**1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, please share your story.**

**Adventures in reading and writing**

I looked out beyond the deck of the spaceship, the blue-white glow of the galaxy filling the bridge and bouncing off my eyes. I wondered where to go from here. Find aliens, or discover new planets.

And then I heard a voice saying, “What are you up to?” bringing me back to reality, leaning back on a chair in the library, my hand on my chin and my mind scrambled from the interruption. This was a typical incident where I was thinking about a story idea.

I have always had a passion for storytelling. Of course, I have other interests, science, technology, even geopolitics. But storytelling is something I have clung to. I have grown up with it. As a child, I was constantly told stories of the natural world. I was told innumerable stories from mythology; how gods and demons fought, how they affected the way that nature functions today. As I grew older, I encountered various stories about people, some fictional and others real, from *Sherlock Holmes* and *Spider-Man* to books about animals and the Indian independence struggle.

Now, I am more mature and can tell fact from fiction. But I still value every story I have heard. If it weren’t for them, I would have grown up in a world which I wasn’t interested in at all. I wouldn’t have met characters who inspired me to be courageous and always stand up for my beliefs. I wouldn’t have gained the habit of actively reading a text; a skill I found to be life-saving in academics. I wouldn’t have realised the sheer size of the world and what I wanted to do in it. Reading empowered me with knowledge, and my teachers were often impressed with my answers in class and the development of my thoughts.

Until grade 7, I was extremely content with reading books and playing video games in my free time. But then came a writing assignment from the English teacher, propelling me into the art of translating the myriad of ideas in my mind into stories. Writing helped me immensely. I learned the fine art of selecting the right words. I learned how to enhance and enrich my imagination. I made so many memories, including my longest story which I wrote with who are now my best, all-weather friends.

Writing not only helped me consolidate friendships, but also showed another side of myself to people. I am usually a very logical person who strives to do his best in academics, but my stories surprised peers and teachers alike by giving them insights about my creativity and personal thoughts. People usually think that creativity and logic are in opposition, but I have experienced firsthand how one can fuel the other’s strengths. Writing helped me see ideologies and arguments from many different perspectives, allowing me to understand others’ opinions logically. I learned to use this ability in various everyday situations and discuss a broad range of topics.

On the other hand, adding logic and knowledge to my work bolstered many aspects of it and made my creations closer to being ‘alive’.

There were challenges that I faced. Writing and academics did not always go hand in hand, and I had to sometimes let go of the former to focus on the latter. This was especially true in 10th grade for my IGCSE boards. However, from this, I learned to prioritise and utilise my time as efficiently as possible.

Most importantly, writing taught me to never give up, to constantly revise the drafts of my life and make them as perfect as possible, to always have stories to tell. Not for anyone else, but for me.