

## FCCLA Member of the Year Video Essay Resource

The Video Essay is a critical component of the FCCLA Member of the Year Award application. This section allows you to showcase your personal qualities, character, and alignment with the U.S. Army's core values: loyalty, respect, integrity, and courage. With only 2 minutes to make an impression, this is your chance to stand out and demonstrate why you deserve this prestigious honor.

### PREPARE AND PRACTICE YOUR MESSAGE

- **Start with an Outline:** Write down the key points you want to cover in your video essay. Organize your thoughts around the required topics: Loyalty and Duty, Selfless Service and Respect, and Integrity and Personal Courage.
- **Practice for Natural Delivery:** Rehearse your responses multiple times to ensure you can deliver your message confidently and without hesitation. Avoid memorizing word-for-word, which can sound robotic and unauthentic.
- **Avoid Reading from a Screen:** While it is fine to have notes for reference, evaluators will value a natural, conversational tone. Reading directly from a page can come across as disengaged. Practice enough so that your points flow naturally, allowing you to look directly into the camera and connect with your audience.
- **Record Test Runs:** Film yourself several times and watch the recordings. Look for areas where you can improve your tone, clarity, or energy. Adjust your delivery until you feel it is polished.

### SHOWCASE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AWARD

- **Treat It Like a Job Interview:** This is the highest honor an FCCLA Member can receive. Approach the video with the same level of seriousness and preparation as you would for an important interview.
- **Seek Feedback:** Share your draft or practice recordings with your chapter adviser, teachers, or other trusted mentors. Ask them for honest feedback on your content, delivery, and overall impression.
- **Refine and Revise:** Use feedback to improve your submission. Ensure your message is clear, impactful, and free from errors.
- **Highlight Why You Deserve This Award:** Think about what makes you stand out among 240,000 members. Share your unique qualities, experiences, and the impact you have made through FCCLA.

### DRESS PROFESSIONALLY

- **Wear FCCLA Official Dress:** Wear the FCCLA official red blazer with appropriate professional attire underneath. This includes a white or black shirt, and optional neckwear as per FCCLA guidelines.
- **Maintain a Neat Appearance:** Groom yourself as you would for an in-person professional event. Ensure your hair is tidy and avoid excessive jewelry or accessories that might distract viewers.

### CHOOSE A NEUTRAL, DISTRACTION-FREE BACKGROUND

- **Keep it Clean and Simple:** Select a neutral background free from clutter, distractions, or personal items. A plain wall or a simple curtain works best. This ensures the evaluator's full attention is on your presentation, not what is behind you.
- **Remove Potential Distractions:** Ensure the area is tidy and free from anything that might pull focus, such as posters, photos, or unnecessary objects.
- **Check Your Surroundings:** Make sure there are no interruptions during your recording—notify others in your home, and silence any potential distractions like pets or background activity.
- **Test Your Setup:** Take a quick test recording to ensure your background looks professional and distraction-free. Adjust if necessary.

### POSITION YOURSELF AND OPTIMIZE LIGHTING

- **Center Yourself in the Frame:** Sit or stand directly in front of the camera so that your head and shoulders are visible and centered. Leave a small amount of space above your head for balance. Avoid being too close or too far from the camera.
- **Use Proper Lighting:** Ensure your face is well-lit from the front. Natural light from a window works well, but if that is unavailable, use a lamp or ring light positioned in front of you.
  - Avoid harsh shadows or uneven lighting by checking the balance of light across your face.
  - Avoid backlighting (light from behind you) as it can create shadows and make your face appear dark.
- **Check Eye Level and Camera Placement:** Position your camera at eye level. This creates a professional appearance and avoids unflattering angles. Use a tripod or sturdy surface to keep your camera steady.
- **Record in Landscape Mode:** Record horizontally to ensure your video fills the screen correctly for evaluators.

## ELIMINATE NOISE AND DISTRACTIONS

- **Silence Your Space:** Record in a quiet area where you will not be interrupted. Turn off TVs, fans, or any devices that could produce noise or unnecessary movement that would be distracting to evaluators.
- **Mute Notifications:** Ensure all devices nearby, including your recording device, are silenced to avoid interruptions.
- **Lock In Your Focus:** Maintain eye contact with the camera as though speaking directly to the evaluator. Avoid looking around the room or at your notes frequently.

## MAXIMIZE YOUR 2-MINUTE TIME LIMIT

- **Be Concise and Clear:** Plan your responses carefully to fit within the 2-minute limit. Focus on the most impactful examples and avoid going off-topic.
- **Use the STAR Method:** When describing your experiences, follow the STAR approach:
  - **Situation:** Briefly explain the context.
  - **Task:** Describe what you were responsible for.
  - **Action:** Highlight what you did specifically.
  - **Result:** Share the outcome or impact of your actions.
- **Practice Timing:** Use a timer while practicing to ensure your video fits within the 2-minute maximum.

## MAKE A MEMORABLE IMPACT

- **Connect Emotionally:** Share personal stories that demonstrate your character and passion for FCCLA. Evaluators are more likely to remember heartfelt, authentic moments.
- **Show Enthusiasm:** Speak with energy and confidence to convey your excitement for FCCLA and this opportunity. A monotone delivery can detract from your message.
- **Engage the Viewer:** Make eye contact with the camera, smile appropriately, and use natural gestures to emphasize your points.
- **End Strong:** Conclude your video with a memorable statement that reinforces your commitment to FCCLA's mission and values.

## TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

- **Orientation:** Record your video horizontally (landscape mode).
- **No Edits Allowed:** Submit your video as a single, unedited file with no added effects, transitions, or cuts.
- **File Format:** Save your video as an MP4 or another standard video file format, and ensure it's ready for upload. Do not submit links to external platforms like YouTube or Google Drive.