

2025–2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Exploring Business Ethics



Exploring Business Ethics challenges members to demonstrate their understanding of ethical principles in the business world through an individual objective test and presentation. This event encourages members to explore standards of right and wrong conduct, ethical decision-making, and the impact of ethics on business practices.

Event Overview

Division	Middle School
Event Type	Team of 1, 2 or 3 members
Event Category	Presentation
Event Elements	Objective Test and Presentation on a Topic

Educational Alignments

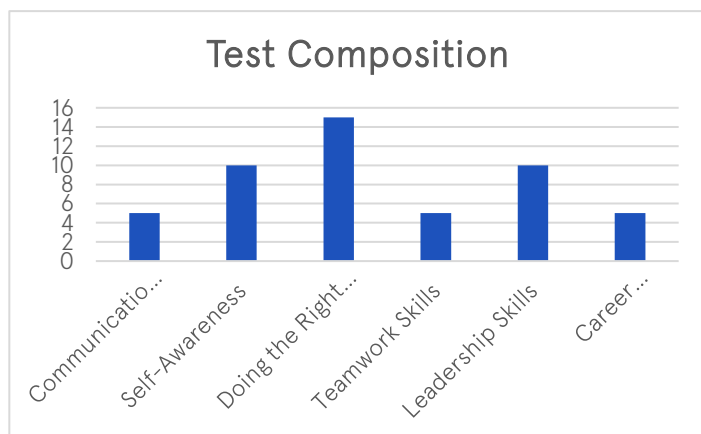
Career Cluster Framework Connection	Management & Entrepreneurship
NACE Competency Alignment	Career & Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Leadership, Professionalism, Technology

FBLA's Business Ethics events are supported by the not-for-profit MBA Research and Curriculum Center. MBA Research offers a wide range of instructional materials focused on principles-based ethical decision-making. For more information, visit www.mbaresearch.org/ethics/

Knowledge Areas

- Communication Skills
- Self-Awareness
- Doing the Right Thing
- Teamwork Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Career Readiness

Test questions are based on the knowledge areas and objectives outlined for this event. Detailed objectives can be found in the study guide included in these guidelines.



2025–2026 Topic Synopsis

How Can Businesses Help the Environment?

Businesses can affect the planet in both good and bad ways. From the packaging used to the energy needed, choices matter.

Thanks to the support of MBA Research, the full background and topic is available in the competitive events guidelines, on pages 6–7.

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State

Check with your State Leader for state-specific competition information and deadlines.

National

Required Competition Items

	Items Competitor Must Provide	Items FBLA Provides
Objective Test	- Sharpened pencil - Fully powered device for online testing - Conference-provided nametag - Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code	- One piece of scratch paper per competitor - Internet access - Test login information (link & password provided at test check-in)
Presentation	- Technology and presentation items - Conference-provided nametag - Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code	Table

Important FBLA Documents

- Competitors should be familiar with the Competitive Events [Policy & Procedures Manual](#), [Honor Code](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [Dress Code](#).

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in FBLA competitive events at the National Leadership Conference (NLC), the following criteria must be met:

- Membership Deadline:** FBLA national membership dues must be paid to the specific division by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 1 of the current school year.
- Repeat Competitors:** Members may only compete in an event at the NLC more than once if they have not previously placed in the top 10 of that event at the NLC. If a member places in the top 10 of an event at the NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at future NLCs, unless the event has been modified beyond a name change. Chapter events are exempt from this procedure.
- Conference Registration:** Members must be officially registered for the NLC and must pay the national conference registration fee to participate.
- Official Hotel Requirement:** To be eligible to compete, competitors must stay within the official FBLA housing block.
- State Entry Limits:** Each state may submit up to four entries per event.
- Event Participation Limits:** Each member may participate in:
 - One individual or team event, and
 - One chapter event (e.g., *Annual Chapter Activities Presentation* or *Community Service Presentation*).
- Competitor Responsibility:** Only registered competitors are permitted to plan, research, prepare, and set up their presentations. Advisers and others may not assist.

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- **Participation Requirement:** To be eligible for an award, each competitor must complete all components of the event at the National Leadership Conference.
- **Team Composition:** All members of a team must be from the same local chapter.
- **Late Arrivals:** Competitors will be allowed to compete until such time that the results are finalized, or participation would impact the fairness and integrity of the event, as determined by Competitive Events staff. If judges have left the competitive event area, it is no longer possible to compete. Five penalty points will be assessed for late arrivals in any competitive event.
- **Event Schedule Notes:**
 - Some events may begin before the Opening Session.
 - All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.
 - Schedule changes are not permitted.

Event Administration

This event consists of three phases: an objective test, preliminary presentation, and a final presentation.

Objective Test

- **Test Duration:** 30 minutes
- **Format:** This event consists of an online objective test that is proctored and completed on-site at the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- **Team Testing Procedure:** Team members must begin their tests within minutes of one another. Each competitor will complete the test individually, and the team's final score will be the average of all individual scores.
- **Materials:** Reference or study materials are not permitted at the testing site.
- **Calculators:** Personal calculators are not allowed; an online calculator will be available within the testing platform.
- **Question Review:** Competitors may flag questions within the testing platform for review prior to the finalization of results at the NLC.
- **Electronic Devices:** Unless approved as part of a documented accommodation, all cell phones, smartwatches, electronic devices, and headphones must be turned off and stored away before the competition begins. Visible devices during the event will be considered a violation of the FBLA Honor Code.

Preliminary Presentation Details

Timing Structure

- **Equipment Set-Up:** 3 minutes
- **Presentation:** 7 minutes (a one-minute warning will be provided)
- **Question & Answer (Q&A):** 3 minutes
- **Important:** Time allocations are exclusive. The presentation must begin immediately after the 3-minute set-up time concludes. Time may not be shifted between segments. Competitors will not interact with judges during the set-up period.

Venue & Format

- Presentations occur in-person at the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- Competitors/teams are randomly assigned to presentation sections.

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- Presentations will take place in a large, open area with a designated space of approximately 10' x 10', which includes a table and chairs for the judges.
- Presentations are closed to all audience and attendee observation.

Technology Guidelines

- **Internet Access:** Not provided
- Presentations must be delivered using one or two personal devices (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, or monitor approximately laptop-sized).
- If using two devices, one must face the judges and the other must face the presenters.
- Projectors and projector screens are not permitted, and competitors may not bring their own.
- Wireless slide advancers (e.g., presentation clickers or mice) are allowed.
- External speakers are not allowed; audio must come directly from the presenting device(s).
- Electricity will not be available.

Non-Technology Items

- Visual aids, samples, notes, and other physical materials related to the project may be used.
- Items may be placed on the provided table or on the judges table, if space allows.
- No items may be left with the judges following the presentation.

Restricted Items

- Animals, except for authorized service animals.
- Food, which may be used for display only and may not be consumed by judges.
- Links and QR codes, which may be shown but may not be scanned or clicked by judges at any time.

Research

- Information must be supported by credible, well-documented sources.
- Any use of copyrighted material, images, logos, or trademarks must be properly documented.

Team Expectations

- In team presentations, all members must actively participate in the delivery of the presentation.

Event Specific Information

- **Identify and Define the Ethical Issues:** Clearly state the ethical issues or dilemmas related to the topic.
- **Explain Why the Ethical Issues Occurred:** Describe the actions, decisions, or circumstances that led to the ethical problems; including relevant context or background information to help explain how the situation developed.
- **Recommend Solutions:** Offer thoughtful, realistic solutions for how the ethical issues could be resolved and explain why these recommendations are appropriate and how they would help address the problem.
- **Suggest Preventive Safeguards:** Recommend steps that could have been taken to prevent the issue from happening in the first place.

Final Presentation Details

The presentation guidelines outlined above will apply to the final presentation.

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Advancement to Finals

- The top-scoring competitors or teams from each preliminary section will advance to the final round in equal numbers.
- The number of competitors or teams advancing to the final round depends on the number of preliminary sections:
 - 2 sections: Top 6 from each section advance
 - 3 sections: Top 4 from each section advance
 - 4 sections: Top 3 from each section advance
 - 5 sections: Top 3 from each section advance
 - More than 5 sections: Top 2 from each section advance

Scoring

- Team members will test individually, and team scores will be averaged.
- The objective test score will be added to the preliminary presentation scores to determine which competitors or teams advance to the final round from each section.
- Winners will be determined by adding the final presentation score to the objective test score.
- Ties are broken by the objective test score.
- All judging decisions are final. Results announced at the National Leadership Conference are considered official and will not be changed after the conclusion of the National Leadership Conference.

Penalty Points

- Competitors may be disqualified if they violate the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.
- Five points are deducted if competitors do not follow the Dress Code or are late to their assigned presentation time.

Recognition

- A maximum of 10 entries (individuals or teams) may be recognized per event.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- FBLA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by providing reasonable accommodations for competitors. Accommodation requests must be submitted through the conference registration system by the official registration deadline. All requests will be reviewed, and additional documentation may be required to determine eligibility and appropriate support.

Recording of Presentations

- Unauthorized audio or video recording is strictly prohibited in all competitive events.
- FBLA reserves the right to record presentations for educational, training, or archival purposes. Competitors should be aware that their presentations may be recorded by FBLA-authorized personnel.

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Exploring Business Ethics Background and Topic: How Can Businesses Help the Environment?

Background Information: This section provides competitors with context on how businesses can positively impact the environment through sustainable practices. Competitors should review this information before completing the Exploring Business Ethics competition using the provided topic on the following page.

Environmental issues like climate change and energy use have long been contentious and divisive topics in American society. In fact, there seems to be only one thing we can all agree on: No one can agree on anything!

However, a recent climate and energy survey from Pew Research Center found there is actually something most Americans seem to agree on. Roughly 70% of Americans believe that businesses are not doing enough to help the environment and reduce the effects of climate change.

This public sentiment comes at a time when many businesses may feel disincentivized to invest in eco-friendly practices. Economic uncertainty permeates throughout the global economy, regulatory agencies and policies are being curtailed in the United States, and powerful interest groups continue to influence public policy and opinion.

In the face of all these obstacles, is it beneficial—or even possible—for businesses to embrace sustainability?

This decision will ultimately fall to the current (and future) business leaders of America. And while public opinion may be cynical and the economic and political environment may be formidable, professionals can still adopt frameworks to help them incorporate responsible and sustainable decision-making.

A good place to start is with ethics. Ethics are the basic principles (such as integrity, transparency, and trust) that govern your behavior. In the business world, ethics are essential to navigating issues ranging from employee conflicts to corporate sustainability practices. The framework or set of standards professionals use to handle these bigger-picture issues is sometimes referred to as Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG).

Businesses don't have to be market leaders in renewable energy or major power players in Washington to make a positive impact on the environment. A positive impact might be as small as switching to cloud storage or double-sided printing. If professionals incorporate ethical principles (like accountability and viability) and frameworks (like ESG) into their organizations' vision and processes, every business can play a role in making our planet a more harmonious, hopeful, and healthier place.

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Middle School Topic

Car company Geo Motors has just announced its newest car model: The Geo Pulse. The Pulse is an electric vehicle (EV) that features all the latest technology, including a battery that allows the Pulse to last longer on the road than any other EV.

Geo Motors proudly markets the Pulse as a “zero emissions vehicle” since it’s powered only by electricity and doesn’t rely on carbon-emitting gasoline or diesel-fuel. The company also claims the Pulse is “the most eco-friendly car in the world.”

However, an investigative report reveals that the Geo Pulse—while still an impressive vehicle—is not nearly as eco-friendly as Geo Motors claims.

The report explains that several key components of the car (like its battery) are manufactured in a very energy-consuming and carbon-intensive process at Geo Motors’ factories. Furthermore, the mining methods used to extract the battery minerals resulted in widespread deforestation and habitat destruction. The report also found that some of the advanced features of the car greatly increase the car’s energy consumption.

After the report is released, Geo Motors faces criticism for branding the Pulse as a “zero emissions vehicle” that is “the most eco-friendly car in the world.” Company executives admit they are still working on more efficient methods to produce and power their EVs. But in the meantime, they say, they are standing by their marketing campaign because the Geo Pulse is still technically “zero emissions,” as the car itself does not directly emit carbon dioxide.

But what do *you* think the company should do? How should a business balance success with protecting the environment?

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Objective Test Study Guide: Knowledge Areas and Objectives

*This study guide outlines the skills and knowledge assessed for this event. Objectives followed by a two-letter, three-digit code in parentheses are aligned to the National Business Administration Standards from MBA Research and Curriculum Center. Some objectives reference MBA Research's Learning Activity Packages (LAPs), which are instructional resources with readings, activities, and assessments available **exclusively to teacher advisers**. For more information, visit MBAResearch.org/FBLA.*

Important Notice Regarding Test Preparation

*MBA Research materials are **not required** to study for or prepare for FBLA competitive event tests. MBA Research provides curriculum and instructional resources directly to teachers and does not administer or manage individual student testing or competition participation.*

Note for members and parents: All questions related to tests, study materials, scores, or competition guidelines should be directed to the local FBLA adviser. Only teacher advisers should contact MBA Research directly.

Communication Skills (5 test items)

1. Demonstrate active listening skills (CO:017, LAP-CO-017) (PQ)
2. Explain the nature of effective communications (EI:007, LAP-EI-140) (PQ)
3. Foster open, honest communication (EI:129, LAP-EI-129) (SP)

Self-Awareness (10 test items)

1. Describe the nature of emotional intelligence (EI:001, LAP-EI-001) (PQ)
2. Recognize and overcome personal biases and stereotypes (EI:017, LAP-EI-917) (PQ)
3. Assess personal strengths and weaknesses (EI:002, LAP-EI-902) (PQ)
4. Assess personal behavior and values (EI:126, LAP-EI-126) (PQ)
5. Assess risks of personal decisions (EI:091, LAP-EI-091) (PQ)

Doing the Right Thing (15 test items)

1. Demonstrate honesty and integrity (EI:022, LAP-EI-138) (PQ)
2. Demonstrate responsible behavior (EI:021, LAP-EI-021) (PQ)
3. Demonstrate fairness (EI:127, LAP-EI-127) (PQ)
4. Take responsibility for decisions and actions (EI:075, LAP-EI-075) (PQ)
5. Build trust in relationships (EI:128, LAP-EI-128) (CS)
6. Describe the nature of ethics (EI:123, LAP-EI-123) (CS)
7. Explain reasons for ethical dilemmas (EI:124, LAP-EI-124) (CS)
8. Recognize and respond to ethical dilemmas (EI:125, LAP-EI-125) (CS)
9. Show empathy for others (EI:030, LAP-EI-030) (PQ)
10. Comply with the spirit and intent of laws and regulations (BL:163, LAP-BL-163) (CS)

Teamwork Skills (5 test items)

1. Participate as a team member (EI:045, LAP-EI-045) (CS)
2. Treat others with dignity and respect (EI:036, LAP-EI-036) (PQ)
3. Foster positive working relationships (EI:037, LAP-EI-037) (CS)

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Leadership Skills (10 test items)

1. Explain the concept of leadership (EI:009, LAP-EI-909) (CS)
2. Explain the nature of ethical leadership (EI:131, LAP-EI-131) (CS)
3. Model ethical behavior (EI:132, LAP-EI-132) (CS)
4. Determine personal vision (EI:063, LAP-EI-063) (CS)
5. Inspire others (EI:133, LAP-EI-133) (CS)
6. Develop an achievement orientation (EI:027, LAP-EI-027) (CS)

Career Readiness (5 test items)

1. Set personal goals (PD:018, LAP-PD-918) (CS)
2. Follow rules of conduct (PD:251, LAP-PD-251) (CS)
3. Make decisions (PD:017, LAP-PD-017) (CS)

References for Knowledge Areas & Objectives

Daniels Fund. *Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative*. <https://www.danielsfund.org/ethics/overview>

MBA Research and Curriculum Center. *National Business Administration Standards*.
<https://www.mbaresearch.org/local-educators/teaching-resources/standards/>

Ethics Unwrapped. <https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu>

Harvard Business School Online. *What are business ethics & why are they important?*
<https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/business-ethics>

Markkula Center for Applied Ethics. <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/>

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Exploring Business Ethics Rating Sheet

Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Content					
Identifies and defines ethical issues presented in the topic	<i>Fails to introduce the topic and its issues.</i>	<i>Introduces the topic but lacks clarity in identifying key issues</i>	<i>Identifies and defines the ethical issues</i>	<i>Captures attention, clearly presents the topic, and outlines the key issues.</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Explains why the ethical issues happened	<i>No reasons cited for the ethical issues</i>	<i>Reasons for the ethical issues identified but were not on target</i>	<i>Several, but not all, reasons accurately identified</i>	<i>All reasons addressed and analyzed</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Provides logical recommendations as to how the ethical issues should be resolved	<i>Fails to provide meaningful recommendations.</i>	<i>Presents recommendations for behavior but lacks thorough exploration of advantages and disadvantages.</i>	<i>Offers solid recommendations, but may not fully address all pros and cons.</i>	<i>Provides well-reasoned and supported suggestions. Balances advantages and disadvantages effectively.</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Recommends safeguards that should have been in place to prevent the ethical issues	<i>No ethical solution to prevent issues identified</i>	<i>One ethical solution to prevent issues provided with no plan</i>	<i>Ethical solutions to prevent issues provided and a plan developed</i>	<i>One feasible ethical solution to prevent issues recommended with supporting evidence with a plan and necessary resources identified</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Substantiates and cites sources used while conducting research	<i>Sources are not cited</i>	<i>Sources/References are seldom cited to support statements</i>	<i>Professionally legitimate sources & resources that support statements are generally present</i>	<i>Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources & resources is given to support statements</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Presentation Delivery					
Statements are well-organized and clearly stated	<i>Competitor(s) did not appear prepared</i>	<i>Competitor(s) were prepared, but flow was not logical</i>	<i>Presentation flowed in logical sequence</i>	<i>Presentation flowed in a logical sequence; statements were well organized</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Consistently displays confidence, poised body language, engaging eye contact, and effective voice projection.	<i>Did not demonstrate any of the listed skills</i>	<i>Demonstrated 1-2 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)</i>	<i>Demonstrated 3 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)</i>	<i>Demonstrated all skills, enhancing the overall presentation</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions	<i>Does not respond to questions or responses are completely off-topic.</i>	<i>Provides incomplete or unclear answers that show limited understanding.</i>	<i>Responds accurately and clearly to most questions, showing adequate understanding.</i>	<i>Responds confidently with clear, accurate, and thoughtful answers that enhance the overall presentation.</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	

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Presentation Protocols			
Adherence to Competitive Events Guidelines	Competitor(s) Did Not Follow Guidelines	Execution Aligned with Guidelines: (All criteria must be met) ✓ Used only allowable technology devices (sizing specs followed; maximum of two, with only one facing judges at a time) ✓ Presentation aligned with the assigned topic ✓ Maintained professional boundaries during set-up time (no interaction with judges) ✓ Did not leave materials behind after the presentation ✓ Links or QR codes were displayed appropriately (not clicked or scanned by judges) ✓ Audio was presented without external speakers ✓ Avoided use of food or live animals	
	0 points	10 points	
Staff Only: Penalty Points (5 points for dress code penalty and/or 5 points for late arrival penalty)			
Presentation Total (110 points)			
Name(s):			
School:		Section:	
Judge Signature:		Date:	
Comments:			