

MERIT BADGE SERIES



COMMUNICATION



SCOUTING AMERICA
MERIT BADGE SERIES

COMMUNICATION



"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"

Scouting  **America**

Requirements

Always check scouting.org for the latest 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, listening to the radio or podcasts, watching television, using social media, reading books another print media, and using any electronic communication device. 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) Be persuaded
 - (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 effectively each Scout communicates their 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, email, text messages, social media, and so on). 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. Prepare 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, email, or regular mail.
 - (b) Create a webpage or blog of special interest to you (for instance, your troop or crew, a hobby, or a sport). Include at least three articles or entries and one photograph or illustration, and one link to some other webpage or blog that would be helpful to someone who visits the webpage or blog you have created. It is not necessary to post your webpage or blog to the internet, but if you decide to do so, you must first share it with your parent or guardian and counselor and get their permission.
 - (c) Use desktop publishing to produce a newsletter, brochure, flyer, or other printed material for your troop or crew, class at school, or other group. Include at least one article and one photograph or illustration.
8. Plan a troop or crew court of honor, campfire program, or interfaith worship service. Have the patrol leaders' council approve it, then write the script and prepare the program. Serve as master of ceremonies.
9. Find out about three career opportunities in communication. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

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Communication: A Key to Opening Doors

Communication is important to your life. Being able to communicate effectively is key to achieving success. It is the way you get people to understand your values, interests, talents, abilities, needs, and wants. It is how you show your knowledge about things.

Good communication means more than just expressing yourself. It also involves listening carefully to others, knowing

when to speak up, and knowing when to keep your thoughts to yourself. If you can communicate well, you will be better at just about everything you do, from Scouting to schoolwork and being a good friend.

As you grow older, your ability to communicate grows with you. When you were an infant, you used crying to communicate simple messages such as “I’m hungry!” or “My diaper needs changing!” At about 6 weeks of age, you learned to communicate by smiling. This was how you said: “I’m happy” or “I’m comfortable with you.” At around 6 months, you started talking. A mixture of sounds and words tumbled out of your mouth. Every day, you got a little better at it. By the time you started school, you had advanced from “Da-da!” to “Can you come over to play?”

When you are old enough to get a job, good communication skills will make you a valued and productive worker.



Here are some other common symbols. What do they mean? The answers are upside down.



1



2



3



4



1. Peace
2. Canada
3. No smoking room
4. Men's room

Today, you are able to communicate complex thoughts about things like sports, math, and movie plots. You may have learned a special group of words related to a favorite hobby or sport. You may have even learned to communicate in a second language.



Different Forms of Communication

As you work on your Communication merit badge, you may wonder, “What is communication?” Simply put, communication is the act of sharing information with others. Most forms of communication are *symbolic*. A *symbol* is something that means or stands for something else. For example, the American flag is a symbol of America.

Language

Language is the most common way that we use symbols to communicate. Most languages use an alphabet to *symbolize* (stand for) sounds in the spoken language. We combine these “letters” to form words. Some words symbolize things you can hold or touch. “Apple,” for example, stands for a fruit. Other words, such as “love,” “intelligence,” and “freedom,” stand for things you cannot hold or touch.

We combine words to form sentences. Sentences state facts, opinions, questions, or commands, such as, “The apple looks very red” and “Is it a Macintosh or Fuji?”

Speaking Without Words

Not all communication uses words. There are many ways we communicate *nonverbally*, or “without words.” Nonverbal communication can still use symbols, however. For example, if a Scout is on a trail and sees a sign with a drawing of a bicycle with a bold red line drawn over it, the Scout knows that no bicycles are allowed on the trail, even though there are no words on the sign.

Some types of communication use words and nonverbal symbols. The eight-sided red sign printed with the word *STOP* in white letters tells drivers to stop their car. You would probably know the sign’s meaning even if the word was not there. That is because the color red, which signifies *danger*, and the eight-sided shape (called an octagon) are used on no other road sign in the United States. In this case, three different symbols—a word, a color, and a shape—all help communicate the same important meaning.



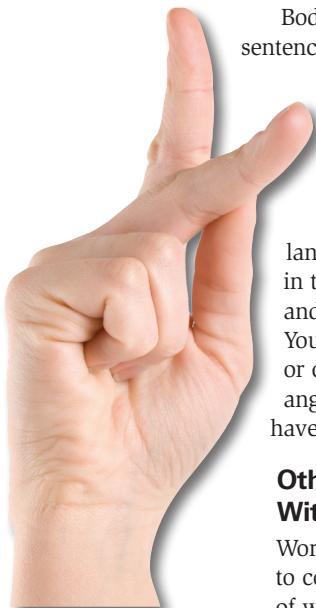
Talking With Your Body

Another nonverbal way to communicate is through “body language.” *Body language* is communication through body movements or gestures. It can be as simple as a smile, frown, or nod of the head.

Shaking hands when you meet someone is a nonverbal way to communicate goodwill. For people in the military, a *salute*—raising the right hand, held flat, to the forehead over the right eyebrow—shows respect. Legend has it that the practice had its origin in the Middle Ages, when knights raised the visors of their helmets to greet each other.



Body language, like spoken languages, can have different meanings in different countries. This could lead to misunderstandings. In some countries, nodding the head up and down means “no,” while it means “yes” in the United States. The peace sign gesture (holding up the middle and index fingers in a “V”) may be polite in this country but considered rude or insulting in other cultures.



American Sign Language, or ASL, helps people communicate whole sentences with hand movements and finger spelling rather than by voice.

Body language can even communicate whole sentences. For example, many people who are deaf, and their friends and families, use a special language called American Sign Language, or ASL. This language uses hand movements and “finger spelling” to communicate thoughts.

People may sometimes “speak” body language without knowing it. If you grew up in the United States, you might lower your eyes and look at the floor when you are feeling shy. You might raise an eyebrow to show doubt or confusion. Squinting your eyes can signal anger. In other cultures, these movements may have different meanings.

Other Ways of Communicating Without Words

Words and body language are not the only ways to communicate. Dressing nicely to go to a place of worship tells others, “I respect this religious tradition.” Sitting in the front of the classroom, rather than in the back, says, “I want to learn and do well in this class.”

The way you wear your hair can communicate, too. In the 1960s, many young men wore their hair long as a way to protest “the establishment,” a term that meant “the usual way of doing things.” However, by the 1970s long hair on boys and young men was common and had lost its special meaning.



Mass Communication and Digital Technologies

Communication that is meant for a large audience is sometimes called *mass communication*. This used to mean communicating through radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, films, and theater. Today, many people communicate using digital (computer-related) technologies.

Some of these are mass communication tools. Others help individuals or small groups communicate.

Digital tools include websites, social networking sites, blogs, instant messaging, and text messaging using cellular phones and other handheld devices. We will look more closely at digital communication in a later chapter.

Why Study Communication?

If we learn to communicate naturally, why do we study communication? The answer is that we all can improve our communication skills if we practice them. That means learning to be a better listener and a more confident public speaker.

Earning this merit badge will make you more aware of communication in your life. You will learn how to interact better with others and improve your communication skills. You can use these skills when you need to inform, persuade, or get the attention of people.



According to the National Communication Association, “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.” In other words, we do not communicate naturally. We learn how to communicate from others—by watching them, listening to them, and doing what we see others do. We learn from our parents or guardians and teachers how to communicate better.

Keeping a Communication Log

By observing how you communicate and how much time you spend communicating, you can learn about your own strengths and weaknesses as a communicator. Requirement 1(a) asks you to keep a detailed communication log for one day. Doing so will help you see your communication style more clearly. You will know how much time you spend online, or watch TV, listen to the radio, and read. You will learn how much time you spend on the phone and in face-to-face interactions, and how often you use email, text messaging, instant messaging, or write letters to friends and relatives.



Sample Communication Log

Date: Monday, 3/18

Ways to Communicate		Interacting Face-to-Face	Listening to Speaker	Talking on Telephone	Writing Notes/Letters	Email/Texting/Instant Messaging	TV/Print Media/Radio	Online
Time	6 to 7 a.m.							
	7 to 8 a.m.							
	8 to 9 a.m.							
	9 to 10 a.m.							
	10 to 11 a.m.							
	11 a.m. to noon							
	Noon to 1 p.m.							
	1 to 2 p.m.							
	2 to 3 p.m.							
	3 to 4 p.m.							
	4 to 5 p.m.							
	5 to 6 p.m.							
	6 to 7 p.m.							
	7 to 8 p.m.			-				
	8 to 9 p.m.			-				
	9 to 10 p.m.			-				
	10 to 11 p.m.	-						
	11 p.m. to midnight							



Good Listener, Good Leader

Have you ever met someone new and then promptly forgotten the person's name? This can be very embarrassing. Listening is one of the most important skills you can learn. Scientists say that we learn 85 percent of what we know by listening. However, listening is more than just hearing. Listening is *receiving*. When you focus on the speaker and what is being said, you learn more, remember more, and retain the information longer.



How to Remember Names

People like it when you call them by name. This shows respect. It often makes people glad they have met you. Here is a neat trick to help you remember a person's name. Let's say you meet a man named Bob Brown. First, say his name aloud. "It's nice to meet you, Bob Brown." Repeat his name to yourself a couple of times. Next, "hang" the name in a mental picture. To do that, look at Bob and picture him in a scene based on his name. For example, imagine that he is in a rowboat with the letters "BOB" on the side. The rowboat is bobbing up and down in a sea of chocolate (brown) milk. The next time you see Bob Brown, this picture will come to mind, and you will remember his name.

Notice how *active listening* includes repeating what you have heard. Active listening helps the speaker and the listener understand, and perhaps resolve, a problem or conflict. We will discuss active listening in the next section.

Practice listening to the speaker with respect. If you work hard not to interrupt even when you really want to make a point, the speaker will respect you more. Being a good listener is important in building and keeping friendships. If you take the time to listen to your friends when they need you, they probably will do the same for you.

There are many different reasons for listening. 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 music that helped you relax. Some people fall asleep faster when they are in a tent near a babbling brook. For others, it helps to hear the big-city background sounds of taxis honking and sirens wailing.



Tips for Better Listening

Pay attention. It is natural for your mind to wander when someone is talking to you. Often, we think about what we are going to say next, rather than listening to what the speaker is saying. However, a good listener ignores that impulse.

Be responsive. A good listener lets the speaker know that the message is getting across. Instead of being distracted, look directly and often at the speaker's eyes, nod your head, and make short responses like, "Yes, I get it;" or "That's interesting."

Restate what you heard. Another great listening skill is to state what you think the speaker just said, using your own words. Ask questions if necessary. This helps you make sure you understood what was said.

"We'll meet at 3 o'clock at the snack bar in the bowling alley, right?"

Or did you say at the snack bar next door to the bowling alley?"

Keep a Listening Journal

Requirement 1(b) asks you to keep a journal of your listening experiences to make you more aware of this key skill. Make a note of when you listen to gain information and when someone is trying to persuade you about something. Identify when you listen to appreciate or enjoy something, and when you listen to understand someone's feelings.

Remembering the Important Things

We cannot remember everything; we must decide what is important to remember. Some scientists have discovered that just after we hear something, we will remember less than half of it. By the next day, we might recall only up to a third of the message.

Earlier, we explained how to create a mental picture to help you recall someone's name. Another great memory tool is to write down what you need to remember. As soon as you can after you hear something, or even while you are listening, write down the things you need to remember. If you have a smartphone, iPad, or tablet computer with note or voice memo applications, you can use those to record what you want to remember. Be sure to look at your notes or listen to your memo later. If necessary, rewrite your remarks more clearly and add details to help you understand your notes.

While you lead the discussion, remember that your task is to be part referee, part coach, and part observer. Do not take sides. Remind participants to make all comments to the group leader or to the whole group. Prevent conversations between individuals, or redirect them to the group.

Leading Small-Group Discussions

Leading a small-group discussion is exciting. As a Scout, you may have a chance to lead a discussion in your patrol or troop. As a student, you may get to lead a discussion for a school project or sports team. Here are some other kinds of group discussions:

- Work groups (people working together on a task)
- Focus groups (people brought together to discuss a product or service)
- Brainstorming groups (people who gather to come up with new ideas about how to do something)

Requirement 1(c) asks you to lead a small-group discussion. Before the discussion begins, give the group clear guidelines about the topic and the format of the discussion. You might start by saying, “Today we are going to brainstorm ideas for Eagle Scout projects. I want each person to share new ideas and make suggestions for our current projects. We will sit in a circle, and each of us will have three minutes to share our own thoughts. After each speaker finishes, the group will have three minutes to ask questions. Then, the person at the speaker’s right will have a turn to speak.”

As group leader, you cannot join the conversation. Avoid talking too much. Instead, stay a little bit apart to watch, listen, and guide. During the discussion:

- Keep the group members focused on discussing the correct topic. Don’t let the group get distracted.
- Make each person feel that it is OK to talk about their own experiences or ideas.



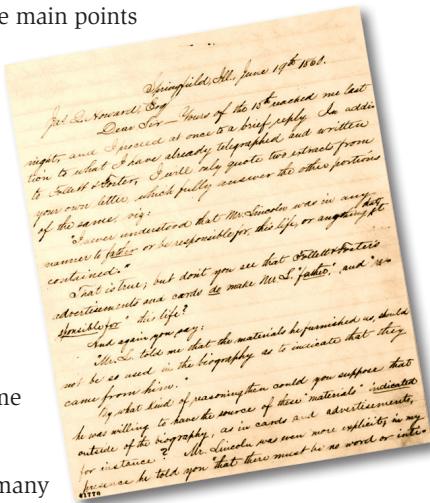
- Give shy people a chance to talk; encourage them with a smile and a kind word.
- Prevent any one person from taking over the conversation. Do this respectfully.
- Make sure the group gives each person a chance to speak and be heard without interruption.
- If necessary, help group members to compromise.
- Watch the time to make sure the group completes the discussion or task.

As each person speaks, observe how the person communicates and how others respond. Look for nonverbal communication. Notice how a smile, shrug, or raised brow can reveal a person's feelings or thoughts. When each speaker finishes, thank them for participating. When the time is nearly up, close by summarizing the main points and the group's conclusions.

Text Message or Formal Letter?

During the Civil War—before there were computers, telephones, or even motorized mail delivery—letters often took months to arrive. Union and Confederate soldiers wrote detailed and expressive letters and used beautiful penmanship. Their friends and relatives cherished these handwritten words. Many of those letters, which became family keepsakes and were passed down through generations, survive today.

Requirement 1(d) asks you to list as many methods of communication as you can, and identify to your counselor when each method should (and should not) be used. Today, we use many forms of communication: text messages, social media, telephones, emails, faxes, regular mail, and express mail delivery around the globe by plane. There is no one right way to communicate. However, you can pick the best way to send a message, depending on who will get it and why you are sending it. Here are some simple guidelines to help you choose the right way to communicate.



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.

Penmanship: A Disappearing Art

In the past, people wrote letters by hand. Now we are more likely to send an email or a text message. Few people today have neat handwriting that is also beautiful. Practice your handwriting so that anyone can read it. Using a computer, choose a font that you would like your handwriting to look like. Make sure your practice sheet includes all the letters in the alphabet and has lots of space between lines. Print out the page and practice writing the letters below each line.

Being able to write a formal letter in the proper format says a lot about your maturity and professionalism.

Formal Letters

We use formal letters to communicate for school or business purposes, or to write recommendations. When you apply for an internship, a camp, or a job, you may have to write a formal letter asking admission or permission to attend or to state your interest. If you are chosen for an award or honored for your talents, write a formal letter thanking the organization. Letters to the editor of a newspaper or magazine, even those sent by email, also require a formal tone.

June 12, 2024

Mr. Doug MacArthur
Sports Director, WSEE-TV
745 Peach Street
Atlanta, GA 30302

Dear Mr. MacArthur:

I am writing to express my interest in applying for the summer internship program that your television station has posted this week.

I am a freshman communication major, concentrating on television writing and production. I have done quite a bit of work during my first year in college writing scripts for campus shows, working cameras and lights, and co-producing a sports program that is aired on our local cable station. I have assisted in organizing talent and guests, and coordinating sets.

I am seeking to complement these great experiences with work at your station, learning from your experienced sports anchors and reporters. I believe I would be an asset to your program from a technical side, and have a thorough knowledge of sports and local teams.

I will call in the next week to see if there is a mutual interest, and that my qualifications meet your station's needs for the program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Peterson
25 Forest Trail
Marietta, GA 30302

Enc: application

Formal letters are always typed, spell-checked, and then proofread (to catch mistakes the computer missed). 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. Add the recipient's email address if you are sending the letter electronically. The formal greeting with a colon at the end (for example, "Dear Ms. Brown:" or "Dear Dr. Smith:") is next.

The body of the letter follows. End with a formal closing, such as "Sincerely," or "Best regards." Follow with your full name typed below it; leave enough space above for your signature. Add your own address information, phone number, and email address. If you are enclosing something with the letter, such as an application or resume, put a note at the bottom of the letter like this: "Enc: resume" or "Enc: application and \$75 fee."

In a formal letter,
"Enc." is short
for "enclosure."

Faxes

A *fax* (short for "facsimile") is a copy of a document that is transmitted over telephone lines or the internet. The recipient can view it as a printout or as an image on a computer screen. Sending a fax is not as personal as making a phone call, but it lets you instantly send detailed or printed information, such as a map or a newspaper clipping. It is particularly helpful for business offices.

The main drawback of faxes is that not everyone has a fax machine or a computer that can send and receive faxes. In addition, faxing can be expensive if you have to send or receive messages at an office supply store or copy shop, and when the recipient has a long-distance number.

Text Messaging

Sometimes called "texting," this form of communication involves sending short messages, usually by cellphone. Texting is good for quick communication, especially when phone calls might be disruptive or impractical. It is also useful for leaving a message when a person can't take your call. Remember that your cellphone provider may charge a fee for texting.

Social Media

Social media are forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).

Email works well for most written communication.

You may sometimes need to send a formal letter, such as when the person you are writing to does not have a computer, or when you are writing about something very personal or serious.

Email

Email, short for “electronic mail,” has changed how many of us communicate. Email messages travel electronically. They can be just about any length and can have attachments such as photographs, videos, or documents. An email usually reaches its destination almost instantly. You can send email just about anywhere in the world and store emails as long as you want. You may also *forward* emails to others.

Email is so easy to use that many people write a note quickly and click “send” without reviewing their message. You should always review an email before sending it. Make sure that it is easy to understand, contains good spelling and grammar, and is respectful. Even in an email, misspelled words, poor grammar, or unclear sentences can make you look rude or not very smart—or both.



If you need to leave someone a voice mail message, speak slowly and clearly. Keep your message brief and to the point.



Phone Calls

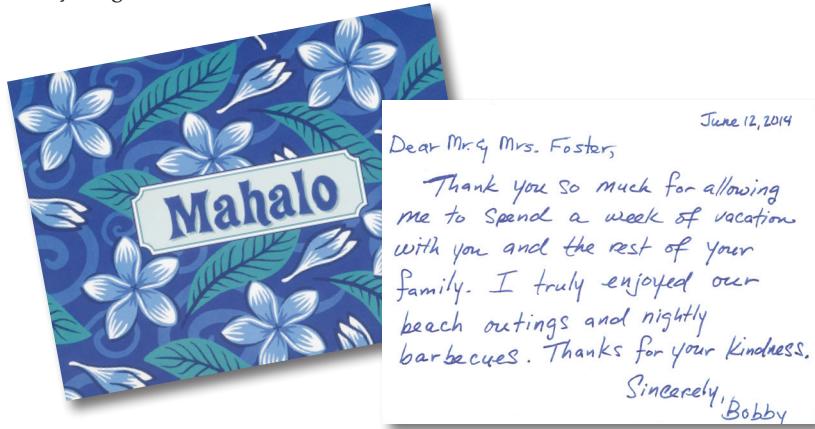
Phone calls are great for hearing the other person’s voice, casual chatting, making quick plans, or finishing some business for your Scout troop. Also, some people communicate better by talking than by writing. Phone calls do have drawbacks: People are not always available to take your calls, it is hard to exchange detailed information over the phone, and visual images or information that needs to be stored cannot be shared.

In the digital age, it is possible to literally talk online by using a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) that transmits sound as data over the internet. You can also make online video calls by using a webcam that feeds images in real time to a desktop computer, laptop, tablet computer, or smartphone.

When making a phone call, have a pen and paper handy to write down details if necessary. When calling a friend and someone else answers, it is polite to say, “Hello, this is [your name here]. May I speak to...?” If you are calling someone whom you do not know well, introduce yourself using your full name; clearly state why you are calling.

Thank-You Notes

If you receive a gift, whether it is in person, such as at your birthday party, or through the mail from faraway friends or relatives, you should write a thank-you note that specifically mentions the gift you received. Write it by hand and send it in the mail. This takes more effort than a phone call or an email, and it shows more respect. Mail your note no more than one week after you receive the gift. Waiting two weeks or longer is not polite. Adults and elders, in particular, will remember receiving a thank-you note from you and will be impressed with your good manners.



Perhaps someone has been very generous or kind to you, inviting you to stay for a weeklong visit or come along on a family trip. In this case, it is even more important to send a thank-you note within a week. You should also think about sending a small gift along with the note. This is particularly important if you had home-cooked meals, went sightseeing, or did something else out of the ordinary, such as if you were driven to events or appointments. You do not have to spend a lot of money. Inexpensive food gifts are a good idea.



It is a good idea to keep a light touch when describing yourself. Be humble. Do not be afraid to poke a little fun at yourself. This also is a good way to introduce yourself when you are asked to speak in public.

Creative Ways to Describe Yourself

Requirement 2(a) calls for you to find a creative way to describe yourself.

Choose a method that you feel comfortable using. It should suit your personality and allow you to express yourself completely. Here are a few ideas.

Make a Collage

Collages are fun to make, and you can use a variety of visual items to describe your life.

Postcards, clip art, 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 things you can use to make an eye-catching 3-D collage.

Create a Slide Show

If you like working with photography and computers, you can create a narrated slide show on your computer. Some slide show software programs let you add your own videos. Instead of using random shots, carefully select the photos and videos to tell a particular story about yourself. Write a script to follow when you record your narration.

Write a Story

If you enjoy writing, you may write a short story about one special event in your life or an autobiography that tells the major events in your life. The best way to start either project is to create an outline. It should pinpoint the event or events you plan to describe. This will give you a road map to follow. Using an outline makes it much easier to stick to your main idea.

Other Ideas

If you are artistic, you might want to create a series of drawings showing yourself and some people and events important in your life. Similarly, if you are musical or theatrical, you may choose to write a song or a short skit to fulfill this requirement.

Make a Good Sales Pitch

Requirement 2(b) asks you to make a sales pitch for a concept, product, or service. A *sales pitch* is a persuasive speech in which you try to get someone to buy your product or service. Here is one way to organize a sales pitch that works. It contains four parts.

- 1. Get the audience's attention.** Tell a story about how your product or service changed your life or the life of someone like the people in your audience.
- 2. Connect to the audience's needs.** Your audience does not necessarily care about your product. What people care about is their own needs. Research your audience—are they Scouts? Adults? Apartment renters? Home owners? Know enough about your audience beforehand so that you can tailor your presentation to fit their needs. You would not try to sell apartment renters a lawnmower service. However, you might successfully sell a dog-walking service to them.
- 3. Offer a solution.** Be specific about how your product or service will fulfill a need of the audience. Explain how their lives will improve if they use your service or product. Describe the problems that might arise if they do not.
- 4. Close the deal.** Before you end your speech, ask your listeners to act. Make it clear how they can buy your product or sign up for your service right away.





The Five-Minute Speech

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

Your speech will be better if you choose a topic that you are personally familiar with and know about. A good way to start a speech is to tell a short *anecdote*, or little story, which audiences love to hear. Telling a personal story allows the audience to feel comfortable with you and helps you relax before you start your main presentation.

When you have finished a simple outline, write the main points and some additional minor points on numbered index cards. Do not write out your speech or try to memorize it word for word. That will result in a stiff-sounding presentation. You want your speech to flow naturally, as it would in conversation.



Sample Outline

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

I. Introduction

Begin with a true story about the first time you cooked over a campfire. "The beef was burned and covered with ash. It was a disaster! I knew I had to improve my skills. That is when I decided to learn about Dutch oven cooking."

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 at a high temperature in an oven.
- B. Tips for cooking with Dutch ovens.
- C. How to clean and properly store a Dutch oven 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 adventures of Scouting so memorable. So don't forget the wonders of one-pot cooking with a Dutch oven.

Practice your speech. Do it in front of a mirror, in the shower, while riding your bike, almost anywhere. You will find that the words flow much more naturally after you have gone over the speech a few times.

Dealing With Stage Fright

Many people get nervous at the thought of speaking in public. That is natural. Here are some tips for staying calm so that you can enjoy giving your speech.

- Know your subject. Give your talk about a topic that you are genuinely interested in and know something about.
- Organize your thoughts. Instead of writing out your entire speech, write only the main points.
- Practice, practice, practice. Rehearse your speech alone or in front of others at least three times. Doing so will help you feel more at ease when you are presenting your speech.
- Be yourself. Do not try to copy a television host or politician. Speak as if you were talking to a good friend.
- Act confident. Even if you feel nervous, do not tell the audience. Smile and look individual audience members in the eye. Speak with a full voice. Do not rush through your words. Soon you will start to feel as confident as you act.
- Get experience. Seek out opportunities to speak in public instead of trying to avoid them. The more you do it, the more comfortable you will get.

Ask your family or a few friends to listen to your speech and give you ideas for improvement. As you speak, remember to look at your audience and smile. Keep your notes handy in case you need to refer to them. Finally, to make sure you are maintaining eye contact, standing in a confident posture, and looking relaxed, ask someone to record your speech as a movie using a smartphone. When you play it back, you can observe yourself and make appropriate adjustments.

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 her and prepare an introduction to deliver to your counselor, as though she 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.

Call your neighbor on the telephone. Have a small notebook and pen or a laptop or computer with you when you make the call. If you have a wireless headset for a cellphone, you can listen hands-free while typing your notes. Tell the neighbor that you

are a member of Scouts BSA and ask her politely if you could interview her as part of your Communication merit badge requirements. Explain that the requirements include interviewing and preparing to introduce a guest speaker.

If she agrees to help you, ask if this is a good time to talk. If she says yes, ask her about her background, and take notes. (If it is not a good time, ask when you might call again.)

Here are some questions that will help you prepare an introduction. Do not be afraid to ask the person politely to slow down or repeat a statement if you were not able to write down the information fast enough.

- What is your full name and professional title?
- How long have you been in your current position?
- What are your duties?
- What position did you have before this one?
- 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 activities or interests do you enjoy when you are not working?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself?

Based on the person's answers, write a short introduction of the speaker. Stick to the most important and interesting facts. You do not have to tell everything you learned. Write a few key points on index cards that you can use as reminders. Keep your introduction short. Practice it several times.

When you and your buddy meet with your counselor to show how you would introduce the speaker, bring your index cards. The cards will help you remember details that you would like to include. Stand up, go to the front of the room, face the “audience,” smile at your counselor confidently, and address the “audience.” (Your counselor knows you, so keep this informal.) Then give a brief introduction of the speaker and sit down.

Here is an example.

“Thanks for coming today. Our special guest speaker is Detective Kate Moore, a 10-year veteran with the Minneapolis Police Department. Detective Moore has solved many puzzling crimes in our area. She has a bachelor’s degree in law enforcement from Iowa State University. When she is not working, she teaches karate and coaches Little League Baseball. Detective Moore has graciously agreed to speak to us today about her position and other career opportunities in law enforcement. Please welcome Detective Kate Moore.”

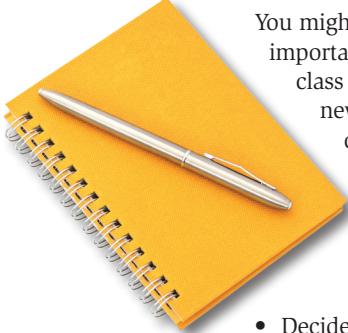


Open-ended questions are a good way to get information from someone without seeming pushy. This kind of question gives the person flexibility in answering. For example, you might ask, "How is your business doing financially?" rather than, "Are you losing money?" Other examples of open-ended questions are, "What is the best thing about winning the marathon?" and "How has being an Eagle Scout helped you in life?"

Conducting a More In-Depth Interview

You might have a chance to interview someone about an important subject. This could happen because you have a class assignment or are writing an article for your school newspaper. An in-depth interview is a good way to conduct research.

Watch broadcast journalists interview people on TV. Notice how they show that they are paying attention to the person they are interviewing. See how they phrase questions to get good responses. Here are some pointers.

- 
- Decide what information you need and whom to interview to get it.
 - Research the topic of the interview. Learn as much as possible about it before you start asking questions.
 - Take notes on a notepad, on a laptop, or on a computer tablet. If you want to record the conversation using your smartphone or other recording device, ask for permission first. Even if you do record the interview, take notes. Recorders do not always work.
 - If you want to record the interview, practice in advance with the equipment you plan to use. Make sure the batteries are charged or new, or that the interview site has a place to plug in your equipment. How close to the recorder should the speaker be to make a good recording?
 - Prepare your questions in advance.
 - Use a closed-ended question to get a specific answer. For example, "How many weeks did you work on your Eagle service project?" will get a more precise answer than, "How hard was it to do your Eagle service project?"

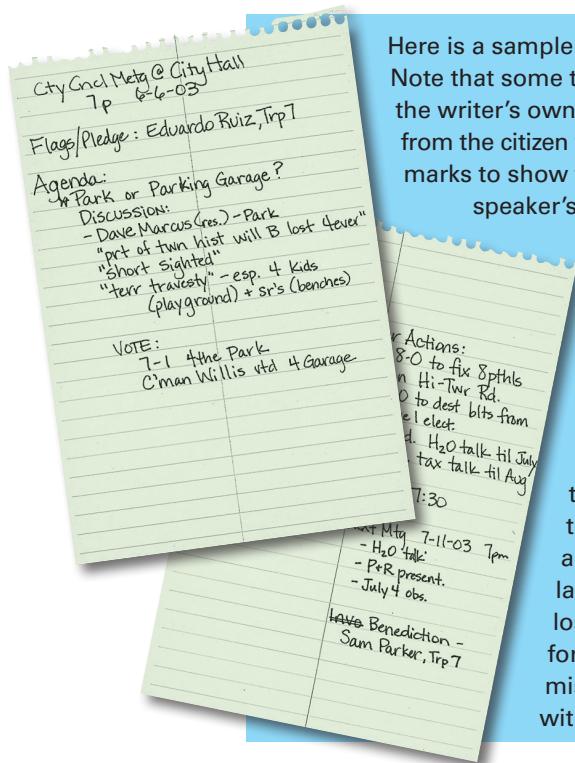
- If you contact the person by phone, ask if this is a good time to talk. If it is not a good time, ask when you should call back. Start by asking the person to spell his or her name and tell you his or her title. Speak clearly and slowly so the person can understand your questions.
- If you do not understand a response, ask the same question in another way. You could also state the response in your own words and ask if you got it right. Use follow-up questions to dig more deeply into a topic.
- Save your hardest questions for last. By then, your subject should be more comfortable with you and more willing to answer difficult questions.
- If you run out of time and you still have more questions, ask the person for permission to call back.
- Read your notes (and replay your recording, if you made one) as soon as you can after the interview. While the conversation is still fresh in your mind, rewrite or type your notes for easier reading.

Your task is not to write down everything every person says. Wait until you hear someone give an opinion about an issue or debate a main point of the meeting. Then start writing. Everyone has a unique way of taking quick notes. You probably do this in class or in emails and text messages. For instance, you might use "EZ" for the word "easy," or a downward arrow for the word "down." "Without" may become "w/o," and "department" can become "dept." Develop your own shorthand style.

Reporting an Event Objectively

With your counselor's and your parent or guardian's approval, attend a public meeting for requirement 5. You can find a list of public meetings in the local newspaper or on a local website. Take a notebook and a couple of pens or pencils or your laptop or computer tablet to the meeting.

Remember to
get your parent
or guardian's
permission to do
a web search.



Here is a sample taken from a report. Note that some things were restated in the writer's own words. The statements from the citizen were put inside quotation marks to show that those were the speaker's actual words.

Dave Marcus, a longtime resident of Petersburg, argued that replacing the city park with a parking garage would mean that part of our town's history would be lost forever. He called the proposal to demolish the park "shortsighted and a terrible travesty," particularly for children, who would lose their playground, and for senior citizens, who would miss sitting on park benches with friends.

To be best prepared, find out if the group has a website. If so, look online for the meeting agenda (the list of topics to be covered), and print a copy to review before the meeting. Otherwise, pick up an agenda when you arrive. Sit near the front so you can hear the speakers, but be ready to turn around and face people in the audience who may stand up to speak.

During the meeting, think of yourself as a witness or observer. Try not to judge what people are saying or form an opinion about the topic of the discussion. Don't be swayed toward one side or the other. Just listen attentively and quietly and record what individuals say about the topic.

As soon as you can after you get home, when the meeting is still fresh on your mind and you can easily remember what people said, write a report of the meeting. Reread the agenda to help you recall what happened. Make the report as unbiased and factual as possible. Focus on topics that were debated or discussed.

For example, imagine that you attended a city council meeting. The city council discussed six proposals, but only one of them—whether to turn a city park into a much-needed parking garage—became a topic of debate. Give a short summary of each proposal, but focus on the parking garage issue, which caused a discussion.

Report what people on all sides of the issue said and what, if any, action the council took. Stick to the facts and record a variety of viewpoints. Do not state your own opinion in the report. Did the council make a decision, or did it agree to postpone making a decision? Did the parties compromise on one or more issues? Did anyone agree to take further action? Be sure to report the outcome.

Be sure to record the council's actions on each agenda item, even if some items were boring. You can keep those sections of your report short. For example, if the city council voted to approve funds to fix eight potholes on Hightower Road, that is all you need to say on the topic. Keep your report to one or two pages, and summarize the main issues and points of view covered at the meeting.

Avoid including details of everything you saw and heard.





Teaching Skills and Using Teaching Aids

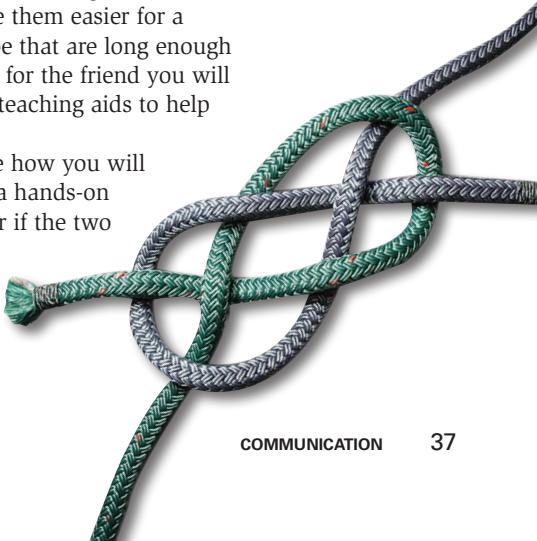
For requirement 6, you will develop a plan to teach a skill or inform someone about a subject. Start by making an outline. Use a process similar to the one you used to prepare your short speech. As you form the outline, think about how you could break down the subject into step-by-step instructions. Pick a subject or skill that is (1) something you know well, and (2) something that a friend, relative, or troop member might like to learn. Also, decide whom you will teach. For example, if you know a lot about knots, you could choose to teach a friend how to tie a few basic knots.

First, choose four basic knots that are useful in different situations. Think about how you learned to tie each one. For each knot, write an outline that lists the steps for how to tie the knot. List the best uses for each one.

Next, find pictures of how to tie each knot. Look in the *Scouts BSA* handbooks, other Scouting resources, library books, and search the internet (with your parent or guardian's permission). You might want to enlarge these diagrams on a photocopier or computer printer to make them easier for a beginner to follow. Get two pieces of rope that are long enough for knot tying—one for yourself and one for the friend you will teach. Use the ropes and the pictures as teaching aids to help your friend learn how to tie the knots.

Before the teaching session, practice how you will show your friend this skill. 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 each other. Which way will make the instruction go more smoothly?

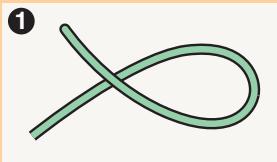
How you teach the skill will depend on whom you plan to teach. For example, how would you teach a Cub Scout? How would your plan change if you were teaching a boater or rock climber?



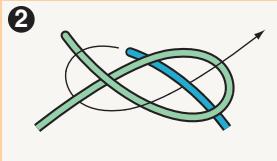
HOW TO TIE A CARRICK BEND

The carrick bend comes in handy for tying together two thick ropes, especially if there will be a heavy strain on the rope. The knot will tighten under strain, but it won't slip and it is usually easy to untie. This knot also works well with wet or slippery ropes.

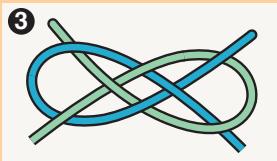
Step 1—Start the carrick bend by making an overhand loop at the end of one rope.



Step 2—Bring the end of the other rope under the overhand loop. Then complete the knot, weaving over and under as you go.



Step 3—The carrick bend looks symmetrical (even) when it is first tied and still loose. When you pull it tight, it looks very different.



Praise your friend's efforts honestly and often. This is called positive reinforcement, and it is a great teaching and learning tool.

Demonstrate each step slowly. If your friend gets confused or frustrated, slow down or start over. If something is hard for the person to master, you might have to rethink the way you are teaching or choose an easier knot. Take a short break if the frustration level gets too high.

Be cheerful and encouraging when you teach. People learn skills best if they can make mistakes without worrying that you will laugh at them or get mad. Be a positive role model. You can often make someone feel better by saying, “I had the same problem when I first started tying this knot. Try this...” Ask whether your friend has any questions, and be sure you answer them thoroughly before moving on.

Before you and your buddy see your counselor to demonstrate the skill you have successfully taught, review the topic with your friend one last time. After the demonstration is over, meet with your counselor to discuss how well you were able to pass on your knowledge or skill to your friend.

Teaching Aids

The knot diagrams are examples of teaching aids. Another example is the memory trick described earlier for remembering a person's name. Another kind of memory trick is to use a word or phrase called a *mnemonic* (pronounced *nu-mon-ik*) device. By using the first letter of each word in a phrase, you can remember something important. For example, if you want to remember the names of the Great Lakes, just think of the word "homes": Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.

Teaching aids can be pictures, maps, a chalkboard, props, memory tricks, or anything else that works. Aids do not have to be fancy or expensive. Anything that you can think of that will help you teach a subject, make the experience more hands-on and fun, or help the person understand what you are saying, will help that person learn more quickly.





Active Communication and the Digital Revolution

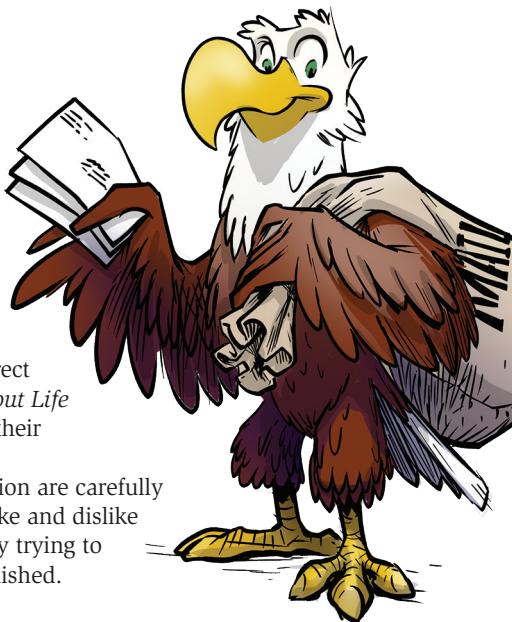
As you decide how to fulfill requirement 7, try something different and challenging.

Letters to the Editor

Many Scouts write to the editor (or the mascot, **Scout the MailEagle**) of the national Scouting publication, *Scout Life*, if they choose requirement 7(a). Many letters are sometimes answered in the magazine by the editorial director, who writes as Scout.

In their letters, readers of *Scout Life* might tell Scout the MailEagle how much they liked a particular story in the magazine. At other times, they write to correct a mistake they saw in print or to tell the *Scout Life* editors about interesting trips or campsouts their troop has planned that year.

All letters to the editor of any publication are carefully read. Editors want to know what readers like and dislike about their publication. They are constantly trying to serve their readers better with what is published.



Even if you are sending a letter to the editor by email, always keep your letter formal and include your name and return address. For privacy reasons, your address will not appear in the publication. However, editors need to be able to make sure you are who you say you are.

Scout Life

From the publisher of *Boys' Life*
since 1911, *Scout Life* is the official
youth publication of Scouting America.

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Send your comments,
questions and anything else to

Aerie on the Prairie, Scout Life, S306, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079. Or head to scoutlife.org. Please include your complete name and address. If you don't want your name to appear, we'll use a pen name. Due to the huge volume of mail, we can answer only the letters appearing here.

scoutlife.org
www.scouting.org

Before you write a letter to a newspaper or magazine, read the publication. Look at its *masthead*, the short section that lists the staff by names and positions. It usually has other key information, such as the newspaper's or magazine's address.

(See the **Scout Life masthead at left**). The masthead often is printed on the editorial page of a newspaper or near the front or the back pages of a magazine. If the masthead does not list the editor by name, address your letter "Dear Managing Editor."

Unless you are writing to Scout the MailEagle at *Scout Life*, your approach should be formal. Write the person's full name, title, the name of the publication (in italics or underlined), and its address in the top left-hand corner of your letter. Begin the body of your letter with "Dear Mr. (last name)" or "Dear Ms. (last name)," followed by a colon (:).

March 15, 2024

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 Peterson in the February 2013 issue. It was about what to look for when shopping for a used car. I just got my driver's license, and I've been saving intensely for a car for about two years now. My parents and I have been looking for a good used one. I've taken an auto maintenance class at school and know a little bit about cars, but Mr. Peterson's article had some choice tips about what to check out before buying.

My parents and I don't exactly agree on what kind of car is best for me. I got them to read "Used Hot Wheels," too, and now we are closer to finding a car we'll all like. At least the article got us talking about what's really important to me and to them.

Thanks for running the article. It's amazing how reading it has helped me get along better with my parents. It's like we try to understand the other side—not just on the car issue, but on a lot of other stuff, too.

Sincerely,

Ronny Metzger
2020 Little Elm Drive
Salem, OR 97777

In your first sentence, state why you are writing this letter to the editor. Here are some examples of good 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. Don’t be mean or aggressive. Back up your opinion with personal experience and/or facts you have learned about the subject. You may want to suggest a way to solve a problem or issue that is different from what the publication proposed. If you do this, explain your solution clearly.

Make your letter only a few sentences long or, at the most, several paragraphs. End the letter with “Sincerely” or “Best regards,” then skip four lines and type your name, address, city, state, and zip code. Spell-check your letter on your computer before sending it. Print it out and read it carefully again. Make sure that you wrote in complete sentences, that you stated your idea or opinion clearly, and that your letter is error-free.

If possible, have a parent, guardian, teacher, or older friend read your letter, too. Ask this person to point out any mistakes or things that are still unclear. Do not feel offended by their remarks. Once you have fixed any mistakes, sign your name in the space you left before your typed name and address.

Most newspapers and magazines have websites where they allow readers to comment on specific articles. The comments usually appear with the reader’s name or screen name. If you decide to post a comment this way, you must first get your parent or guardian’s *and* counselor’s permission. While this might be a much more informal way to express your opinion than a traditional letter to the editor, you should still be respectful of others. Some individuals challenge comments left by other readers. This can quickly lead to a “flame war” in which parties trade insulting remarks. Flame wars are a waste of time. Do not get involved in one.

You should still learn how to use a map and compass for backcountry travel. You can't always rely on your GPS unit, especially if it runs on batteries.

Digital Communication

Technology is rapidly changing how we communicate and the speed of that communication. The word “digital” refers to two numbers, or *digits*—0 and 1—that are the basic units all computers use to process information. *Digital communication* is communication that uses some kind of computer technology.

As of 2019, there were 7.6 billion people in the world. Of those, an estimated 4 billion, or 52 percent, were using the internet. From 2000 to 2019, use of the internet increased almost ten times worldwide. Much of this growth involved high-speed internet, which makes it easy to transfer video, audio, text, and photo files. Add in the growing use of cellphones and other handheld electronic devices, and you can safely say we are experiencing a digital communication revolution.

Personal Digital Communication



Today you can send an email from your computer to another computer just about any place in the world, as long as it is connected to the internet. Your message will arrive almost instantly. Using a smartphone, you can download maps of a city you are visiting and find out about good places to eat. People keep in touch with their friends minute to minute using text messaging.

Global positioning system (GPS) devices let us share our exact location with friends or family who may want to track our movements. These units can also help us reach a destination, whether in a car or out hiking. People bank and shop online, pick out the features of their next car, map the route to the amusement park, and even socialize with friends online.

Social networking sites have attracted millions of users. Many people post information about themselves on these sites, including text, photos, favorite music, and videos. Their online “friends” can view the entry and post messages of their own.

There are dangers with social networking sites, so discuss this thoroughly with your parent or guardian. Get their permission before using such a site. See the cautions later in this section for more information. Consider that anything you post online—whether it is a photo or personal information—can stay online just about forever.

Texting

Texting is a popular form of digital communication. To text, you type a message using the keypad on a cellphone or other handheld electronic device. The message is then sent over the airwaves, often via cellular phone networks. Because typing messages on a small device can be difficult, texters often use abbreviations. So “Oh my gosh, are you serious?” becomes “OMG, R U serious?”

Be aware that service providers often charge a flat rate or per-character fee for text messaging. Such charges can quickly make a phone bill go sky-high. Before you send any text messages, you should have your parent or guardian’s permission. Be sure you understand the guidelines your parent or guardian has set for you regarding text messaging.

Items you post online are easy to copy, forward, and change. Once you post something, you may not be able to control what happens to it. The item can stay online long after you remove it from your site or page.

The Fastest Fingers

Texting is so common now that many people have become quite skillful at typing messages. One mobile phone manufacturer started an annual texting competition in 2007. At the LG Mobile World Cup, teams representing 13 different countries competed for \$130,000 in prize money. Bae Yeong-ho, 17, from South Korea, won first prize by texting an average of 7.25 characters per second.

Public Relations in the Digital Age

A public relations firm handles the important communication tasks of individuals and companies. The PR firm will communicate with government agencies, the media, and the general public on behalf of its client. These companies also work in marketing, finding creative ways to promote a client's products to the buying public.

An example of a PR campaign in the digital age was a web-based contest called "Knock It Out!" It was conducted by a PR firm to promote an electric grill. The goal was to show how the grill could be used in cooking healthy to "knock out the fat."

The campaign took the form of webisodes, or video episodes on the web, that showed four people competing to lose weight through exercise and healthy eating. It encouraged members of the public to upload helpful videos of their own as well as cheer on contestants. Viewers could then vote on which tips from the public were most useful. This campaign showed how marketing and public relations use nontraditional media and digital technology to get potential customers involved in the use of a product.



Mass Communication

The digital revolution is also changing mass communication—communication that reaches large groups of people. Newspapers, magazines, and TV and radio (broadcast) stations have all been drastically affected by the internet. Most people in small towns used to have a very limited choice of news sources. The local newspaper and broadcast stations were their main choices. Besides the local news, those sources reported regional and national news from news services or from major broadcast networks.

All that has changed. People can now get news from more than just the traditional sources. They can read newspapers and magazines from around the world on their computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and e-readers. They can listen to or watch downloaded audio and video podcasts or watch live broadcasts streamed in real time.

TV is different, too. Cable and satellite technology bring dozens of channels into many homes. Most of these channels are national, not local. Local newspapers and radio and TV stations, which sell ads to make money, have suffered. The “business model”—the way a company makes money—is rapidly changing for publishers and broadcasters.

Today people can
watch streamed
media from
all over the
globe on the
big screen—
on an internet-
connected TV.

User-Generated Content

The internet now makes it possible for ordinary individuals to reach large audiences. A printing press or broadcast tower is no longer necessary. Anyone with a computer and an internet connection can publish information that people worldwide can read. That has put the “power of the press” into everyone’s hands, including yours. Two ways to exercise this personal publishing power are by creating a webpage and writing a blog.



Online mass communication is often called “user-generated content.” This is because the same people who are using the media are now also generating (creating and providing) online text, photos, and videos.

You cannot post
your website
or blog to the
internet unless
you have *both*
your parent or
guardian's *and*
your merit badge
counselor's
permission to
do so.

Build Your Own Webpage

If you choose requirement 7(b), you will need to create a webpage for your Scout troop, school, or other organization. In addition to websites for companies, schools, Scouts BSA troops, and other groups and organizations, there are many personal websites on the internet generated by people all over the world. If you are interested in joining this global community of “netizens,” here is what you will need to do.

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. This may be more interesting than you think, especially to people from faraway places and other cultures. Your webpage can teach others how to do things, introduce them to new interests, or just share information that might interest them.

It is important to remember that once you post your webpage, it becomes public. It is more like a poster displayed in a football stadium than a private letter to a friend. Others can take that information, change it, and pass it on. Be careful when choosing the information you post. You would not give complete strangers personal information such as your address or telephone number, or broadcast such information for everyone to have. Do not provide any information that could be used to harm you or your family. Always have your parent or guardian's and counselor's permission *before* posting anything on the internet.

Find a Web Server

To make your home page available to others, it must be hosted on a web server. Your troop, place of worship, or school may agree to host your webpage for free, for a limited time. If so, be sure to follow the rules set by the host and the webmaster. If your family has an account with an internet service provider—often a telephone or cable TV company—your parent or guardian can check whether that subscription comes with free space on a web server. You may be able to post your page there.

Building Your Webpage

In the early days of the web (which was invented around 1990), you needed to know a special language called hypertext markup language, or *HTML*, to create a webpage. You used HTML to create a source document that held all the text as well as pointers to pictures and animations on the page.

Few people today bother to create HTML code themselves. Instead, they use a web-page editing program to do the job. Some websites will even allow you to create a webpage without using any special software or having any technical knowledge. Again, have your parent or guardian check if your family's internet service provider offers this service.

These sites present the steps for creating your page in a simple "wizard," an easy, step-by-step process for performing the task. These programs will typically allow you to create a website using ready-made *templates* (forms). Your Scout buddies also can contribute to the site by adding their email addresses in the proper field. You may choose whether to make the site public or private. A public site is viewable by anyone; a private one can be viewed only by the people you select or invite.

Start Your Own Blog

The word "blog" is formed from the words *web* and *log*. Here, "log" means a record of events or thoughts. A *blog* is a special kind of webpage. The owner usually updates it regularly—weekly, daily, or even many times a day. Some blogs are nothing more than an online diary in which the blogger posts entries about what is going on in his or her life. Many other blogs focus on a particular topic—say, new electronic gadgets, a hobby, a sports team, travel, or any of a million other special interests.

Many newspaper reporters have established blogs on their newspaper's websites to provide more information about their "beat" (their subject area) than what appears in print. The simplest format for a blog is a series of posts made by

Another new form of mass communication is the news aggregator. A news aggregator is a single site that brings together (aggregates) and displays dozens of links to columnists and news reports from other publications.

If you want to add video to your website or blog, the easiest way to do this is by uploading the video to a video sharing site. Embed that video into your own website or blog. Everything you need to build your own webpage or blog is available on the internet. See the resources section at the end of this pamphlet for more information. Just be sure you have your parent or guardian's and counselor's permission before you begin.

the blogger, with the newest at the top. The website often will have space for the blog's readers to post comments of their own. Fancier blogs may have news stories, links to other websites, photographs, and video.

Many blogs are read by a small audience with common interests. Others have millions of viewers. Blogging has become so popular that many big companies have started blogs on their websites. Blogging has become an important form of mass communication. Today, some people even make their living as bloggers.

Decorate Your Webpage or Blog

You will want to decorate your webpage or blog with a few graphics. You can use a piece of equipment called a *scanner* to input drawings and photographs for your webpage. You can also use drawing or painting software to create artwork directly on the computer. You may find free graphics on the internet, such as clip art. Before using art from the internet, you will need your parent or guardian's permission. Also make sure that it is OK with the copyright holder (the person or company that owns the image). You can't just take a picture from someone else's website to use on your own. That is stealing.

Get Permission

Before you begin work on Requirement 7(b), be sure you have your parent or guardian's permission to visit any website mentioned in this text or the resources section. Never download anything or purchase anything online, unless you have your parent or guardian's permission to do so. Also, if you choose requirement 7(b), remember that while you do not have to post your page or blog on the internet, if you decide to post it, you will first need to share it with your parent or guardian *and* your counselor, and you **must** have their approval to do so.

Stay Safe Online

Computers allow access to a vast amount of knowledge. You might already be using the internet for schoolwork, hobbies, or simply for enjoyment. By logging onto the internet, you can contact sources of information around the world. You can download material about any subject. You can also use it to develop online friendships with Scouts anywhere on the globe.

For all of its benefits, though, the internet can also present hazards.

Most people using the internet are friendly and

honest. However, there are some who use the internet to take advantage of others. There are also websites with content that is not good for young people. Use the following guidelines to protect your privacy and gain the most good from your time online.

1. Follow your family's rules for going online. Respect limits on how long and how often you are allowed to be online and what sites you can visit. Avoid sites that are off limits. Just like in real life, there are places to avoid on the internet.
2. Do not respond to inappropriate messages or websites. If you stumble across information or images that you don't understand or that make you feel uncomfortable, it is OK to talk about it with your parent or guardian.
3. Protect your privacy. Do not share information such as your address, telephone number, school name, or parent or guardian's work address or telephone number, and never send any photos via the internet unless you have permission.



4. Never agree to meet anyone who has contacted you online unless your parent or guardian goes with you.
5. Do not open emails 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.
6. Never share your internet passwords with anyone (even if they sound official) other than your parent or guardian or other responsible adults in your family.
7. Do not shop online without getting your parent or guardian's permission first.
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.

Another hazard of the internet is called the *cyberbully*. A *cyberbully* uses electronic communications such as the internet to harass, threaten, and harm others. They use tactics like *dissing* (spreading damaging gossip about a person), *harassment* (repeatedly sending hateful messages), and *impersonation* (pretending to be someone else and posting damaging information to harm another's reputation).

If you feel you are the victim of cyberbullying, do not try to get back at the bully. Ask the cyberbully to stop. Do not make your message aggressive or emotional. Let the bully know that you will take other steps if the abuse does not stop. If that does not help, tell your parent or guardian right away.

Cyberbullies can't be seen when they are online. This gives them a false sense of security. What they don't know is that they can be found out, caught, and even punished.

The best way to protect yourself is to be a good online citizen. Do not post information that could be used against you or others. Avoid sites that tolerate and encourage bullying. *Be kind online.*

You can learn more about internet safety by viewing the Digital Safety video that is required for Scout rank. Together with NetSmartz.org, Scouting America created this video to help educate Scouts about being safer online, cyberbullying, and internet scams, and to promote community awareness of internet safety issues. Find the video at scouting.org/training/youth-protection/scouts-bsa

How to Create a Tri-Fold Brochure

If you choose requirement 7(c), you do not need internet access. You just need a computer with word processing software and a printer. If you do not have a computer and printer at home, you might be able to use equipment at school or a public library.

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*, which is made up of the front and back of one sheet of paper. It is folded so that it has three panels. Here are some tips you can use to create a simple one yourself, using word processing software.



Determine the Message and Content

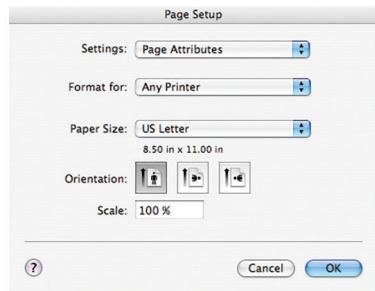
First determine your brochure's message and audience. Decide what you want to communicate, to whom, and why. Create an outline, and organize the information with headings and subheadings for easier reading. Include only what will be helpful to readers.

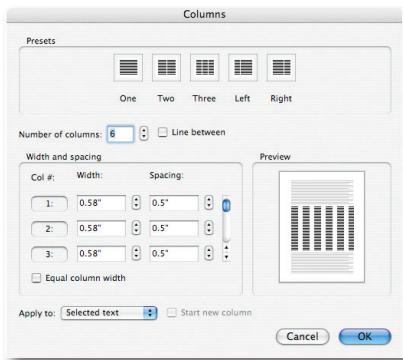
Choose the Layout

Decide how you want the information to look on your brochure. For a *barrel fold* (or *roll fold*), the top fold overlaps the first one. For a *Z-fold* (or *accordion fold*), the paper is folded in alternating directions. This format is good to present information in sequence. Fold a piece of scrap paper the way you want the brochure to look. Then number the panels on each side to make sure the information for each panel is in the right place.

Set Up the Page

For more space to set up columns, choose the *landscape* or horizontal setting for your paper orientation. This format will also allow you to fold the brochure the correct way once it is printed. Set the top, bottom, left, and right margins. A practical choice is 0.5" all the way around. Some printers, such as inkjet printers, have size limits, so do not make the margins too narrow.



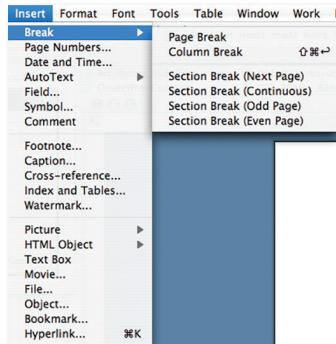


Set Up Columns

A tri-fold brochure has three columns. You will need to space your text equally on either side of the folds between each column. To do this, make the gutters (the space between the columns) twice as wide as the margins. For instance, if the margins are 0.5", make each gutter 1.0" wide.

Add a Page Break

To create the second, or back, side of your brochure, insert a page break at the end of the third column.



Add and Format Text

To *format* your text, you will choose the font style, size, and other elements. You may format the text as you type it, or you may want to format the text after it has all been entered. As you add text, think about where you want it to go on the finished brochure. For instance, you may actually need to enter the cover text on the last panel.

Refer to your
folded and
numbered
scrap paper
if necessary.

Keep formatting simple. If you use too many fonts and font sizes, your brochure will look busy. Designers choose fonts for a reason: to communicate. Avoid fonts that are so fancy or small that they are hard to read. People—especially busy people—will pass over something that is hard to read.



Add Pictures

You will want to use at least one photo or other visual image in your brochure. If you are creating a product brochure, you may want to include a picture of the product. It can be a digital photo from your camera, smartphone, another external drive, or your computer's hard drive. You may find a useful clip art image that came with your computer's software. If you don't have an image that works, you can search (with your parent or guardian's permission) various free clip art sites on the internet.

Even though it may be free, be sure you have the copyright holder's permission to use the clip art on your brochure. The website will have information about the proper way to use the clip art it makes available.

Use photos, clip art, and other visual effects in moderation. You want the art to improve your brochure, not clutter it.



Planning a Program

Planning and serving as master of ceremonies at a troop court of honor, campfire program, or interfaith service (requirement 8) is one of the most important and challenging undertakings you will face in earning the Communication merit badge. You will be in charge of making sure committees complete their work on time. You will also need to handle many organizational details in order to present a successful program.

Planning a Campfire Program

Planning a campfire program is much easier if you use the standard campfire program planning form. The form, reproduced later in this section, comes from the Troop Program Resources website at programresources.org.

As the master-of-the-campfire, or *MC*, you must put songs, stunts, and stories in a good sequence for the program. First, be sure that every feature of your campfire program upholds the highest traditions and ideals of Scouting. Next, think about timing, variety, smoothness, and showmanship.

You must plan the opening, closing, and headliner or main event. You also must designate the song leader and cheerleader. Help them develop a plan that details the songs and yells they will lead and their order on the program. Here are some additional details you will need to discuss during the campfire planning session with your troop and unit leader.

- 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 clean up afterward?

Complete the Campfire Program Planner and Campfire Program in pencil, because you probably will make changes later. List all participants in the

A full-size
Campfire Program
Planner form is
available on the
Troop Program
Resources
website. Ask
for your parent
or guardian's
permission before
visiting the site.



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

program. Then note the name, description, and type of each song, stunt, or story in the program. Before the campfire begins, the MC fills in the campfire program sheet and gives copies of the program to all participants. The MC then opens the campfire program with a greeting and introduces the song leader, cheerleader, and the various acts, songs, and yells.

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

Another way to end the program is to have a troop member stand some distance from the fire and play “Taps” on the bugle. Then have the Scout repeat this quite softly. These are not the only choices; use your imagination.

Planning a Court of Honor

Courts of honor require even more careful planning than campfire programs. A court of honor is convened when members of Scouts BSA achieve Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks. Write out your plan, assign roles, and then have key members rehearse their parts.

Use the checklist provided near the end of this section as a guide to help you through the court of honor planning process. Develop your own ideas. Get feedback from other troop members and parents or guardians on how to make the ceremony even more memorable. Remember to complete your checklist in pencil so you can make changes easily.

Have a written program for the Scouts and the adults who will be presenting the awards. Rehearse, if possible, in the place where you will be serving as master of ceremonies. If scripts are needed, be sure to give a copy to participants well in advance.

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

Lighting

Lighting is important to all ceremonies. Use it to help create a sense of drama and excitement. For instance, you can also use a spotlight to recognize recipients during the 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.

Consider the following basic procedures 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, guardians and audience members join the Scouts in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
5. An appointed person presents an appropriate opening ceremony.
6. The court chair (or master of ceremonies) convenes the court of honor.
7. The court chair calls on members of the court to present the awards.
8. Participants present special program features—Scout demonstrations, a brief address, or singing.
9. The color guard retires the colors.
10. The court of honor may close with the troop's regular closing ceremony.



At a minimum,
use spotlighting
whenever a Scout
is recognized
before an audience.
A simple flashlight
can serve as
a spotlight.

If you have access to the ceremony site earlier in the planning process, take the time to learn how to operate the lighting controls. Find out what lighting resources are available. Depending on the facility's lighting, you may have access to stage lights, spotlights, or colored lighting. Arrive early the day of the ceremony to inspect the lighting controls and be sure you know how to switch the lights off and on. Practice the timing for using the lighting controls so that the program goes smoothly.

Decorations

The right 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 a few examples.

Audiovisuals

Scouting America has many videos and slide programs that are appropriate for use during a court of honor ceremony. Ask your Scoutmaster about these. Enhancing the court of honor with good sound equipment and carefully selected music will give the ceremony a polished touch.

Props

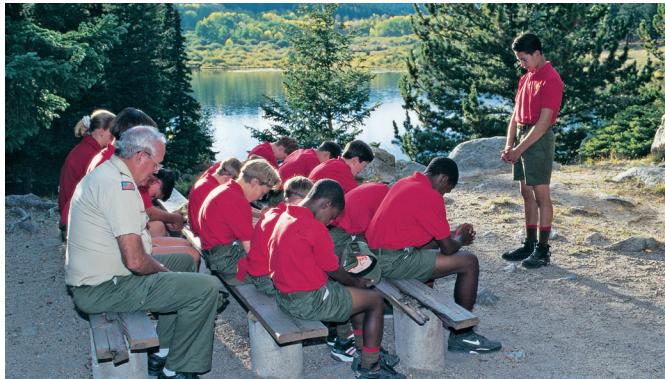
Props add special flair to any ceremony. Use your imagination. You may want to make an advancement board that displays the progress of each Scout in the troop or patrol. At the court of honor, some troops present a handsome plaque to Eagle Scouts.

Many Scouts and Scouters have created webpages with tons of imaginative, dramatic ideas for court of honor ceremonies. With your parent or guardian's permission, search the internet. Type "Courts of Honor, Scouting" into a good search engine, and you will find many excellent resources.



An engraved nameplate on the plaque shows their name, troop number, and date of the ceremony. Here are more ideas for props.

- 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 surface such as a felt-covered tray, used to display advancement badges, pins, and cards.



"Truth in advertising" is extremely important here. If a service is advertised as interfaith, then it really needs to be so.

- Flags—Flags from your troop, place of worship, and state, as well as the U.S. flag, are appropriate in ceremonies. Be certain to display and carry flags correctly.
- A troop scrapbook—The troop historian, who helps maintain the troop scrapbook, can assist you with this.

Planning an Interfaith Service

Worshipping with fellow Scouts and Scouters is a fine way to live the 12th point of the Scout Law—"A Scout is reverent"—and the part of the Scout Oath that addresses duty to God. At Scouting activities where it is not practical to carry out multiple religious services, it would make sense to have a single interfaith religious service.

Consider that some religions have specific requirements based on their own beliefs that would not be fulfilled through an interfaith service. Carefully choose elements such as scripture, prayers, hymns, and all other parts of the worship. Be considerate of everyone present; be respectful of all religions.

If there is a good chance that people of the Jewish faith will be present, and you are using printed materials, it would be considerate to use the term *G-d* instead, as many Jews do not write the name of God.

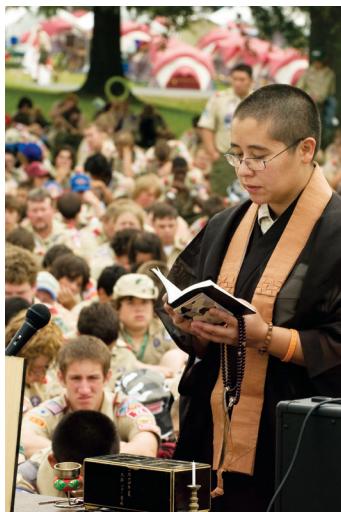
The name of the service should be clear: *Interfaith Service* (the preferred term) and *Outdoor Worship Service* are a couple of practical examples. Be sure everyone understands that the service is for all religious faiths and that everyone is invited. Choose songs, readings, and other content carefully so that everyone will feel comfortable during the service.

Here are some basic guidelines for conducting interfaith religious services.

- The word *God* generally is accepted by most faith groups and is the term used in all phases of Scouting. This term means the creator or divine spirit; it is not intended to be a limiting term. Many other names can be used to represent God.
- Use *God* rather than specific names (such as *Jesus*, *Buddha*, *Allah*, or *Holy Spirit*) that are related to specific religions. Also avoid male nouns and pronouns (such as *Father*, *Heavenly Father*, or *his*), which may be disrespectful in some religions.
- Pick a theme for the service that fits with the specific weekend or time of year. This helps focus the prayers, songs, and message in a meaningful way and ties the religious service into the weekend event.

Avoid isolating the service so it feels like a separate activity. Possible themes include God's Creation, Thanksgiving, the Great Outdoors/Forest/Ocean, Doing One's Best, and On the Trail of the Eagle.

- Keep songs generic; do not call them "hymns." The words should address *God* rather than *Jesus*, *Buddha*, and so on. This can be challenging, since the list of worship songs that are both usable and familiar is fairly short.



- Choose quotations and readings wisely and that fit the theme or message of the service.
- The length of time required for a good religious service varies. Consider the time of day, age of the participants, and other elements. However, don't short-change this experience by wedging it into a 15-minute spot—for instance, between a major activity and dinner. Make the interfaith service a meaningful part of each Scouting weekend.
- When a speaker delivers a message, avoid use of the religion-specific words *sermon* or *homily*. Be sure that the speaker understands that this is an interfaith experience. Choose a topic that relates to all who will attend. Any message presented should steer clear of specific religious beliefs—for instance, biblical themes.
- Pick a comfortable location for the interfaith service that fits with the theme of the service and enhances the religious experience. Try to avoid the display of religious symbols such as the cross, although this may be hard to do if you are using a chapel with affixed symbols. In any case, try to be sure that all appropriate religious symbols are represented.
- Keep a working file of Scouting interfaith services that you attend. Make notes about what worked well and share this with those who may be asked to plan future interfaith services. You can find additional ideas for interfaith services by searching the internet (with your parent or guardian's permission). Use the search terms *Scout interfaith services* or *Scout's Own Service* (the former name used for interfaith services).



Scouting America's Troop Program Resources website (programresources.org) contains a wealth of information about planning ceremonies and courts of honor. Use the planning guides on the following pages to help you get started.

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 MC 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.

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

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CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Place _____

Date _____

Time _____

Camp director's approval: _____

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

Spot	Title of Stunt, Song, or Story	By _____	Time
1	Opening—and firelighting		
2	Greeting—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.

Ideas for Interfaith Services***SAMPLE INTERFAITH PRAYERS
AND BENEDICTIONS**

1. For health, strength, and daily food, we give You thanks, O Lord.
2. For this and all Your mercies, Lord, make us truly grateful.
3. For food, health, friendship, we give You thanks, O Lord.
4. For food, for raiment, for life, for opportunity, for friendship and fellowship, we thank You, O Lord. (Philmont grace)
5. Come, O Lord, be our guest, and bless what You have bestowed on us.
6. Gracious Giver of all good, we thank You for food and rest. Grant all we say or do pleases You.
7. Lord, bless our Scouting leaders who spend so much time and energy to help us grow up well. Guide them in their work; give them patience and wisdom, and reward them in this life and the next. Amen.
8. As our campfire fades, we thank You for the joys and blessings of this day. We lift our minds and hearts to You in gratitude for life, happiness, and the Scouting movement. Lord, protect our camp this night; may we rise refreshed and ready to serve You. Amen.
9. May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.

*Source: Troop Program Resources website (programresources.org)

**SAMPLE INTERFAITH
WORSHIP SERVICE****Call to Worship**

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord,
all the lands!

Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into his presence
with singing!

Know that the Lord is God!

It is he who made us, and
we are his!

We are his people and the sheep
of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!
For the Lord is good; his steadfast love
endures forever, and his faithfulness to
all generations.

Invocation

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, we lift our hearts to thee at the beginning of this new day. We come to this time and place of worship with thy beauty all about us; in the sky, in the trees, in the earth, and in all thy creation. We praise thee, and come to worship thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who gives us each new day. Amen.

If the group consists of mixed beliefs, or if the beliefs of the group are unknown, then prayers should be of an interfaith content. However, if everyone in the group is of like belief, then it is entirely appropriate to offer belief-specific prayer.

Song: America the Beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain.
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassion'd stress
A thorough-fare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness.
America! America!
God mend thine ev'ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control,
Thy liberty in law.

Responsive Reading

Leader: A true and worthy person recognizes his or her obligations and does them without being watched or compelled.

Scouts: A Scout is trustworthy.

Leader: We owe much to many—to home, school, community, nation, and to God.

Scouts: A Scout is loyal.

Leader: The Good Samaritan showed the spirit of doing a Good Turn.

Scouts: A Scout is helpful.

Leader: A real friend is one who remains loyal in victory and in defeat.

Scouts: A Scout is friendly.

Leader: Courtesy is the mark of an honorable and courteous person. It is shown in thoughtful acts and kindly respect for everyone.

Scouts: A Scout is courteous.

Leader: Kindness is the way people show respect for others.

Scouts: A Scout is kind.

Leader: Life is filled with things that we must do whether we like them or not. One of the marks of growing up is to willingly accept responsibilities.

Scouts: A Scout is obedient.

Leader: Our moods make our days. If we are grouchy, our day is gloomy. If we are happy, the day is always happier.

Scouts: A Scout is cheerful.

Leader: The world offers many gifts. A wise person uses them with care.

Scouts: A Scout is thrifty.

Leader: To each of us comes danger, difficult tasks, and temptations. When faced with a choice between courage and cowardice, we must be brave.

Scouts: A Scout is brave.

Leader: Cleanliness is next to godliness. To have a clean body, a clean mind, and a clean record is a rewarding achievement.

Scouts: A Scout is clean.

Leader: Character is determined by the things we worship. If we respect ourselves and others, and see them as gifts of goodness from God, we live on a high plane.

Scouts: A Scout is reverent.

Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace.



Careers in Communication

A career in communication will give you many choices. As in most fields, the better your education, the more likely your success. Many communication professionals have bachelor's degrees from colleges with journalism or communication departments. Their specialty might be public relations, advertising, or print or broadcast journalism. Others may have a bachelor's or an advanced degree in business, law, or engineering.

Competition for communication positions is fierce, and more students are learning to work with all types of media. Training in technology is very helpful, because many communication specialists now work mostly with websites and other digital media. This is because of the links among video, audio, and text in online communication.

If you hope to enter the communication field, be prepared to be a "jack of all trades" rather than specialize in only one area. Doing so will give you an edge over those who have more narrow expertise.

Most college students seek internships or other related work experiences so they will graduate with useful career-related skills.



Advertising

If you are creative and like to write, you may want to be a copywriter. This professional writes the text, or “copy,” for advertisements and commercials. Other advertising careers include account executive, sales manager, advertising or marketing specialist, media planner, creative director, media sales representative, and public opinion researcher.

There is a healthy market for management and corporate trainers. These communication specialists help individuals develop or sharpen special types of skills like project or time management, customer service, and presentation skills.

Communication Education

Most communication educators teach at four-year colleges, but communication teachers also work at elementary and secondary schools and community colleges. To teach, you will need at least a bachelor’s degree related to the subject you will be teaching. Big universities and graduate schools prefer that instructors be 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 chair.

Electronic Media, Radio, and Television Broadcasting

Network newscasters and talk-show hosts are considered by many to be glamorous positions in this field. However, radio and television offer far more off-camera and off-microphone positions than on-air ones. Many of these are technical, creative, sales, and administrative careers. Positions include broadcast station manager, video/audio librarian, community relations director, unit manager, video/audio editor, news director, news writer, transmitter engineer, technical director, media buyer, market researcher, producer, casting director, researcher, and floor manager.

Journalism (Print or Electronic)

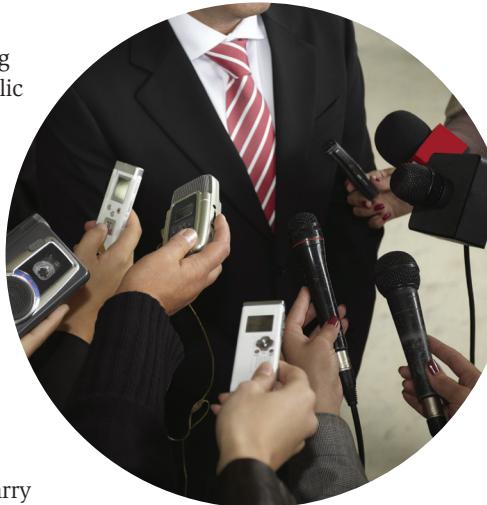
Journalism involves researching and gathering information and communicating it to the public through written, spoken, visual, or electronic means. Careers in journalism include reporter, editor, photographer, newscaster, author, scriptwriter, publisher, news service researcher, technical writer, and acquisitions editor.

Converging Media

Today, print and broadcast are *converging* (coming together). Video/audio editing and production positions are now common at traditional print media companies. Today's newspaper reporters are almost as likely to carry a small video camera as a notebook and pen.

Likewise, there are print-related positions at broadcast media companies. For example, reporters may write news updates for a broadcaster's website. Web editors and producers are in demand at all kinds of media companies.

Completely new media are forming. One such example is the professionally produced blog, which may have millions of viewers. Often people with good training in journalism and communication operate these sites.



If you plan to pursue a career in the communication field, look for classes and training in writing, editing, radio and TV production, as well as web production. You may specialize later, but it is wise to cover all the bases as you prepare.

Web-Related Careers

Some of the newest positions in the digital age are webmaster (the person who creates or maintains a company's website), web developer, web designer, information architect, web producer, graphic designer, programmer, multimedia specialist, systems administrator, and e-commerce specialist (someone who maintains the systems that process payments made online). Still other positions involve developing, monitoring, and managing websites.



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, fund-raiser, membership recruiter, sales manager, media analyst, media planner, creative director, audience analyst, news writer, and public opinion researcher.

Off-stage positions exist in theater management, instruction, technical, and production positions. Careers in performing arts include performing artist, scriptwriter, producer, director, costume designer, scenic designer, lighting designer, theater critic, makeup artist, stage manager, model, theater professor, and casting director.

Local theater groups or performing arts venues may offer internships to those interested in learning more about these fields.

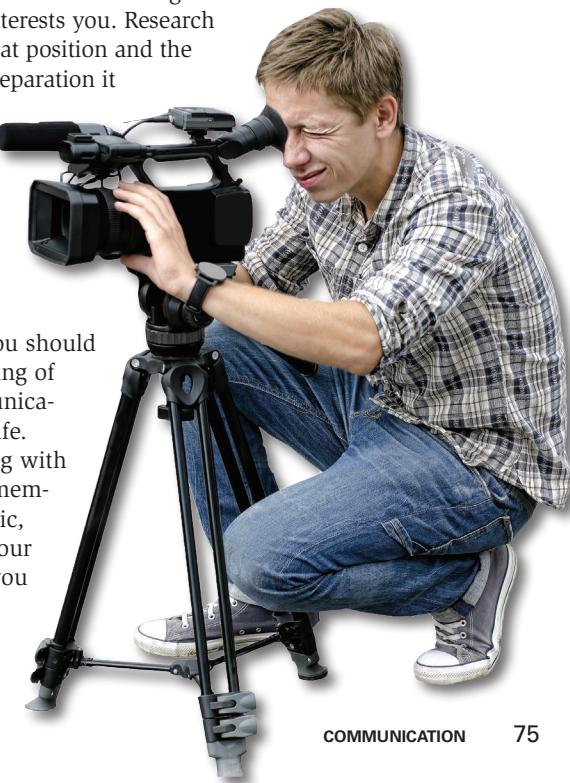
Theater/Performing Arts/Dramatic Arts

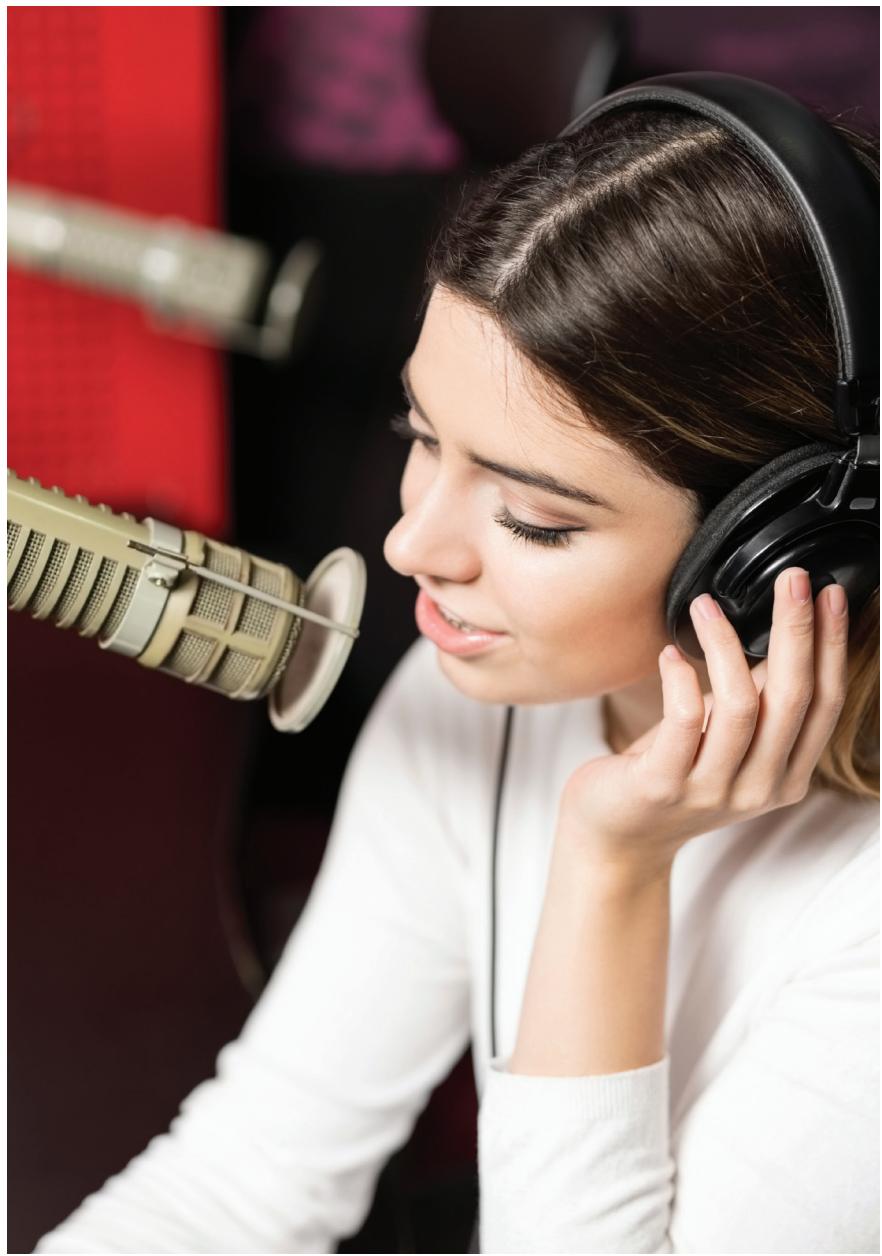
Stars do exist in this glitzy industry, but successful performing careers are few and far between. The majority of actors do not reach star status. Rather, many performers take advantage of theatrical opportunities found in professional, community, and educational theaters across the country.

Choosing a Career

Think about which careers in communication might suit you. Choose one position 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.) Share what you learn when you and your buddy meet with your counselor to discuss requirement 9.

Now that you have finished the requirements for your Communication merit badge, you should have a much better understanding of 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 learned to meet your badge requirements will serve you well throughout your life.





Resources in Communication

Scouting Literature

Journalism, Moviemaking, Photography, Public Speaking, Radio, and Theater merit badge pamphlets

With your parent or guardian's permission, visit Scouting America's official retail site, scoutshop.org, for a complete list of merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

Books

Alba, Jason, et al. *I'm on Facebook—Now What???: How to Get Personal, Business, and Professional Value from Facebook*. Happy About, 2013.

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Otfinoski, Steven. *Speaking Up, Speaking Out: A Kid's Guide to Making Speeches, Oral Reports and Conversation*. Millbrook Press, 1997.

Pease, Allan, and Barbara Pease. *The Definitive Book of Body Language*. Bantam, 2006.

Strunk Jr., William. *The Elements of Style*. Tribeca Books, 2011.

Organizations and Websites

Animation Factory

animationfactory.com

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

aejmc.org

Broadcast Education Association

beaweb.org

Freedom Forum

First Amendment Center

freedomforum.org

GoDaddy

godaddy.com

National Communication Association

natcom.org

Public Relations Society of America

prsa.org

Toastmasters International

toastmasters.org

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