

Why College Is Important to Me

by Julia Deng

I love the beauty of communicating words and the precision of writing code, which is essentially conversing with a computer. Just like writing essays or stories, coding requires precise syntax—semicolons, escape sequences with backslashes, and vocabulary to evoke action. Much like a poem whose every word and punctuation mark has meaning, every line of code performs a function within the whole. Experimenting with the order of commands in Java reminds me of analyzing reversed word order in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

High school is the place where I learn the foundations of computer science and begin to grasp the nuances of the English language, but college is the world in which I will pursue the depths of a multidisciplinary curriculum. With my college education, I want to find the intersection of language and thought, open roads between exploring consciousness in humans and computers, and even uncover music's effects on brain development.

Growing up learning and playing music, I have always been interested in the connection between music, emotions, and the mind. I play viola by interpreting black circles and lines on a white page into stories, injecting life into notes. The transition between two legatos is the curve of a river. A crescendo becomes a young girl in yellow boots splashing higher up along that river. Another line is a shallow pool, with a magnifying glass zooming in to inspect the rocks, water striders, and fallen leaves.

How do brains perceive images from sound? How can I convey these images from one mind to another? I want to venture into the frontiers of the human mind. I want to

develop this perspective of seeing music and visualizing sound into something I can only dream of. College is where my explorative vision will evolve.

I crave discovery, and I know college is where I'll find people to make those discoveries with. My path of higher education towards a career follows fields like natural language processing and generation: teaching computers to understand human language, learning to talk with a computer in its own language, and translating what machines can comprehend into language we can interact with. Maybe an interdisciplinary study of computer science can even help me analyze Shakespeare.

The future is ripe with possibility. College can't help me save the whole world, but it just might help me save creativity in the whirlwind of technology.