



## Scholarship Essay

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Leadership, character, and service are three pillars that form the foundation of what it means to be a good person and a good cadet. As a member of JROTC, these principles have been vital in shaping who I am as not just a cadet but as a leader within my Corps. In this essay, I will show what leadership, character, and service mean to me, by providing examples of how I embody these qualities through my involvement within my school's AFJROTC program, and emphasize the significance of these attributes as they may be important for everybody but especially important for a JROTC cadet.

Firstly, leadership is not merely a position but a set of attributes and actions that inspire others to follow in your footsteps. It is not merely about taking a group of people and making them conform to your leadership style in such a manner that only you are capable of leading it. Leadership is not only being in charge of and leading people, but also making improvements to the organization you are leading and leaving it better off than it was when you were in charge of it. A leader is someone who takes initiative, leads by example, and gives others a chance to prove themselves. In my school's AFJROTC Unit, I have been provided with many opportunities to assume various different leadership positions, such as Flight Sergeant, Logistics Commander, and even Corps Commander. These experiences have shown me how important qualities such as decision-making, communication, and accountability are for a good leader to possess.

One instance that stands out in my memory is when my Corps participated in a community service project

to clean up the school grounds. As Group Commander, I was responsible for organizing the event and motivating my cadets. I took the initiative to plan out individual tasks, delegate assignments, and ensure that everyone knew what they were supposed to be doing. By actively participating in the cleanup alongside my fellow cadets, I demonstrated that leadership is not about barking orders from the sidelines but getting your hands dirty alongside the very people you lead and working together as a team striving to achieve a common goal. This experience sharpened my ability to delegate tasks and reinforced the idea that true leadership is about serving others.

Character is who we are when no one is watching, it is our ability to do the right thing when nobody is there to hold you accountable for your own actions but yourself. It incorporates qualities such as integrity and honesty. AFJROTC places a strong emphasis on integrity through our corps values "Integrity first, Service before self, and excellence in all we do". Integrity first demonstrates that good leaders are the ones that possess a solid ethical foundation. Through my tenure in my school's AFJROTC I have learned the importance of maintaining one's integrity and character especially when faced with any conflicts or hardships.

During a visit from a retired USAF Lt. Colonel, the class was presented with a scenario designed to test our ethics and their effect on our decision-making skills. The hypothetical situation required us to choose between following orders that contradicted our values and standing up for what we believed was right. This scenario challenged us to reflect on the true

importance of unwavering character and integrity in leadership. When asked what I would do I articulated my commitment to upholding my own internal set of ethical standards, even in difficult circumstances. This experience only further reinforced my opinion that strong character is necessary for effective leadership.

Service, the third pillar, is dedication to making a positive impact on the community and the world at large. JROTC places an immense and great importance on community service, fostering a sense of responsibility and duty to helping others. Engaging in community service activities has not only allowed me to give back to my community but has also broadened my perspective and opened my eyes to the many challenges faced by those who are less fortunate.

One service project we undertook was volunteering at our local Feed My Starving Children, a non-profit organization where volunteers pack food for the malnourished. We took it one step further than just showing up and putting in the effort, we took the time to learn about the people we were helping and how our efforts would make their lives better. Through this experience, I discovered the true power of service in building empathy and understanding. This would teach me that good leadership is also about serving the community.

In summation, embodying leadership, character, and service as a JROTC cadet has been truly beneficial to my growth as a leader even beyond the boundaries of the program. These traits are not exclusive to the military but are applicable to various aspects of life. They provide people with the skills and mindset necessary to

successfully navigate challenges, contribute to society, and inspire positive change within their communities and beyond. In other words, my involvement in JROTC has enabled me to embody the traits of leadership, character, and service. Through various experiences such as organizing community service projects, navigating ethical dilemmas, and actively participating in leadership roles and opportunities, I have developed a better understanding of these qualities. These attributes extend far beyond the confines of the JROTC program. As I continue to carry these principles forward, I am confident that they will serve as a great guide in my future personal and professional ventures, further developing a commitment to excellence, integrity, and service to others.

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