

BSA Rank Advancement Requirements, 1910–2012

Requirements below are a brief paraphrasing of the more detailed requirements in the various editions of the Boy Scout Handbooks. Note especially in the first four Handbook editions, spelling and capitalization of terminology are often very inconsistent between printings, and even in the same book ('scout law', 'Scout Law', 'Scout Laws', etc). I have numbered the requirements for convenience; some Handbook editions numbered them, some did not.

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1910 TEMPORARY REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

- 1 Know Scout Law, signs, & salute.
- 2 Know history of Stars & Stripes.
- 3 Tie 4 standard knots.

Second Class

- 1 1 month as Tenderfoot.
- 2 Elementary first aid & bandaging.
- 3 Signalling ('elementary' knowledge of semaphore, Myer, or Morse). [note UK spelling of 'signalling']
- 4 Track 1/2 mile in 25 minutes (or if in a town, describe contents of 1 store window out of 4 observed for 1 minute).
- 5 Scout's Pace (go a mile in 12 minutes).
- 6 Lay & light a fire, using no more than 2 matches.
- 7 Cook 1/4 pound of meat & 2 potatoes using only the regulation cook kit.
- 8 Have at least \$1.00 in a savings bank (equivalent to almost \$25 in 2012).
- 9 Know the 16 principal points of the compass.

First Class

- 1 Swim 50 yards (or could run a mile in 8 minutes if doctor "certifies that bathing is dangerous to the boy's health").
- 2 Have \$2.00 in a savings bank (equivalent to almost \$50 in 2012).
- 3 Signalling (send & receive a message in either Myer or Morse at 16 letters per minute.
- 4 Travel alone by foot or rowboat to a point at least 7 miles distant and return (15 miles if by vehicle or animal), and write a short report. It is preferable to take 2 days to do this.
- 5 Describe or show how to save life for 2 of these accidents: fire, drowning, runaway carriage, sewer gas, ice-breaking, or bandage an injured patient, or revive an apparently drowned person.
- 6 Cook 2 dishes: porridge, bacon, hunter's stew, or skin & cook a rabbit, or pluck & cook a bird. Also, make a "damper" or camp sinker of half a pound of flour, or a "twist" baked on a thick stick.
- 7 Read a map correctly; draw an intelligible rough sketch map; point out compass directions without the help of a compass.
- 8 Use an axe for felling or trimming light timber; or produce an article of carpentry or joinery or metalwork.
- 9 Judge distance, size, numbers, and height within 25% error.
- 10 Train another boy to pass the Tenderfoot requirements.

Beyond First Class

Beyond First Class, there were 14 "badges of merit" (called merit badges by 1911) that could be earned by First Class Scouts and by Scoutmasters. Seton specifies "shoulder lines" for anyone who earns six badges of merit, and the "Silver Wolf" to any Scout who earns all 14. I don't believe any Silver Wolf was ever awarded, since these temporary requirements were soon replaced by different permanent ones, culminating with the first Eagle Scout badge awarded in 1912.

1911 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

- 1 Know Scout Law, sign, salute, & significance of the badge. [no clear requirement to memorize the Scout Oath]
- 2 Flag composition, history, & respect.
- 3 Tie 4 of these knots: square, sheet-bend, bowline, fisherman's, sheep-shank, halter, clove hitch, timber hitch, two half hitches.

Second Class

- 1 1 month as Tenderfoot.
- 2 Elementary first aid & bandaging.
- 3 Elementary signaling (know semaphore, American Morse, or Myer).
- 4 Track 1/2 mile in 25 minutes (or if in a town, describe contents of 1 store window out of 4 observed for 1 minute).
- 5 Scout's Pace (go a mile in 12 minutes).
- 6 Proper use of knife & hatchet.
- 7 Build a fire in the open, using no more than 2 matches.
- 8 Cook 1/4 pound of meat & 2 potatoes in the open without ordinary kitchen cooking utensils.
- 9 Earn & deposit \$1 in a public bank.
- 10 Know the 16 principal points of the compass.

First Class

- 1 Swim 50 yards.
- 2 Earn & deposit \$2 in a public bank.
- 3 Send & receive a message by semaphore, American Morse, or Myer at 16 letters per minute.
- 4 Make a round trip alone or with another Scout by foot or rowboat to a point at least 7 miles away, and write a satisfactory account of the trip & things observed.
- 5 Advanced first aid (panic prevention, various accidents, runaway horse, mad dog, snake bite, dislocations, unconsciousness, poisoning, fainting, apoplexy, sun stroke, heat exhaustion, freezing, sunburn, ivy poisoning, bites/stings, nosebleed, earache, toothache, object in eye, stomach ache or cramp, chills; demonstrate artificial respiration [Schaefer prone-pressure method]).
- 6 Prepare & cook in the open two of the following, without regular kitchen utensils: eggs, bacon, hunter's stew, fish, fowl, game, pancakes, hoe-cake, biscuit, hardtack, or twist on a stick. Explain to another Scout the methods followed.
- 7 Read a map correctly; draw an intelligible rough sketch map; point out a compass direction without the help of a compass.
- 8 Use an axe for felling or trimming light timber; or produce an article of carpentry or cabinet-making or metalwork. Explain the method followed.
- 9 Judge distance, size, number, height, and weight within 25%.
- 10 Describe 10 plant species or 6 wild bird species or 6 wild animal species. Find the North Star; name & describe 3 constellations.
- 11 Show evidence of living by the Scout Oath and Law.
- 12 Enlist a boy trained by himself as a Tenderfoot.

Life (changed to Star in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

Earn First Class plus these 5 merit badges: first aid, athletics, life-saving, personal health, public health.

Star (changed to Life in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

Earn First Class, the 5 badges for Life, plus any 5 more.

Eagle

- 1 Earn First Class.
- 2 Earn any 21 merit badges.

1915 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Only change: Requirement now states to repeat Oath and Law in full.

Second Class

Only change:

Req. #3—Dropped American Morse & Myer codes; added International Morse.

First Class

Only change:

Req. #3—Dropped American Morse & Myer codes; added International Morse.

Life (changed to Star in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

Earn First Class plus these 5 merit badges: first aid, physical development, personal health, public health, and life saving or pioneering.

Star (changed to Life in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

No change.

Eagle

Earn First Class plus 21 merit badges, including these 11: first aid, physical development, life saving, personal health, public health, cooking, camping, bird study, pathfinding, pioneering, athletics.

1917 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Repeat the Oath and Law in full.

- 1 Know Scout Law, motto, sign, salute, & significance of the badge.
- 2 Flag composition, history, & respect.
- 3 Tie the following knots: square, sheet-bend, bowline, fisherman's, sheep-shank, halter, clove hitch, timber hitch, two half hitches.

Second Class

Only change:

Req. #8—Cook 1/4 pound of meat & 2 potatoes in the open without any cooking utensils.

First Class

Only changes:

Be Second Class for 60 days.

Req. #3—Send & receive a message by semaphore (30 letters/minute) or by International Morse (16 letters/minute).

Life (changed to Star in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

Earn First Class plus these 5 merit badges: first aid, physical development or athletics, personal health, public health, and life saving or pioneering.

Star (changed to Life in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

No change.

Eagle

Earn First Class plus 21 merit badges, including these 11: first aid, life saving, personal health, public health, cooking, camping, civics, bird study, pathfinding, pioneering, athletics or physical development.

1922 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Only change:

Req. #3—Substituted slip knot for halter knot.

Second Class

No change.

First Class

No change.

Life (changed to Star in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

No change.

Star (changed to Life in 1924)

[optional until 1936]

No change.

Eagle

No change.

1927 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

- 1 Know Scout Oath & Law, Motto, Sign, Salute, & significance of the badge.
- 2 Flag composition, history, & respect.
- 3 Tie the square knot & any 8 of the following: sheet-bend, bowline, fisherman's, sheep-shank, slip, clove hitch, timber hitch, two half hitches, carrick bend, miller's knot, rope halters, pipe hitch, stevedore, barrel hitch, girth hitch, binder twine bend, lariat loop, hitching tie.

Second Class

- 1 1 month as Tenderfoot.
- 2 Elementary first aid & bandaging.
- 3 Elementary signaling (know semaphore, International Morse, or the elementary signs of the Indian Sign Language Code).
- 4 Track 1/2 mile in 25 minutes (or if in a town, describe contents of 1 store window out of 4 observed for 1 minute).
- 5 Scout's Pace (go a mile in 12 minutes); or lay out, measure by the stride method and stake a 4-acre tract of land.
- 6 Proper use of knife & hatchet.
- 7 Build a fire in the open, using no more than 2 matches. Care for, and put it out.
- 8 Cook 1/4 pound of meat & 2 potatoes in the open without any cooking utensils.
- 9 Earn & deposit \$1 in a public bank, or earn, own and raise some farm animal.
- 10 Know the 16 principal points of the compass.
- 11 Demonstrate practice of 5 rules of safety.
- 12 Show evidence of living by the Scout Oath and Law.

First Class

- 1 Be Second Class for 2 months.
- 2 Swim 50 yards.
- 3 Earn & deposit \$2 in a public bank, or plant, raise and market a farm crop.
- 4 Send & receive a message by semaphore (30 letters/minute) or by International Morse (16 letters/minute) or by Indian Sign Language code (30 signs/minute).
- 5 Make a round trip alone or with another Scout by foot or rowboat to a point at least 7 miles away, and write a satisfactory account of the trip & things observed.
- 6 Advanced first aid (similar to before, except removed panic prevention & runaway horse).
- 7 Prepare & cook in the open two of the following, without regular kitchen utensils: eggs, bacon, hunter's stew, fish, fowl, game, pancakes, hoe-cake, biscuit, hardtack, or twist on a stick, and give an exact statement of the cost. Explain to another Scout the methods followed.
- 8 Read a map correctly; draw an intelligible rough sketch map; point out a compass direction without the help of a compass.
- 9 Use an axe for felling or trimming light timber; or produce an article of carpentry or cabinet-making or metalwork; or demonstrate repair of a decaying or damaged tree. Explain the method followed.
- 10 Judge distance, size, number, height, and weight within 25%.
- 11 Describe 10 plant species or 6 wild bird species or 6 wild animal species. Find the North Star; name & describe 3 constellations.
- 12 Show evidence of living by the Scout Oath and Law.

Star

- [optional until 1936]
- 1 First Class for 3 months.
 - 2 Earn any 5 merit badges.

Life

- [optional until 1936]
- 1 First Class for 6 months.
 - 2 Earn 10 merit badges, including: First Aid, Physical Development or Athletics, Personal Health, Public Health, Life Saving or Pioneering.

Eagle

- 1 First Class for 1 year.
- 2 Earn 21 merit badges, including these 11: first aid, life saving, personal health, public health, cooking, camping, civics, bird study, pathfinding, pioneering, athletics or physical development. [no change]

1936 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

No change.

Second Class

Only changes:

Req. #3—Added option to learn Manual Alphabet for the Deaf, with one hand or two hands.

Req. #9—Added option to earn and contribute \$1 or equivalent to the family budget or to welfare work in the community.

First Class

Only changes:

Req. #1—Added requirement to recognize leadership & service badges & insignia.

Req. #3—Added option to earn and contribute \$2 or equivalent to the family budget or to welfare work in the community

Req. #4—Added option to send/receive message with Manual Alphabet for the Deaf (30 letters/minute).

Star

No change except that Star is now mandatory for advancement to Eagle.

- 1 First Class for 3 months.
- 2 Earn any 5 merit badges.

Life

- 1 Star for 3 months.
- 2 Earn 10 merit badges, including: First Aid, Physical Development or Athletics, Personal Health, Public Health, Life Saving or Pioneering or Safety. [added optional Safety]

Eagle

- 1 Life for 6 months.
- 2 Earn 21 merit badges, including: First Aid, Life Saving, Personal Health, Public Health, Cooking, Camping, Civics, Bird Study, Pathfinding, Safety, Pioneering, Athletics or Physical Development [added Safety; plus Swimming is now required for Life Saving].

1946 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

No change.

Second Class

Only changes:

Req. #3—Removed Indian Sign Language.

Req. #10—Follow a compass course with 3 changes in direction, using the degree system, and explain how a compass works.

First Class

Only changes:

Req. #7—Added requirement to specify the number of persons intended to serve.

Added new Req. #13—Enlist & train a boy as a Tenderfoot or as a Bobcat.

Star

No change.

Life

No change.

Eagle

No change.

1948 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

- 1 Know Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.
- 2 Describe Scout Badge; when to wear the uniform.
- 3 Give Scout Sign, Salute, & Handclasp.
- 4 Give your patrol name & yell; describe troop leaders & their jobs; explain what to do to earn Second Class & First Class.
- 5 Explain how to contact doctor, hospital, police/sheriff; how to report a fire.
- 6 Describe US flag & flag history, when to fly it, how to hoist, lower, display, fold, salute it.
- 7 Simple first aid, including tying a bandage with a square knot.
- 8 Basic fire-building safety. Describe harm to live tree from hacking with an axe or other sharp tool.
- 9 Whip a rope. Tie sheet bend, clove hitch, two half hitches, bowline.

Second Class

- 1 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.
- 2 Be active in patrol & troop.
- 3 Be helpful at home, school, church, & community.
- 4 Take care of your things.
- 5 Maintain a personal savings plan.
- 6 Prepare for a hike. Show safe hiking practices. Demonstrate 6 Scout Silent Signals; how to purify drinking water; how to make 1-man latrine. Identify poisonous plants. Demonstrate basic first aid.
- 7 Show how to use a compass. Follow a compass course with 3 changes in direction, including being able to measure distances by the length of your step. OR lay out in this manner and stake a 4-acre tract of land. Orient and follow a map.
- 8 Sharpen a knife & axe. Prepare kindling and build a fire with not more than 2 matches. Cook a meal on that fire from raw meat (or fish or poultry) and at least one raw vegetable.
- 9 Do either tracking for 1/4 mile OR trailing for 1/2 mile OR stalking for 1/2 mile. ['Trailing' means following trail signs.] Find & identify evidence of 6 different kinds of wild mammals, birds, reptiles, or fish.
- 10 After doing all of the above, take a 5-mile hike, using a map or map sketch.

First Class

- 1 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.
- 2 Be active in patrol & troop.
- 3 Be helpful at home, school, church, & community.
- 4 Take care of your things.
- 5 Maintain a personal savings plan.
- 6 Present yourself for inspection for an overnight camp. Explain proper methods to care for food, drinking water, fire protection, & waste disposal. Demonstrate first aid.
- 7 Lay out a true north-south line using the sun and the North Star, and a magnetic north-south line using a compass. Determine a height you cannot reach and a width you cannot walk. Make a map sketch of your camp location & directions how to find it from at least 2 miles away.
- 8 Sharpen an axe & use it to cut tent pegs from light wood. Set up a tent. Use a taut-line hitch, and make a camp gadget with lashings. Identify 10 trees or shrubs.
- 9 Prepare a complete breakfast & complete dinner from raw ingredients for yourself and a companion. Identify 4 edible wild plants.
- 10 Swim 50 yards.
- 11 Send & receive a message of 20 words over a distance of 100 yards using the Morse Code.
- 12 After doing all of the above, camp overnight with your patrol, sleeping in a tent or improvised shelter, and cooking at least 1 hot meal.

Star

No change.

Life

No change.

Eagle

No change.

1958/59 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Minor rearranging & slight adjustments (1959):

- 1 Give your patrol name & yell; describe troop leaders & their jobs.
- 2 Explain what to do to earn Second Class & First Class. Describe Scout Badge & explain its meaning.
- 3 Describe Scout uniform & when to wear it.
- 4 Give Scout Sign, Salute, & Handclasp.
- 5 Tell why natural resources are important. Describe harm to live tree from hacking with an axe or tearing off its bark. Basic fire-building safety.
- 6 Whip a rope. Tie sheet bend, clove hitch, two half hitches, bowline.
- 7 Explain how to contact doctor, hospital, police/sheriff; how to report a fire. How to care for cut or scratch, and tie a bandage with a square knot.
- 8 Describe US flag & flag history, when to fly it, how to hoist, lower, display, fold, salute it. Recite the pledge of allegiance.
- 9 Know Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.

Second Class

Minor adjustments (1959):

- 1 Be active in patrol & troop.
- 2 Take part in service projects.
- 3 Present yourself dressed & equipped for a 5-mile hike. Show foot care. Tell safety precautions. Show 6 silent Scout signals. Identify poisonous plants. Show how to purify water for drinking; how to make 1-man latrine. Tell what to do if lost.
- 4 Read 10 map symbols. Orient a map in the field. Follow a route on the map. Explain how a compass works; set & read a bearing in the field. Follow a course with 3 compass degree bearings, including being able to measure distances by the length of your step.
- 5 Find & identify evidence of 6 different kinds of wild mammals, birds, reptiles, or fish. Explain how plant life & wildlife live together.
- 6 Do either tracking for 1/4 mile OR trailing for 1/2 mile OR stalking for 1/2 mile.
- 7 Sharpen a knife & axe. Prepare kindling and build a fire with not more than 2 matches. Cook a meal on that fire from raw meat (or fish or poultry) and at least one raw vegetable.
- 8 Demonstrate basic first aid.
- 9 After doing all of the above, take a 5-mile hike, using a map or map sketch.
- 10 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan. Be helpful at home, school, church, & community. Take care of your things. Respect others' property and practice conservation.

First Class

Minor adjustments (1959):

- 1 Be active in patrol & troop.
- 2 Take part in service projects.
- 3 Present yourself dressed & equipped for an overnight camp.
- 4 Select a campsite. Lay out a true north-south line using the sun and the North Star, and a magnetic north-south line using a compass. Determine a height you cannot reach and a width you cannot walk. Make a map sketch of your camp location & directions how to find it from at least 2 miles away.
- 5 Sharpen an axe & use it to cut tent pegs from light wood. Set up a tent. Use a taut-line hitch, and make a camp gadget with lashings. Identify 10 trees or shrubs. Explain proper methods to care for food, drinking water, fire protection, & waste disposal. Find 10 kinds of wild trees or shrubs.
- 6 Prepare a complete breakfast & complete dinner from raw ingredients for yourself and a companion. Identify 4 edible wild plants.
- 7 Swim 50 yards.
- 8 Send & receive a message of 20 words over a distance of 100 yards using the Morse Code.
- 9 Demonstrate first aid.
- 10 After doing all of the above, camp overnight with your patrol, sleeping in a tent or improvised shelter, and cooking at least 1 hot meal.
- 11 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan. Be helpful at home, school, church, & community. Take care of your things. Respect others' property and practice conservation.

1958/59 REQUIREMENTS (continued)

Star

(1958)

- 1 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.
- 2 Be active in patrol & troop for 3 months since First Class. Be helpful at home, school, church, & community. Take care of your things. Understand conservation, and take part in a conservation project.
- 3 Earn 1 merit badge from the CITIZENSHIP or PUBLIC SERVICE groups.
- 4 Earn 1 merit badge from any of these groups: CAMPCRAFT, AQUATICS, OUTDOOR SPORTS, CONSERVATION, or Nature merit badge.
- 5 Earn any 3 additional merit badges (total of 5 merit badges, including two 'required' badges).

Life

(1958)

- 1 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.
- 2 Be active in patrol & troop for 3 months since Star. Be helpful at home, school, church, & community. Take care of your things. Understand conservation, and take part in a conservation project.
- 3 Earn First Aid merit badge plus 2 badges from the CITIZENSHIP group.
- 4 Earn the following merit badges: 1 from CAMPCRAFT; 1 from OUTDOOR SPORTS or AQUATICS; Nature or 1 from CONSERVATION; 1 from PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT; 1 from any of these groups: ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, PLANT CULTIVATION, COMMUNICATION, TRANSPORTATION, BUILDING.
- 5 Earn any 2 additional merit badges (total of 10 merit badges, including 8 'required' badges).

Eagle

(1958):

- 1 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.
- 2 Be active in patrol & troop for 5 months since Life. Work actively as a leader in your troop. Be helpful at home, school, church, & community. Take care of your things.
- 3 Earn 1 merit badge from the CONSERVATION group.
- 4 Earn 3 merit badges from the CITIZENSHIP group.
- 5 Earn 1 merit badge from the OUTDOOR SPORTS group.
- 6 Earn 1 merit badge from any of the following groups: ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, PLANT CULTIVATION, COMMUNICATION, TRANSPORTATION, BUILDING.
- 7 Earn the following merit badges: Camping, Cooking, Swimming, Lifesaving, Nature, Personal Fitness, Public Health, Safety, Firemanship, First Aid.
- 8 Earn any 5 additional merit badges (total of 21 merit badges, including 16 'required' badges).

NOTE on merit badge groups—All merit badges were assigned to one of 15 groups.

1965/71 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Very minor rearranging & slight adjustments (1965):

- 1 Know Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan.
- 2 Give Scout sign, salute, & handclasp.
- 3 Describe Scout uniform & when to wear it.
- 4 Describe Scout Badge & explain its meaning.
- 5 Describe US flag & flag history, when to fly it, how to hoist, lower, display, fold, salute it. [Pledge of allegiance now assumed as part of Tenderfoot ceremony]
- 6 Whip a rope. Tie square knot, sheet bend, clove hitch, two half hitches, bowline, taut-line hitch.
- 7 Understand the Outdoor Code.
- 8 Give your patrol name & yell; describe the importance of the patrol in your Scout activities.
- 9 Explain what to do to earn Second Class.

Second Class

(1965):

- 1 Tell what precautions must be taken for a safe hike.
- 2 Take three 5-mile hikes. For each, submit a hike plan; present yourself dressed & equipped for the hike.
- 3 Identify 10 map symbols.
- 4 Explain how a compass works. Read 3 bearings in degrees.
- 5 Show how to orient a map. Follow a route on the map.
- 6 Explain how to keep from getting lost, & what to do if lost.
- 7 Identify poisonous plants. Find & identify evidence of 10 different kinds of wild mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, or insects. Explain how this wildlife depends on plants.
- 8 Do two: tracking for 1/4 mile OR trailing for 1/2 mile OR stalking for 1/2 mile.
- 9 Sharpen a knife & ax and explain their safe use.
- 10 Prepare kindling and build a fire with not more than 2 matches. Cook a meal on that fire without utensils from raw meat (or fish or poultry) and at least one raw vegetable.
- 11 Demonstrate basic first aid.
- 12 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan. Describe several Good Turns you have done.
- 13 Explain what to do to earn First Class.

First Class

(1965):

- 1 Describe campout preparations, equipment, & site selection.
- 2 Take 2 overnight camping trips. For each, submit a hike plan; present yourself dressed & equipped for the outing. Backpack in and out at least once for 1.5 miles. Pitch tent & sleep in it. Prepare a complete breakfast & complete dinner from raw ingredients at least once.
- 3 Lash poles together with shear, square, & diagonal lashings.
- 4 Make a sketch map of an area using compass & step measurements.
- 5 Point out in the sky the North Star & 5 constellations.
- 6 Identify 10 trees or shrubs & explain their usefulness.
- 7 Find 4 edible wild plants. Prepare & eat one of them.
- 8 Swim 50 yards.
- 9 Send & receive a message of 20 words using either Morse or semaphore codes.
- 10 Demonstrate first aid.
- 11 Explain how you live up to Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan. Describe at least one service project in which you have taken part.
- 12 Explain what to do to earn Star and to progress toward Eagle Scout.

1965/71 REQUIREMENTS (continued)

Star

(1965):

Be active in patrol & troop for 3 months since First Class.

- 1 Earn 5 merit badges, including 1 from the Eagle list.
- 2 Take part in a service project.
- 3 Take part in a conservation project.
- 4 Serve as a troop "warrant officer" (patrol leader, senior patrol leader or assistant, jr assistant scoutmaster, instructor, scribe, quartermaster, librarian, den chief).
- 5 Scoutmaster conference: Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan; Look over requirements for Life.

Life

(1965):

Be active in patrol & troop for 3 months since Star.

- 1 Earn 10 merit badges, including 5 from the Eagle list.
- 2 Take part in a service project and a separate conservation project.
- 3 Serve as a troop "warrant officer" (patrol leader, senior patrol leader or assistant, jr assistant scoutmaster, instructor, scribe, quartermaster, librarian, den chief) for at least 3 months.
- 4 Scoutmaster conference: Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan; Look over requirements for Life.

Eagle

(1965):

Be active in patrol & troop for 6 months since Life.

- 1 Earn 10 merit badges, including: Camping, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Cooking, First Aid, Lifesaving, Nature, Personal Fitness, Safety, Soil & Water Conservation, Swimming.
- 2 Serve as a troop "warrant officer" (patrol leader, senior patrol leader or assistant, jr assistant scoutmaster, instructor, scribe, quartermaster, librarian, den chief) for at least 6 months.
- 3 Plan, develop, and carry out a service project helpful to your church or synagogue, school, or community.
- 4 Scoutmaster conference: Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan; future in Scouting.

(1971):

Eagle required list changed to replace Soil & Water Conservation with the new Conservation of Natural Resources merit badge (which was soon to be replaced by Environmental Science merit badge).

1972 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Ranks now called “Progress Awards” as part of the disastrous “Improved Scouting Program” of 1972.

- 1 Be active for 2 months.
- 2 Memorize Scout Oath & Law [NOTE—Scouts now required to memorize not just the 12 points, but over 300 words of explanatory text!]
- 3 Earn Citizenship & 1 other skill award*.
- 4 Earn any 1 merit badge.
- 5 “Personal Growth Agreement Conference” (new name for Scoutmaster Conference).

*—12 metal belt loop skill awards now group basic skills into: Camping, Citizenship, Communications, Community Living, Conservation, Cooking, Environment, Family Life, First Aid, Hiking, Physical Fitness, Swimming.

Second Class

- 1 Be active for 3 months as a Tenderfoot.
- 2 Show Scout spirit.
- 3 Earn 3 more skill awards.
- 4 Earn any 2 more merit badges.
- 5 “Personal Growth Agreement Conference”.

First Class

- 1 Be active for 3 months as a Second Class Scout.
- 2 Show Scout spirit.
- 3 Earn 3 more skill awards (total of 8 out of 12).
- 4 Earn 2 more merit badges (total of 5, must include Citizenship in the Community & First Aid).
- 5 “Personal Growth Agreement Conference”.

Star

- 1 Be active for 4 months as a First Class Scout.
- 2 Show Scout spirit.
- 3 Earn a total of 9 merit badges, including 4 from the Eagle list.
- 4 Take part in service projects totaling 6 hours.
- 5 Serve for 4 months in one or more of the following “positions” (patrol leader, jr assistant scoutmaster, scribe, den chief, quartermaster, librarian, member of Leadership Corps, senior patrol leader or assistant, or instructor).
- 6 “Personal Growth Agreement Conference”.

Life

- 1 Be active for 6 months as a Star Scout.
- 2 Show Scout spirit.
- 3 Earn a total of 15 merit badges, including 7 from the Eagle list.
- 4 Take part in service projects totaling 6 hours.
- 5 Serve for 6 months in one or more of the “leadership positions” listed for Star.
- 6 “Personal Growth Agreement Conference”.

Eagle

- 1 Be active for 6 months as a Life Scout.
- 2 Show Scout spirit.
- 3 Earn a total of 24 merit badges, including: Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World [former World Brotherhood], Communications, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Environmental Science, First Aid, Personal Fitness OR Sports OR Swimming, Personal Management [formerly Personal Finance], Safety.
- 4 Serve for 6 months in one or more of the “positions” listed for Star.
- 5 Plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to your religious institution, school, or town.
- 6 “Personal Growth Agreement Conference”.

NOTE—Swimming and Lifesaving now no longer required. Camping and outdoor experience minimized.

1976/78/88 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

1976 Changes:

Optional from 10/15/1976; mandatory 1/1/1978.

Req. #2—Returned to requiring memorizing only the 12 words of the Law and explaining their meaning in your own words.

Req. #4—Deleted. No merit badge required.

1988 Changes:

Eliminated complex & confusing terminology and restored tradition pre-1972 terminology (progress award back to rank; personal growth agreement conference back to Scoutmaster conference, etc).

Second Class

1976 Changes:

Req. #3—Earn Hiking, First Aid, and 1 other skill award (total of 5).

Req. #4—Earn any 1 merit badge.

1978 Change:

Req. #4—Deleted. No merit badge required.

First Class

1976 Changes:

Req. #3—Earn Camping, Cooking, and 1 other skill award (total of 8).

Req. #4—Earn 2 more merit badges (total of 3, must include First Aid).

1978 Change:

Req. #4—Earn First Aid merit badge.

1988 Change:

Added requirement to swim 50 yards.

Star

1976 Changes:

Req. #3—Earn a total of 8 merit badges, including 4 from the Eagle list.

Req. #5—Add bugler, chaplain aide, & historian to the list of troop positions.

1978 Change:

Req. #3—Earn a total of 6 merit badges, including 4 from the Eagle list.

Life

1976 Change:

Req. #5—Add bugler, chaplain aide, & historian to the list of troop positions.

1978 Change:

Req. #3—Earn a total of 11 merit badges, including 7 from the Eagle list.

Eagle

1976 Change:

Req. #3—Add Camping merit badge to the Eagle required list.

Req. #5—NOTE that bugler, chaplain aide, & historian were NOT added to positions allowed for Eagles.

1978 Change:

Req. #3—Earn a total of 21 merit badges, including the 11 from the Eagle list.

1990 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Eliminated the 12 skill awards.

- 1 Present yourself properly dressed & equipped for an overnight camping trip.
- 2 Spend at least 1 night on a patrol or troop campout in a tent you helped pitch.
- 3 Whip & fuse the ends of a rope. Tie two half hitches & a taut line hitch.
- 4 Explain safe hiking rules, & what to do if lost.
- 5 Demonstrate how to display, raise, lower, & fold the American flag.
- 6 Know and explain the Scout Oath, Law, motto, slogan.
- 7 Know your patrol name, yell, & describe the patrol flag.
- 8 Explain why we use the buddy system in Scouting.
- 9 Record your best & show improvement over 30 days in pushups, pullups, situps, standing long jump, 500 yard run/walk.
- 10 Identify poisonous plants and their treatment.
- 11 Show basic first aid.
- 12 Scoutmaster conference.

Second Class

- 1 Demonstrate how a compass works & how to orient a map. Explain what map symbols mean. Using a compass & a map you've drawn, take a 5-mile hike (or 10 miles by bike).
- 2 Since joining, have gone on 5 separate troop/patrol activities, including 2 overnight camps [troop/patrol meetings don't count]. Demonstrate proper care, sharpening, & use of knife, saw, & ax. Prepare tinder, kindling, & fuel for a cooking fire. Light the fire & assist with meal preparation & cleanup. Select your patrol site & sleep in a tent you pitched.
- 3 Participate in a flag ceremony.
- 4 Participate in a 1-hour service project.
- 5 Identify or show evidence of 10 wild animals (birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, mollusks).
- 6 Show how to handle first aid "hurry cases". Prepare a first aid kit. Demonstrate basic first aid.
- 7 Swim 50 yards.
- 8 Take part in a program on the dangers of drugs, alcohol, & tobacco.
- 9 Show Scout spirit.
- 10 Scoutmaster conference.

First Class

- 1 Demonstrate how to find directions during the day & at night without using a compass.
- 2 Using a compass, complete a 1-mile orienteering course, including measuring the height & width of designated items.
- 3 Since joining, have gone on 10 separate troop/patrol activities, including 3 overnight camps [troop/patrol meetings don't count].
- 4 On one overnight, serve as patrol cook & prepare breakfast, lunch, & dinner that require cooking.
- 5 Discuss with an approved individual your constitutional rights & obligations as a US citizen.
- 6 Identify or show evidence of 10 native plants.
- 7 Demonstrate tying a timber hitch, clove hitch, and square, shear, & diagonal lashings. Use lashings to make a useful camp gadget.
- 8 Demonstrate tying a bowline & how it's used in rescues. Show additional first aid treatments.
- 9 Swim 100 yards.
- 10 Show Scout spirit.
- 11 Scoutmaster conference.

Star

Minor change.

Req. #5—Leadership now called 'positions of responsibility'. List drops Leadership Corps (which was discontinued by BSA), and adds troop guide.

Life

No changes except to positions of responsibility.

Eagle

No changes except to positions of responsibility. Chaplain aide now allowed as an Eagle position, but not historian or bugler.

1998 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Changes:

New Req. #3 added.

Req. #10—Changed 500 yards to 1/4 mile (440 yards), and changed it from “run/walk” to “walk/run”.

Req. #12—Added Heimlich maneuver.

- 1 Present yourself properly dressed & equipped for an overnight camping trip.
- 2 Spend at least 1 night on a patrol or troop campout in a tent you helped pitch.
- 3 On the campout, assist in preparing & cooking one of your patrol’s meals.
- 4 Whip & fuse the ends of a rope. Tie two half hitches & a taut line hitch.
- 5 Explain safe hiking rules, & what to do if lost.
- 6 Demonstrate how to display, raise, lower, & fold the American flag.
- 7 Know and explain the Scout Oath, Law, motto, slogan.
- 8 Know your patrol name, yell, & describe the patrol flag.
- 9 Explain why we use the buddy system in Scouting.
- 10 Record your best & show improvement over 30 days in pushups, pullups, situps, standing long jump, 1/4-mile walk/run.
- 11 Identify poisonous plants and their treatment.
- 12 Show basic first aid, including Heimlich maneuver.
- 13 Scoutmaster conference.

Second Class

Changes:

Req. #2—Expanded, including requirement to light a lightweight stove

Req. #7—Cut distance from 50 yards to 50 feet; added elementary water rescues.

- 1 Demonstrate how a compass works & how to orient a map. Explain what map symbols mean. Using a compass & a map you’ve drawn, take a 5-mile hike (or 10 miles by bike).
- 2 Since joining, have gone on 5 separate troop/patrol activities, including 2 overnight camps [troop/patrol meetings don’t count]. Select your patrol site & sleep in a tent you pitched. Demonstrate proper care, sharpening, & use of knife, saw, & ax. Prepare tinder, kindling, & fuel for a cooking fire. Discuss when it’s appropriate to use a cooking fire & a lightweight stove. Demonstrate how to light a fire and a lightweight stove. On one campout, plan & cook over an open fire one hot breakfast or lunch for yourself.
- 3 Participate in a flag ceremony.
- 4 Participate in a 1-hour service project.
- 5 Identify or show evidence of 10 wild animals (birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, mollusks).
- 6 Show how to handle first aid “hurry cases”. Prepare a first aid kit. Demonstrate basic first aid.
- 7 Swim 50 feet. Demonstrate elementary water rescues.
- 8 Take part in a program on the dangers of drugs, alcohol, & tobacco.
- 9 Show Scout spirit.
- 10 Scoutmaster conference.

1998 REQUIREMENTS (continued)

First Class

Various minor changes to several requirements:

- 1 Demonstrate how to find directions during the day & at night without using a compass.
- 2 Using a compass, complete a 1-mile orienteering course, including measuring the height & width of designated items.
- 3 Since joining, have gone on 10 separate troop/patrol activities, including 3 overnight camps [troop/patrol meetings don't count].
- 4 On one overnight, serve as patrol cook & prepare breakfast, lunch, & dinner that require cooking. [Expanded to include more details]
- 5 Discuss with an approved individual your constitutional rights & obligations as a US citizen.
- 6 Identify or show evidence of 10 native plants.
- 7 Demonstrate tying a timber hitch, clove hitch, and square, shear, & diagonal lashings. Use lashings to make a useful camp gadget. [Added requirement to discuss when & when not to use lashings.]
- 8 Demonstrate tying a bowline & describe several uses. Show additional first aid treatments.
- 9 Pass the BSA 100-yard swimmer test. Jump into water fully clothed and use clothing for inflation. Demonstrate line rescue.
- 10 Show Scout spirit.
- 11 Scoutmaster conference.

Star

Minor change:

Req. #5—Expanded positions of responsibility list to include leadership positions for Varsity Scouting.

Life

No changes except to positions of responsibility.

Eagle

Changes:

Eagle required merit badge list—Personal Fitness now required (not optional); Sports option dropped; Scouts who don't want to earn Swimming can now earn either Cycling or Hiking.

Positions of responsibility—Historian now allowed as Eagle position, but not bugler. Varsity list does not show historian, but this was probably an oversight.

2009 REQUIREMENTS

Tenderfoot

Changes:

Req. #4—Added requirement to teach with the EDGE method.

Req. #9—Added requirement to learn about bullying.

Req. #12—No longer refers to Heimlich maneuver, just says treatment for choking.

Added new Req. #13.

- 1 Present yourself properly dressed & equipped for an overnight camping trip.
- 2 Spend at least 1 night on a patrol or troop campout in a tent you helped pitch.
- 3 On the campout, assist in preparing & cooking one of your patrol's meals.
- 4 Whip & fuse the ends of a rope. Tie two half hitches & a taut line hitch. Using the EDGE method, teach another person how to tie a square knot.
- 5 Explain safe hiking rules, & what to do if lost.
- 6 Demonstrate how to display, raise, lower, & fold the American flag.
- 7 Know and explain the Scout Oath, Law, motto, slogan.
- 8 Know your patrol name, yell, & describe the patrol flag.
- 9 Explain why we use the buddy system in Scouting. Describe what a bully is and how to respond to one.
- 10 Record your best & show improvement over 30 days in pushups, pullups, situps, standing long jump, 1/4-mile walk/run.
- 11 Identify poisonous plants and their treatment.
- 12 Show basic first aid, including treatment for choking.
- 13 Demonstrate Scout spirit. Discuss 4 examples of how you have lived the Scout Law in your daily life.
- 14 Scoutmaster conference.

Second Class

Changes:

Added new Req. #2.

Req. #3—Cooking on a fire no longer required. Lighting a fire no longer required.

Req. #9—Added 3 "R's".

Added new Req. #10.

- 1 Demonstrate how a compass works & how to orient a map. Explain what map symbols mean. Using a compass & a map you've drawn, take a 5-mile hike (or 10 miles by bike).
- 2 Discuss the principles of Leave No Trace.
- 3 Since joining, have gone on 5 separate troop/patrol activities, including 2 overnight camps [troop/patrol meetings don't count]. Select your patrol site & sleep in a tent you pitched. Demonstrate proper care, sharpening, & use of knife, saw, & ax. Prepare tinder, kindling, & fuel for a cooking fire. Discuss when it's appropriate to use a cooking fire & a lightweight stove. Demonstrate how to build a fire and set up a lightweight stove (lighting the fire is not required). On one campout, plan & cook one hot breakfast or lunch [not necessarily for yourself, and can be on fire or stove].
- 4 Participate in a flag ceremony.
- 5 Participate in a 1-hour service project.
- 6 Identify or show evidence of 10 wild animals (birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, mollusks).
- 7 Show how to handle first aid "hurry cases". Prepare a first aid kit. Demonstrate basic first aid.
- 8 Swim 50 feet. Demonstrate elementary water rescues.
- 9 Take part in a program on the dangers of drugs, alcohol, & tobacco. Explain the three R's of personal safety and protection.
- 10 Earn an amount of money agreed upon by you and your parent, then save at least 50% of that money.
- 11 Demonstrate Scout spirit. Discuss 4 examples of how you have lived the Scout Law in your daily life.
- 12 Scoutmaster conference.

2009 REQUIREMENTS (continued)

First Class

Changes:

Req. #2—Now requires using a map as well as a compass.

Req. #3—Added Leave No Trace.

Req. #9—Removed the requirement to jump into the water fully clothed.

Added new Req. #10 & #11.

- 1 Demonstrate how to find directions during the day & at night without using a compass.
- 2 Using a map & compass, complete a 1-mile orienteering course, including measuring the height & width of designated items.
- 3 Since joining, have gone on 10 separate troop/patrol activities, including 3 overnight camps [troop/patrol meetings don't count]. Demonstrate the principles of Leave No Trace on these outings.
- 4 On one overnight, plan & cook a hot breakfast, lunch, & dinner.
- 5 Discuss with an approved individual your constitutional rights & obligations as a US citizen.
- 6 Identify or show evidence of 10 native plants.
- 7 Discuss when & when not to use lashings. Demonstrate tying a timber hitch, clove hitch, and square, shear, & diagonal lashings. Use lashings to make a useful camp gadget.
- 8 Demonstrate tying a bowline & describe several uses. Show additional first aid treatments.
- 9 Pass the BSA 100-yard swimmer test. Demonstrate line rescue.
- 10 Invite an inactive or non-Scout to a meeting and tell him about Scouting.
- 11 Describe the 3 things to avoid doing while using the Internet. Describe a cyberbully and how to respond to one.
- 12 Demonstrate Scout spirit. Discuss 4 examples of how you have lived the Scout Law in your daily life.
- 13 Scoutmaster conference.

Star

Minor change:

Req. #5—Further expanded positions of responsibility list to include leadership positions for Venturing/Sea Scouting as well as new positions of Order of the Arrow troop representative, troop webmaster, & Leave No Trace trainer.

Life

Change:

Expanded positions of responsibility list.

Added new Req. #6 to teach a younger Scout using the EDGE method.

Eagle

No changes except to positions of responsibility.

BSA Badges of Rank

There have been three main designs for the BSA rank badges, although collectors identify dozens (or hundreds) of variants, especially with the pre-1972 badges and with the Eagle badges, as for example with two variants of the Star rank badge here:



Earlier Star Badge



Later Star Badge



1911–1972 Rank Badges



1972–1990 Rank Badges (Eagle badges, both unpopular, lasted 1972–75 & 1975–85)



1990—present Rank Badges