

Merit Badge Program

Background and Purposes

As chartered by the Congress of the United States, the Boy Scouts of America is a movement dedicated to supplementing and enlarging the education of youth. The merit badge program, which provides opportunities for youth to explore more than 120 fields of skill and knowledge, plays a key role in the fulfillment of this educational commitment.

A vital part of the BSA's advancement plan, the merit badge program is one of Scouting's basic character-building tools. Through participation in the program (which may begin immediately upon registration in a troop or team), a Scout acquires the kind of self-confidence that comes only from overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. Instruction is offered in everything from animal science and public speaking to swimming and communications, providing a young man with invaluable career, physical, and interpersonal skills.

Merit Badge Pamphlets

Each merit badge subject is outlined and explained in a pamphlet that contains short introductory information written for Boy Scouts/Varsity Scouts by recognized authorities. More than a million pamphlets are sold yearly, and many are used as approved reference texts in libraries and school curricula.

Counselors

People who are knowledgeable about the various merit badge subjects are selected, approved, and trained by council and district advancement committees to serve as merit badge counselors. For example, a dentist might be asked to serve as a counselor for the Dentistry merit badge. A counselor must not only possess the necessary technical knowledge but also have a solid understanding of the needs, interests, and abilities of Scouts. A counselor must also be a registered adult with the BSA.

Procedure

When a Scout has an interest in earning a particular merit badge, he obtains his Scoutmaster's/Varsity Scout Coach's approval and identifies another Scout with similar interests to become his partner. They are then directed to the appropriate merit badge counselor. The counselor reviews the badge requirements with the young men and decides with them what projects should be undertaken and when they should be completed. After the counselor has certified that the Scouts have qualified for the merit badge, it is presented to them at a troop/team meeting and can be applied toward rank advancement.

Badges for Eagle

To qualify for the Eagle Scout Award, Scouting's highest advancement rank, a Scout must—along with meeting five other requirements—earn a total of 21 merit badges, including First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Management, Camping, Hiking OR Cycling OR Swimming and Family Life.

New Badges

To meet the changing interests of boys, new merit badges are added from time to time. In addition, all merit badges are reviewed and revised periodically. The most recent is Composite Materials in 2006.

MERIT BADGE	2005	TOTAL 1911 THROUGH 2005
Agribusiness (2)	0	6,716
American Business	541	47,197
American Cultures	2,450	44,738
American Heritage	4,890	109,607
American Labor	576	14,902
Animal Science	3,151	28,887



Archaeology	3,766	85,768
Archery	46,902	1,192,759
Architecture	2,587	189,139
Art	33,031	1,046,222
Astronomy	11,229	524,946
Athletics	4,260	1,029,960
Auto Mechanics	8,175	84,047
Aviation	17,641	432,168
Backpacking	5,092	172,308
Basketry	32,165	2,220,470
Beekeeping (2)	0	60,261
Bird Study	5,357	527,102
Botany (2)	0	87,752
Bugling	832	164,332
Camping*	62,393	4,123,108
Canoeing	42,414	2,670,630
Chemistry	5,592	274,505
Cinematography	5,143	47,443
Citizenship in Community*	52,666	2,973,491
Citizenship in Nation*	58,715	2,661,448
Citizenship in World*	61,746	1,694,894
Climbing	22,316	204,282
Coin Collecting	5,011	443,333
Collections	5,406	96,055
Communications*	54,633	1,540,472
Computers	14,647	389,665
Consumer Buying (2)	0	26,970
Cooking	25,033	4,025,878
Crime Prevention	6,702	71,353
Cycling**	7,217	512,569
Dentistry	4,584	96,566
Disabilities Awareness	2,275	68,254
Dog Care	3,157	402,331
Drafting	1,659	211,872
Electricity	11,953	708,316
Electronics	6,219	151,445
Emergency Preparedness***	46,346	1,400,859
Energy	3,019	50,780
Engineering	5,164	71,851
Entrepreneurship	1,605	7,286
Environmental Science*	67,852	2,047,670
Family Life*	52,538	670,099
Farm Mechanics	1,948	199,752
Fingerprinting	41,565	1,269,557
Fire Safety	13,261	2,476,525
First Aid*	87,300	6,194,413
Fish & Wildlife Management	13,676	518,464
Fishing	27,203	1,729,285
Fly Fishing	1,040	6,072
Forestry	15,123	1,011,439
Gardening	1,904	368,936
Genealogy	5,704	182,825
General Science (2)	0	52,953

Geology	18,693	449,821
Golf	6,920	111,284
Graphic Arts	2,024	24,477
Hiking**	8,275	1,260,055
Home Repairs	4,536	2,375,764
Horsemanship	11,650	529,518
Indian Lore	28,581	945,632
Insect Study	1,611	139,637
Journalism	1,428	95,984
Landscape Architecture	1,927	67,684
Law	5,666	126,244
Leatherwork	56,128	1,999,215
Lifesaving***	28,552	2,787,846
Machinery (2)	0	175,322
Mammal Study	29,935	939,644
Masonry (2)	0	160,151
Medicine	3,396	35,956
Metals Engineering (2)	0	29,857
Metalwork	9,362	1,027,720
Model Design & Building	2,699	195,966
Motorboating	13,724	474,510
Music	14,640	1,181,147
Nature	15,292	1,513,229
Nuclear Science	3,585	121,257
Oceanography	9,472	196,045
Orienteering	21,395	644,995
Painting	4,212	519,849
Personal Fitness*	54,348	1,999,108
Personal Management*	51,197	1,337,868
Pets	6,919	604,077
Photography	9,302	360,638
Pioneering	24,204	2,221,225
Plant Science	900	27,794
Plumbing	5,949	339,034
Pottery	9,218	298,326
Public Health	2,028	1,502,097
Public Speaking	4,640	584,014
Pulp & Paper	2,878	66,357
Rabbit Raising (1)	0	137,332
Radio	4,963	114,558
Railroading	6,922	169,984
Reading	7,155	1,429,082
Reptile and Amphibian Study	11,093	561,330
Rifle Shooting	50,337	887,621
Rowing	17,889	1,585,994
Safety*	4,040	2,899,154
Salesmanship	4,880	271,312
Scholarship	6,496	1,218,348
Sculpture	8,760	205,734
Shotgun Shooting	23,562	297,987
Skating	3,841	147,442
Skiing	3,841	273,267
Small Boat Sailing	17,224	488,909

