

Girls and Boys in the BSA

Here are some answers to your questions

1. Just when did “coed” Scouting start? Was the USA first?

Robert Baden-Powell founded the world Scouting (or Boy Scouting) program in 1908, then went on to found the separate world Guiding (or Girl Guiding) program in 1910. In the US, William Boyce founded the Boy Scouts of America in 1910, and Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girl Guides of America in 1912 (Low renamed her program Girl Scouts in 1913 in order to improve recruitment). All world Scouting/Guiding programs were single-gender in the early years, and virtually all Girl Guide/Girl Scout programs remain single-gender today.

Worldwide Scouting, on the other hand, has gradually opened its ranks to girls, starting in the 1960's. Today well over 90% of all world Scouting programs are open to girls. Scouts Canada, for example, became fully coed in all program sections in 1998. So the Boy Scouts of America is a late-comer to fully opening up to girls. Boy-only Scouting continues mainly in several predominantly Muslim countries in Africa and the Middle East.

2. OK, just when did BSA (Boy Scouts of America) become coed?

Actually, starting 50 years ago, in 1969! The BSA's high-school and college-aged Explorer program (renamed Venturing in 1998) began admitting girls as unregistered “associate members” in 1969, then as full members in 1971 (though female Explorers/Venturers could not earn the Eagle Scout award until 2019). And although all BSA programs are now open to girls and young women, Venturing is still the BSA's only truly coed program. All adult positions in all programs have been open to men or women since 1988.

Cub Scouting (Kindergarten through grade 5) began admitting girls in 2018. Cub Scout packs can be boy-only, girl-only, or ‘mixed’. In mixed packs, girls and boys must be in separate single-gender dens.

Scouts BSA (formerly ‘Boy Scouting’) began admitting girls in 2019. Girls and boys must be in separate single-gender troops, although troops at the same chartered organization typically share the same troop number and are usually run by a common troop committee. BSA refers to such troops as ‘linked’ troops.

Note that in all programs, participation, leadership, and advancement requirements are identical for boys and girls, and all adult positions are open to both men and women. The Scouts BSA *Handbook for Boys* and *Handbook for Girls* are identical except for gender-specific photos.

3. What about Troop 97?

Troop 97 began in 1952. Starting in 2019, we created a ‘linked’ Troop 97 for girls. A single troop committee operates both troops and ensures that both troops maintain the same quality program. Each troop has its own Scoutmaster and elected youth leadership team. Currently both troops meet on Monday nights. The girls and boys plan their own programs, but coordinate key activities. Some weekend campouts are separate and some are joint. Major outings (like summer camp) are usually joint to reduce costs and simplify logistics (though either troop can choose to do any of these separately).

All adult positions in both troops are open to either men or women. But note that BSA requires that at least one BSA-registered woman be present on any activity involving girls. This means that we need to register as many moms as possible so that we never have to cancel an activity.

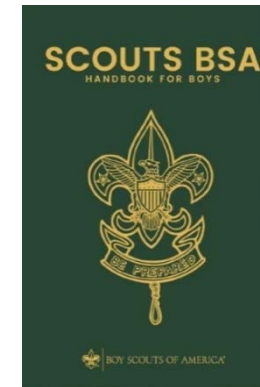
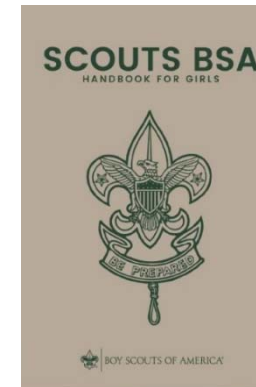
4. What about the Girl Scouts?

GSUSA (Girl Scouts of the USA) has always been a separate organization from the BSA. There is no connection between GSUSA troops and Scouts BSA troops for girls, and their programs are significantly different.

5. Terminology

The overall organization is still called the **Boy Scouts of America (BSA)**. The BSA has four traditional Scouting programs (it also has non-traditional school- and work-based programs):

- **Cub Scouts BSA**—Boys & girls are called Cub Scouts (grades K–3) or Webelos Scouts (grades 4–5) and are part of a ‘pack’.
- **Scouts BSA**—Boys & girls are called Scouts and are part of a ‘troop’.
- **Sea Scouts BSA**—Young men & women are called Sea Scouts and belong to a ‘ship’.
- **Venturing BSA**—Young men & women are called Venturers and belong to a ‘crew’.



Troop 97 BSA

Troop 97 for Boys

Troop 97 for Girls