COMMUNICATIONS

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
IRVING, TEXAS

Requirements

1. Do ONE of the following:
   a. For one day, keep a log in which you describe your communication activities. Keep track of the time and different ways you spend communicating, such as talking person-to-person, listening to teachers or the radio, watching television, reading books and other print media, and communicating online. Discuss with your counselor what your log reveals about the importance of communication in your life. Think of ways to improve your communication skills.
   b. For three days, keep a journal of your listening experiences. Identify one example of each of the following, and discuss with your counselor when you have listened to:
      1. Obtain information
      2. A persuasive argument
      3. Appreciate or enjoy something
      4. Understand someone's feelings
   c. In a small-group setting, meet with other Scouts or with friends. Have them share personal stories about significant events in their lives that affected them in some way. Take note of how each Scout participates in the group discussion and how effective each one is in telling his story. Report what you have learned to your counselor about the differences you observed in effective communication.

d. List as many ways as you can think of to communicate with others (face-to-face, by telephone, letter, e-mail, fax). For each type of communication, discuss with your counselor an instance when that method might not be appropriate or effective.

2. Do ONE of the following:

   a. Think of a creative way to describe yourself using, for example, a collage, short story or autobiography, drawing or series of photographs, or a song or skit. Using the aid you created, make a presentation to your counselor about yourself.

   b. Choose a concept, product, or service in which you have great confidence. Build a sales plan based on its good points. Try to persuade the counselor to agree with, use, or buy your concept, product, or service. After your sales talk, discuss with your counselor how persuasive you were.

3. Write a five-minute speech. Give it at a meeting of a group.

4. Interview someone you know fairly well, like, or respect because of his or her position, talent, career, or life experiences. Listen actively to learn as much as you can about the person. Then prepare and deliver to your counselor an introduction of the person as though this person were to be a guest speaker, and include reasons why the audience would want to hear this person speak. Show how you would call to invite this person to speak.

5. Attend a public meeting (city council, school board, debate) approved by your counselor where several points of view are given on a single issue. Practice active listening skills and take careful notes of each point of view. Present an objective report that includes all points of view that were expressed, and share this with your counselor.

6. With your counselor's approval, develop a plan to teach a skill or inform someone about something. Prepare teaching aids for your plan. Carry out your plan. With your counselor, determine whether the person has learned what you intended.

7. Do ONE of the following:

   a. Write to the editor of a magazine or your local newspaper to express your opinion or share information on any subject you choose. Send your message by fax, e-mail, or regular mail.

   b. Create a Web page for your Scout troop, school, or other organization. Include at least one article and one photograph or illustration, and one link to some other Web page that would be helpful to someone who visits the Web page you have created. It is not necessary to post your Web page to the Internet, but if you decide to do so, you must first share it with your parents and counselor and get their permission.

   c. Use desktop publishing to produce a newsletter, brochure, flier, or other printed material for your Scout troop, class at school, or other group. Include at least one article and one photograph or illustration.

8. Plan a troop court of honor or campfire program. Have the patrol leaders' council approve it, then write the script and prepare the program. Serve as master of ceremonies.

9. Learn about opportunities in the field of communication. Choose one career in which you are interested and discuss with your counselor the major responsibilities of that position and the qualifications, education, and preparation it requires.

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Communication: A Key to Opening Doors

From the day you were born, you started to communicate your needs to the people around you. Although you could not talk when you were born, you could and did cry. You cried when you were hungry, tired, when your stomach hurt, and when you were lonely. Your parents and your caregivers grew to know what each one of those cries meant so they could respond to your needs.

Facial expressions and body language also develop in early childhood. If you have ever seen a toddler try a food for the first time, his or her face will tell you "It's yucky!" or "It's yummy!"

At about 6 weeks of age, babies start to communicate another way: They smile. They smile at their parents; they smile at sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, and even total strangers who make funny faces at them. Somewhere around the age of 18 months to 2 years, toddlers learn to talk. A mixture of gibberish and words comes tumbling out of their mouths like a babbling brook.

Thankfully, with each developmental step you take in life, your communication skills expand to meet the occasion. Your ability to make people understand your values, interests, talents, needs, and wants becomes increasingly important. By the same token, learning to listen to others without interrupting, knowing when to offer advice and when to keep your opinions to yourself, and knowing how to communicate effectively in different situations are crucial skills that will help you succeed.

"Communication is a learned skill. *Most people are born with the physical ability to talk, but we learn over time to speak well and communicate effectively. Speaking, listening, and our ability to understand verbal and nonverbal meanings are skills we develop in various ways. We learn basic communication skills by observing other people and modeling our behaviors based on what we see. We also are taught some communication skills directly through education, and by practicing those skills and having them evaluated."*

—National Communication Association,
Pathways to Careers in Communication

As you develop better communication skills, you may wonder, "What is communication?" The topic encompasses many elements. This clear and concise definition comes from the U.S. Department of Education: "Communication focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media. The field of communication promotes the effective and ethical practice of human communication."

With that in mind, let's discover the different methods people use to communicate.

How Do You Communicate?

Everyone has a dominant style of communicating. Your ability to know your own style and quickly gauge the dominant style in other people can teach you how to relate better to people who learn differently than you do. You can use this skill in any situation where communication is used to influence, persuade, or engage people.

Having this skill also can help you break negative thinking patterns. For example, if you think of a problem as a brick wall, you have already planted a heavy, immovable obstacle in

your own mind. Professional communicators suggest that if you imagine that brick wall crumbling or that you are leaping over it, you will be able to solve the problem more easily.

Which of your senses do you rely on most to get information? Visual learners have to see something to believe it. Audio learners learn best by listening. Kinetic or physical learners learn most effectively by touching or doing something physical.

Sample Communication Log

Date: Tues., 3/18

Ways to Communicate		Person-to-Person	Listening to Teacher/Public Speech	Small Group	TV/Print Media/Radio	E-Mail/Correspondence	Telephone
Time	6 to 7 a.m.	III			II		
	7 to 8 a.m.	𝍸 𝍸 III		IIII	I		
	8 to 9 a.m.	𝍸 I	I	II	III		
	9 to 10 a.m.	𝍸	I	III	II II		
	10 to 11 a.m.	𝍸 II	I	I	I		
	11 a.m. to noon	𝍸 I	I	I	III		
	Noon to 1 p.m.	𝍸 IIII		IIII	II		
	1 to 2 p.m.	IIII	I	II	I		
	2 to 3 p.m.	III	I	I	II	IIII	
	3 to 4 p.m.	𝍸 III		I	III	𝍸	II
	4 to 5 p.m.	𝍸 II		I	I	II	
	5 to 6 p.m.	IIII			II	𝍸 II	II
	6 to 7 p.m.	III			𝍸	II	III
	7 to 8 p.m.	𝍸			I	𝍸	I
	8 to 9 p.m.	II			I	III	I
	10 to 11 p.m.	I					
	11 p.m. to midnight						

Once you figure out whether you are talking to a visual, audio, or kinesthetic learner, use this as your chief mode of expression with this person. The person probably will understand you better and will respond more positively.

Look at how you perceive the world and how you process information, and you will be able to pick up on other people's verbal and nonverbal cues to uncover their dominant senses. For example, if the person you are talking to uses a lot of visual metaphors, like, "There is a spider in the kitchen the size of Texas," try describing your ideas as images or pictures, like, "I *see* what you mean. It *looks* huge. I have a fly swatter the size of Alaska you can use."

Keeping a Communication Log

Looking at the ways and time you spend communicating will give you a good handle on where your comfort zone is and what skills you may have to work a bit harder to acquire. By keeping a detailed communication log for a day, your own style of communicating will become clear. You will know how much time you spend on the Internet, how much you watch television, how much you read, and how often you listen to the radio. You will find out how much time you spend on the phone, in face-to-face interaction with others, and how often you e-mail or write friends and relatives.

People who listen to others usually are considered thoughtful, nonjudgmental, and easily approachable.

Listen, Learn, and Communicate

Listening is one of the most important skills you can learn. Studies indicate that 85 percent of what we know we learned by listening. But listening is more than just hearing; listening involves receiving. When you take time to focus on the person who is speaking and what is being said, you not only learn more, you retain what you learn better and longer.

Listening Tips

- Listen with your eyes as well as with your ears. Watch for nonverbal cues.
- Avoid distractions, both physical and mental. Do not focus on how tired you are, how hot the room is, or the argument you had earlier in the day.
- Try to see things from the speaker's point of view. In other words, try to put yourself in the speaker's shoes.
- Apply the ideas to yourself. Think about how the speaker's message relates to you and your experiences.
- Review the speaker's points and think what logically might come next in the speaker's message.
- Curb your desire to talk until the speaker has finished.
- Respond nonverbally (nod your head, smile) as well as verbally (make a comment, ask a question) to the speaker.

Effective listening and observing people as they speak requires withholding judgment and not voicing your own opinions about a topic.

Practice listening with respect for the speaker. Work hard not to interrupt even when you have a burning desire to make a point. The speaker will develop more respect for you. In fact, being a good listener is important in building and maintaining friendships. If you take the time to be a sounding board for your friends when they need you, they will probably return the favor down the road. Everybody needs to vent from time-to-time.

There are many different types of listening experiences. When you listen to your teacher in school or to your Scoutmaster at a troop meeting, you are listening to gain information. You may have listened to someone who is trying to persuade you about something. Perhaps you have listened to sounds in nature or types of music or specific spoken words that make you appreciate life more. You might fall asleep faster when you pitch a tent near a babbling brook, or the big-city background sounds of taxis honking and sirens wailing.

If you decide to keep a journal of your listening experiences, pay attention to those times you listen to gain information, and when you listen to someone who is trying to persuade you to change your mind about a topic. Notice how active listening includes reiterating or repeating what you have heard and how this type of active listening may help both parties understand and resolve a problem or conflict.

Leading Small-Group Discussions

The tasks of leading a group discussion differ from the responsibilities of other members. Instead of joining the conversation, you must hold yourself slightly apart. Quietly keep the group on topic, and support and encourage each person to convey experiences in a supportive, active listening atmosphere that promotes mutual respect.

You also must lead by example. Make sure each person is allowed to speak and be heard without interruption. All communication in a small-group discussion should be directed toward the group leader. Think of yourself as part referee, part coach, and part impartial observer.

While each participant speaks, quietly observe how that person communicates and how other people in the group relate to the story. Look for nonverbal communication cues and how something as simple as a smile, glare, shrug, or a raised brow can convey a feeling. When the person finishes speaking, thank him or her for participating.

Another duty of the leader is to make sure that no one dominates the conversation. On the flip side, pay particular attention to quiet individuals who may be shy or feel less confident speaking in public. Encourage them with a smile and a positive word.

Using Nonverbal Communication

Much of our communication is nonverbal—that is, messages expressed without words. The following nonverbal cues can have a significant effect on communication.

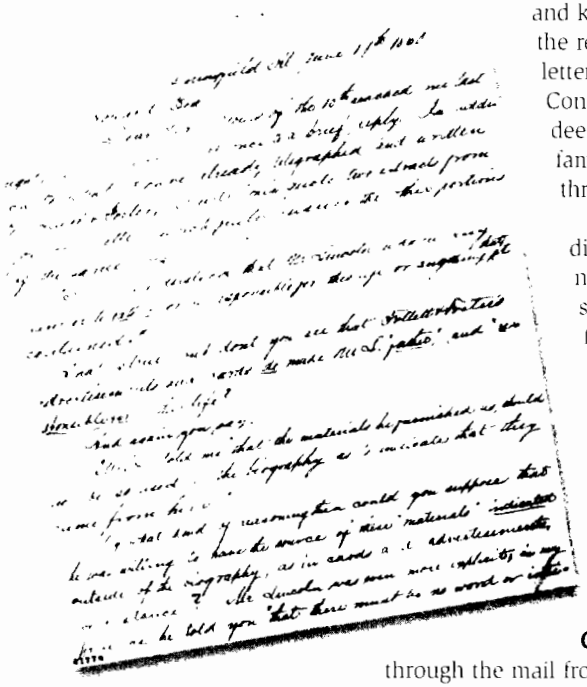
- **Eye contact**—looking directly at the person with whom you are communicating.
- **Facial expressions**—conveying your mood and feelings, such as happiness, sadness, agreement, anger.
- **Gestures, posture, or body movement**—emphasizing a point by, for instance, leaning forward or nodding in agreement.
- **Use of space**—standing or sitting close enough to communicate effectively with others.
- **Appearance**—wearing clean, neat clothing that is appropriate for the occasion.

Guidelines for Leading a Small-Group Discussion

1. Begin the discussion by introducing the topic or task and the format of the discussion. For example, "We will discuss the problem of school graffiti and ways to stop it."
2. Moderate the discussion.
   - —Control excessive talkers and draw out quiet members.
   - —Guide the group through the discussion format. Do not let solutions be discussed until the problem has been discussed fully.
   - —Keep the group focused on the topic or task.
   - —Encourage members to express different opinions.
   - —Help all group members to compromise.
   - —Avoid talking too much.
   - —Watch the time to make sure the group completes the discussion or task.
3. Close the discussion by summarizing the main points and the conclusions that were reached.

Will a Phone Call Do?

During the Civil War, letters often took months to get to the intended recipient across ever-changing battle lines. Men on both sides of the conflict, regardless of their miserable surroundings, spent considerable time and thought crafting eloquent letters. Written words on parchment paper were cherished and kept close to the heart by the recipient. Many of these letters, written by Union or Confederate soldiers, were deemed so important that families passed them down through generations.



Today, there are many different ways to communicate, from instant messaging to mobile phones, from e-mail to faxes and overnight mail that is available around the globe. There is no one "right" way to communicate, but some simple guidelines can help you choose the right communication for the right occasion.

Gifts. If you receive a gift through the mail from relatives or faraway friends, write a thank-you note and mail it the following week. Waiting any longer than two weeks to send a thank-you note is not polite. Particularly when communicating with adults and elders, thank-you notes are important and will be remembered.

Letters written by Union and Confederate soldiers show that the average foot soldier had, for the most part, a fairly impressive command of the English language.

Great Getaways. If a friend invites you to come along on a family camping trip, or if you stay for a while in someone else's home, send a thank-you note the following week. If that person provided home-cooked meals, showed you a great time, or did something else out of the ordinary besides putting you up, a small thank-you gift is in order—if you can afford it. Inexpensive food gifts are a good bet.

Formal Letters. A formal letter usually is written for academic, business, or professional purposes. When you apply to college or for a job, you may have to write a formal letter requesting admission or describing your interest in a position. If you are chosen for an award or honored for your talents, a formal letter thanking the organization is in order. Letters to the editor of a newspaper or magazine, even those sent by e-mail, also require a formal tone.

Formal letters are always typewritten and spell-checked. They begin with today's date in the top, left-hand corner, followed by the recipient's name, formal title, street address, city, state, and zip code. The formal greeting ("Dear Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Dr.") comes next. The body of the letter follows, then a formal closing (such as "Sincerely," or "Best regards,") and your full name below that. If you include additional documents with a formal letter such as an application or résumé, make sure you note that at the bottom of the letter, like this: "Enc: résumé" or "Enc: college application and $75 registration fee."

Writing an e-mail thank-you is OK if the person is your age and a close friend, but it will not carry the weight that a note in the mailbox would.

Telephone Calls. Telephone calls are great when you need to get in touch, leave a quick message, make plans, finish some business for your Scout troop, or simply tell someone hello. The phone does not leave a paper trail, though. If you are the least bit worried the person will forget important details of your conversation, jot them down in a follow-up note. If you are calling for a friend and someone else answers, it is polite to say, "Hello, this is (fill in your name here). May I speak to ...?" If you are calling someone you do not know, introduce yourself using your full name and then clearly state why you are calling.

Conversation Starters: *GrowthWays,* an online publication, asked its readers to submit their best communication tips. Here are the top five ways they suggested for starting a good conversation and showing genuine interest in another person:

"I noticed . . ."

"Tell me . . ."

"I appreciate . . ."

"What do you think . . ." or, "I need some advice . . ."

"Why do you say that . . ."


John's World
Skate
Slammin' & Jammin
SCHEDULE
MUNCHIES

Creative Ways to Describe Yourself

Requirement 2a calls for you to find a creative way to describe yourself. Choose a method that you feel comfortable using, that suits your personality, and that allows you to express yourself completely. Here are a few ideas.

Collages are fun to make, and you can use a variety of items to visually describe your life. Postcards, clip art, bumper stickers, photos, cutouts from magazines, typed text, markers, paint, decorative items, leaves and other things from nature, and small plastic toys are just a few items useful in making an eye-catching, 3-D collage.

If you enjoy writing, consider composing a short story about one memorable event in your life or writing an autobiography that chronicles the major events in your life. The best way to start either project is to first create an outline, pinpointing the event or events you plan to describe. This will give you a basic road map to follow. Using an outline makes it much easier to stick to the main idea you want to make.

More artistic Scouts might want to create a series of drawings showing themselves and various people and events in their lives. Musical and theatrical Scouts may choose to create a song or a short skit to fulfill this requirement.

It is a good idea to keep a light touch when describing yourself. Be humble, and do not be afraid to poke fun at yourself a little. This also is a good way to break the ice when you are asked to speak in public.

The Five-Minute Speech

A short speech consists of an introduction, the main body, and a closing. Your goal for requirement 3a is to introduce yourself, deliver information so that the audience understands, and wrap it up in a memorable way. The trick is to know what you are going to say and to organize it well.

Sample Outline

Let's say you decide to give a five-minute speech to your Scout patrol about Dutch-oven cooking for campouts. To begin, you should create a brief outline listing the main points you want to cover. It might look like this:

I. Introduction

Lead-in with quote from Scoutmaster Roger Morris: "No Scout ever starved to death on a weekend campout."

II. Body

A. How to select a Dutch oven and why you need to season it before using it. This involves oiling it and baking it in an oven.

B. Tips for cooking with Dutch ovens.

C. How to clean a Dutch oven and how to store it properly so it will last a lifetime.

D. One-pot wonders: Handouts of four recipes for a Dutch-oven meal that will make your entire patrol a bunch of happy campers.

III. Conclusion

Nothing tastes better than a hearty meal at the end of a long day of hiking, cycling, or canoeing. Preparing and eating great home-cooked meals outdoors with your patrol is part of what makes the brotherhood of Scouting so memorable. So don't forget the wonders of one-pot cooking with a Dutch oven.

When you have finished a simple outline, fill in the details for each main point you intend to cover. Then write out your speech on index cards and practice it several times in front of a mirror. (Number your cards in case you drop them.) Ask your family or a few friends to listen to your speech and give you pointers afterward for improving it. As you speak, remember to look at your audience, smile, and keep your notes handy in case you need to refer to them.

Building a Successful Sales Plan

A sales plan is a persuasive speech in which your objective is to get the audience to buy your product or service. An effective organizational scheme for presenting your talk contains four parts:

1. **Get the audience's attention.** Convince the audience that what you have to say is important.
2. **Highlight a need.** Explain the problem or need and persuade the audience that a solution is in order.
3. **Propose a solution.** Use supporting evidence to convince the audience of the appropriateness of your solution and why they need what you have.
4. **Help the audience visualize the solution.** Show them what happens when they take your advice and what happens when they don't.

Tips for Interviewing and Introducing a Guest Speaker

Let's say you have a neighbor who is a police detective. To fulfill requirement 4, you would like to interview him and prepare an introduction to deliver to your counselor, as though he were to be a guest speaker at your next troop meeting. You also need to show your counselor how you will invite your neighbor to speak at the meeting. Here is how you could approach the task.

First, have a small notepad and pen with you when you make the call. Call your neighbor on the telephone and ask him politely if you could interview him as part of your Communications merit badge requirements. Explain that the requirements include interviewing and preparing to introduce a guest speaker.

If he agrees to help you, and now is a convenient time, ask him to tell you a little about his background, and take notes. (If it's not a good time, ask when you could call again.) Do not be afraid to politely ask the person to slow down or repeat a statement if you were not able to write down the information fast enough.

Here are some questions to break the ice and help you prepare an introduction:

- What is your full name and professional title?
- What are your duties?
- What do you like best about your career?
- What is the most difficult challenge you face in your position?
- Did you go to college or receive special training?
- What do you enjoy doing when you are not working?

Depending on whom you are interviewing, craft your questions accordingly. Based on the person's answers, write a brief, upbeat introduction to the speaker. Practice your introduction several times.

When you demonstrate to your counselor how you would introduce a speaker, bring a couple of index cards with notes just in case you forget some detail that you would like to include about the person.

Stand up, go to the front of the room, face the "audience," smile at your counselor confidently, and address the audience. (They know you so keep this informal.) Then give a brief introduction of the speaker and sit down.

For example:

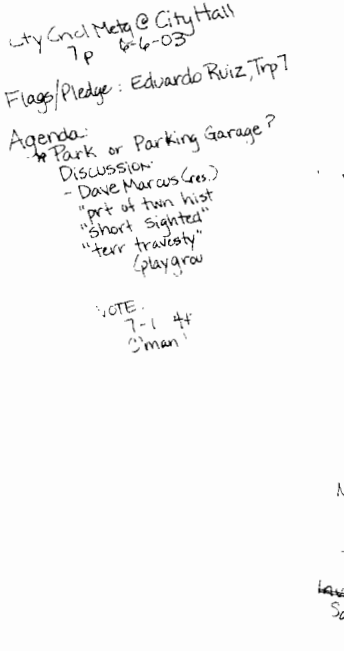
"Thanks for coming today. We have a special guest speaker today, Detective Tom Jackson with the Minneapolis Police Department. Detective Jackson is a 10-year veteran of the police department and has solved many puzzling crimes in our area. He has a bachelor's degree in law enforcement from Iowa State University. When he is not working, he teaches karate and coaches Little League baseball. Detective Jackson has graciously agreed to speak to us today about his position and other career opportunities in law enforcement. Please welcome Detective Jackson. . . ."

Objective Reports

Arrange with your counselor or your parents to attend a public meeting for requirement 5. You can find a list of public meetings in your local newspaper or on a local Web site (with your parent's permission), if one is available. Take a small notepad and a couple of pencils with you to the meeting.

When you arrive, check if there is a meeting agenda (list of topics to be covered) at the front door. If so, pick one up. Sit in the back of the meeting room so you have a view of everyone who will speak.

Your task is not to write down everything every person says. Wait until you hear someone voice an opinion about an issue or debate a main point of the meeting, then take abbreviated notes. Everyone has a unique way of abbreviating notes, particularly with the advent of e-mail, instant messaging, and pagers. For instance, the word "easy"



Make up your own abbreviated version of frequently used words. As long as you know what your notes say, that's all that matters.

becomes EZ, "down" becomes a downward arrow, "without" is written as w/o, "department" is dept. Develop your own style.

During the meeting, think of yourself as an impartial observer. Withhold judgment about what people are saying—do not form your own opinion about the subject under discussion. In other words, do not try to instantly analyze and categorize what is being said or allow yourself to become one-sided in your thinking. Simply record what various people say about the proposal and listen actively to the discussion without participating. Write an objective report of the meeting immediately afterward, when your notes are fresh and you can easily remember what people said.

If you cannot write down exactly what someone says, paraphrase.

Say you attended a city hall meeting and the city council discussed six proposals but only one issue—whether to turn a city park into a much-needed parking garage—generated public comment or heated discussion. List and briefly detail all six proposals, but focus most of your report on the issue that provoked discussion.

If people in the meeting are polarized—if there is great controversy or debate over an issue—report what all sides of the controversy said and what, if any, action the council took. Do not state your own opinion in your report. Stick to the facts and record a variety of viewpoints and the outcome or any compromise that may have been reached among the parties.

Your objective report might paraphrase Mr. Marcus in this way: "Mr. Marcus, a longtime resident of Petersburg, argued that replacing the city park with a parking garage will mean that part of our town's history will be lost forever. He called the proposal to demolish the park short-sighted and a terrible travesty, particularly for the children of Petersburg who would no longer be able to use the playground, and for senior citizens, who enjoy sitting on the park benches talking with friends and other park visitors."

Be sure to record the council's actions on each agenda item, even if some of it is boring. Keep those sections of your report brief but cover all the bases, for example: "The city council unanimously voted to approve funds to fix eight potholes on Hightower Road." Keep your report to one or two pages, summarizing the main issues and points of view covered at the meeting.

Pick a subject or skill you know well that a friend, relative, or troop member might like to learn.

Teaching Skills And Using Teaching Aids

For requirement 6, you will develop a plan to teach a skill or inform someone. Develop an outline much the same as you did for your short speech, keeping in mind how you could break down the subject into simple, step-by-step instructions. For example, if you know a lot about knots, you could choose to teach a friend how to tie a few basic knots.

First, pick out four basic knots that are useful in different situations. Think about how you learned to tie these knots. Write an outline, detailing each step you take to make each of the four knots. List how each knot can be best utilized.

Next, consult your *Boy Scout Handbook*, library books, and Internet resources (with a parent's permission) for illustrations of the four knots. You might consider enlarging these diagrams on a photocopier to make them easier for a beginner to follow. Get a couple of pieces of the right-sized rope to practice with—one for yourself and one for the friend you will teach. The ropes and the illustrations, which you may want to display when you demonstrate this skill, are your teaching aids. They will help your friend visualize the rope-tying skills.

Practice how you will teach your friend this skill before you meet. Since this is a hands-on skill, consider whether it would be better if the two of you sat side-by-side or across from one another so that your actions to tie the knot are easy to follow.

Demonstrate each step slowly. If your friend gets confused or flustered, slow down or start over. If something is extremely difficult for the person to master, you might have to rethink the skill you are teaching or choose a less-complicated knot. You can suggest taking a short break if the frustration level gets too high.

Be light-hearted and encouraging in your teaching approach. People learn skills by being allowed to make mistakes without being penalized. Be a positive role model. You can always make someone feel better by saying, "I had the same problem when I first started tying this knot. Try this... ." Ask if there are any questions and make sure you answer them thoroughly.

Before the two of you go before your counselor to demonstrate the skill you have successfully taught, review the information with your friend one last time. After the demonstration is over, sit down privately with your counselor and determine how well you were able to transfer your knowledge or skill to your friend.

Praise your friend's efforts often and generously; positive reinforcement is a great learning tool.

Teaching aids can involve the use of graphics, maps, a chalkboard, props or any number of things limited only by your imagination. Aids do not have to be elaborate or expensive. Anything that you can think of that will help you instruct your friend and make the experience more hands-on and fun, or help the person visualize what you are saying, will add a great deal to that person's ability to catch on quickly.

Teaching aids like this 3-D chart make learning more fun and understandable.

Even if you are sending a letter to the editor by e-mail, always keep your letter formal and include your name and return address. For privacy reasons, your letter will not be printed in the publication with your address but editors need to be able to verify you are who you say you are.

Active Communication

As you decide how to fulfill requirement 7, try something different and challenging.

Letters to the Editor

A lot of Scouts write to the editor (or the mascot, Pedro) of the national Scouting publication, *Boys' Life*, if they choose requirement 7a. Letters written to Pedro, the *Boys' Life* mailburro, are sometimes answered in the magazine by the editor-in-chief doubling as Pedro.

Usually, you would not address the editor of a magazine with "Dear Hay-Munching, Tumbleweed- and Taco-Eating Mailburro," but readers of *Boys' Life* do just that when writing to the wacky burro that supposedly delivers the magazine's mail when he's not off having wild adventures in his monthly cartoon in the magazine.

Scouts sometimes tell Pedro how much they liked a particular story in the magazine; other times they write to correct a mistake they saw in print or to inform the editors of *Boys' Life* about interesting trips or campouts their troop has planned that year.

All letters to the editor—whether they are sent to a local newspaper or a national magazine—are carefully read. Journalists are particularly interested to hear what readers like and dislike about the publications for which

they write. Editors are constantly striving to serve their readers better with what they publish. In a free society like America, your voice counts.

Before you write a letter to the newspaper or your favorite magazine, read the publication thoroughly. Look at the masthead of the publication; this may be on the editorial page of your newspaper or on one of the front or back pages of a magazine. Write to the managing editor if an editor is not listed.

Your approach, unless you are writing to Pedro, should be formal. Write the person's full name, title, the name of the publication (in italics), and the address in the top, left-hand corner of your letter. Begin the body of your letter with "Dear Mr. or Ms." and the person's last name. In your first sentence, state why you are writing this letter to the editor.

Here are some examples of opening sentences:

- "I am writing to say how much I enjoyed Dan McLain's story on high-adventure Scout camps."
- "Drew Norton's piece on rappelling was highly informative, however, the third paragraph contained an error that could lead to an unsafe climbing situation."

Back up your first statement with more detail or an explanation. If you are expressing an opinion, do so respectfully and in a measured way. Back up your opinion with personal experience, facts you have gathered about the subject, and clear-cut ways of solving the problem or issue in a different way than what the publication proposed.

If you have said all you need to say in a few sentences or at the most, a couple paragraphs, wrap it up by closing with "Sincerely," or "Best regards," then skip four lines down and type your name, address, city, state, and zip code. Spell-check your letter on your computer before you send it. Print it out and read it carefully again to make sure that you wrote in complete sentences; stated your idea, position, or


Boys' Life

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ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
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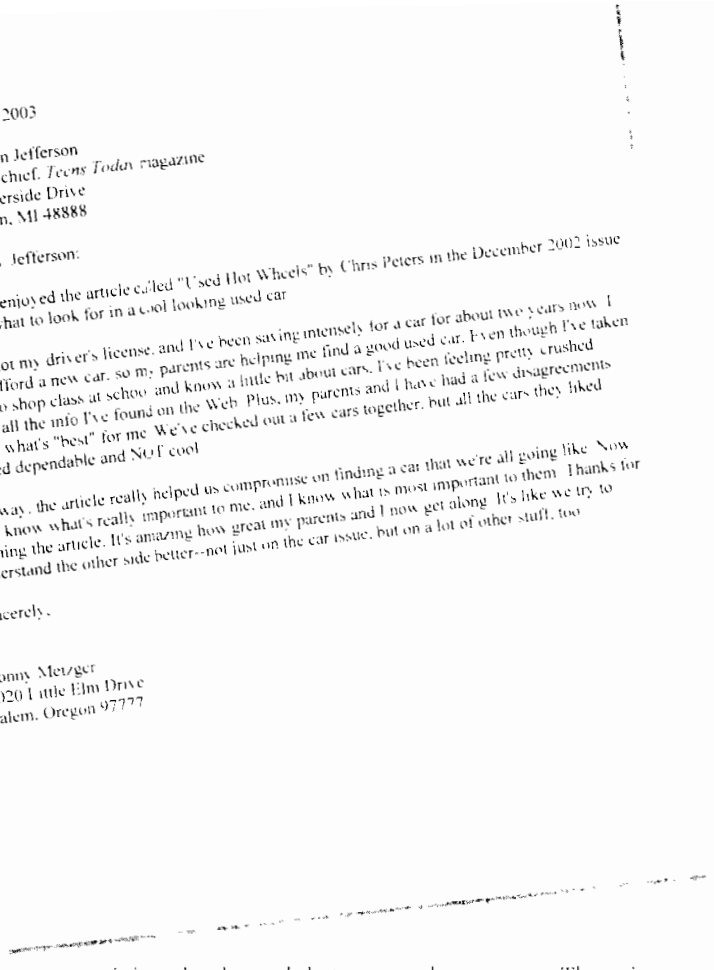
A publication's masthead will list the publisher, editor, managing editor, and various department heads.



March 15, 2003

Ms. Vivian Jefferson
Editor-in-chief, *Teens Today* magazine
1401 Riverside Drive
Little Elm, MI 48888

Dear Ms. Jefferson:

I really enjoyed the article called "Used Hot Wheels" by Chris Peters in the December 2002 issue about what to look for in a cool looking used car.

I just got my driver's license, and I've been saving intensely for a car for about two years now. I can't afford a new car, so my parents are helping me find a good used car. Even though I've taken an auto shop class at school and know a little bit about cars, I've been feeling pretty crushed about all the info I've found on the Web. Plus, my parents and I have had a few disagreements about what's "best" for me. We've checked out a few cars together, but all the cars they liked looked dependable and NOT cool.

Anyway, the article really helped us compromise on finding a car that we're all going like. Now they know what's really important to me, and I know what is most important to them. Thanks for running the article. It's amazing how great my parents and I now get along. It's like we try to understand the other side better--not just on the car issue, but on a lot of other stuff, too.

Sincerely,

Ronny Metzger
2020 Little Elm Drive
Salem, Oregon 97777

opinion clearly; and that you made no errors. Then sign your name in the space you left after the closing, followed by your typed name and address.

How to Build Your Own Web Page

If you choose requirement 7b, you will need to create a Web page for your Scout troop, school, or other organization. In addition to Web sites for companies, schools, Boy Scout troops, and other groups and organizations, there are countless sites that post personal home pages on the Internet from people all over the world. If you are interested in joining this global community of "netizens," here is what you will need to do.

If you choose requirement 7b, remember that while you do not have to actually post your page to a Web site, if you decide to post it, you will first need to share it with your parents and your counselor and get their approval.

Choose Your Content. First, decide what you want to say to the world. You could tell people about your hobbies, show off your collections, or just talk about your daily life (which often is more interesting than you think, especially to people from faraway places and diverse cultures). Your Web page could teach others how to do things, introduce them to new interests, or just share information that might interest them.

The important thing to remember is that your Web page is *public*. It's more like a poster displayed in a town square than a private letter to a friend, so *you must be careful about the information you provide*. You certainly wouldn't want to give complete strangers personal information such as your address or telephone number, or provide any information that could be used to harm you or your family.

Find a Web Server. In order for your home page to be available to others, it must be hosted on a Web server. Your troop, place of worship, or school may agree to host your Web page for free, for a limited time. If so, be sure you adhere to the guidelines set by the host and the Webmaster.

Building Your Web Page. Your Web page must be "built" in a language called "HTML" in order to be viewed by most Web browser software. The HTML source document contains all the text and pointers to pictures and animations that will decorate your page. It is surprisingly easy to learn HTML. In addition, tools called "Web page editors" will enable you to build a Web page without knowing all the technical details.

In addition to HTML, you will want to decorate your page with a few graphics. A piece of equipment called a scanner can digitize drawings and photographs for use on your Web page. You might also have drawing or painting software that allows you to create your own artwork, right on the computer. Another option is to use free graphics available on the Internet (with your parent's permission), such as clip art—but make sure that it's OK with the copyright holder. You can't just take a picture off someone else's Web site to use on your own—that's stealing.

Where to Get Help. Everything you need to build your own Web page is available on the Internet. See the resources section at the end of this pamphlet for more information about Web sites that can be helpful. Some are free, some have free introductory memberships, and others require you to become a member for a fee.

Before you begin, be sure you have your parent's permission to visit any of those Web sites, and never download anything or purchase anything online, unless you have your parent's permission to do so.

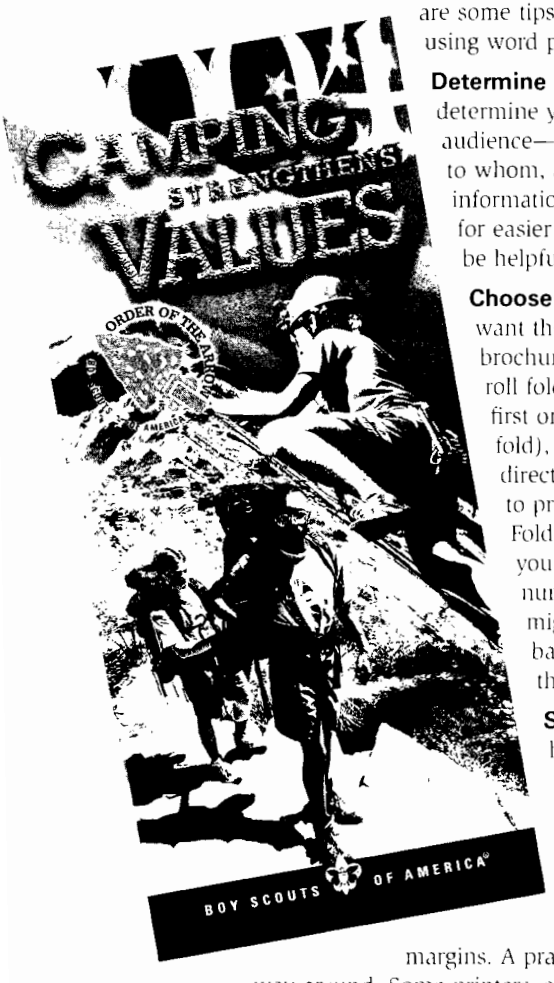
Tips for Online Safety

Whenever you are online, you need to guard your privacy and protect yourself and your family from potentially harmful situations. These tips will help you stay safe.

1. Follow your family's rules for going online. Respect any limits on how long and how often you are allowed to be online and what sites you can visit. Do not visit areas that are off-limits. Just as there are places you don't go to in real life, there are places to avoid on the Internet.
2. Protect your privacy. Never exchange e-mails or give out personal information such as your phone number, your address, your last name, where you go to school, or where your parents work, without first asking your parent's permission. Do not send anyone your picture or any photographs unless you have your parent's permission.
3. Do not open e-mails or files you receive from people you don't know or trust. If you get something suspicious, trash it just as you would any other junk mail.
4. If you receive or discover any information that makes you uncomfortable, leave it and tell your parent. Do not respond to any message that is disturbing or hurtful.
5. Never agree to get together with someone you "meet" online, unless your parent approves of the meeting and goes with you.
6. Never share your Internet password with anyone (even if they sound "official") other than your parents or other responsible adults in your family.
7. Never shop online, unless you have your parent's permission to do so.
8. Do not believe everything you see or read online. Along with lots of great information, the Internet has lots of junk. Learn to separate the useful from the worthless. Talk with your counselor or other experienced Web user about ways to tell the difference.
9. Be a good online citizen. Do not do anything that harms others or is against the law.

How to Create a Tri-Fold Brochure

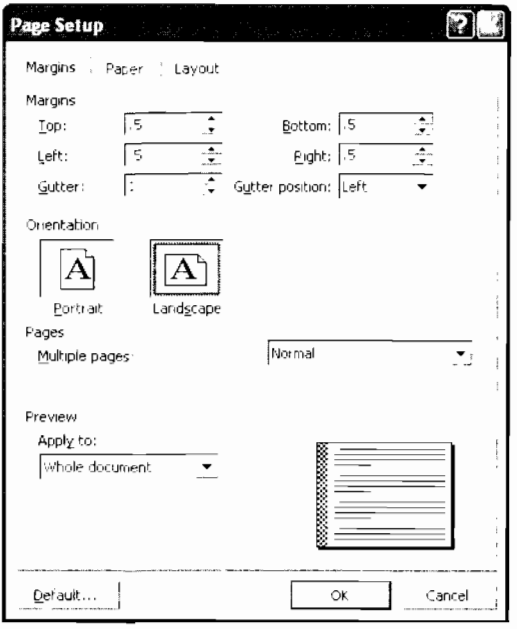
A brochure is a simple and effective way to communicate a message visually. You do not have to be a graphic designer to develop a tri-fold brochure—the front and back of one page, folded so that it has three columns, or panels. Here are some tips to create a simple one yourself, using word processing software.



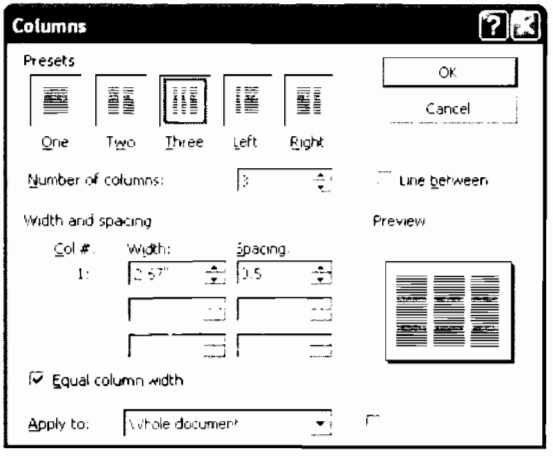
Determine the Message and Content. First determine your brochure's message and audience—what you want to communicate, to whom, and why. Then organize your information with headings and subheadings for easier reading. Include only what will be helpful to your reader.

Choose the Layout. Decide how you want the information to appear on your brochure panels. For the barrel fold (or roll fold), the top fold will overlap the first one. For a z-fold (or accordion fold), the paper is folded in alternating directions, which is good if you want to present information sequentially. Fold a piece of scrap paper the way you want the brochure to appear, then number the panels on each side. You might be surprised to find that the back side of the brochure could be the front cover.

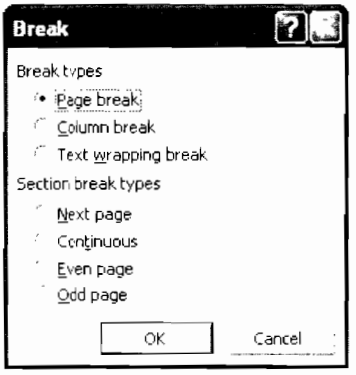
Set Up the Page. Choose the horizontal (landscape) setting for your paper orientation. This setting will give you more space to set up your columns and will allow you to fold the brochure appropriately once printed. Set the top, bottom, left, and right margins. A practical choice is 1/2 inch all the way around. Some printers, such as inkjet printers, have size restrictions, so do not make your margins too narrow.

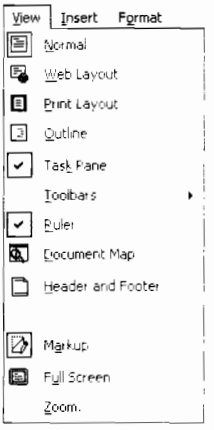


Set Up Columns. A tri-fold brochure has three columns. So that your brochure will be equally spaced on either side of the fold between each column, make your *gutters* (the space between the columns) double that of your margins. For instance, if your margins are 1/2 inch, make each gutter 1 inch.



Add Page Breaks. Inserting a page break in the third column will create the second, or back, side of your brochure.



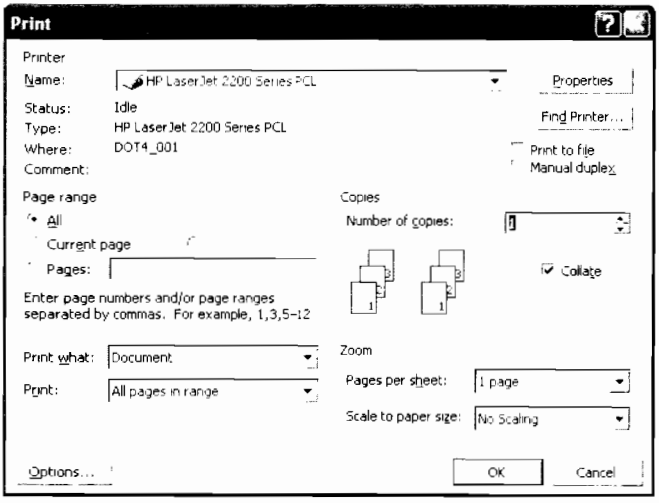


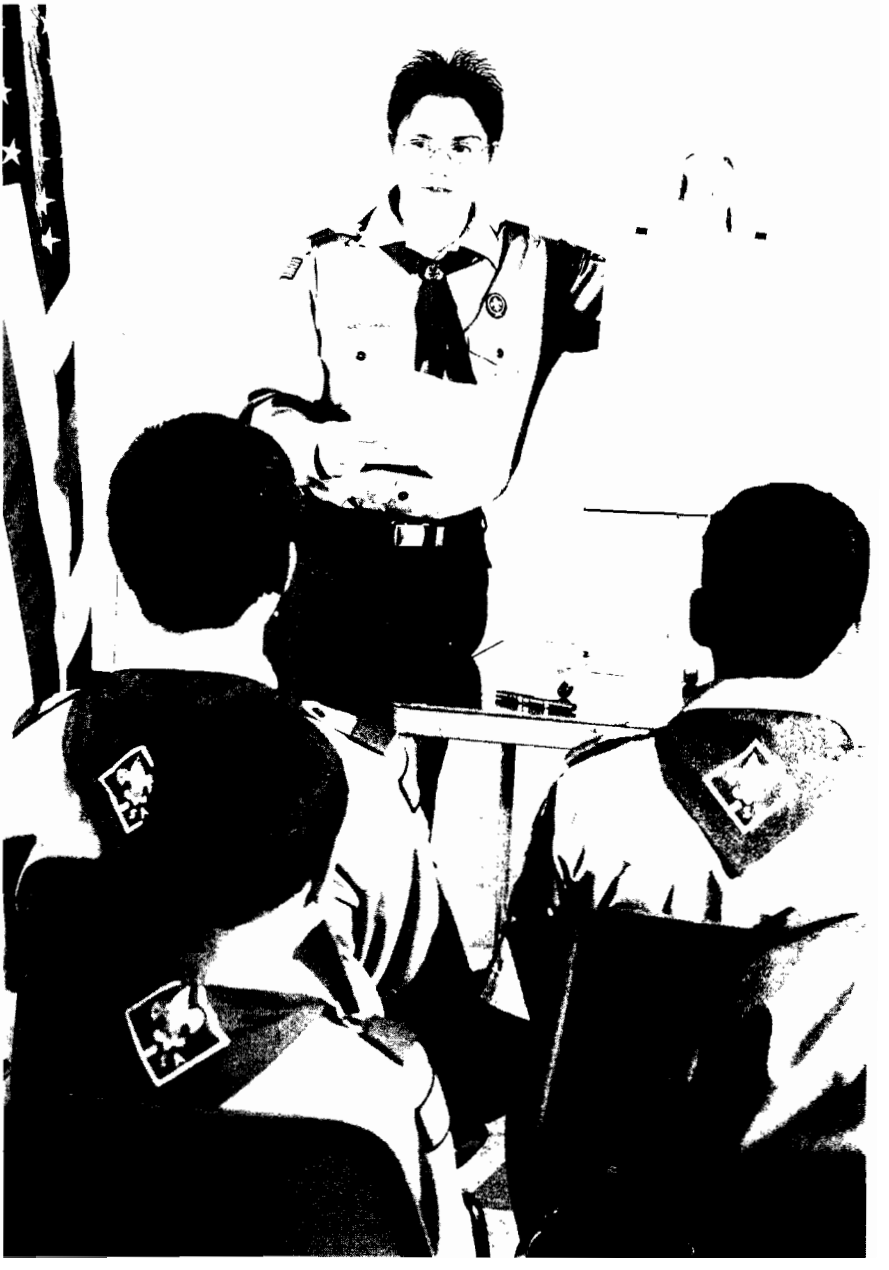
Add and Format Text. Format (choose the font style, size, etc.) the text as you type, or key it all in first and format later. As you add text, consider where you want it to go on the finished brochure. For instance, the cover text may actually need to be keyed in on the last panel (refer to your folded sample if necessary).

> With formatting, less often is best. Use fonts sparingly. Designers choose fonts for a reason: to communicate. Anything that is too busy or that is hard to read *won't* be read.

Add Pictures. If you are creating a product brochure, you may want to include a photograph of the product that you have stored on a disk or on your computer's hard drive. Or, you may want to use clip art available on your own computer software. If not, you can find (with your parent's permission) various free clip art sites on the Internet. Even though it's free, be sure you have permission from the copyright holder to use the clip art on your brochure. The Web site will have information about the proper use of the clip art it makes available.

Use photographs or clip art sparingly and appropriately; you want to enhance your brochure, not clutter it.





Planning a Campfire or Court of Honor Program

One of the most important and complex challenges you will face in earning the Communications merit badge is planning and serving as master of ceremonies at either a troop court of honor or a campfire program (requirement 8).

You will be in charge of making sure committees complete their assignments on time, and you will need to keep track of many organizational details to pull off a successful campfire or court of honor program.

Planning a Campfire Program

Planning a campfire program is much easier if you use the standard campfire program planning form. The form, reproduced here, comes from the *Troop Program Resources for Scout Troops and Varsity Teams* (your Scoutmaster can get a copy of the full-size form from this publication).

As the master-of-the-campfire (or MC), you must organize songs, stunts, and stories in a good sequence. Consider timing, variety, smoothness, and showmanship while you plan your campfire program.

First, be sure that every feature of your campfire program upholds the highest traditions and ideals of Scouting. You must plan the opening, closing, and headliner or main event, and designate the songleader and cheerleader.

Write down everything in pencil, because you likely will make changes and adjustments later. List all units and individuals who will participate in the program. Then write down the name, description, and type of song, stunt, or story they have planned.

The master-of-the-campfire fills in the campfire program sheet and gives copies of the program to all participants. The MC also opens the campfire program, with a greeting or introduction, and introduces the various acts, songs, or yells.

Additional details you will need to consider in a campfire planning session with your troop and Scoutmaster include:

- Who will set up the campfire area
- Who will build the campfire
- Who will put the campfire out after the program
- Which troop members will be designated to clean up afterward

Lighting is important to all ceremonies. Have the performers stand behind the campfire so that the fire illuminates the participants.

You also must designate a songleader and cheerleader and help them develop a plan that details specifically what song or yell they will lead in what order on the program.

When the glowing embers of your campfire begin to fade, close the program with a note of quiet inspiration, and reference the value of Scouting in daily life. This can be achieved in many ways.

For example, you could ask all to stand, bow their heads, and recite the Scout benediction together: "Now may the great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again." Then have the Scouts leave the area quietly. Or you could end your program with a troop member standing some distance from the fire, playing "Taps," then have him repeat this quite softly. Be imaginative in your approach.

Planning a Court of Honor

Courts of honor require even more careful planning than taking charge of a campfire program. A court of honor is convened when Boy Scouts achieve Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks.

Write out your plan, and then have key members rehearse their parts. Use the checklist provided to help guide you through the court of honor planning process. The checklist is only a guide. Develop your own ideas and do not forget to get feedback from other troop members and parents on how to make the ceremony even more memorable. Remember to use a pencil to complete your checklist so you can neatly make changes as needed.

Have an agenda or program for the Scouts and the adults who will be presenting the award. Rehearse, if possible, in the actual setting where you will be serving as master of ceremonies. If scripts are needed, be sure they are distributed to participants well in advance.

Consider the following basic protocol as you develop your plan:

1. The Scouts enter carrying the troop and patrol flags.
2. The court of honor members enter.
3. The color guard enters carrying the colors. The Scouts and audience members stand at attention.
4. The parents and audience members join the Scouts in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
5. An appropriate opening ceremony is presented.
6. The court chairperson (or master of ceremonies) convenes the court of honor.
7. The court chairperson calls on members of the court to make awards presentations.
8. Special program features are presented—Scout demonstrations, a brief address, or singing.
9. Retire the colors.
10. Close. The court of honor may close with the troop's regular closing ceremony.

Many Scouts and Scouters have created Web pages with tons of imaginative, dramatic ideas for unique courts of honor ceremonies. With your parent's permission, just type in "Courts of Honor, Scouting" into a good search engine, and you will find many excellent resources.

As you plan the ceremony, keep the following tips in mind.

Lighting

Lighting is important to most ceremonies. It can be used to help create a sense of drama and excitement, and to spotlight award recipients in a court of honor. By following the script, you will be able to prepare in advance for the lighting techniques you want to use during the ceremony.

Depending on the facility's lighting, you may have access to stage lights, spotlights, and colored lighting. Arrive early the day of the ceremony so that you can inspect the lighting controls and be sure you know how to switch the lights off and on, and when.

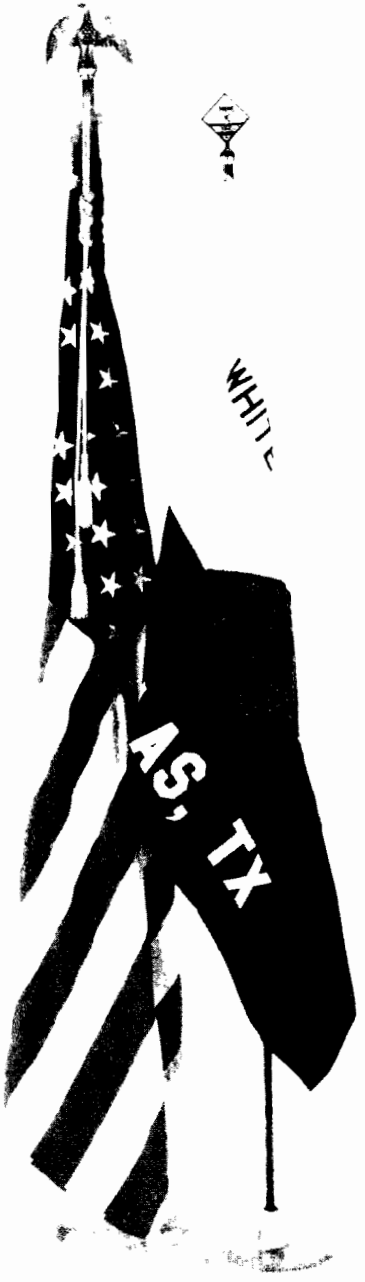
Spotlighting should be used anytime a Scout is recognized before an audience. A simple flashlight can serve as a spotlight.

Decorations

A few appropriate decorations can transform a bare room into a special place for any court of honor. Crepe paper, neckerchiefs, Scouting posters, Scout skill displays, merit badge displays, and knot boards are just a few examples.

Audiovisuals

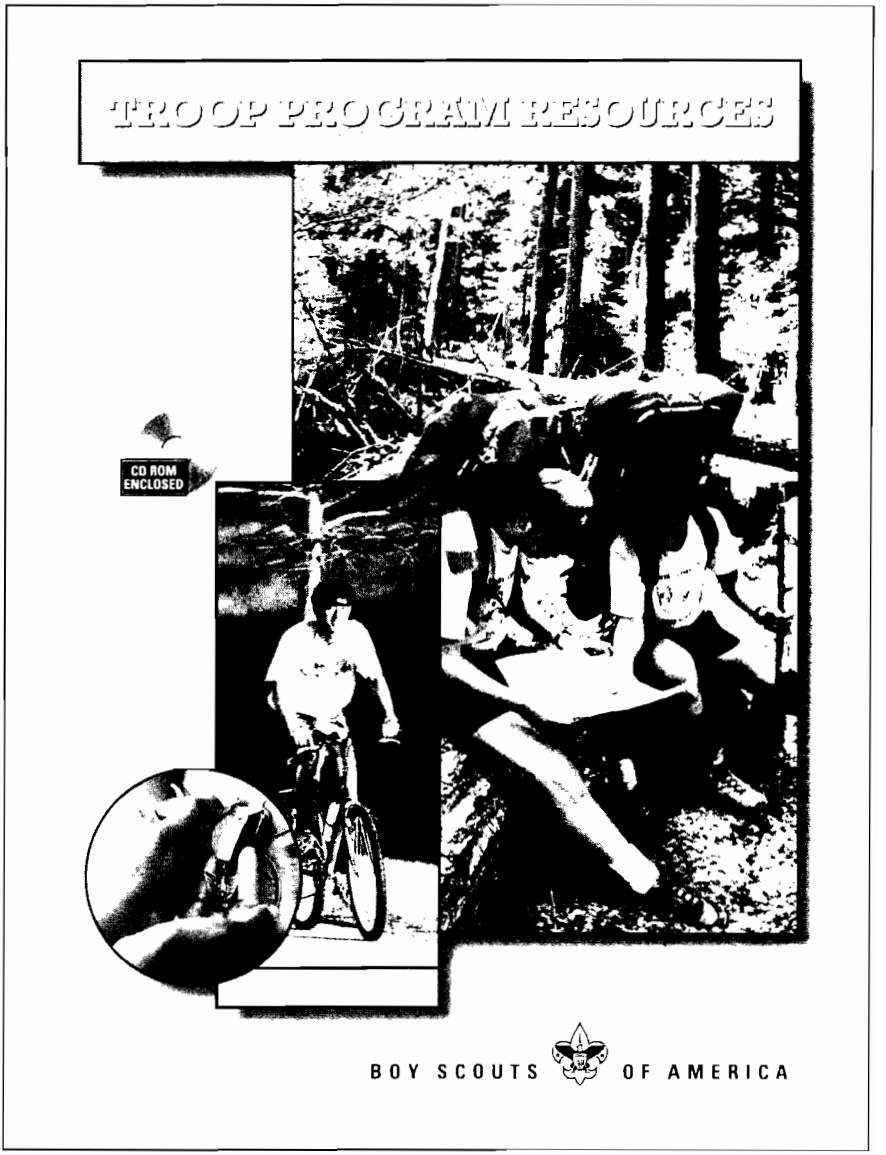
The BSA has many videos and slide programs (ask your Scoutmaster about these) available that are appropriate for use in a court of honor ceremony. Enhancing the court of honor with good sound equipment and carefully selected music will give the ceremony a professional touch.



Props

Props add special flair to any ceremony. Use your imagination. You may want to craft an advancement board that displays the progress of each Scout in the troop or patrol. At the court of honor, some troops present a handsome plaque to Eagle Scouts that includes a nameplate engraved with their name, troop number, and date of the ceremony. Other ideas for props include:

- A candle log—a log drilled with holes, used as a candleholder.
- An artificial campfire—made with a flashlight, logs, and sheets of red, yellow, and orange cellophane.
- A badge holder—a device such as a felt-covered tray, used to display advancement badges, pins, and cards.
- Flags—from your troop, place of worship, state, and the U.S. flag all are appropriate in ceremonies. Be certain you display and carry flags correctly.
- Troop scrapbook—seek assistance from the troop historian, who helps maintain the troop scrapbook.



The BSA's *Troop Program Resources* contains a wealth of information about planning ceremonies and courts of honor. Your Scoutmaster should have a copy of this resource.

THE CAMPFIRE PROGRAM PLANNER

How to use this sheet Be sure that every feature of this campfire program upholds Scouting's highest traditions.

1. In a campfire planning meeting, fill in the top of the Campfire Program sheet (over)
2. On the Campfire Program Planner (below), list all units and individuals who will participate in the program.
3. Write down the name, description, and type of song, stunt, or story they have planned
4. The master-of-the-campfire organizes songs, stunts, and stories in a good sequence considering timing, variety smoothness, and showmanship
5. The master-of-the-campfire makes out the Campfire Program sheet (over)
6. Copies of the program are given to all participants

Cheer Planner	Spot

Song Planner	Spot

Campfire Program Planner

Group or Individual	Description	Type	Spot
Opening			
Closing			
Headliner	Main event		
Song leader			
Cheerleader			

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA No. 5x696

CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Place

Date

Time

Camp director's approval

Campers notified	Area set up by
Campfire planning meeting	
MC	Campfire built by
Song leader	Fire put out by
Cheermaster	Cleanup by

Spot	Title of stunt, song, or story	By	Time
1	Opening (and firelighting)		
2	Greetings (introduction)	MC	
3	Sing Yell		
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22	Closing		

CHECKLIST FOR COURTS OF HONOR (AND OTHER CEREMONIES)

Eagle Scout Court of Honor	Regular Court of Honor	Planning Phase
		Schedule the date
		Reserve the facility
		Meet with the Eagle Scout, committee, and parents
		Request letters from dignitaries, etc
		Secure the speaker/court commitments
		Send invitations
		Print programs
		Prepare/distribute news releases
		Mail programs to participants
		Order refreshments
		Physical Arrangements
		Seating for audience
		Seating for platform
		Lighting
		Heat and ventilation
		Public address system
		Special equipment (such as movie equipment, if used)
		Custodian's cooperation secured
		Refreshments
		Parking
		Awards Presentation
		Badges and certificates are in individually marked envelopes
		Clasps on mothers' pins and metal badges are open and ready to be pinned on
		All other awards and recognitions are arranged and marked.

CHECKLIST FOR COURTS OF HONOR (AND OTHER CEREMONIES) (cont'd.)

Eagle Scout Court of Honor	Regular Court of Honor	Planning Phase
		Presenter's Briefing
_____	_____	One Scout at a time receives his award
_____	_____	The Scout faces the audience
_____	_____	The Scout is on a box or raised platform
_____	_____	The Scout is spotlighted, if possible.
_____	_____	The presenter knows where to pin the badge
_____	_____	The presenter knows how to give the Scout handshake using the left hand
		General Program
_____	_____	Who is to be introduced?
_____	_____	Make speakers aware of the time limit.
_____	_____	Prepare notes for people who are not familiar with the activities
_____	_____	Encourage parents' participation
_____	_____	Recognize the Scoutmaster and other leaders
_____	_____	Have any demonstration or special program materials on hand
_____	_____	Plan the entrance for court of honor officials.
_____	_____	Start on time and end on time
_____	_____	Set up and staff refreshments and reception tables.
		Follow-up Details
_____	_____	Make arrangements for returning equipment and cleanup.
_____	_____	Send a note of thanks to program participants, the custodian, and any others who helped.

Careers in Communications

If you are interested in a career in communications, you will have many choices.

Advertising. This includes positions such as advertising or marketing specialist, copywriter, account executive, sales manager, media planner, creative director, media sales representative, and public opinion researcher.

Communication Education. Most communication educators are found at the college level but communication teachers are hired at elementary and secondary schools and community colleges, too. All require a minimum of a bachelor's degree in the field you will be teaching. Research and graduate schools prefer candidates trained in a specific area such as organizational communication, rhetoric and public address, or interpersonal communication. Careers in this field include language arts coordinator, high school speech teacher, forensics/debate coach, drama director, college or university professor, and speech communication department chairperson.

Electronic Media, Radio, or Television Broadcasting. Network newscasters and talk-show hosts are what one thinks of as the glamour jobs in this field, but radio and television offer far more off-camera and off-microphone positions than those that are on the air. Many of these are technical, sales, and administrative positions. Careers also include broadcasting station manager, film/tape librarian, community relations director, unit manager, film editor, news director, news writer, transmitter engineer, technical director, media buyer, market researcher, producer, casting director, researcher, and floor manager.

Journalism (Print or Electronic). Journalism involves researching and gathering information and communicating it to the public through writing, speaking, visual or electronic means. Careers in journalism include reporter, editor, photographer, newscaster, author, copywriter, scriptwriter, publisher, news service researcher, technical writer, and acquisitions editor.

Public Relations. This field usually involves managing the public image of an organization or an individual. Careers in public relations include publicity manager, advertising manager, marketing specialist, press agent, lobbyist, corporate public affairs specialist, account executive, development officer, fundraiser, membership recruiter, sales manager, media analyst, media planner, creative director, audience analyst, news writer, and public opinion researcher.

Theatre/Performing Arts/Dramatic Arts. "Stars" do exist in this glitzy industry, but successful performing careers are hard to come by. The majority of actors do not reach star status. Rather, many performers take advantage of theatrical opportunities found in professional, community, and educational theaters across the country. Off-stage positions exist in theatre management, instruction, technical, and production positions. Careers in performing arts include performing artist, scriptwriter, producer, director, costume designer, scenic designer, lighting designer, theatre critic, makeup artist, stage manager, model, and theatre professor and casting director.

Think about which careers in communication listed above might suit you. Choose one career that interests you. Research the primary responsibilities of that position and the qualifications, education, and preparation it requires. (See the resources section at the end of this pamphlet for further research.) Take notes on what you find out so you can refer to them when you meet with your counselor to discuss requirement 9.

Now that you have finished the requirements for your Communications merit badge, you no doubt have a much better understanding of just how important effective communication is to every aspect of daily life. Whether you are communicating with your family and friends, troop members, elders, or the general public, the skills you have learned to meet your badge requirements will serve you well throughout your life.

Communications Resources

Scouting Literature

Journalism, Public Speaking, Radio, and *Theater* merit badge pamphlets

Books

Ali, Moi. *Effective Public Relations.* DK Publishing, 2001.

Buehler, Ezra. *Building the Contest Oration.* Wilson, 1965.

Dine, Jeremiah. *How to Build a Twenty-Minute Home Page.* Yahoo! Internet Life, 1997.

Dragisic, Patricia. *How to Write a Letter.* Franklin Watts, 1998.

Feldman, Tony. *An Introduction to Digital Media.* Rutledge, 1997.

Haegele, Katie. *E-Advertising and E-Marketing: Online Opportunities.* Rosen Publishing Group, 2001.

Johnson, Marlys H. *Careers in the Movies.* Rosen Publishing Group, 2001.

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Organizations and Web Sites

Animation Factory

Web site: *http://www.animationfactory.com*

Visit this site for easy-to-use animations that can be used to decorate your Web page.

Broadcast Education Association

1771 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-2891
Toll-free telephone: 888-380-7222
Web site: *http://www.beaweb.org*

The BEA provides a Directory of Colleges and Universities that outlines degrees in broadcasting and electronic media. In addition, you will find information on scholarships for college students, industry positions through state broadcast associations, convention and exhibit information, and related scholarly journals.

Communication Ring/Rhetoric Resources

Web site: *http://www.rhetorical.info*

A communication ring site is a group of communication sites that are linked together. You can go from one communication site to the next with ease. It offers links to sites such as professional organizations (like the NCA), references, project, link collections, hubs, and discussions.

Cool Archive

Web site: *http://www.coolarchive.com*

This service provides a large collection of free clip art for Web sites, including backgrounds, bullets, bars, icons, and more.

HTML Writers Guild

Web site: *http://www.hwg.org*

This beginner-friendly site offers free Web development training, including online courses taught by professional developers.

National Communication Association

1765 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: 202-464-4622
Fax: 202-464-4600
Web site: *http://www.natcom.org*

The NCA Web site provides information to help students in their search for a communication program at any level of study. Links are provided to communication departments at most colleges and universities across the country.

Tucows Software Library
Web site: *http://www.tucows.com*

This site has all the tools you need to build your own Web page. Its library includes freeware and shareware HTML editors, image editors, and much more.

Web Monkey
Web site: *http://www.webmonkey.com*

This site includes a how-to library, quick references, and articles on Web development for creators of various skill levels, from beginners to "masters."

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