



  
**FIRST**  
ROBOTICS  
COMPETITION  
  
CHAIRMAN'S  
AWARD

# CHAIRMAN'S RESOURCES

FRC TEAM 1902 / FRC TEAM 2485



The background image shows a FIRST Robotics Competition event. In the foreground, a student in a white and orange shirt is kneeling next to a large orange ball, possibly a game ball. A black robot with the text "NEVER TELL ME THE ODDS" and "HAM SOLO" is visible. The robot has a white top deck with "LOCKHEED MARTIN" and "FIRST" logos. The base of the robot is labeled "1902" and "19". Other students and adults are visible in the background, some working on robots. The entire image has a yellow-orange tint.

# INTRO

The Chairman's Award is the most prestigious award at FIRST; it honors the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the mission of FIRST.

It was created to keep the central focus of FIRST Robotics Competition on the ultimate goal of transforming the culture in ways that will inspire greater levels of respect and honor for science and technology, as well as encouraging more of today's youth to become science and technology leaders.

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FRC Team 1902 and FRC Team 2485 have a strong belief in sharing our expertise through providing resources for others. Both of our teams have been through the process numerous times, having won a combined 13 Chairman's awards (ten by Team 1902--including the 2019 Houston Championship Chairman's Award--and three by Team 2485).

We're not here to say that we're the experts, or that we know all the ins and outs of the process, but we feel that our submissions have provided us with a useful and relevant perspectives. We hope you find helpful tips and tools from our experience to better tell your story.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Drew Beamer (2485), Rebecca Perkins (1902), Luca Bonanno (2485), Chisato Kamakura (2485), Ruhi Lankalapalli (1902), Elise Cronin-Hurley (1902)



# ABOUT





# THE BASICS

The first step to creating your successful Chairman's Award submission is to have a plan. The plan should carry a consistent message that embodies the core values and impact of your team throughout. Creating this consistent message will help your team stand out and be memorable to judges.

## PICKING A THEME

The submission as a whole should:

Embody the team. If there is a motto, core value, or something else that represents the team, then go ahead and adapt it into a presentation!

Carry a consistent message or theme a consistent message or theme through all aspects of a presentation. If it is proving too challenging, it is proving too challenging, it might be worth considering trying another angletrying another angle.

Be simple and understandable. Remember that adult judges will be reading, watching, and listening to your submission. They will be evaluating a lot of teams, make sure your message is easy to understand.

Have three to five distinct talking points. Since a video and essay are part of the Chairman's Award submission, having three to five sections to talk about within each element allows for easy, consistent organization across all platforms.

Be easy to brand. Easily branded submissions look more professional in appearance.

Some of Team 2485's previous themes have included: By the Numbers (focused on the numbers that make up who we are as a team) , We Are (a play on the team name, We Are Robot Lords, focused on who our members are and what we do).

1902, in the past 5 submissions focused on the rocket as the center core theme...building a rocket, preparing for take off, traveling through space, to a space station and then to another planet colony. Using the rocket as a vehicle to address various core impacts helped keep the team in the judges' minds while creatively telling our story.



Picking which programs to include in the submission, and where, is perhaps one of the most crucial steps in the entire process.

## PICKING PROGRAMS

Determining the most impactful programs your team runs/partakes in can be difficult, but considering the following factors can help:

- Is the program FIRST-Related?
- Is the program STEM-Related?
- Does the program have an impact outside of the team?
- Does the program start FIRST teams?
- Does the program have an impact on the team?
- Is the program innovative?
- Does the program show team leadership in the community
- Is mentorship a part of the program? (can be non-FIRST)
- Is the program sponsor-related?

A template of a spreadsheet Team 2485 uses as an aide in this step can be found here: <http://bit.ly/CAcriteriatemplate>.

The next step is to determine where to include this information. Many of the “supplementals” ( 500-character response questions) ask about specific aspects of a team’s outreach, and the content you choose to include in the response should answer the question as closely as possible.

Example: The response to the question: “Describe how your team works with other FIRST teams to serve as mentors to younger or less experienced FIRST teams (including FIRST LEGO League Jr., FIRST LEGO League, & FIRST Tech Challenge)” should focus solely on the outreach done with other teams to mentor young teams.

The Chairman’s Essay should incorporate as many elements of the team’s outreach as possible, without repeating information already given. While anything impactful your team does belongs in the essay, try to avoid restating facts (unless important) that have been previously given in the supplementals. The essay does have a greater character limit (10,000 characters), so this is the place to include any quotes you may have, or additional lengthier content that would limit your response to a supplemental question.







# SHORT ANSWERS

The short-answers, or “supplementals” are 500-character limited responses to questions relating to your team’s impact. Figuring out the best way to answer them can be tricky, and here are some things to keep in mind.

## ANSWERING SUPPLEMENTALS

Be succinct. The responses to these questions need to be under 500 characters while still conveying as much information as possible. Answering the question asked in these questions is quite important. Many of these questions ask about specific aspects of a team’s outreach, so try to answer the question asked. This includes:

Being relevant to the question (a question asking about the team’s efforts in starting teams should not include information on mentorship).  
Avoiding “number-dropping,” or stating statistics without context if possible. Explain how these statistics pertain to the question asked.

This being said, supplementals should be filled with the best data and numbers that support your team’s impact on the community. Often times, short, quick, facts with some explanation work best in this short-answer format. Most importantly, fill out what you can, and just know that the response does not have to be 500 characters long (we shoot for 450-500 if possible).



The Chairman's Essay can be a beast. Given just 10,000 characters to answer an incredibly open-ended question can be difficult. The essay should draw attention to the strengths of the team. There are, however, a few things that you can do to help in the process.

## CHAIRMAN'S ESSAY TIPS

Create a 3-5 sectioned essay (not including an introduction or conclusion paragraph). Your essay does not need to follow conventional essay structure, but should have a clear easy to follow organization and easy to understand content. Pay attention to the flow from one section to the next. Dividing your content with subtitles can make it easier for judges to read and find important information later.

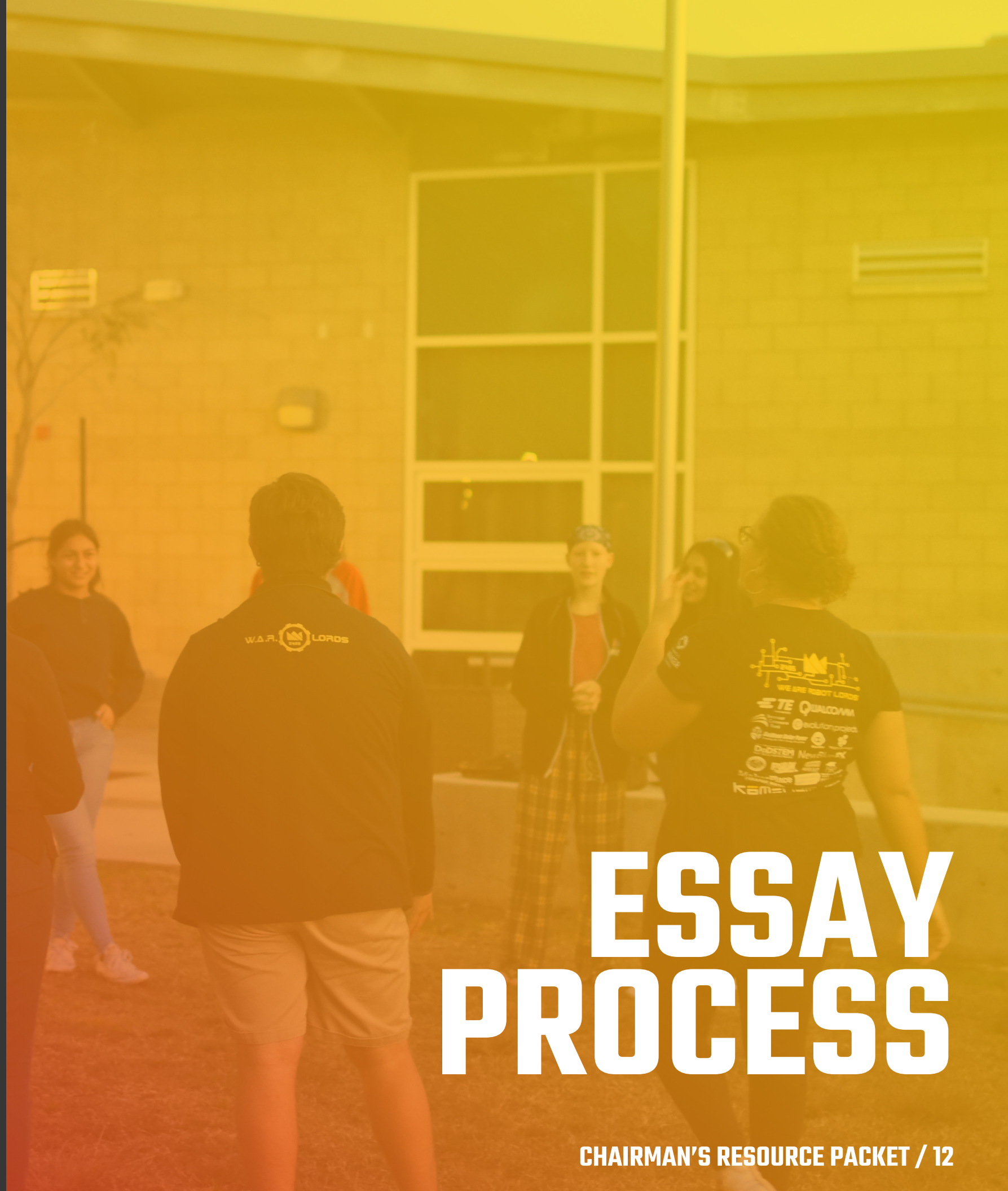
Do not be afraid to delete something your really like. If a sentence does not sound quite right, or just feels out of place, often rewording, replacing, rewriting, or deleting it altogether is the answer.

Allow a trusted adult or English teacher to review your grammar. Everyone makes mistakes, and one of the easiest ways to mitigate that is to simply allow a trusted adult to read over the essay. The important outcome is an impactful essay.

Revise, revise, revise! There will never be a perfect essay, looking it over, reading aloud in a group multiple times can help illuminate areas not conveying information well.

Incorporate your theme when possible without the loss of important content. If it sounds forced or takes away from the impact of the message, try in another section. A good theme/message should be seamless and natural.

One last thing: Be proud of your team in your essay! Brag about your accomplishments, that is the point of the submission! Stay positive and focus on the good and GREAT things about your team!



# ESSAY PROCESS



A woman with glasses and a yellow shirt stands behind two young girls. They are all smiling. In front of them is a table with a LEGO robot and a sign that says #FIRSTLikeAGirl. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

# INTERVIEW PROCESS

The Chairman's interview is often seen as the most daunting part of the Chairman's process. But never fear! Judges aren't out to get you, they want you to succeed! They're simply there to listen to what you have to say and ask any questions they have. To best prepare for the presentation, here are a few of our tips to help you out:

## PRESENTATION TIPS

Prepare a script and PRACTICE! While writing the script, stick to your theme/ message and adjust for the speaking styles of the presenters. Your presenters should represent your team well in the room if they have mastered the message. Practice ensures the presenters will have good, confident flow of information. Presenters may also not be the students who know the most information, but rather work well with each other. Having a team with diverse presentation styles that can easily bounce off each other in Q&A may be the best choice, even if it's not the most obvious.

DON'T JUST REPEAT YOUR ESSAY! Judges have read what you wrote, but they are looking for continuity of message. Build on the information in your essay. Here is the chance to "Tell your story." Focus on the most measurable impacts (For instance, the number of teams you've started, mentored, or assisted) and updates since you wrote the essay. Don't throw too many numbers at them verbally though. Use presentation boards and handouts when there is a lot of good information to convey.

Well-rehearsed presentations are more effective. They communicate the intended message and better represent your team. Practice will help you understand the pace and timing of your lines. While there is a 7 minute time limit, aim for a comfortable ending below that limit so you are not cut off at the most critical moment of a message



## PRESENTATION TIPS CONT.

Practice Q&A as much, if not more than you practice the script. Practice nurtures confidence. The more prepared, the better the presenters will feel about representing your team. Presenters should be thoroughly knowledgeable of the information in your essay, script, handouts and your team history. Judges use the answers from your essay and supplemental questions as the basis for their questions in the presentation room and will be looking for continuity in the information given. A general understanding of which presenters will answer which questions can also minimize empty time during Q&A and can help break up the required material to prepare. Find an adult mentor(s), sponsors or even other teams to ask questions about your essay and presentation. Write down the questions and practice with different people asking to formulate the most representative answers. This ensures that presenters will be ready for a wide range of possible questions and have good answers at the ready. Start with free flow long answers to the questions and then start timed practices with questions. It is not much time and the more ready and concise the answer the more questions of the judges they can answer in the short 12 minutes in the room.

Every student on the team should know their personal story. This will help not only in the presentation room, but in the pits as well. Have them think through, what they enjoyed most, their favorite outreach event, interactions they've had with kids in the community, or just funny team bonding moments. The kids should be asked these questions as well in Q&A practice. These stories make the student's experience relatable to the judges and help them connect to the students, your impact and the team.

To help all the team members be better prepared to talk about the team, make a game. Have everyone stand in a circle and each share any piece of team information (history, outreach, or general team information). The circle grows smaller as less people are able to come up with new facts. It is not just a learning experience, but fun!

Finally... bring simple infographic handouts or a short list to remind them of the key points that set your team apart. Make it easy to be memorable! And, don't forget the goodies for the judges, especially those items that keep you in the mind of the judges, like team merchandise.



# PRESENTATION PROCESS



A background image with a warm orange tint showing two students, a boy and a girl, smiling and working on a robot. The robot is a complex assembly of metal plates, wires, and components. In the background, other students and a banner with "#1 Source" are visible.

# VIDEO PROCESS

The Chairman's video will likely be the most publicly visible element of your submission. The average FIRSTer will not read your essay, but an easy-to-digest 3-minute video published on the internet will be viewed by a much larger FIRST community, as well as sponsors.

## VIDEO TIPS

Always begin with an outline! To create a clear path forward, outline general themes, messages and topics, as well as a timeline for each section. Post-it notes can help you move ideas and events as your story evolves.

Stick to the message. If you have a theme, the best way to encapsulate that in the video, is with imagery and careful narration/dialogue. The most important part of any video project is to tell your story. You can include things like personal stories, statistics, event footage, photos, and a narrative to mold together the story of your team.

On the technical side, plan a video you can successfully produce with the content, resources and talents your team has available. Look at examples of past Chairman's videos and other good story telling videos for ideas. Keep it as professional as possible: shots should be stable and well lit; use video over photos whenever possible; and dialogue should be friendly and easily understood.

The Chairman's video should encompass the input from as many members' views as possible to create an audiovisual representation of what your whole team values. The team should also respect the talents and limitations of the editors and allow them to create something they can be proud of as well. With tasteful editing and professionalism, the video can become a demonstration of your team's work ethic and belief in FIRST's core values, and can be used beyond the award submission process.

The video is only reviewed if you are one of the top teams under consideration and only shown if you win at an event, so focus on your impact, this will convey why the judges chose you, so the whole event can celebrate your accomplishments too!



Beginning in the 2020 season, teams submitting for the Chairman's Award are encouraged to provide a completed Chairman's Documentation Form as evidence of your well planned and documented activities.

## DOCUMENTATION TIPS

The purpose of the forms is to provide judges with an easy to review list of your work and the evidence for your impact.. To do this, teams should make a habit of documenting each activity you take part in, gathering attendance, photos, testimonials, thank you letters etc... especially in the case of working with FIRST teams and events.. Pictures, testimonials, a signature from a team member, or acknowledgement letter from the team or event coordinator are all great, provable ways to confirm your involvement.

FIRST also expects teams to adhere to the terminology developed in 2017 throughout the process. These terms are "Started," "Mentored," "Assisted," "Hosted," "Ran," and the new term (introduced in 2020), "Reached." A full definition and additional explanation of each term is provided in a link on the Additional Resources page.

Compiling an organized binder with all of your team's evidence will help the judges at competitions. The introduction of the Chairman's Documentation Form has made this even more important. Giving each piece of evidence an identifying page number can make navigating the binder much easier. Consider using tabs to sort your binder, and wait to do page identification numbers for the documentation form until having a fully finished binder.

A background image showing a group of students working on a robot. A boy in an orange shirt is leaning over a table, working on a robot. A girl in a black shirt is also working on the robot. Another boy in an orange shirt is sitting on the floor, looking at the robot. The robot is a blue and orange FIRST robot. The background is a yellowish-orange color.

# DOCUMENTING OUTREACH





# PRINTED MATERIALS

One of the most beneficial things a team can do in addition to the submission is to provide a printed, visual element both for the presentation and to hand out. Visuals not only help to convey complex information, but helps make your team's impact more memorable.

## PRINTED MATERIAL TIPS

Consider creating brochures or infographics that summarize your impact, in addition to a binder for the pit. Print out extra copies, as judges may request to keep one, especially for Engineering Inspiration/Entrepreneurship. Having these resources available allows members to have a reference while talking to judges, and provides a low-cost reminder for judges to take along with them.

In presentation judging, Team 2485 provides judges with copies of documents within the pits, in addition to having an interactive vinyl banner to refer to while presenting. Content on the vinyl banner changes yearly to match the team's overarching message/theme, along with the requests of the presenters. Additionally, consider props you might want presenters to have. These should not be distracting, but should be used to help convey the theme/message. Example: Team 2485 in 2018 used a variety of items from various events, including program-related t-shirts and photos, and pulled them out of a chest while talking about programs during the presentation.

Team 1902 has taken a similar approach by providing documentation through a "Judge's Packet" which has a combination of easily digestible graphical information as well as evidence to support quantitative figures. Team 1902 has used interactive, tangible presentation boards which can help judges follow along throughout the 7 minutes. Countless teams have also successfully implemented props that are entirely digital and photo based. For example, a more emotional line may resonate better with photos attached.

Make sure whatever graphics you chose are easy to transport, and easy to read. Interview rooms can be small and have no tables or outlets, so be prepared!



Both Team 1902 and Team 2485 are open to any questions you might have about our Chairman's processes. We have also attached additional resources published by our teams.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### W.A.R. Lords Chairman's Award Videos

<https://youtu.be/0gdts4eUejM> (2016)

<https://youtu.be/K-RI9LZCcSI> (2017)

### W.A.R. Lords Chairman's Essay & Supplemental Submissions

<http://bit.ly/Team2485essay2019>

<http://bit.ly/Team2485essay2018>

### Exploding Bacon Chairman's Information

<https://www.explodingbacon.com/chairmans/>

<https://www.explodingbacon.com/2019-championship-chairmans-award/>

### FIRST-Provided Resources

*Chairman's Award Resources/References*

<https://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/frc/chairmans-award-resources>

*Chairman's Award Terminology Definitions*

[https://www.firstinspires.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resource\\_library/frc/game-and-season-info/awards/2020/frc-chairmans-definitions.pdf](https://www.firstinspires.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resource_library/frc/game-and-season-info/awards/2020/frc-chairmans-definitions.pdf)

*Documentation Form*

[https://www.firstinspires.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resource\\_library/frc/game-and-season-info/awards/2020/chairmans-documentation-form.pdf](https://www.firstinspires.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resource_library/frc/game-and-season-info/awards/2020/chairmans-documentation-form.pdf)

## CONTACT US

We are open to any questions you may have!

**Team 1902:** [explodingbacon.team1902@gmail.com](mailto:explodingbacon.team1902@gmail.com) / [explodingbacon.com](http://explodingbacon.com)

**Team 2485:** [roboticsteam2485@francisparker.org](mailto:roboticsteam2485@francisparker.org) / [team2485.org](http://team2485.org)

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION





## **CHAIRMAN'S RESOURCE PACKET**

[explodingbacon.com](http://explodingbacon.com) / [team2485.org](http://team2485.org)