Scratch was the first engine I used. It was too easy, so I lost interest quickly. In the 2011, my interest for computer science was revitalized and changed for the better.

Comment [A1]: Open with an image or an anecdote. Tell a story that engages the reader.

Comment [A2]: Show the reader why these activities appealed to you. You want the admissions committee to understand your mindset and motivation.

Comment [A3]: Excellent that you mention specifics. Give the reader more details about these experiences.

Comment [A4]: You need to discuss the details and specifics. Why was it so easy? (This way you can showcase the skills you already have and show the admissions committee a desire to go beyond basics and learn more.

Comment [A5]: Use proper nouns - the names of your friends and the programs.

Comment [A6]: Move this part of the essay to elsewhere. It's too jarring here. Also, you need to state what about CMU is "great" and what makes their programs "the best programs in the world."

In the summer of 2011, my friends and I heard of a computer science (specifically for game and animation) workshop at Oracle. Oracle wasn't far from where we lived, so we went to the workshop all three days. There, I learned my friend (Eric Gan) was going to Carnegie Mellon for college. At that time I knew very little about the school, but Eric told me how great the school was for computer science and how they have the best programs in the world. We arrived at Oracle and sat down for class it came.

Comment [A7]: Condense the paragraph.

Alice (the software) was something that changed my perspective on computer science. I programmed with it for the two days and I was really into the way it organized commands. It was easy to understand and yet it was a powerful engine. But I wanted something more. I had a vision of a 3d game, browser based, free and fun. I needed something more powerful. I started with Unreal Development Kit (UDK), but the engine did not seem to fit what I needed. Then I used Unity. Unity's engine appealed to me the most, its licensing, the power and layout was just what I needed. I learned some basics on the engine, but I still missing something that could help me create the game in the vision. It was coding.

All software needs coding. My first step into the real world of computer science was the summer of 2012, in which I look a quarter of Java coding. The class opened my eyes to a bigger world of computer science and where it could take me. With the combination of my love for gaming, my vision, and coding, I decided I want make games for a living. I have taken a few steps into the field but I wanted to know more. I wanted to take Unity programming classes or any other game development class. I tried ROP, but I didn't qualify for the class. Other summer programs (such as ID Tech) were too expensive for me. The only class I was able to attend was the Java coarse held online my a local community college.

Comment [A8]: This paragraph is moving your essay background. You mention wanting to study Unity to add to your learning, but in the paragraph before, you mention having used Unity already. I understand that you want to state that exposure to Unity inspired you to learn Unity coding, but the order and paragraph breaks make that point vague. Maybe combine the paragraph and reorganize the chronology so that it's easier to follow.

I needed more; I wanted to continue my education in computer science. College was the next step. I researched for many months on which college was best for me in learning computer science. Carnegie Mellon was always on the top of my list. They have one of the best, if not, the best program for computer science majors like me. I also learned that Alice was also being developed by Carnegie Mellon. I want to be part of the team that inspired me to continue pursuing computer science. I want to achieve my vision of making computer science easy and available to everyone. With Alice, I can achieve more and make my vision a reality.

Right now, my friends and I are planning to create an application for the iPhone during the second semester of high school. We plan on using Unity to accomplish it and plan on taking a semester of C++ online through a community college as well. Hopefully, I will be able to apply the computer science skills I learned over the years in the application.

(forgot to add I did a game during elementary school as san jose tech museum)

Comment [A9]: Needs a smoother transition to discussion about the school. Also, you need to research specific aspects of the school to be able to discuss them in the essay. Find professors, programs, and current news items about the school. Avoid sparse and non-specific references. Show the school that you actually want to attend by spending the effort to show you researched the school thoroughly, and that you're not interested only for the school's big name reputation. Set yourself apart from other students.

Comment [A10]: This conclusion is too anti-climactic. Discuss your future plans and how you plan to apply your skills to contributing to your current and future campus communities and the world. Mention college student organizations and research communities you plan to take part in, and how you plan to use your education to benefit the world.

In the third step, the college admissions counselor completes a thorough edit and revision of the each essay draft, modifying structure and word choice to better express the student's ideas and overall message. An essay might take several edits to complete. Below is an example of ONE edit.

Carnegie Mellon University: Prompt – Edits

Prompt: Please submit a one page, single-spaced essay that explains why you have chosen Carnegie Mellon and your particular major(s), department(s) or program(s). This essay should include the reasons why you've chosen the major(s), any goals or relevant work plans and any other information you would like us to know. For freshmen applying to more than one college or program, please mention each college or program to which you are applying. Because our admission committees review applicants by college and program, your essay can impact our final decision.

Our animated Old Spice Guy executed a quick succession of push-ups before facing the audience: “Ladies, can your man smell like me? Yes, if he stops using that lavender scented body wash.” The class laughed as Old Spice Guy leaped from his galloping stallion and flew into the sunset in his biplane. Our judges awarded our Old Spice animation the Java Summer Workshop 2011 “Funniest Animation” and we beamed as we took the stage.

When I love computer science. I have always wondered how computer work. My mother introduced me to is a majored in computer science in college. She showed me a world of programming, logic and algorithms. I was instantly hooked. I started experimenting with coding and writing scripts on my own. In fifth grade, my My first experience of programming was during elementary school. I programmed Lego Robotics class taught me to code in with three different languages, (RoboLab, Mindstorms RCX, Mindstorms NXT.) which I used to program Itsy-Bitsy to retrieve a stranded Lego dolphin. Later, I developed an interest moved to game programming with Scratch, but was the first engine I used. It was too easy, so I quickly lost interest quickly. In the 2011, I took a summer course that revitalized and strengthened my interest in for computer science was revitalized and changed for the better.

In the summer of 2011, my friends and I signed up for a heard of a computer science (specifically for game and animation) workshop specializing in game animation at Oracle. During the three day workshop, Kyle, Valerie, Eric and I worked with Oracle wasn't far from where we lived, so we went to the workshop all three days. There, I learned my friend (Eric Gan) was going to Carnegie Mellon for college. At that time I knew very little about the school, but Eric told me how great the school was for computer science and how they have the best programs in the world. We arrived at Oracle and sat down for class it came.

Alice e (the software,)which was something that changed my perspective on computer science. I programming with Alice, I enjoyed the easy to understand, yet powerful, engine and the way in which it ed with it for the two days and I was really into the way it organized commands. It was easy to understand and yet it was a powerful engine. But I wanted something more. I enhad a visioned using my new skills to create of a 3-Dd game, browser-based, free and fun. I needed more specific options from the softwaresomething more powerful. I started with Unreal Development Kit (UDK), but the engine did not seem tailored to my to fit what I need. Then I used Unity because Unity's engine appealed to me the most; its licensing, the power and layout wereas just what I needed. I learned some basics on the Unity engine, but I still lacked a crucial skill to missing something that could help me create the game in my the-vision. I needed to learn how to code. It was coding.

All software requireneeds coding. My first step into the real world of computer science was the summer of 2012, when in which I took a quarter of Java coding at the local community college. The class opened my eyes to a bigger world of computer science and where it could take

me. With the combination of my love for gaming, my vision, and coding, I decided I wanted to make games for a living. I have taken a few steps into the field but I wanted to know more. I wanted to take Unity programming classes and or any other game development class. I tried ROP, but I did not qualify for the class. Other summer programs (such as ID Tech) proved were too expensive for me. I elected to take a distance course online through Foothill Community College, which introduced me to loops, strings, object-oriented programming and other Java basics. The only class I was able to attend was the Java course held online my a local community college.

At Carnegie Mellon, I needed more; I wanted to continue my education in computer science. College was the next step. I researched for many months on which college was best for me in learning computer science. Carnegie Mellon's strong was always on the top of my list. They have one of the best, if not, the best program for computer science program offerings will allow me to develop [redacted] through courses such as [redacted] majors like me. I also learned that Alice was also being developed by Carnegie Mellon is also home to the creative team of Alice, and; I want to be part of the team that inspired me to continue pursuing computer science. I want to achieve my vision of making computer science easy and available to everyone. With Alice, I can help create more access to computer science for other interested students and achieve more and make my vision a reality.

Right now, my friends and I are planning to create an application for the iPhone during our the second semester of senior year high school. We plan on using Unity to accomplish it and plan on taking a semester of C++ online through a community college as well. Hopefully, I will be able to apply the computer science skills I learned over the years in the development of the application. In the future, [redacted]

Comments:

- highlighted parts indicate areas where rephrasing or further elaboration is needed

The final essay has undergone many drafts and revisions before it is finally ready to be submitted. The final essay is now a compelling piece of the student's application, representing the student well and placing the student at best advantage for admission.

Carnegie Mellon University: Prompt – Final

Prompt: Please submit a one page, single-spaced essay that explains why you have chosen Carnegie Mellon and your particular major(s), department(s) or program(s). This essay should include the reasons why you've chosen the major(s), any goals or relevant work plans and any other information you would like us to know. For freshmen applying to more than one college or program, please mention each college or program to which you are applying. Because our admission committees review applicants by college and program, your essay can impact our final decision.

Our animated Old Spice Guy executed a quick succession of push-ups before facing the audience: “Ladies, can your man smell like me? Yes, if he stops using that lady scented body wash.” The class laughed as Old Spice Guy leaped from his galloping stallion and flew into the sunset in his biplane. Our judges awarded our Old Spice animation the Java Summer Workshop 2011 “Funniest Animation” and we beamed as we took the stage.

When my mother introduced me to programming, logic and algorithms, I – instantly hooked – started experimenting with coding and writing scripts. In fifth grade, my Lego Robotics class taught me to code in three different languages, RoboLab, Mindstorms RCX, Mindstorms NXT, which I used to program Robo-Bob to retrieve a stranded Lego dolphin. Later, I developed an interest game programming with Scratch, a simple game programming software, but I quickly lost interest due to a lack of more complicated commands. In 2011, I took a summer course that revitalized and strengthened my interest in computer science.

In the summer of 2011, my friends and I signed up for a computer science workshop specializing in game animation at Oracle. During the three day workshop, Kyle, Valerie, Eric and I worked with Alice, an animation software which changed my perspective on computer science. I enjoyed the easy to understand yet powerful engine and the way in which Alice organized commands. I envisioned using my new skills to create a 3-D game that was browser-based, free and fun. However, I needed more specific options from the software. I started with Unreal Development Kit (UDK), but the engine did not seem tailored to my needs. Then I used Unity because its engine appealed to me the most; its licensing, power and layout were just what I needed. I learned some basics on the Unity engine, but I still lacked a crucial skill to create the game in my vision. I needed to learn how to code.

All software requires coding. My first step into the real world of computer science was the summer of 2012, when I took a quarter of Java coding at the local community college. The class opened my eyes to a bigger world of computer science and where it could take me. With the combination of my love for gaming, my vision, and coding, I decided I wanted make games for a living. I had taken a few steps into the field but I wanted to know more. I wanted to take Unity programming classes and other game development class. I tried our school’s ROP, but I did not qualify for the class. Other summer programs (such as ID Tech) proved too expensive. I elected to take a distance course online through Foothill Community College, which introduced me to loops, strings, object-oriented programming and other Java basics.

At Carnegie Mellon, I want to continue my education in computer science. Carnegie Mellon’s strong computer science program will allow me to develop advanced coding skills, abilities to help me achieve my vision to make amazing games, through courses such as computer game programming and artificial intelligences. Carnegie Mellon is also home to the creative team of Alice, and I want to be part of the team that inspired me to continue pursuing computer science. I want to achieve my goal of making computer science easy and available to

everyone. With Alice, I can help create more access to computer science for other interested students and make my vision a reality.

As of now, my friends and I plan to create an application for the iPhone during our second semester of senior year. We plan on using Unity to accomplish our project and plan on taking a semester of C++ online through a community college distance program. Hopefully, I will be able to apply the computer science skills I learned over the years in the development of the application. In the future, I hope to work as a programmer for game companies in the electronic sports scene and make my vision a reality.

Just in case you already forget how the first draft looks like, below please find the first and final draft for comparison. Please carefully check them: you will be amazed by how many changes are made in wording, content and structure.

Carnegie Mellon University: Prompt – Original Draft

Prompt: Please submit a one page, single-spaced essay that explains why you have chosen Carnegie Mellon and your particular major(s), department(s) or program(s). This essay should include the reasons why you've chosen the major(s), any goals or relevant work plans and any other information you would like us to know. For freshmen applying to more than one college or program, please mention each college or program to which you are applying. Because our admission committees review applicants by college and program, your essay can impact our final decision.

I love computer science. I have always wondered how computer work. My mother is a majored in computer science in college. She showed me a world of programming, logic and algorithms. I was instantly hooked. I started experimenting with coding and scripts on my own. My first experience of programming was during elementary school. I programmed Lego Robotics with three different languages (RoboLab, Mindstorms RCX, Mindstorms NXT). Later I moved to game programming. Scratch was the first engine I used. It was too easy, so I lost interest quickly. In the 2011, my interest for computer science was revitalized and changed for the better.

In the summer of 2011, my friends and I heard of a computer science (specifically for game and animation) workshop at Oracle. Oracle wasn't far from where we lived, so we went to the workshop all three days. There, I learned my friend (Eric Gan) was going to Carnegie Mellon for college. At that time I knew very little about the school, but Eric told me how great the school was for computer science and how they have the best programs in the world. We arrived at Oracle and sat down for class it came.

Alice (the software) was something that changed my perspective on computer science. I programmed with it for the two days and I was really into the way it organized commands. It was easy to understand and yet it was a powerful engine. But I wanted something more. I had a vision of a 3d game, browser based, free and fun. I needed something more powerful. I started with Unreal Development Kit (UDK), but the engine did not seem to fit what I needed. Then I used Unity. Unity's engine appealed to me the most, its licensing, the power and layout was just what I needed. I learned some basics on the engine, but I still missing something that could help me create the game in the vision. It was coding.

All software needs coding. My first step into the real world of computer science was the summer of 2012, in which I look a quarter of Java coding. The class opened my eyes to a bigger world of computer science and where it could take me. With the combination of my love for gaming, my vision, and coding, I decided I want make games for a living. I have taken a few steps into the field but I wanted to know more. I wanted to take Unity programming classes or any other game development class. I tried ROP, but I didn't qualify for the class. Other summer programs (such as ID Tech) were too expensive for me. The only class I was able to attend was the Java coarse held online my a local community college.

I needed more; I wanted to continue my education in computer science. College was the next step. I researched for many months on which college was best for me in learning computer science. Carnegie Mellon was always on the top of my list. They have one of the best, if not, the best program for computer science majors like me. I also learned that Alice was also being developed by Carnegie Mellon. I want to be part of the team that inspired me to continue pursuing computer science. I want to achieve my vision of making computer science easy and available to everyone. With Alice, I can achieve more and make my vision a reality.

Right now, my friends and I are planning to create an application for the iPhone during the second semester of high school. We plan on using Unity to accomplish it and plan on taking a semester of C++ online through a community college as well. Hopefully, I will be able to apply the computer science skills I learned over the years in the application.

Carnegie Mellon University: Prompt – Final

Prompt: Please submit a one page, single-spaced essay that explains why you have chosen Carnegie Mellon and your particular major(s), department(s) or program(s). This essay should include the reasons why you've chosen the major(s), any goals or relevant work plans and any other information you would like us to know. For freshmen applying to more than one college or program, please mention each college or program to which you are applying. Because our admission committees review applicants by college and program, your essay can impact our final decision.

Our animated Old Spice Guy executed a quick succession of push-ups before facing the audience: "Ladies, can your man smell like me? Yes, if he stops using that lady scented body wash." The class laughed as Old Spice Guy leaped from his galloping stallion and flew into the sunset in his biplane. Our judges awarded our Old Spice animation the Java Summer Workshop 2011 "Funniest Animation" and we beamed as we took the stage.

When my mother introduced me to programming, logic and algorithms, I – instantly hooked – started experimenting with coding and writing scripts. In fifth grade, my Lego Robotics class taught me to code in three different languages, RoboLab, Mindstorms RCX, Mindstorms NXT, which I used to program Robo-Bob to retrieve a stranded Lego dolphin. Later, I developed an interest game programming with Scratch, a simple game programming software, but I quickly lost interest due to a lack of more complicated commands. In 2011, I took a summer course that revitalized and strengthened my interest in computer science.

In the summer of 2011, my friends and I signed up for a computer science workshop specializing in game animation at Oracle. During the three day workshop, Kyle, Valerie, Eric and I worked with Alice, an animation software which changed my perspective on computer science. I enjoyed the easy to understand yet powerful engine and the way in which Alice organized commands. I envisioned using my new skills to create a 3-D game that was browser-based, free and fun. However, I needed more specific options from the software. I started with Unreal Development Kit (UDK), but the engine did not seem tailored to my needs. Then I used Unity because its engine appealed to me the most; its licensing, power and layout were just what I needed. I learned some basics on the Unity engine, but I still lacked a crucial skill to create the game in my vision. I needed to learn how to code.

All software requires coding. My first step into the real world of computer science was the summer of 2012, when I took a quarter of Java coding at the local community college. The class opened my eyes to a bigger world of computer science and where it could take me. With the combination of my love for gaming, my vision, and coding, I decided I wanted make games for a living. I had taken a few steps into the field but I wanted to know more. I wanted to take Unity programming classes and other game development class. I tried our school's ROP, but I did not qualify for the class. Other summer programs (such as ID Tech) proved too expensive. I elected to take a distance course online through Foothill Community College, which introduced me to loops, strings, object-oriented programming and other Java basics.

At Carnegie Mellon, I want to continue my education in computer science. Carnegie Mellon's strong computer science program will allow me to develop advanced coding skills, abilities to help me achieve my vision to make amazing games, through courses such as computer game programming and artificial intelligences. Carnegie Mellon is also home to the creative team of Alice, and I want to be part of the team that inspired me to continue pursuing computer science. I want to achieve my goal of making computer science easy and available to everyone. With Alice, I can help create more access to computer science for other interested students and make my vision a reality.

As of now, my friends and I plan to create an application for the iPhone during our second semester of senior year. We plan on using Unity to accomplish our project and plan on taking a semester of C++ online through a community college distance program. Hopefully, I will be able to apply the computer science skills I learned over the years in the development of the application. In the future, I hope to work as a programmer for game companies in the electronic sports scene and make my vision a reality.