

<http://admissions.berkeley.edu/personalstatement>

Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from UC Berkeley

PROMPT #1: Describe the world you come from—for example, your family, community or school—and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.

The promise of future computer development seems certain to devour most aspects of my future. Coming from China's Silicon Valley of Zhongguancun in Beijing, this doesn't surprise me. My city is metallic and flashy, a beacon into the future of globalization. It testifies to the success of free market systems as one of only three special economic zones established by the Chinese government. That standard gives me a perspective highly focused on advancing computer science. I've grown up watching founding Chinese tech companies like Lenovo Group alongside foreign ones like Google as they develop new generations of laptops and advertising opportunities for businesses. In the past few years, I've benefitted from seeing this Beijing district turn into a globally renowned site for computer innovation. The people that work in Zhongguancun are smart and creative. They focus on refining existing technologies and making the consumer computing products of tomorrow. These kinds of advancements are a part of the culture I call home. Their example gives me something to live up to as I pursue a cosmopolitan brand of computer science education at UC Berkeley.

Growing up, I remember eagerly waiting for my dad to come home from work at the Lenovo Group. Even today, my house is filled with opened computers and spare microchips lying around. One of my earliest memories comes from constantly putting different parts together in my father's basement. My sense of curiosity benefitted from

my father's patience as he showed me the latest projects he works on. Lenovo's DOit apps are designed to connect the world through cloud file transfers and writing recognition software. This involves complex computer code that I am still working to grasp. I try and copy the same functions in the DOit app in writing my own programs on my laptop. Things rarely work perfectly the first time. File transfers come through in formats that I cannot open. The handwriting software reproduces a mirror image of the intended result. Each time, I learn from the experience and make adjustments. My father's influence gave me the experience of a talented amateur with plenty of room for growth in professional development.

I am passionate about learning but never enjoyed going to school that much. I hope that doesn't seem too contradictory. In China, some people think learning and school should always go together, but most of what they taught me at school was just copying and pasting other people's ideas into my papers and then taking a bunch of bubble tests where I hardly get to see the result. As for the Zhongkao, it was a nightmare of academic Olympics that measured my life achievement in a standardized test. Still, did learn a few things from school, especially a love for reading. When I'm not working on computers, I've found a passion for reading about communication. Getting along with others is the key to getting anything meaningful done, especially if I ever decide to start my own IT company.

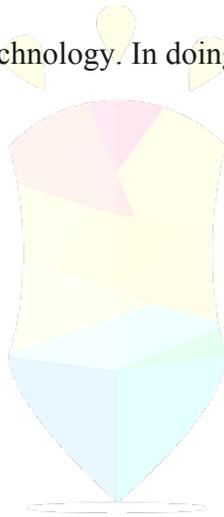
PROMPT #2: Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

In 2011, I decided to start using my computer knowledge to help others. I posted microblogs on Weibo to help people when their computers stopped working. I received a lot of contact from middle-aged people who were skeptical of a young person with a free service. It was slow at first, but I worked hard to help solve problems. I learned how to fix system malfunctions like malware and slow performance as well as upgrade hard drives and RAM. The experience made me even more curious to learn about how computers worked, and I spent time with my father learning code on ChinesePython. By the time I was 15, I was assembling my own computers and writing programs that mimicked the DOit apps. This explains why I started learning English as I sought to understand international code like C++ and Java. The accomplishment of starting my own service project directly relates to the broad person I am today.

People think that computer science is nerdy. I disagree. Everyone uses computers to connect with other people. It should come naturally that the people who design and fix computers understand how to engage with the people they provide their service to. I'm proud of this project because I learned how to work with people and solve their technical problems. Acting in ways that seem blunt, rude, or shy is not very interesting. Instead, I learned to act respectfully with great courtesy to the people who sought my help. They look to me to help solve their computer problems, but they usually go away feeling better about themselves.

The experience of losing my father, however, was perhaps one of my greatest challenges. His death was unexpected, and I immediately lost a teacher and role model. Afterwards, I stopped working with computers for a few months because I did not care any more. I did not see the point of continuing without his encouragement and guidance.

My father made me the person I am today, but I had to learn to appreciate programming computers for myself. A few months after he died, I woke up to a stormy day. I checked my Weibo account as usual only to discover a message from one of the first people I had helped with my service project, thanking me for the good work. I realized in that moment that my growth in computer science must continue. It isn't for my father, for the people I help, or even for a degree. It is for my passion for working. By programming computers and solving technical problems, I do things that few people my age can accomplish: help people communicate better using technology. In doing so, I fulfill my purpose.



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