

Opening Remarks

You definitely have a unique story to tell! However, your main message about not letting failure hold you back is a familiar theme in admissions essays, so I think we can dig deeper to showcase how you have grown since your first fight. Then, we'll work on crafting a structure to keep the reader hooked and make room for more details about how your interest in robotics has inspired other interests.

Your Content

- Through your writing, I learn about your interest in and aptitude for building robots for competitions, and I learn that your first fight (and first loss) taught you the importance of perseverance in the face of defeat. This is a great start with a lot of potential.
- We learn a lot about this one experience when you were nine, but the reader will want to know more about how you have applied this interest and lesson to other aspects of your life more recently. Below, I'm going to ask you some questions whose answers can help you develop some new material to give the reader a clearer sense of who you are now.
 - **Scene:** Let's start with your first fight. I'm interested to know a little more about the atmosphere and what you were feeling in the moment. Where were you, and what was the arena like? How did your robot compare to your opponent's, besides the differing materials? Were you nervous, or confident that all your hard work would pay off?
 - **Motivation:** Next, I'm curious about your motivation for building a robot. Why were you drawn to this competition? Was this the first time you built a robot? How did you learn how to build one? Readers will be interested to see your curiosity and pro-active learning in action.
 - **Results:** Most importantly, I'm curious about what this experience has led you to do more recently. Have you pursued robotics or related fields in school or independently? What skills have you learned, and how have you applied them or developed them since you began building robots? Do you have any examples of another time related to your interests where you were resilient in the face of defeat?
 - **Guiding Message:** It seems that your main message is that this first loss inspired you to be "the guy that nobody wants to fight." How else have you worked to better yourself and learn on your own? How will you apply those skills going forward?

Your Structure

- Below, is an example outline to help show the reader how you have grown since your first fight. This outline will suggest how and where you could incorporate some of the answers to the questions I've asked, and will make space for you to add more details

about how you have grown since this experience. Note: Each section can be multiple paragraphs.

- **Introduction:** You already have a pretty compelling introduction! See my suggestion for how you can create a stronger first sentence. Then, you can incorporate some of your answers to the “Scene” questions to flesh out this moment.
- **First section:** Next, you can heighten suspense by providing some context for how you came to compete. Show us why you were drawn to this competition, and provide some details about your building process. This is where you'll answer some of the “Motivation” questions.
- **Second section:** Next, you can show us the outcome of the battle, and how it felt when you lost.
- **Third section:** Now, let's fast forward. Include your answers to some of the “Results” questions to show us how you have applied the lessons and skills from these competitions to other areas of your life. Show us how your experience as a competitor feed into your present-day curiosities, and consider including how it has affected how you approached a recent challenge.
- **Conclusion:** Here is where you'll reinforce the guiding message of your essay, which seems to be that you are determined to be "the guy nobody wants to fight." This is where you can answer some of the “Guiding Message” questions.

Next Steps:

- First, reflect on the questions I have asked you, and jot down some notes and specific details about how robotics have influenced other areas of your life.
- Review the example outline to help you organize your content.
- Create your own outline that incorporates your new material.
- Once you have incorporated your answers, you will have a more compelling draft that paints a vivid picture of a thoughtful, ambitious, and creative person. Great effort so far, and good luck!

The Intro Fight

I have always been interested in robots. Nine-year-old me couldn't get enough of shows like Discovery's *Battlebots*, competitions that combined mechanics with all the excitement of a real battle. I spent months building my first robot, and finally it was time to fight. My first opponent was a handful of years older than me and far more experienced. Despite how favored he was, an air of anticipation hung over the crowd. The announcer called us up. My titanium-clad opponent entered first, and I, clad with aluminum, followed. With shaky hands, I turned my robot on and it buzzed into electronic life.

Our robots weren't simply line followers or basketball shooters. They were combat robots – smashing, crashing killing machines. I had spent painstaking hours of trial and error constructing my aluminum and polycarbonate machine and learning how to radio control it in my family's living room. The robot's weapon was a flipper, which aimed to immobilize other robots by lifting their wheels off the ground.

With four beeps and some green lights, it was time for battle. Our fight lasted two minutes. We pushed each other. We clobbered each other into the walls. I even got a chance to attempt a few flips, but was never able to fully invert my opponent. After the two-minute battle ended, my robotic gladiator emerged almost unscathed, but it was up to a panel of three judges to decide my fate.

"And the winner by judges' decision," said the announcer, was not me.

I looked up at my father in agonizing defeat. I had been convinced that my robot would win not just its first fight but the entire competition! My father gave me the "losing look" that I have now grown accustomed to over the years of fighting robots.

Comment [E1]: General statements like this one aren't super compelling. Instead, you could say something that places us in the scene with you. For example, "Finally, it was time to fight."

Comment [E2]: I'm curious to learn a little more about where you are. Is this a competition at school or somewhere else?

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Comment [E4]: Great turn of phrase!

Comment [E5]: I love this writing, but before we get to your robots, I'm curious to learn how you came to compete. What brought you to the competition?

Deleted: I exhausted my time for daydreaming:

Comment [E7]: Nice cliffhanger ending for this paragraph!

Comment [E8]: Great storytelling here!

Deleted: On the way home, I reflected on the agony of defeat. I was disappointed by the loss, but suddenly I realized that I would never win unless I tried again. You can't have success without failure, and you can't let yourself feel too defeated to never try again. This realization has shaped who I am today. Now, whenever I face an obstacle, I just imagine myself as one of my robots: resilient, indestructible, and with years of experience in the arena behind me.

Nowadays, I find myself in the winners' circle a lot more. My first loss provided me with the motivation to become the guy nobody wants to fight – not just in robotics, but in life as well. I realized that although one will never win every time, it's always worth getting in the arena.

Comment [E10]: This sounds like you're still competing. That's great! I'm curious to know a little more about how you have changed since this first fight. Have your building methods become more sophisticated? Do you prepare differently? And most importantly, how has your mindset changed?

Comment [E11]: How so? You can spend more time showing us how you have applied this value to other areas of your life.