



Merit Badge Counselor Orientation

The Path to a Quality Program in Scouting
Lies in Training our Adult Leaders

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125+ Merit Badges . . .

...Art, Hiking, Archery, Lifesaving,
Citizenship in the World, Orienteering,
Architecture, Scuba, Cooking, Small-Boat
Sailing, Public Speaking, Camping,
Geocaching, Theater, Personal Management,
Weather, Signaling, Pets, Pioneering,
Scouting Heritage, Nature...



Scouts must earn a specified number of merit badges to earn the ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle (and Eagle Palms).

12 required for Eagle.

21 total merit badges earned for Eagle.

How do you tell them apart?



Learning Objectives

- **Discuss the BSA Advancement Program**
 - Aims & Methods, the 4-steps, Mentoring
- **The Role of the Merit Badge Counselor**
 - How it Works
 - Individual vs. Group Counseling
- **Before Beginning to Counsel**
 - Qualifications, Applications, Youth Protection Training, Planning
- **The Process**
 - Roles of Scout, Scoutmaster, Counselor
 - Completing Merit Badge Card
 - "Partial" Merit Badge
- **Troubleshooting**
- **Troop 99 "To Do's"**



The Purpose of the Program

Merit Badges are an educational tool unique to Scouting...

...Designed to help youth tackle new subjects with the help of mentors.

Each new topic creates new experiences...

...Which help them grow into adults and citizens of good character.



Aims & Methods of Scouting

AIMS (what the BSA hopes to accomplish)

- Growth in moral strength and character
- Learning and participating in citizenship
- "Fitness" growth and development: physical, mental, and moral



Aims & Methods of Scouting

METHODS (the process of growing into leaders)

- Advancement
- Ideals
- Patrols
- Outdoor Program
- Adult Association
- Personal Growth
- Leadership Development
- Uniform



The Advancement Program

4 Steps

Learning - Testing - Reviewing - Recognition

- Provides a unique, non-classroom-based educational tool that helps young men grow into adults of character.
- Allows the Scout to progress at his own rate.
- Accepting the challenge encourages Scouts.
- Shows that there are recognition and rewards for perseverance.
- Encourages Scouting ideals: the Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan.



Counselors Mentor Scouts to...

- Develop character and self-confidence
- Learn and practice communication skills
- Overcome obstacles
- Meet and work with new people
- Research possible future careers
- Develop physical fitness
- Have fun (the best way to learn!)
- Discover a lifetime of hobbies and interests



Counselor & Scout Meet



The Scout (*not an adult*) will contact you to schedule a meeting.

At the meeting

- Introduce yourself. Tell *why* you counsel this Badge!
- Determine:
 - Preparedness: Signed Merit Badge Card?
 - Did he read the Merit Badge pamphlet?
 - What does he already know about the subject?
 - Has he been researching possible projects?
 - Discuss requirements.
 - Set short- and long-term goals.
 - Scouts may use school assignments if they 'fit' well.
- Set the next meeting date.



The Counselor's "Helps"



Merit Badge Worksheets are optional

- Some think they are too much like school... Others love them.
- Worksheets do help with understanding and organization.
- If your Badge could benefit from a Worksheet, make your own, or ask the Scout to download one.
- www.boyscouttroop99.org There are great 'Resources' at the end of these Worksheets.



Mentoring

During the time you are working with the Scout on the Badge:

- Teach skills (EDGE Method)
- Scouts learn best by practicing, then teaching someone else
- Scout must do what is asked in the requirements:
* make * list * collect * identify * label * in the field...*
- Expect “no more, no less.”
- If Scout wants to do more than is required, great!
- Date and initial each requirement when complete.
- Follow-up on goals
- When done, congratulate Scout!
- Keep “Counselor’s Record”



Buddies and Groups

Buddies

- A Scout **MUST** have a buddy with him at **EACH** meeting with a merit badge counselor.
- Buddies may be:
 - Another Scout
 - Parent or guardian
 - Brother or sister
 - Relative
 - Friend
- A Scout can **NEVER** meet with a merit badge counselor **ALONE**



Buddies and Groups



Group Counseling

(Meetings, Weekend Camp-outs, Summer Camp, High Adventure Trips, Jamborees, Camporees, Merit Badge Days, Camporees, Skills Seminars...)

Specialized facilities:

- to work on appropriate equipment
- to tour businesses specializing in subject matter
- to meet with expert personnel
- to give Scouts in rural areas access to Counselors and Badges



Are You Qualified?

- Counselors must be 18 and registered with BSA.
- Counselors must be approved by **District** and by **Council** before beginning
- Should enjoy working with youth!
- Have interest, skill, and perhaps education, in your subjects
- No restriction on number of Badges you may Counsel
- No limit on number of Badges earned from one Counselor
- Counselors may work with any Scout, including sons and relatives.
- Scouts may do Badges with Counselors anywhere in the U.S.A



Are You Current?

For New Counselors or to Add New Badges:

- **BSA Adult Application** (BSA #524-501)

The image shows the top portion of a 'BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA ADULT APPLICATION' form. It includes the BSA logo and introductory text about the application process.

- **Merit Badge Counselor Application** (BSA #34405)

The image shows the top portion of a 'MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR APPLICATION' form. It includes the BSA logo and fields for personal information and unit details.

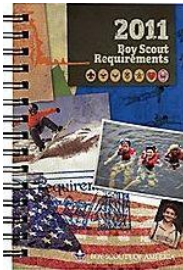
- No Unit Leaders need to sign
- No fee

- **Before Counseling, submit Applications**
- **Follow BSA Policies**
- **"Youth Protection" for ALL**
- **Register yearly**
- **Notify District when you 'retire' from Counseling**

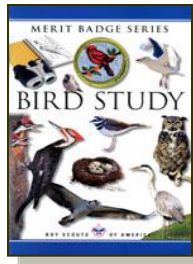


Are You Ready?

Be Prepared!



Keep a recent "*Boy Scout Requirements*" booklet (BSA #33215) on hand. Printed yearly. More accurate than pamphlet. Most Troops have one.



Merit Badge Pamphlets (do ***not*** use © 2000 and older)

- Prepare projects
- Gather materials and references
- Search out and plan for appropriate off-site events



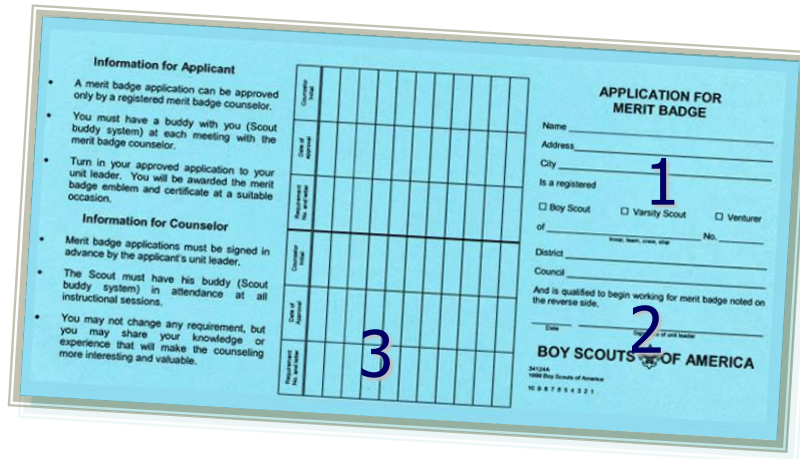
The Process Begins



- **The Scout** selects Badge, tells Scoutmaster
- **The Scoutmaster** gives Scout Blue Card (or Old Yellow Card)
- **The Scout** fills in data
- **The Scoutmaster**
 - Signs front of Card
 - Provides names of Counselors (MBC)
 - Asks Scout to wear uniform and take a buddy
- Ideally, the **Scout** will study the Merit Badge pamphlet and other resources before meeting with MBC.



Filling out the Card



Information for Applicant

- A merit badge application can be approved only by a registered merit badge counselor.
- You must have a buddy with you (Scout buddy system) at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.
- Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be awarded the merit badge emblem and certificate at a suitable occasion.

Information for Counselor

- Merit badge applications must be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.
- The Scout must have his buddy (Scout buddy system) in attendance at all instructional sessions.
- You may not change any requirement, but you may share your knowledge or experience that will make the counseling more interesting and valuable.

APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE

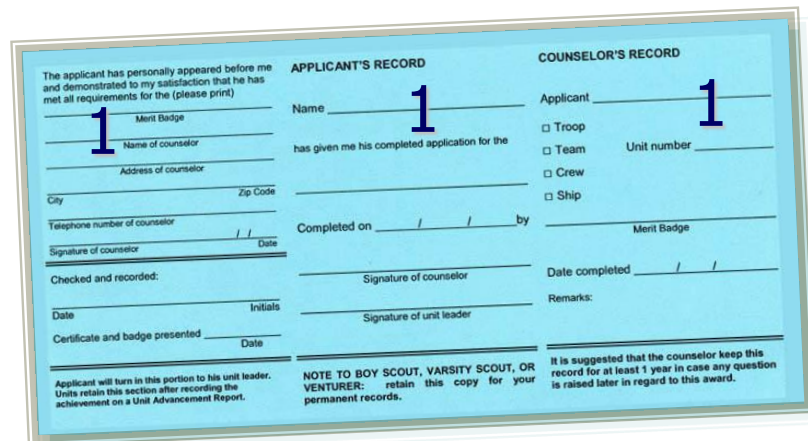
Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 Is a registered **1**
☐ Boy Scout ☐ Varsity Scout ☐ Venturer
 of _____ No. _____
 District _____
 Council _____
 And is qualified to begin working for merit badge noted on the reverse side. **2**
 Date _____
 Signature of unit leader _____
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
 1000 Boy Scouts of America
 10 0 0 7 7 0 0 2 1

3

1) The **Scout** fills out the personal data on *both* sides of card

2) The **Scoutmaster** signs front of card *before* Scout begins to work on badge

3) The **Counselor** writes in the req. number, date, and initials whenever the Scout completes a requirement



The applicant has personally appeared before me and demonstrated to my satisfaction that he has met all requirements for the (please print)

1 Merit Badge
1 Name of counselor
 Address of counselor _____
 City _____ Zip Code _____
 Telephone number of counselor _____
 Signature of counselor _____ Date _____
 Checked and recorded: _____
 Date _____ Initials _____
 Certificate and badge presented _____ Date _____

APPLICANT'S RECORD

Name **1**
 has given me his completed application for the _____
 Completed on ____/____/____ by _____
 Signature of counselor _____
 Signature of unit leader _____

COUNSELOR'S RECORD

Applicant **1**
☐ Troop ☐ Team ☐ Crew ☐ Ship
 Unit number _____
 Merit Badge _____
 Date completed ____/____/____
 Remarks: _____

NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER: retain this copy for your permanent records.

It is suggested that the counselor keep this record for at least 1 year in case any question is raised later in regard to this award.

The Process Continues



- **Scout** selects Counselor, calls to schedule meeting.
- **Counselor** asks Scout to bring:
 - Signed Merit Badge card
 - Merit Badge Pamphlet
 - Projects in progress, samples of school projects, ideas for requirements...



The Process Continues



- **Scout** and **Counselor** decide on requirements, projects, goals.
- The **Scout** does work on own or with other Scouts; with help from Counselor. May require several work days.
- **Counselor** tests each Scout individually
- **Counselor** records completed requirements



Processing the Card



Information for Applicant

- A merit badge application can be approved only by a registered merit badge counselor.
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- Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be awarded the merit badge emblem and certificate at a suitable occasion.

Information for Counselor

- Merit badge applications must be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.
- The Scout must have his buddy (Scout buddy system) in attendance at all instructional sessions.
- You may not change any requirement, but you may share your knowledge or experience that will make the counseling more interesting and valuable.

Requirement	Scout	Buddy	Counselor	Date of Approval
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 Is a registered
☐ Boy Scout ☐ Varsity Scout ☐ Venturer
 of _____ No. _____
 District _____
 Council _____
 And is qualified to begin working for merit badge noted on the reverse side.
 Date _____ Signature of unit leader _____

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
 34124A
 1990 Boy Scouts of America
 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The **Counselor**

1. Fills in personal data
2. Signs and dates requirements as Scout completes them
3. Signs card when complete, or (after event is over, returns partially-completed card to Scout)
4. Keeps "Counselor Record;" gives card to Scout.

The applicant has personally appeared before me and demonstrated to my satisfaction that he has met all requirements for the (please print)

Merit Badge _____
 Name of counselor _____
 Address of counselor _____
 City _____ Zip _____
 Telephone number of counselor _____
 Signature of counselor _____ / / _____ Date _____

Checked and recorded:
 Date _____ Initials _____
 Certificate and badge presented _____ Date _____

APPLICANT'S RECORD

Name _____
 has given me his completed application for the _____
 Completed on _____ / _____ / _____ by _____
 Signature of counselor _____
 Signature of unit leader _____

NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER: retain this copy for your permanent records.

COUNSELOR'S RECORD

Applicant _____
☐ Troop ☐ Team ☐ Crew ☐ Ship
 Unit number _____
 Merit Badge _____
 Date completed _____ / _____ / _____
 Remarks: _____

It is suggested that the counselor keep this record for at least 1 year in case any question is raised later in regard to this award.



Completing the Card



The applicant has personally appeared before me and demonstrated to my satisfaction that he has met all requirements for the (please print)

Merit Badge _____

Name of counselor _____

Address of counselor _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone number of counselor _____

Signature of counselor _____ / / _____ Date _____

Checked and recorded: _____

Date _____ Initials _____

Certificate and badge presented _____ Date _____

Applicant will turn in this portion to his unit leader. Units retain this section after recording the achievement on a Unit Advancement Report.

APPLICANT'S RECORD

1 Name _____

has given me his completed application for the _____

Completed on _____ / _____ / _____ by _____

Signature of counselor **2** _____

Signature of unit leader _____

NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER: retain this copy for your permanent records.

- 1) The **Scout** gives his completed card to the Scoutmaster
- 2) The **Scoutmaster** signs card, gives to Advancement Chair
- 3) Advancement Chair amends records, buys badge, files card
- 4) **Scout** keeps center portion

The applicant has personally appeared before me and demonstrated to my satisfaction that he has met all requirements for the (please print)

Merit Badge _____

Name of counselor _____

Address of counselor _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone number of counselor _____

Signature of counselor _____ / / _____ Date _____

Checked and recorded: _____

Date _____ Initials _____

Certificate and badge presented _____ Date _____

Applicant will turn in this portion to his unit leader. Units retain this section after recording the achievement on a Unit Advancement Report.

3

APPLICANT'S RECORD

Name _____

has given me his completed application for the _____

Completed on _____ / _____ / _____ by _____

Signature of counselor _____

Signature of unit leader _____

4

NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER: retain this copy for your permanent records.

Scout receives Badge at the next Court of Honor.



This Scout has
two requirements
to complete.



Troubleshooting

A Counselor Should Stop Work on a Badge if

- A Scout has no Blue Card (or old Yellow Card)
- Card not signed by Scoutmaster
- The Scout comes to the meeting alone (no buddy)
- The Scout is “winging it.” Sign only complete requirements.
- Summer Camp Partial
- Age 18 vs. the 3-month badges...
- Scout has made up charts, lists, or logs...
- Parent is doing the work



Troop 99 "To Do's"

Unit Advancement Chairs

- Maintain Merit Badge Counselor List
- Work with *Troop Librarian*
- "*Resources Survey*," available at www.boysscouttroop99.org
- Training the Unit's MB Counselors:
 - <http://scouting.org/scoutsource/boyscouts/guideformeritbadgecounselors.aspx>
 - Every MBC should have Youth Protection Training every 2 years.
 - Registration every year (in February), Four Year Follow UP.





Questions?





The Path to a Great Program Lies in Training our Adult Leaders



We hope this presentation has been
helpful.

