



# CODE\_TRIP

## Viewing Guide



Microsoft  
Philanthropies



In a joint partnership, **Microsoft Philanthropies** and **Roadtrip Nation** brought together three college students interested in computer science from different parts of the country to explore the wide range of career possibilities in the field. Natalie, Zoed and Robin explore what it means to be an underrepresented population in the tech industry in a four-episode documentary, *Code Trip*.

The road-trippers travel throughout the United States chatting with diverse leaders, many of whom are also part of the underrepresented communities in computer science. These insightful conversations, shared experiences, and life lessons learned make up the Code Trip Roadtrip.

Whether or not you're new to Roadtrip Nation, or have ever explored the many resources available on the Microsoft Philanthropies website, this guide is a great way to help your students understand the diverse possibilities available to them in the technology industry.

The resources that follow are designed to help teachers and facilitators create meaningful discussions with students after each episode to help them understand the importance of computer science education, the diversity of career possibilities, as well as the diversity of individuals who are succeeding in the industry—and making world-changing breakthroughs along the way.

We hope the *Code Trip* series and this guide will help spark new ideas about what's possible for students as they think about their futures.

## HOW TO USE THE VIEWING GUIDE



### **WATCH.**

This Viewing Guide should be used to prompt meaningful discussion with students after watching each episode of the documentary; however, the documentary may be merged into two viewings if needed.

Total running time per episode: approximately 25 minutes



### **TALK.**

After students have watched an episode, ask them to discuss the questions provided in either small or large groups, depending on the number of students watching.

Students should write down their thoughts first, then share them through conversation. Conversations can take place immediately after viewing or during several small sessions.

Encourage students to discuss any insights, ideas, or questions they have during the viewing of the episode or during your conversation.

Throughout the discussion, encourage students to consider computer science as a possible career path.



### **CONNECT.**

After watching the series and completing this guide, direct students to do some research on the YouthSpark Hub ([microsoft.com/youthsparkhub](https://microsoft.com/youthsparkhub)) to explore the many free online resources available to them surrounding the topic of computer science.

Encourage students to visit [roadtripnation.com](https://roadtripnation.com) and the CodeTrip Share Your Road platform ([codetrip.shareyourroad.com](https://codetrip.shareyourroad.com)) for more leader interviews and interactive tools.

Students can CONNECT during class time or at home.

Invite students to share new information they discover as they connect to new resources.

## Meet the Road-Trippers

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**Natalie** entered college as a chemical engineering major—but all it took was one computer science class and she was hooked. Now she’s on track to becoming a computer scientist and has no regrets about her decision—but she does have hesitations. As a Latina entering a male-dominated field, she wonders whether she has what it takes to survive the world of tech.



**NATALIE, 20**  
*Malden • MA*



**ROBIN, 29**  
Houston • TX

**Robin Maxkii** can make a lot out of a little. It’s a spirit of plucky resourcefulness that comes from growing up in a small Native American tribe where access to technology was scarce. Today, Robin continues to exercise her love for tech by coding and blogging. Her choice to pursue tech hasn’t always been easy, and she’s often viewed as an outsider by peers, but she’s determined to show the world that the face of computer science is more varied than people think.

For **Zoed Mora**, the choice to pursue computer science has been met with skepticism. He’s the type of guy you’d find in a motorcycle garage working on his bike, but he feels equally at home coding on his computer without feeling the need to fit into the “geek” stereotype. People tend to question whether someone who looks like him would be interested in such techy pursuits, but he’s determined to prove that someone’s appearance has nothing to do with their passions, goals, and abilities.



**ZOED, 26**  
Long Beach • CA

# Episode 1: Pumped and Ready



## WATCH.



## QUOTES.



*“If you want to know more, crack it open, look at it in a way that other people haven’t, and dig a little deeper than most people would.”*

**Samy Kamkar, Security Researcher**



*“I’m going to do this and be brave and conquer it today. You don’t have to climb Mt. Everest tomorrow. You can, and should, take little steps.”*

**Carolyn Parcheta, NASA Postdoctoral Fellow**



## TALK.

As the road-trippers begin their journey, they come to the realization that they are experiencing a great opportunity, and begin to find their own voice. Their desire to explore brings up the question, “are there others like me in computer science?”

- 1 The road-trippers start by talking about what computer science means to them. What does computer science mean to you?
- 2 Is computer science an area you are interested in? Why or why not?
- 3 What dream, talent, personal story, or interest moves you forward? What little steps are you taking to get you to your goals?
- 4 Samy Kamkar has had some big successes and some big setbacks. How do you anticipate handling the setbacks that will happen to you?
- 5 One piece of guidance from Carolyn Parcheta is that “more knowledge means more power.” Do you agree with that? What does this mean to you?

## Episode 2: Breaking Down Barriers



### WATCH.



### QUOTES.



*“Stay true and loyal to your potential— not anyone else’s, but your own.”*

**Laura Gómez, Founder, Atipica**



*“It’s easier to see the pressure from outside, than to see who you are. Don’t let a statistic define you. Don’t fit. Why should you fit?”*

**Sabry Tozin, Director of Enterprise Platforms, Netflix**



*“If someone else can do it, so can you.”*

**Amie Tornincasa, Senior Technical Program Manager, Netflix**



### TALK.

As the road-trippers interview different leaders, they discover that each individual had dreams and aspirations beyond who they were, and who they felt stereotyped to be. In order to get where they wanted to go, they had to work hard, overcome obstacles, and learn that you can’t let other people’s perceptions—or misconceptions—deter you from pursuing your goals. As you begin to plan for your future, you will begin to explore what makes you happy. When you start to think about what you want to do with the rest of your life, you begin to determine your own aspirations.

- 1 What career and personal aspirations do you have for the future?
- 2 What sacrifices do you think you may need to make to achieve those aspirations?
- 3 What obstacles might you face on the road towards your goals?
- 4 Have you ever felt stereotyped? Did you have to prove yourself? How did you get through that experience?
- 5 One of the leaders interviewed in this episode says, “you probably won’t find other people like you in this field; you will be the first.” Do you think you’ll be the first in the area you want to pursue? How do you feel about being the one to blaze a new trail?

## Episode 3: Get the Ball Rolling



### WATCH.



### QUOTE.



*“You can follow the traditional routes and you can get traditional responses. Or, you can be bold, brave and brilliant. You determine your own destiny.”*

**Dima Elissa, Founder/CEO, VISMED-3D**



### TALK.

There are diverse opportunities in computer science, from hacking to robotics. As the road-trippers meet leaders working in a variety of computer science niches, they explore what it takes to find their own path. Stepping out on your own and finding your place is never easy, but there are small steps you can take to start becoming independent and confident. By beginning the conversation with people you trust, getting informed, and exploring your options, you can begin the journey toward your own fulfilling future.

- 1 What did you learn about the opportunities available within the computer science industry through this episode?
- 2 Ian Bernstein and Adam Wilson from Sphero chose to focus their company on something they found fun and were passionate about. How can you take your passion, something you enjoy doing, and turn it into a career?
- 3 How can exploring extracurricular opportunities help you find your passion?
- 4 Dima Elissa encourages the road-trippers to look at challenges as opportunities. What have you done to turn hurdles into learning experiences, or use them to your benefit?
- 5 Amara Poolswasdi Hulslander from Sphero talks about the “regret minimization framework”—a concept which involves imagining yourself at the end of your life, and considering what you would and would not regret about your life’s journey. Apply this concept to your career: What will you regret NOT doing in your professional life?

## Episode 4: The Door's Wide Open



### WATCH.



### QUOTE.



*"I need to be that person that I am looking for."*

**Jessica Santana, Co-Founder, New York on Tech**



### TALK.

As the road trippers end their trip, they start asking themselves, "How do I define myself? How do I fit in?" Their experiences on the road taught them just how unique they are as individuals, and as underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities in technology. But they also realize that they're not alone, and can turn to others who are in the same boat. Many successful people have had mentors who walked the path before them and provided guidance about how to navigate the obstacles. Having someone who believes in you, who supports your goals and to whom you can turn when you need help, is essential.

- 1 How do you define yourself? How do you fit in?
- 2 This episode talked a lot about fitting in, and quoted the rapper Nas in referencing the struggle to conform: "When you're too hood to be in them Hollywood circles, and you're too rich to be in that hood that birthed you." Have you ever felt like you didn't quite fit in? Do you think you're on a career path that might make you feel like you don't fit in? How will you manage this?
- 3 What will stop you from moving forward towards your goals and how can you overcome it? What will motivate you to keep going?
- 4 What support system do you have or need to succeed?
- 5 How can you give back to others who are in a similar situation as you?
- 6 These road-trippers talked to professionals from all walks of life, and one piece of advice they heard was to continue to talk to more people. Who would you like to talk to in order to learn more about a career in computer science?

# CONNECT

Use the links below to begin exploring computer science and career resources.



[microsoft.com/youthsparkhub](https://microsoft.com/youthsparkhub)

[roadtripnation.com/explore](https://roadtripnation.com/explore)

[codetrip.shareyourroad.com](https://codetrip.shareyourroad.com)

[code.org](https://code.org)

[csunplugged.org](https://csunplugged.org)

[tealsk12.org](https://tealsk12.org)