



COLLEGE ESSAYS · BEFORE & AFTER

Counting out loud

Supplemental essay · a community you belong to

BEFORE · 158 WORDS

Music has always been a huge part of my life. Ever since I joined the marching band in ninth grade, the drumline has been my second family. We practice for hours in the hot sun and push each other to be our best.

Through band, I have learned the value of teamwork, dedication, and perseverance. As a section leader my senior year, I have tried to be a role model for the younger members. I remember how lost I felt as a freshman, since I did not know how to read music very well, and I do not want anyone else to feel that way. I made a chart to help the freshmen learn their parts.

Band has taught me that hard work pays off and that a group can accomplish more than any individual can alone. I will always cherish the memories I have made with my drumline family, and I plan to continue playing in college.

I could not read music when I joined the drumline. I faked it for most of ninth grade by watching the hands of the person next to me, half a beat behind, which works until the person next to you is also wrong.

What fixed it was counting out loud. Our director made me say the subdivisions — one-e-and-a, two-e-and-a — before I was allowed to play them, out loud, in front of the section. It was as bad as it sounds. By November I could hear where the beat was going before I saw anybody's hands.

Three years later I'm the section leader, and what I am actually responsible for is the two or three freshmen every fall who are doing exactly what I did. They're easy to spot. They watch hands. So we count out loud, the same way, and they hate it the same way I did.

I also made a chart: every part broken into two-bar chunks, one column for tempo, one for the date they played it clean. It isn't a teaching method. It's a way for somebody who is behind to see that they're moving, which is the only thing that kept me in the section my freshman year.

Our line is not the best in the state. We're the section where someone who couldn't read music in September is playing the show in October. I would rather be that than the other thing.